

SCROLL OF EXALTS™



EXALTED
SECOND EDITION

SCROLL OF EXALTS™

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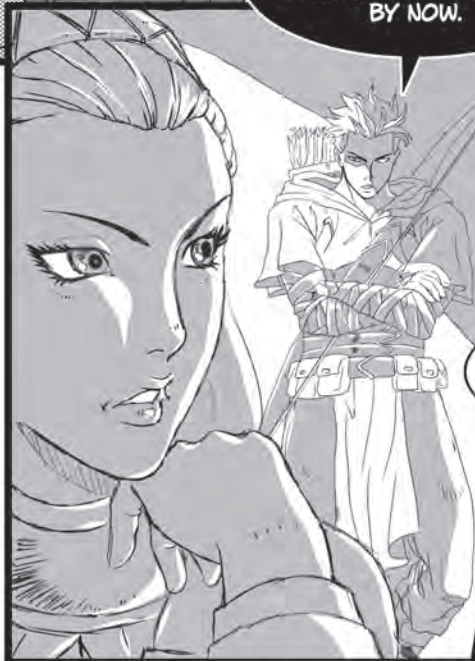


WHICH IS WHERE
RISA AND HER
SCALE COMES IN.
SHE'LL PROVIDE—

IF I MAY INTERRUPT,
CAPTAIN...

FOR ALL YOUR
CLEVER PLANNING, YOU'RE
IGNORING A PAINFUL
LIKELIHOOD.

YOUR COPPER SPIDER
HAS PROBABLY
SURRENDERED HER WILL
BY NOW.



NO. SHE'S TOO
BULL-HEADED
FOR THAT.

THAT'S JUST NAIVE
SENTIMENTALITY. THINK
ABOUT WHERE SHE IS.

NO ONE HOLDS OUT
AGAINST THE LOVER
FOREVER.



JADE AND I SHOULD GO
TO THE FORTRESS OF
CRIMSON ICE ALONE.

THE TWO OF US
CAN ASSESS THE
SITUATION AND... DO
WHATEVER IS
REQUIRED.

NO! THAT KIND OF
NARROW THINKING
GOT ARIANNA WHERE
SHE IS!

WE'RE DOING THIS
TOGETHER, AND THAT'S
FINAL.

BAM!

AND ARIANNA
WILL HOLD OUT.
YOU'LL SEE.





INTRODUCTION

Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by.
—Oliver Goldsmith, *The Traveller*

Designed as living weapons of the Incarnae for the Primordial War, the Exalted far exceeded their creators' expectations, defeating the Primordials and winning control of Creation for the gods. In recognition of their service, the Exalted were gifted with the rule of Creation itself, while the greatest of the gods retired to Yu-Shan to play the Games of Divinity. Unbeknownst to both god and Exalt, however, a Curse lay upon the gods' Chosen, and they and the world have suffered for it ever since.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Scroll of Exalts is a supplement detailing examples of prominent or notorious Exalted of every type, who may be used as allies, antagonists or inspiration for a player's own characters. Its contents are as follows:

Chapter One: The Solar Exalted

This chapter concerns itself with the mighty Solar Exalted. These Lawgivers once ruled their fellows and all of Creation before being usurped by their subordinates. Newly returned to the world, they are set to change it once again, for good or for ill.

Chapter Two: The Lunar Exalted

This section is devoted to the savage Lunar Exalted. The Stewards were once the loyal mates and strong right hands of the Solar rulers in the First Age, but they now strive to build a better world on their own terms.

Chapter Three: The Sidereal Exalted

The mysterious Sidereal Exalted are the subjects of this chapter. During the Old Realm, the Viziers were advisors of the Lawgivers but betrayed them out of fear and hubris. Since then, the Maidens' Chosen have guided the fate of Creation from behind the scenes.

Chapter Four: The Terrestrial Exalted

The prolific Terrestrial Exalted are the focus of this section. The Dragon-Blooded were designed to be the subordinates of the Celestial Exalted, but since the Usurpation these individually weaker but much more numerous Chosen have ruled Creation.

Chapter Five: The Abyssal Exalted

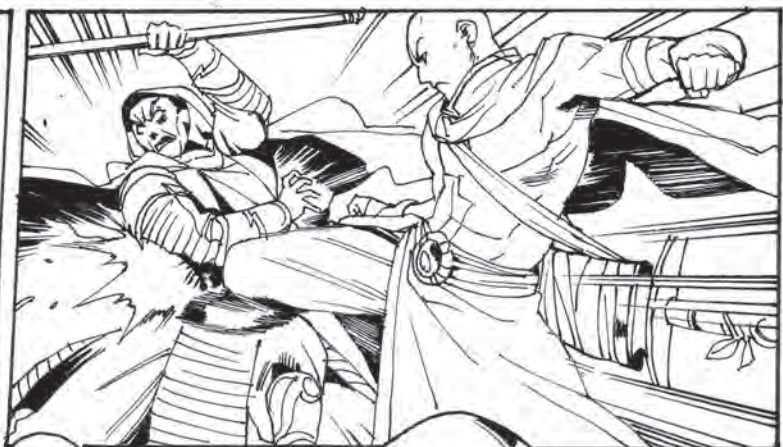
This section revolves around the morbid Abyssal Exalted. Chosen by the Deathlords and empowered by stolen Solar Exaltations corrupted by the Neverborn, these deathknights strive to kill Creation and drag its rotting carcass into the Void.

Chapter Six: The Infernal Exalted

The wicked Infernal Exalted are the focus of this chapter. Empowered by stolen Solar Exaltations corrupted by the Yozis, the Green Sun Princes wish to transform Creation into a mirror of Hell and thereby free their demonic masters.

Chapter Seven: The Alchemical Exalted

This chapter is devoted to the Alchemical Exalted. Designed for the Primordial War but never fielded, these Champions of the Great Maker have protected and served the mortal inhabitants of Autochthonia for thousands of years.





CHAPTER ONE

THE SOLAR EXALTED

The Chosen of the Unconquered Sun once ruled Creation itself after the events of the Primordial War, but the Great Curse laid on these Lawgivers by their fallen foes led them to madness and ruin. After being usurped by their subordinates, the Solars' Exaltations were confined for centuries beneath the ocean, being freed only recently. Now, the Solars grow again into their power, and the world may well be remade by their deeds.

What follow are a number of famous and infamous Solar Exalts of differing levels of experience to use as allies or antagonists in **Exalted** series.

DACE

THE REJUVENATED CAVALIER

Quote: *This is where we draw the line! From here, we only go forward!*

What should've been a grizzled veteran's last battle turned into the first day of an Exalted general's glorious career. An orphan of the Time of Tumult, Dace was taken in by the Ravenous Wolves mercenary company and raised among its auxiliary. He tidied up, mended armor, minded horses and sharpened weapons, learning through play the rudiments of sword and shield and hand-to-hand combat. When he was old enough, he took to the battlefield as a pikeman, standing his ground despite nigh-overwhelming fear. He survived his first battle and the next and one after another, growing stronger as he steadily moved up the ranks. By late middle age, he'd become the most respected captain in the company, and it was to him that command passed when the Ravenous Wolves' commander finally retired.

On the day Dace Exalted, retirement was the farthest thing from his mind. Employed by Great Forks, he and his soldiers stood outnumbered against a force of Lookshyan archers, cavalry and heavy infantry. The Lookshyans had outflanked him, breaking his men into small groups for the archers to pick off, yet hope was not lost. Dace realized that if he could break through one particular knot of cavalry, he could destabilize the Lookshyan line and give his soldiers a chance to regroup. The other fighters in the single fang he could spare for this desperate gamble all fell dead or wounded, but Dace remained upright and untouched. The old stiffness in his knee subsided, his distance vision cleared for the first time in years, and the grind in his shoulder and elbow might as well

never have troubled him. He broke through the Lookshyan cavalry, scattered the entire line by himself and plunged on toward the bewildered archers farther on. With newfound courage, his soldiers formed up behind him and drove the rest of the Lookshyans from the field. It wasn't until the opposing force was in full retreat that Dace realized that his body was at the center of a corona of blazing Essence and that some of his men were looking fearfully askance at the symbol burning on his forehead.

The next day, Dace left the Wolves behind, asking for a core of brave volunteers around which he would found a new mercenary company. From this seed grew the

Bronze Tigers mercenary army, which Dace based in the Cinnabar District of Nexus.

It has traveled extensively throughout the Scavenger Lands, losing battles only rarely and stealing seemingly impossible victories against raksha, Wyld mutants, beastmen, the dead and even Realm legionnaires from Greyfalls. Some of the army's most notable exploits to date include its bloodless restoration of the royal family of the nation of Chask in the Hundred Kingdoms ("the Battle that Wasn't There"), its defeat of a vastly superior Imperial force despite being caught with its back to the Yellow River ("Fucian's Tragedy") and its contribution to the defense of Nexus against a plague of demons ("the Day Dark as Night").

Dace respects his soldiers unfailingly and brooks no disparagement of their reputation. He never leaves wounded soldiers behind if he can help it, nor does he allow captured comrades to languish for very long in enemy hands. His soldiers, in turn, honor Dace and follow him with unfailing faith. Even those who are the most disturbed by and unsure about his new Exalted status are still willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Dace is also widely known for engaging in single combat foes most would hesitate to challenge. He has taken on the Lunar Ma-Ha-Suchi, the deathknight known as the Maiden of the



Mirthless Smile, the peerless raksha cataphract Lan-Shoki Hahna, the demoness Zsofika and even the Emissary of Nexus itself. While he cannot claim total victory in all these encounters, that he stood against such fearsome foes and survived is remarkable in itself. That he wins more of such fights than he loses is a testament to his Celestial prowess.

Motivation: To unify the armies of the Scavenger Lands under his command

Caste: Dawn

Anima Banner: A luminous wolf howls and bares its flashing fangs.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Foolhardy Contempt

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 1, Dodge 2, Integrity 1, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Forest-Tongue, Old Realm) 2, Lore 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 5 (Dawnlight +1), Performance 3, Presence 1, Resistance 1, Ride 5, Socialize 1, Survival 1, War 3

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Artifact 2, Contacts 2, Followers 3, Resources 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Melee (1st), War (2nd)

Melee: Bulwark Stance, Dipping Swallow Defense, Fire and Stones Strike, Hungry Tiger Technique

Performance: Respect Commanding Attitude

Resistance: Body-Mending Meditation

Ride: Master Horseman's Techniques (Master Horseman's Eye, Spirit-Steadying Assurances)

War: Rout-Stemming Gesture

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 7B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C,N, P

Orichalcum Reaper Daiklave (Dawnlight): Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 13L/3, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Soak: 10L/13B (Fine lamellar armor, +7L/9B, -2 mobility, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 11 **Peripheral Essence:** 23 (28)

Committed Essence: 5

Other Notes: Dace's Followers rating represents the Bronze Tigers, his burgeoning mercenary army based in Nexus, with his Ally Risa acting as its lieutenant. Its base unit—and the smallest unit Dace will hire out independently—is a 25-man scale of cavaliers comparable to the Hammer Scale of Marukan soldiers on page 79 of *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*. He also possesses Contacts within Nexus's other mercenary companies. His Artifact rating refers to his orichalcum reaver daiklave, Dawnlight, which he found in a tomb among the ruins of a collapsed city north of Nexus. Within this ancient mausoleum, he discovered dusty bones and a weary, threadbare ghost. He dismissed his men and remained in the darkness for a long time. When he emerged, he was carrying the daiklave and knew its name. He returned the following day to take the bones somewhere else and bury them in secret. His soldiers suspect that the tomb belonged to his First Age incarnation, but what the ghost revealed to him there, Dace refuses to tell them.

Box 5

DEMETHEUS

THE PENITENT WANDERER

Quote: *If you keep actin' up, there's gonna be trouble.*

Growing up without any parents to speak of and running with the orphan gangs on the streets of Chiaroscuro, Demetheus pulled his weight protecting the smaller kids from the bullies in rival gangs and the ill-meaning adults everywhere else—at least the screwed-up ones who treated kids like toys or punching bags. He left the gangs when he was old enough to work, like everybody had to, and took some jobs doing manual labor. From there, he got involved in the local bare-knuckle fight scene. He learned to fight and made a little money, but the scene was corrupt and ugly underneath.

Demetheus got out while he could and set off into the South to wander instead. Figuring

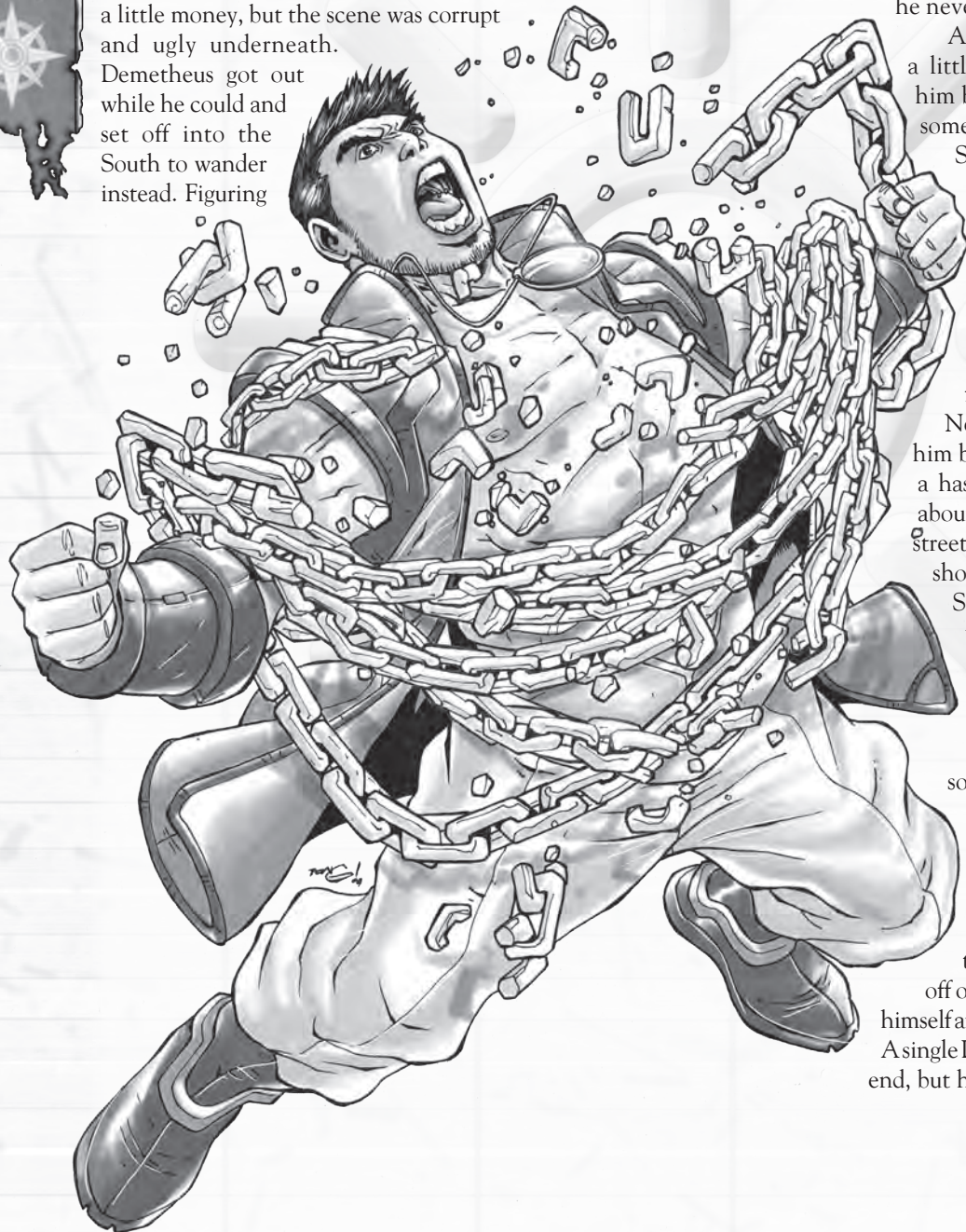
he could live the rest of his life on the road, he earned money at poor villages showing off strongman tricks or betting cocky locals they couldn't take him down. And when the kind of help a strong back and hard fists could provide was called for, Demetheus felt obliged to lend it.

That's why he got Exalted, he figures. (It's as good a reason as any.) He'd come to a caravansary where a pair of brothers were running a theft and murder scheme on lone, unlucky travelers. The first brother was the brains, so he went down easy. Now, Demetheus could've left after that, but he knew the other brother would keep preying on travelers if he did. So he stayed. When the other brother showed up, a Solar Exalt was waiting. Though this brother was the muscle, he never stood a chance.

After that, Demetheus wandered a little longer until his feet brought him back to Chiaroscuro. He'd made some friends of other like-minded Solar types who saw the potential in Chiaroscuro's glittering ruins and hardy citizens. They took up residence just outside the city and tried to do what they could to make it cleaner, safer and better. Things went all right for a while until Demetheus met a freshly Exalted kid named Kidale.

New in town, with nothing going for him but charisma, Kidale was making a hash of local customs. Kidale was about to get himself cut down on the street by a Delzhan nobleman with a short temper when his own sudden Solar Exaltation and a timely intervention by Demetheus saved the lad. Demetheus brought the Eclipse Caste home to the rest of his circle.

All too soon, what started off so well came to dust. The circle's early efforts to make Chiaroscuro better attracted the notice of local Dragon-Bloods, who called in a Wyld Hunt. The hunters surprised and scattered the Solars, hoping to pick them off one by one. Demetheus fought for himself and his friends, but tragedy loomed. A single Dragon-Blood remained by night's end, but he was the smartest and toughest





one. Knowing he couldn't defeat Kidale and Demetheus both, he put himself between them and redirected their simultaneous attacks toward each other. Kidale's attack never connected; Demetheus's did. Demetheus couldn't check himself in time. He killed his friend Kidale, and the Dragon-Blood escaped.

Demetheus broke off from his circle that morning and disappeared into the Southern desert. He's been wandering ever since.

He's determined to find some way—any way—to do right by his fallen friend Kidale. Sure, he only knew the kid for less than a week, but the young Exalt made a powerful impression on Demetheus and had a lasting effect—not least because Demetheus couldn't protect him. Demetheus knows intellectually that Kidale's soul has already moved on to be reborn—his circlemate Wind saw to that—but knowing that doesn't obviate Demetheus's need to make up for what he did. Unfortunately, he has no idea how to do that.

Motivation: To beat back the bullies who threaten the Children of Earth

Caste: Dawn

Anima Banner: A lion with a golden mane throws back its head and roars.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Red Rage of Compassion

Abilities: *Athletics* 4, *Awareness* 2, *Dodge* 2, *Integrity* 1, *Larceny* 1, *Linguistics* (Native: Flametongue; Others: Riverspeak) 1, *Lore* 1, *Martial Arts* 4, *Medicine* 1, *Presence* 2, *Resistance* 4, *Ride* 1, *Sail* 1, *Socialize* 2, *Stealth* 1, *Survival* 3

Backgrounds: *Artifact* 2, *Contacts* 3, *Influence* 1, *Resources* 1

Charms:

Athletics: Increasing Strength Exercise

Martial Arts: Knockout Blow

Resistance: *Body-Mending Meditation*, *Durability of Oak Meditation*, *Iron Kettle Body*, *Iron Skin Concentration*, *Ox-Body Technique*

Survival: *Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit*

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Solar Hero Style: *Dragon Coil Technique*, *Fists of Iron Technique*, *Sledgehammer Fist Punch*, *Solar Hero Form*

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 6B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 9B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 6B, Parry DV—, Rate 1, Tags C,N, P

Soak: 5L/8B (Buff jacket, +3L/4B, -1 mobility, fatigue value 2)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 11 **Peripheral Essence:** 24 (28)

Committed Essence: 4

Other Notes: Demetheus's Artifact rating refers to a pair of orichalcum hearthstone bracers he found stashed with a bunch of other loot at the caravansary where he Exalted. He doesn't own any hearthstones, but the bracers give him an edge in combat (and they can stop an axe), so he guesses they're all right. His Influence rating refers to the local fame he drummed up traveling around the South as a strongman and exhibition fighter before his Exaltation. Now that he's wandering again but capable of so much more, his fame and influence is sure to grow. His Contacts include Southern Guildsmen who traveled the same routes he did, as well as some of the fellows he either pummeled or defended as a kid (many of whom have grown up now and made good—or bad—names for themselves in Chiaroscuro).



?

THE RIGHTEOUS DEVIL

Quote: *All I have to say to you... is farewell.*

Many heroic stories are told throughout the South of a certain folk legend and culture hero. According to the stories, this figure carries two fire-breathing pistols and keeps a third weapon in reserve that is either a red jade short spear, a fire lance or a firewand fitted with a bayonet. Some details remain the same in most stories, including the hero's sex, his general description and his merciless, righteous demeanor. Beyond those similarities, the events of the stories vary from region to region. Some say the hero once rode an enormous golden scarab beetle, or possibly an agata he captured and tamed. Some say he lives in a mansion in the heart of a dormant volcano, emerging only when "his people" need him. One tale depicts him sailing the desert in a boat made of ice, which he won in a card game from a raksha noble. The farther it went, the more it melted—from the size of a four-masted bark to that of a galleon, a caravel, a felucca and finally a raft. Another account has him living for a time in the ear of an island-sized tortoise, whispering to it directions that it mistook for its own thoughts.

Naturally, many of these stories are made up, but folklorists are occasionally able to trace certain legends back to fantastical real-world events—some going all the way back to the dawn of the Second Age. Such is the way of folklore when historical records

fail, they declare, but playwrights, junk theorists and hack authors have popularized another idea. They speculate that most of the stories that seem to be about that same hero actually *are* about that same hero. That man, they claim, would have to be either an Anathema, a rogue demon or some other manifest spirit who's been around since the end of the First Age.

This idea remained inoffensive popular nonsense for years, until recently, when all-new stories about the hero began to circulate. In one cycle of tales, he and "the Silver Preacher" face off time and again, alternately getting the better of one another.

The most recent tale has the hero descending into "the Screaming City" to pursue the



Preacher after some unforgivable wrong. Another has him battling Lintha pirates in their secret lair in order to steal “the ocean’s most valuable pearl.” One legend in the Martial Arts World has him descending into the Underworld to find and challenge the soul of one Master Manoco Salamander—the long-dead founder of the South’s foremost Golden Exhalation Style martial arts school.

The cause of the sudden explosion of these stories across the South is the emergence (reemergence?) of a Solar Exalt who matches the superficial description of the hero of the older stories. He wanders the South, settling in its major cities long enough to expose and eradicate rampant corruption or to help defend them against dire threats from beyond their walls. When the threat ends, he leaves again, having laid down no roots in the community. He rarely so much as gives his name. Some of the Exalted who claim to have met him have reliable First Age memories of the martial arts style he uses, and they use its modern name as a sobriquet to refer to him. They do so obliquely, however, rather than calling him by that name directly. He apparently finds that rude. When people talk about him, they usually do so with a subtle, unique inflection on pronouns that refer to him. It doesn’t translate very well outside the original Flametongue, but native Flametongue speakers understand it perfectly well when they hear it.

As to whether the Solar who’s active today is the same person from verified historical accounts or has simply adopted that persona for the acclaim and anonymity it provides him... It’s anyone’s guess. And he isn’t saying.

Motivation: ?

Caste: Dawn

Anima Banner: A scarab made of lavender fire rises into the air and spreads its wings.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Heart of Flint

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 5 (Join Battle +3), Bureaucracy 1, Craft (Air) 1, Dodge 4, Integrity 5 (Versus Begging +3), Investigation 2, Larceny 1, Linguistics (Flame-tongue, High Realm, Low Realm, Old Realm, Riverspeak, Southern Tribal Tongues) 5, Lore 3, Martial Arts 5 (Plasma Tongue Repeaters +2, Firewands +1), Medicine 1, Melee 3 (Firewand Bayonet +3), Occult 2, Performance 3 (Wooden Flute +3), Presence 5 (Low-Key Intimidation +3), Resistance 5, Ride 4, Sail 3, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Survival 5 (Desert +3), Thrown 1, War 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Artifact 1, Influence 2, Contacts 5, Resources 5

Charms:

Excellencies: Dodge (1st), Integrity (3rd), Martial Arts (1st, 2nd, Infinite Martial Arts Mastery, Martial Arts Essence Flow) Survival (2nd)

Dodge: Flow Like Blood, Reflex Sidestep Technique, Seven Shadow Evasion, Shadow over Water

Integrity: Elusive Dream Defense, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Righteous Lion Defense, Temptation-Resisting Stance

Resistance: Body-Mending Meditation, Durability of Oak Meditation, Ox-Body Technique (5)

Survival: Hardship Surviving Mendicant Spirit, Trackless Region Navigation

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Righteous Devil Style: All Charms

Join Battle: 13

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 2B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 10, Damage 2B, Parry DV—, Rate 1, Tags C,N, P

Perfect Firewand Bayonet: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 8L, Parry DV 7, Rate 2, Tags 2, R

Perfect Firewand: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 14L, Rate 1, Range 15, Tags 2,F,S

Exceptional Plasma Tongue Repeater: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 11L, Rate 2, Range 20, Tags F

Soak: 10L/10B (Orichalcum chain shirt, +7L/5B, Hardness: 3L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 10

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 22 **Peripheral Essence:** 51 (53)

Committed Essence: 2

Other Notes: The traits here represent the ideal of the heroic wanderer to whom the widespread Southern legends refer. If one man is truly responsible for all the actions of the hero in the stories, the foregoing are the traits he would need.

Of specific note, his first two Artifact ratings cover the matching plasma tongue repeaters that never leave the man’s sides. The weapons are of exceptional quality, with enhanced Accuracy, Damage and Rate. The third Artifact rating applies to an orichalcum chain shirt concealed beneath the man’s clothing. The firewand the character carries is not an artifact per se, but it is of perfect quality with enhanced Accuracy and Damage and an extended range. An adamant bayonet sometimes adorns the end of the firewand, making it an even more deadly instrument. Whether this man carries other weapons or artifacts—either secreted on his person or stored safely Elsewhere—no one can say for sure.



KARAL FIRE ORCHID

THE INSPIRATIONAL TEACHER

Quote: *You already have the strength to defend yourselves. I'm only here to show you how.*

Some say that destiny shows in the blood, but the woman named Fire Orchid lives to prove that people forge their own destiny every time they choose to take a stand for what they believe in. She was born into Gens Karal to one of Lookshy's greatest Dragon-Blooded generals, but time proved that she would never be a Dragon-Blood herself. Nevertheless, she refused to accept the humdrum life of a Child of Earth. Like her famous mother, she elected to make a career in the Seventh Legion and proved her bravery on the battlefield time and again. As the years passed by, Fire Orchid made her mother proud (at least as proud as a Terrestrial hero could be of a mortal daughter) and rose to the utmost heights of mortal rank. Decades of honorable service earned Fire Orchid the Legion's respect and a healthy pension, and she retired to an idyllic farm to live out her sunset years in peace.

Peace was not written in her destiny, however, which became undeniable when the Fair Folk emerged from a freehold hidden nearby to menace her quiet village. Her friends and neighbors panicked and fled and even tried to negotiate, but the raksha showed the villagers no mercy. None of her civilian neighbors seemed to understand what Fire Orchid did, that the only way to deal with such a heartless, alien menace was to fight back. She resolved to teach them this by example, and as she did so, the power of the Unconquered Sun came upon her. "Strike down the unrighteous with your fury," the god's voice said to her, "and teach others with your wisdom." With that, the weight of age lifted, and an orchid of burning Essence wove itself in the air around her. She drove off the Fair Folk and saved the village... for the moment.

In the aftermath, the bravest of the villagers lavished praise on their resident veteran warrior and treated her like the answer to all their problems. They offered to rebuild her home for her—or even a temple if she wanted one. Anything she asked they

would have gladly given. Yet, Fire Orchid knew that she could not stay there and fight the next raksha raiding party that came to terrorize the village (or the next, or whatever threat came after that). Over the villagers' pleas and protests, she announced that she would soon be leaving. Of course, she wasn't going to simply abandon them, she explained. Instead, she was going to impart to them the skills and the confidence they would need to defend themselves. As they rebuilt their homes, she trained them in some basic light-infantry tactics and squad-level teamwork and preached to them of the righteousness the Unconquered Sun expected of Creation. When the Fair Folk returned some time later—and with a much larger force than the last—they found not a rabble of helpless farmers, but a brave and competent community that was willing and able to take care of itself. The raksha were forced back once again, and this time, all Fire Orchid had to do was inspire her neighbors before the battle and help them mop up afterward.

She left the village the next day, knowing she would never return. The Fair Folk, she realized, would go off seeking easier prey, and it was up to her to find it before they did. In every Child of Earth, she believes, is a soul of heroism. Some smother it with wickedness or apathy or fear, but nothing can truly kill it while a person yet lives. Fire Orchid has made it her mission to encourage and nurture that soul, for it is the most important part of humanity. Whether she teaches others how to take care of themselves or inspires others by her own Exalted example, her every action is devoted to making sure people become the heroes she knows they can be.

Motivation: To teach the people of the Threshold how to take care of themselves and live righteous lives

Caste: Zenith

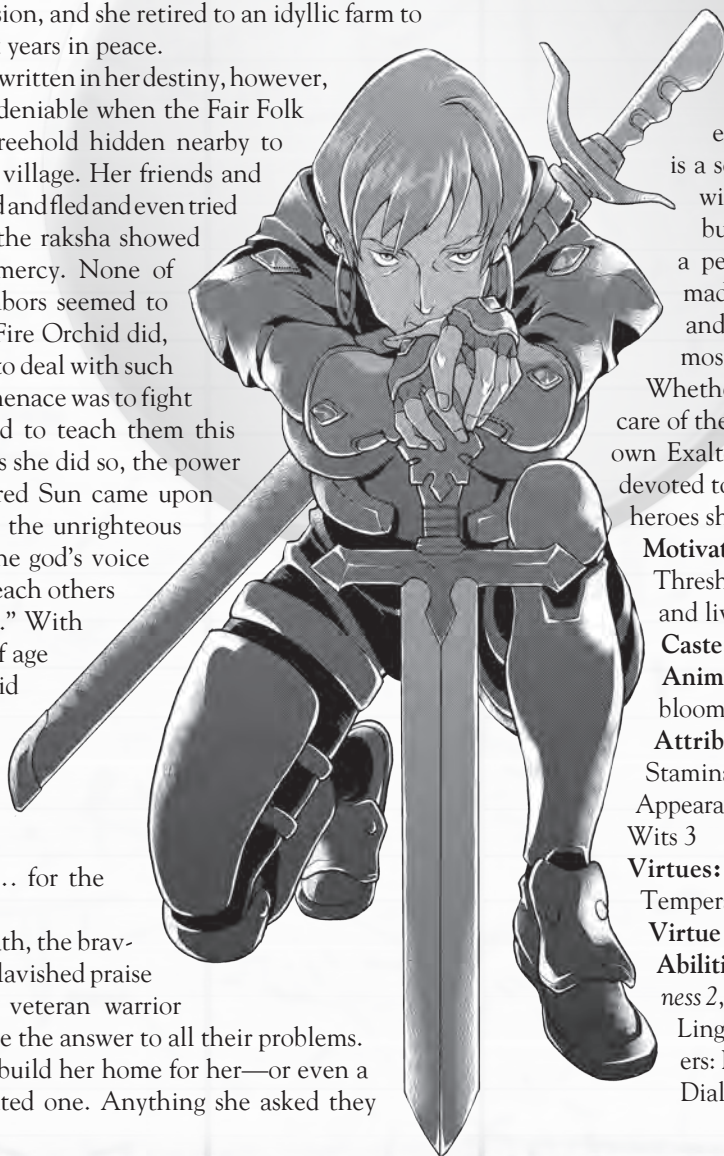
Anima Banner: An orchid of golden fire blooms and rotates in the air.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Heart of Flint

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 1, Dodge 3, Integrity 2, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Forest-Tongue, Eastern Barbarian Dialects) 2, Lore 2, Martial Arts 1,





Melee 3, Performance 2, Presence 2, Resistance 3, Ride 1, Socialize 1, Survival 1, War 4

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Resources 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Melee (1st), War (3rd)

Resistance: Hauberk-Lightening Gesture, Ox-Body Technique, Whirlwind Armor-Donning Prana

War: Fury Inciting Presence, Heroism-Encouraging Presence, Mob-Dispersing Rebuke, Rout-Stemming Gesture, Tiger Warrior Training Technique

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV—, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Straight Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Short Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Soak: 9L/9B (Reinforced breastplate, +7L/6B, -2 mobility, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5

Willpower: 5

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 14

Peripheral Essence: 35

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Karal Fire Orchid's Allies trait represents her mother, a Fire Aspect field force taimyo of Lookshy named Karal Linwei. The rating would be higher save that Linwei has yet to decide if Fire Orchid remains her beloved daughter or is merely a hollowed-out shell animated by a demonic Blasphemous Anathema. Right now, Linwei only offers minimal support behind the scenes to keep her daughter safe from those in Lookshy and beyond who would harm her. Her mother's full support would garner an additional two dots (at least until Gens Karal, the other Gentes and/or the General Staff found out and eliminated her influence—and perhaps the taimyo herself), while her turning against Fire Orchid would likely garner the woman a four-dot Enemy Flaw. Fire Orchid's Contacts rating represents people of the villages she's saved from the Fair Folk.

PANTHER

THE CHAMPION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Quote: Skill, fame, money... It's all worthless until you devote it to a righteous cause.

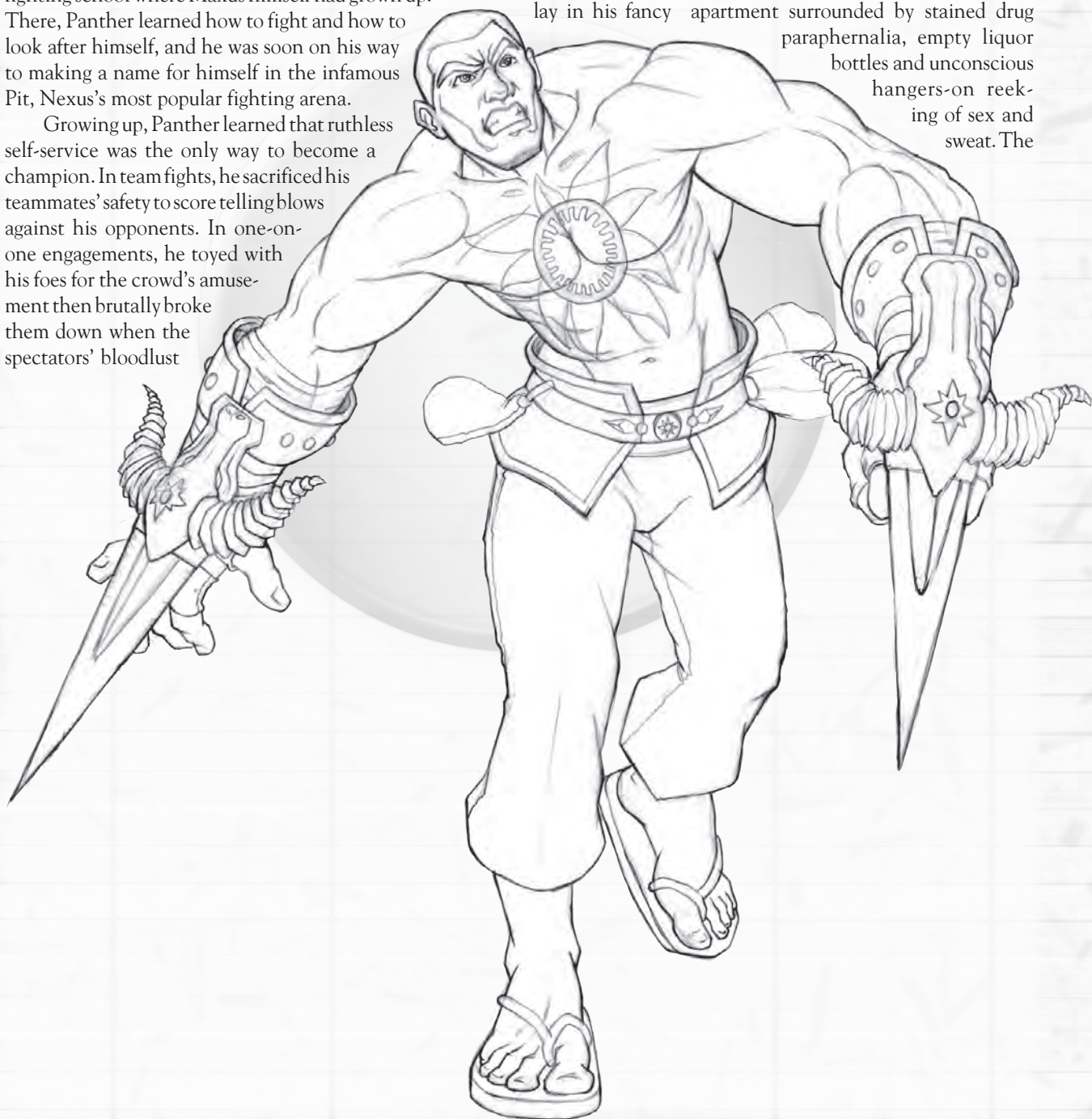
That Panther survived to adulthood seemed like a miracle. That he was selected to be a priest of the Unconquered Sun seemed like a mistake. The son of a Nexus prostitute, he was orphaned young then subjected to endless "indenture" for the crime of stealing to feed himself. A retired arena fighter named Maxus bought him and took him to the same fighting school where Maxus himself had grown up.

There, Panther learned how to fight and how to look after himself, and he was soon on his way to making a name for himself in the infamous Pit, Nexus's most popular fighting arena.

Growing up, Panther learned that ruthless self-service was the only way to become a champion. In team fights, he sacrificed his teammates' safety to score telling blows against his opponents. In one-on-one engagements, he toyed with his foes for the crowd's amusement then brutally broke them down when the spectators' bloodlust

was at its highest. In order to win the sponsorship of a wealthy patron (and amuse the man's jaded peers), he brutally beat down and killed a former teammate with his bare hands, ignoring the fighter's surrender and pleas for mercy. For the blood he spilled and the lives he ruined, he received fame and money enough to buy his freedom. He ascended to the lifestyle he'd always coveted, wanting for nothing. Yet, for all he had, his life was ugly and pointless. The days blended into a pageant of endless bloodshed. The nights blurred into a lurching, debauched revel. Life became a fever dream, and he was content never to awaken.

But awoken Panther did, and with profound regret. He lay in his fancy apartment surrounded by stained drug paraphernalia, empty liquor bottles and unconscious hangers-on reeking of sex and sweat. The



sight dizzied him. He had to step out onto his balcony. There, he turned his face to the sky, and in that moment, the Unconquered Sun spoke to him. He commanded Panther to go forth and make the world a righteous place as he (Panther) knew best. Sudden clarity overwhelmed Panther, and he realized what a shallow, worthless life he led. In a daze, he leapt from his balcony and walked out of Nexus into the depths of the East.

When he could go no farther, Panther rested and meditated on the world and his new place in it. He understood his divine mandate, but what did he know of righteousness? All his life, he'd been nothing but wicked and well rewarded for it. Yet, he realized that knowing so well a thing's opposite can offer keen insight into the thing itself, and in this revelation, he found a measure of enlightenment. Perhaps his life of hardening and training his body had not been wasted after all. From that day on, he would seek out those who most like he himself had been and teach them the lessons he should have learned himself so many years ago. Some would listen, he knew, but most would not. To those, he would show that he was no mere priest, but the Chosen of Creation's most powerful god.

Since his Exaltation, Panther has committed his heart and strength to redeeming himself for the unrighteous life he led. The core of his ethical framework, in fact, is to think about what might have seemed easiest or most satisfying to his old self and do the opposite of that. Thus does he hope to eventually redeem himself for his sinfulness and gain the moral high ground whence a man can justifiably preach of righteousness. By the same token, he believes that any Exalt can be redeemed, no matter how wicked he or she might be at the moment. It might take wicked mortals a few reincarnations to get it right, but the Exalted may change their ways in a single lifetime so long as they have dedicated guidance from those around them.

Motivation: To guide those who should be Creation's heroes onto the path of righteousness

Caste: Zenith

Anima Banner: A golden-clawed panther snarls and slashes at the air.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Red Rage of Compassion

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 3, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Forest-Tongue, Low Realm) 2, Lore 1, Martial Arts 4, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Occult 1, Performance 2, Presence 2, Resistance 3, Socialize 1, Survival 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Resources 3

Merits & Flaws: Enemy (4 pt. Merit—The Visitor in the Hall of Obsidian Mirrors)

Charms:

Martial Arts: Thunderclap Rush Attack

Resistance: Durability of Oak Meditation, Iron Skin Concentration, Ox-Body Technique

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Solar Hero Style: Dragon Coil Technique, Fists of Iron Technique, Hammer on Iron Technique, Ox-Stunning Blow, Sledgehammer Fist Punch, Solar Hero Form

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 7B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV—, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Slayer Khatars: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags M

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15

Peripheral Essence: 38

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Panther possesses the Ambidextrous Merit. He can attack with either of his artifact slayer khatars with equal facility (though he must still flurry in order to attack with both in the same action—excepting the use of Hammer on Iron Technique). Unlike the standard punch-dagger style of khatar and slayer khatar, Panther's weapons are designed to be worn over the backs of the hands. This unusual design does not, however, enable him to hold close combat or ranged weapons while he is using the slayer khatars.



WIND

THE IMMACULATE APOSTATE

Quote: *The Immaculate Order wanted me to serve and worship only the Dragon-Blooded. The Unconquered Sun called on me not to worship him, but to serve Creation and protect it. Which calling seems more worthy?*

When Wind was still a boy, he dreamed of living the life of an itinerant Immaculate monk, exploring the Threshold for lost holy texts and Shogunate artifacts. He gave himself to the Palace Sublime at a young age, where he made good friends and devoted himself to the study and emulation of the teachings of Mela, the Immaculate Dragon of Air. The Elemental Dragons' grace was denied him—at least in this incarnation, he consoled himself—but by early adulthood, he had made himself into a strong, competent monk and left the Palace Sublime with two Immaculate cohorts in search of the lost ruins of the past. He was only a mortal, but he wouldn't have traded the life he led for anything short of a Terrestrial Exaltation.

Desire is not destiny, however, and Wind was forced to sacrifice the life he wanted for the life the Unconquered Sun wanted for him. It happened when he and his two friends were doing research in Gethamane. Every night of their sojourn there, another local was murdered in horrific fashion. Wind found someone he thought was the culprit, but the one he blamed for the acts was actually a Lunar Exalt investigating the same murders. When the vicious creature responsible for the horrors revealed itself, Wind made a fateful decision: Rather than attacking the "Anathema," he stood by the Lunar's side and attacked the monster. Power flooded into him, and when the creature lay dead, Wind realized that he radiated an intense golden light. The voice of the Unconquered Sun spoke to him, and he knew that his old life was over. The Unconquered Sun's blessing changed Wind's life and revealed the truth beneath the lies of the Immaculate Order. Now, Wind has not only the power to defeat the unrighteous, but also the purpose and potential that the Immaculate Order's delusions would have squandered. He is grateful to the Unconquered Sun for this blessing and considers it his duty to prove that the god invested it wisely.

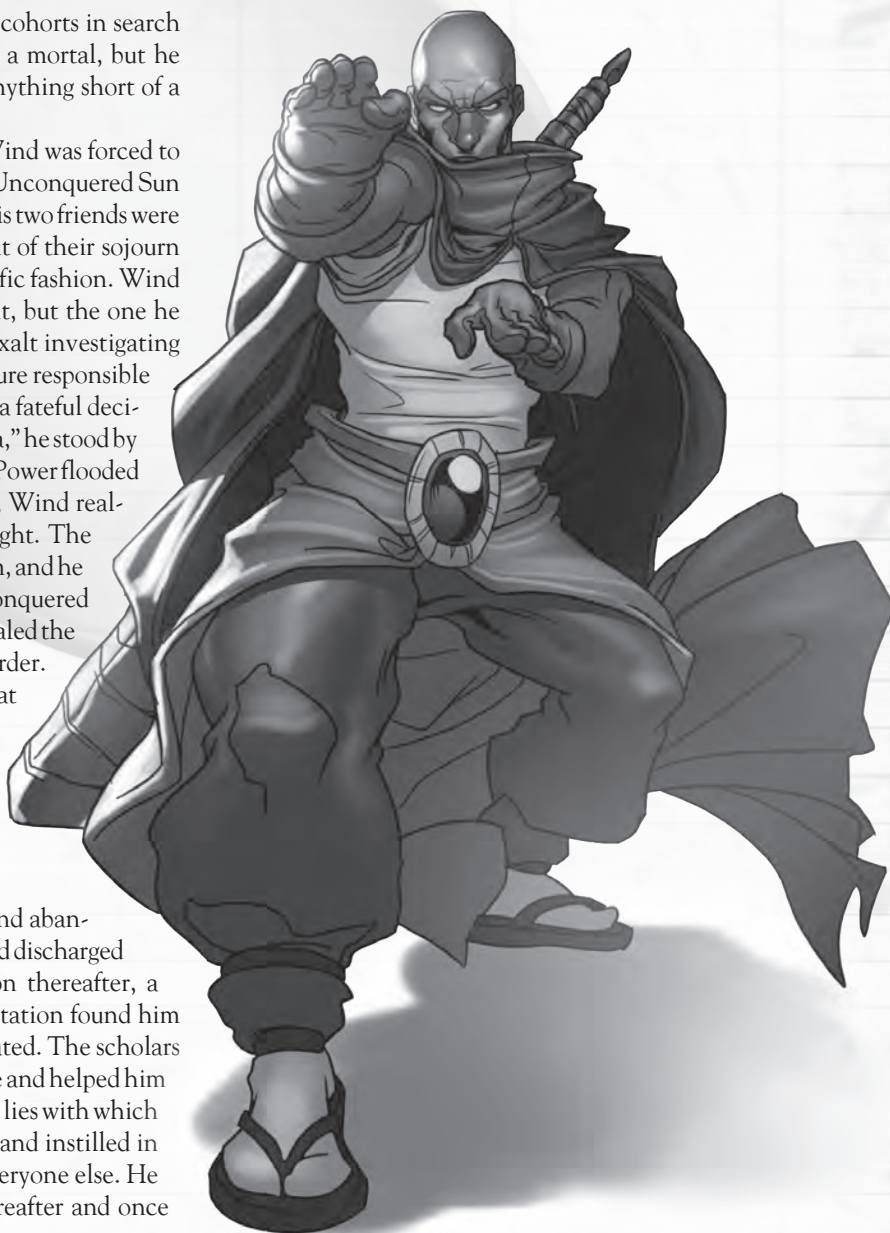
The Lunar led Wind away to safety and abandoned him, claiming that, in so doing, he had discharged a debt left over from the First Age. Soon thereafter, a Sidereal who had prophesied Wind's Exaltation found him and guided him to the Cult of the Illuminated. The scholars of the Cult taught him what he had become and helped him accept his new status. They broke down the lies with which the Immaculate Order had filled his head and instilled in him a burning desire to do the same for everyone else. He left the Cult of the Illuminated soon thereafter and once

again took up the wanderer's life—teaching the truth of the Unconquered Sun while staying one step ahead of the Wyld Hunt. Since then, he has settled in Chiaroscuro, where he joined a local circle. That circle recently lost one member (an Eclipse Caste named Kidale) in a fight with the Wyld Hunt, and a second (the Dawn Caste named Demetheus) abandoned the others in despair, but Wind is determined to hold the rest together any way he can.

Motivation: To spread the suppressed truth of the Exalted throughout Creation in defiance of the Immaculate Order
Caste: Zenith

Anima Banner: A vast mandala of gold and blue light spins in the air.

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



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

Virtue Flaw: Compassionate Martyrdom

Abilities: *Athletics* 2, *Awareness* 2, *Bureaucracy* 1, *Dodge* 3, *Integrity* 3 (*Torture* +1), *Linguistics* (Native: Low Realm; Others: *Flametongue*, *Skytongue*) 2, *Lore* 2, *Martial Arts* 3, *Medicine* 1, *Melee* 3 (*Slashing Swords* +1), *Occult* 2, *Performance* 1, *Presence* 2, *Resistance* 3, *Socialize* 1, *Survival* 1

Backgrounds: *Allies* 2, *Artifact* 2, *Contacts* 1, *Resources* 2

Charms:

Excellencies: *Melee* (1st)

Resistance: *Durability of Oak Meditation*, *Iron Skin Concentration*, *Ox-Body Technique* (x2), *Spirit Strengthens the Skin*

Melee: *Hungry Tiger Technique*; One Weapon, Two Blows

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Snake Style: *Serpentine Evasion*, *Striking Cobra Technique*

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: *Speed* 5, *Accuracy* 8, *Damage* 3B, *Parry DV* 5, *Rate* 3, *Tags* N

Kick: *Speed* 5, *Accuracy* 7, *Damage* 6B, *Parry DV* 3, *Rate* 2, *Tags* N

Clinch: *Speed* 6, *Accuracy* 7, *Damage* 3B, *Parry DV* —, *Rate* 1, *Tags* C, N, P

Orichalcum Reaper Daiklave: *Speed* 4, *Accuracy* 12, *Damage* 7L, *Parry DV* 5, *Rate* 4, *Tags* —

Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15 **Peripheral Essence:** 32 (37)

Committed Essence: 5

Other Notes: Wind's Artifact rating refers to the orichalcum reaper daiklave that he carries in a breakaway harness on his back. Wind was present when his circle mate Kidale found the weapon in the tomb of the First Age Solar whose Exaltation he inherited, and Wind was also present when Kidale died tragically less than a week later. Rather than return the sword to the tomb, the Zenith has elected to carry it in trust until he meets the next Eclipse Caste who bears Kidale's Exaltation. He doesn't know how to find that Exalt or even how he would recognize the right person, but as long as he survives, he knows he'll have time enough to look. The blade symbolizes to him the hopeful potential promised in the cycle of rebirth, and Wind knows that the next Solar who bears Kidale's Exaltation will carry a piece of Kidale with him. With Wind's help and the daiklave's power, that Solar can help build a world in which Kidale would have been proud to live. Wind has attuned the blade, but he doesn't consider it truly his. (He doesn't even know its name.) When he is convinced he has met the Solar in whom Kidale's Exaltation has reincarnated, he will give up the blade and take up instead a normal slashing sword—the kind with which he originally learned to fight. Wind's Allies are V'neef Kirin and Gentle Song, Dragon-Blood and mortal Immaculate monks, respectively. He also maintains Contacts within the Order.



ARIANNA

THE IMPLACABLE SORCERESS

Quote: *You'll stay out of my way if you know what's good for you.*

Arianna was never a nice little girl. A life of quiet marital servitude to some piggish oaf and his snotty, demanding brats was not for her. At age 14, when her parents announced that

they'd chosen her a husband, she ran away, haring north out of the Hundred Kingdoms in search of a more enlightened society. She thought she'd found it in the Northern city of Rylea, which claimed to have the grandest library of ancient lore in the entire region. Arianna made her way there and did her best to insinuate herself into the society of the scholars in residence. In trying to do so, she found that Rylea was a chauvinist kingdom no more enlightened than her own home despite the treasure trove of knowledge its library offered. The scholars were too proud to accept her as one of their own but plenty willing to let her stay on as a serving girl. One even tried to make a biddable mistress of her. She told the scholar's wife, who—it turned out—had a notorious temper and a father connected to Rylea's criminal underground. That scholar was never seen again, and none of the others approached Arianna with similar intentions thereafter.

That settled, Arianna proved herself a quick study with as sharp a mind as any man at the library had. She read and studied in the hours not devoted to cooking and cleaning, always assuming that her intellect would eventually win the scholars over and earn her a place among them. In all the years she spent there, that never happened. Fortunately, before she snapped and made something regrettable happen to another of Rylea's most respected men, a higher authority elevated Arianna to the station she'd worked so hard to achieve. It came over her not in a bonfire of Essence or in the heat of battle, but in a subtle moment as she puzzled out the subtext in an innocuous-seeming book that none of the other Rylean scholars had deemed important. She knew from earlier readings exactly what she had become and that the Immaculate Order's "Anathema" label was a self-aggrandizing sham.

Despite her awful experiences thus far, Arianna intended to stay at the library for a while. Dozens of "untranslatable" volumes were gathering dust in storage there, and if she could keep her new nature a secret, she could glean a wealth of secrets from them. Her charade seemed to be going smoothly at first, but that calm was just a lull before a storm. In a few short months—before she'd had time to learn more than the rudiments of Exalted sorcery—the Wyld Hunt tracked her down in spite of all of her caution and discretion.

The shikari attacked in the night, one of them marring Arianna with a slash from forehead to cheek that would leave a fine-but-indelible scar. She overcame two of her Dragon-Blooded attackers, nearly destroying the library in the process, but the last ones survived and flushed her out into the countryside. She might have died by the roadside that night if not for the timely arrival of a Coral Archipelago junior diplomat named Swan who, it turned out, was also a Solar Exalt. He protected her and took care of her after the fact.

Her wounds were quick to heal, and as they did, Arianna's resolve strengthened. She'd been thinking small at Rylea's library, she realized. There were bigger cities, older



libraries and more magnificent wonders out there. In them, she could find the knowledge to unlock the power she knew to be rightly hers. That day, she determined to visit them all and do just that. Swan traveled with her for a while, which was alternately comfortable and taxing. She also traveled alone, crossing paths with the likes of Yurgen Kaneko, Grendis Lam, the Shoat of the Mire and a host of luminaries, criminals, kings and gods. She eventually found her way back to Swan, who brought her into the circle of Solars with which he had fallen in himself. Since then, they've been able to accomplish great things, with even greater achievements just around every corner.

Arianna is a self-absorbed woman, driven to retake every right and advantage to which she feels her Exaltation entitles her. In her pursuit of that goal, she will stop at nothing short of betraying those of her associates who can best help her achieve it. Those associates currently include her circlemates—Dace, Panther, Harmonious Jade and Swan. Of them, she most appreciates the Eclipse Caste, Swan, who saved her life, has proven himself a competent sidekick and seems the least inclined to argue with her when she's trying to get things done. Her feelings for her circlemates are based more on respect than honest affection, however.

Motivation: To restore the Solar Exalted to their rightful station as the rulers of Creation

Caste: Twilight

Anima Banner: Tall, broad lapis-lazuli wings of Essence with golden tips unfurl behind her, seeming to transform Arianna into a terrible angelic figure.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Deliberate Cruelty

Abilities: *Athletics* 2, *Awareness* 1, *Bureaucracy* 2, *Dodge* 2, *Integrity* 1, *Investigation* 2, *Linguistics* (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Old Realm, Skytongue) 2, *Lore* 4, *Martial Arts* 1, *Medicine* 1, *Occult* 4, *Resistance* 1, *Ride* 3, *Stealth* 1, *Survival* 1, *Thrown* 2

Backgrounds: *Contacts* 3, *Influence* 2, *Resources* 2

Charms:

Athletics: Graceful Crane Stance

Integrity: Integrity-Protecting Prana

Occult: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Resistance: Body-Mending Meditation

Ride: Master Horseman's Techniques (Horse-Summoning Whistle, Master Horseman's Eye), Phantom Steed

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Countermagic, Invulnerable Skin of Bronze, Wood Dragon's Claw

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 4L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3, Tags T

Thrown Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 4L, Rate 3, Range 15

Soak: 1L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15

Peripheral Essence: 36

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Arianna possesses Contacts among the North's intelligentsia, and holds great Influence over Northern academia in general.



JASARA

THE AUTODIDACTIC SAVANT

Quote: *Hey, it worked! I mean... of course it worked.*

Were Jasara of a mind to find contentment in idle pleasures, she could have lived a blissful life in one of the Second Age's most wondrous cities. At that life's end, however, she would have died forgotten, having made no contribution to the welfare of Creation. She certainly never would have Exalted. Fortunately for her, and for Creation, idleness is not in her nature.

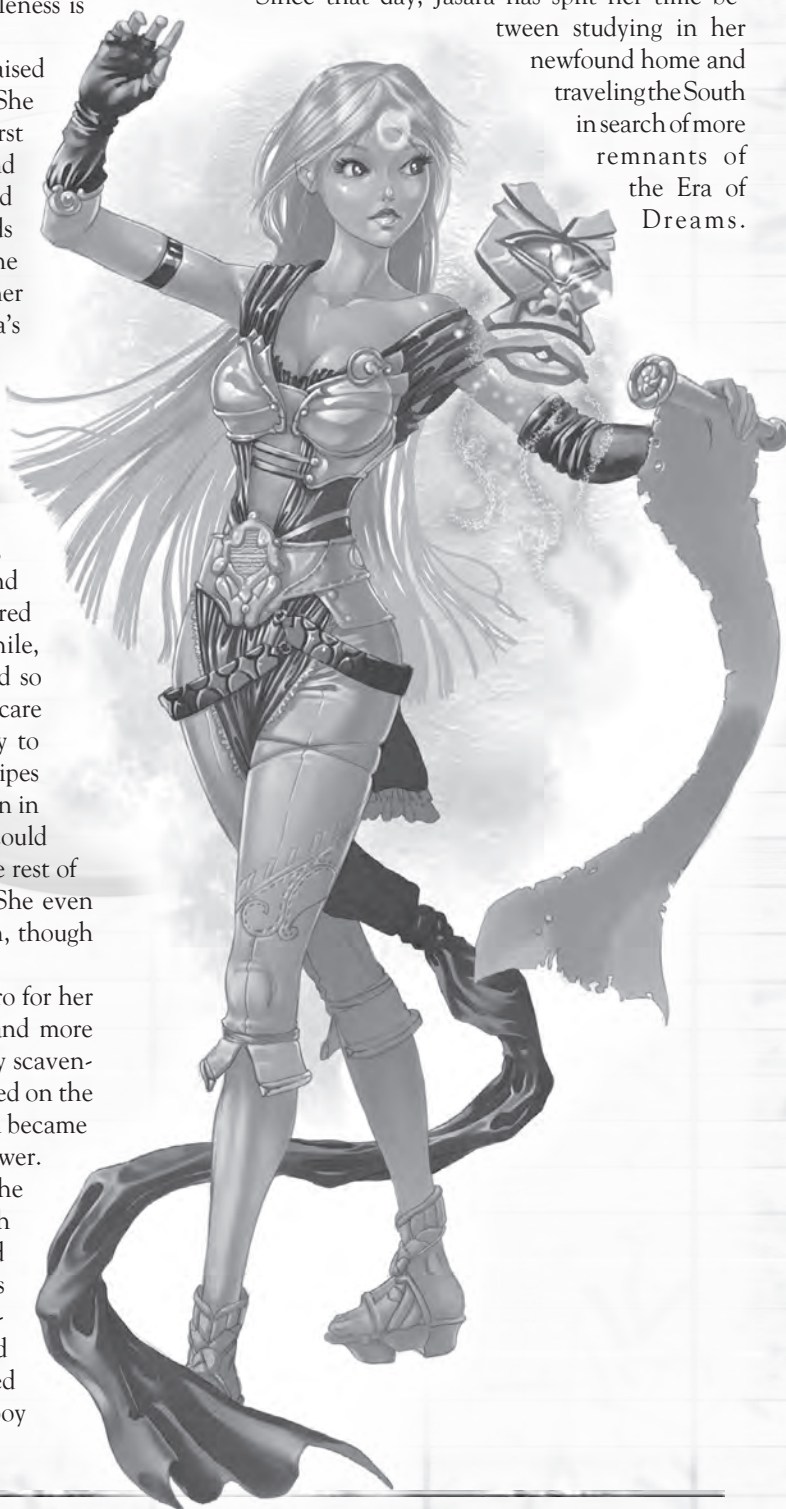
Born to a Guild factor's mistress, Jasara was raised in Chiaroscuro in the old city west of the harbor. She was a lovely child, growing up surrounded by First Age amenities in one of the city's least ruined and most prosperous neighborhoods. Nothing was denied her, from the most skillful tutors to the finest foods to the best clothes and cleverest playmates—all the advantages her mother would have wanted in her own childhood. Yet, even from an early age, Jasara's mind was ravenous. She bored easily. Easy city living stifled her, and having things handed to her was no challenge. In her daydreams, she planned to run away and be a scavenger lord or a bandit princess or a wandering thaumaturge or an actor or a circus acrobat...

To keep her occupied (and safe at home), Jasara's mother filled their home with books and scrolls and other such materials, which Jasara devoured almost as fast as they showed up. It worked for a while, but Jasara's teenage heart could not be contained so easily. When she felt she was old enough to take care of herself, she made secret trips all over the city to meet scholars and workers and rogues of all stripes who could teach her more than she could ever learn in books. Languages, trades, thaumaturgy... until she could figure out what one thing she wanted to do for the rest of her life, she would try a little bit of everything. She even experimented with the Dereth lifestyle off and on, though she could never quite figure out its appeal.

Jasara's aimless search throughout Chiaroscuro for her life's path eventually led her into the less safe and more ruined parts of the old city. Dodging the unsavory scavengers, vicious squatters and hungry ghosts who preyed on the unwary there was a thrill at first, but the thrill soon became a calling. It happened the day she discovered the tower. A preliminary geomantic study of an area deep in the ruins revealed a confluence of dragon lines, on which she found a First Age structure that had withstood the destruction that had befallen the rest of its neighborhood. It drew her to it, guiding her unerringly through the rubble into a maze of mirrors and crystal at its base. In a dreamlike trance, she followed ghostly images of a strangely familiar blond-haired boy

through the maze to a staircase at its center. At the top of the stairs, Jasara found herself in an automated library that came alive around her. It spoke to her in the language of the Old Realm—which she had only ever seen written but never heard spoken aloud—welcoming her by the sobriquet “Copper Spider.” It was not until Jasara caught a glimpse of herself in one of the crystal walls and saw the glowing mark on her forehead that she understood what it meant and what she had become.

Since that day, Jasara has split her time between studying in her newfound home and traveling the South in search of more remnants of the Era of Dreams.



She works regularly with a circle of Solars that consists of the Night Caste thief Faka Kun and the Zenith Caste monk Wind. The first Solar she ever met—the Dawn Caste Demetheus—was part of that circle once, but she hasn't seen him since he accidentally killed their mutual friend and circlemate Kidale. None of Jasara's circlemates are savants, but they're indispensable comrades and good friends. They're welcome in her tower when they're working in Chiaroscuro or hiding from the Wyld Hunt.

Motivation: To learn what wonders the First Age offered and surpass them

Caste: Twilight

Anima Banner: A chrysalis of shimmering Essence rises and cracks open to reveal an enormous butterfly with iridescent wings.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Contempt of the Virtuous

Abilities: Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Air) 2, Craft (Fire) 2, Craft (Earth) 1, Craft (Magitech) 3, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: Riverspeak, Old Realm) 2, Lore 2, Medicine 2, Occult 3 (Art of Alchemy, Art of Geomancy), Ride 1, Socialize 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 1, Contacts 1, Manse 4, Resources 3, Savant 1

Charms:

Excellencies: Craft (3rd)

Bureaucracy: Frugal Merchant Method

Craft: Durability Enhancing Meditation, Object-Strengthening Touch

Integrity: Integrity-Protecting Prana

Occult: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Death of Obsidian Butterflies, The Eye and the Mouth, Flight of Separation, Incantation of Effective Restoration

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C,N, P

Soak: 1L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15 **Peripheral Essence:** 35 (36)

Committed Essence: 1

Other Notes: Jasara's Manse is a tower hidden among the ruins of Chiaroscuro. It has a Solar aspect with the Ability Enlightenment, Archive (Magitech), Comfort Zone, Magical Conveniences and Minor Tricks and Traps. The latter is a confusing maze of mirrors and crystal between the main entrance and the central staircase that leads up to the manse proper. For added security, only Jasara and her circlemates know the way through the wreckage and rubble around the tower to find the entrance to the maze in the first place. The manse grants her a gem of sorcery, which she wears in an Artifact orichalcum hearthstone amulet beneath her shirt. Her Contacts are among the inhabitants of Chiaroscuro's old city.

Jasara

SAYN

THE RESPONSIBLE SMITH

Quote: *Our power is only a tool. With it, we must repair Creation before it breaks down altogether.*

Sayn's mother was the exiled illegitimate daughter of a Dynast. When her family ostracized her as a worthless by-blow, she sought shelter and anonymity at an insignificant Southwestern village too small to even have a name. Sayn's father was the smith for that village, who had lived there every day of his life and intended to die there. From his mother, Sayn learned to read and write and work mathematics. From his father, Sayn learned the skills of the smith's

trade and the satisfaction to be found in hard work done well. Tragically, his parents both died in a local epidemic of wasting fever when Sayn was 16, leaving the village's livelihood more or less in his hands. With his surviving friends and neighbors counting on him and the peaceful rest of his parents' souls depending on him, he took up his father's hammer and assumed the man's place at the forge. He toiled there for decades, growing stronger and more skilled as life in the village went on. It was the life of a Child of Earth, but a secure one to which Sayn felt himself well suited.

Security is not a given in the Time of Tumult, however, and in time, tragedy loomed over Sayn's village once again. A merciless drought struck the land, parching nearby villages and slowly sucking the life from his own. All he could do was work tirelessly at his forge, but he yearned for the skill to do something, *anything*, to save his home. In desperation,

he even cried out for mercy to the Unconquered Sun, whose relentless heat seemed the cause of the region's imminent ruin. And in that desperation, Sayn received an answer. Blue and red fires of Essence leapt out from his body, filling him with power and reminding him of ancient days when the Chosen of the Sun ruled the world. Flush with energy and ancient memories, Sayn stalked away from his smithy to a section of the cliff overlooking the village. There, with one mighty blow of his heavy hammer, he freed a river that had been trapped and buried beneath the cliff face since time out of mind.

Once they'd drunk their fill and tired themselves out splashing in the icy water like children, the grateful villagers would have made Sayn a king or a warlord if he'd asked them to. Yet, the smith knew that only ruin lay in that self-indulgent direction. Instead, he asked only that they let him remain there among them as their smith and spiritual leader. He longed

to try to re-create the wonders that he could barely remember from the First Age and to build new ones that would serve the people of Creation as never before, but he would need peace and space for such work. And as his mother had learned many years before, the village offered both in abundance. To this day, Sayn always comes back to that nameless village no matter how far abroad he travels, either alone or with his



circle. His skill in artifice is growing, and he will soon try his hand at creating original magitechnical wonders. In the meantime, he forges the mundane tools his villagers need to do their work, as well as the moral and ethical tools they need to live upright and righteous lives.

What use would a new and better world be, after all, if its people were wicked and let it collapse into ruin like the First Age did?

Motivation: To teach humanity the value of responsibility, hard work and the truth

Caste: Twilight

Anima Banner: A red hammer trailing evanescent lines falls on an anvil of adamant, throwing blue sparks.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Berserk Anger

Abilities: Athletics 1, Craft (Fire) 4, Craft (Air) 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 3, Investigation 1, Lore 2, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Occult 3, Presence 2, Resistance 3, Socialize 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Contacts 2, Followers 2, Resources 1

Charms:

Excellencies: Craft (2nd), Investigation (2nd), Melee (1st)

Craft: Object-Strengthening Touch

Integrity: Integrity-Protecting Prana

Occult: Spirit-Detecting Glance, Spirit-Cutting Attack, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Death of Obsidian Butterflies, Incantation of Effective Restoration, Invulnerable Skin of Bronze

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 4B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 7B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Exceptional Hammer: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 13B/2, Parry DV 5, Rate 2, Tags O, P

Soak: 8L/11B (Lamellar armor, +6L/8B, -2 mobility, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15 **Peripheral Essence:** 34 (36)

Committed Essence: 2

Other Notes: Sayn's Followers rating represents the bravest and ablest of his villagers, all of whom would willingly leave their homes and families behind to travel the world doing Sayn's bidding if he ever asked. He has not yet done so, but he is aware of their feelings toward him.

The Artifact rating refers to Sayn's magical bracer of the hawk, which he found not long after his Exaltation while exploring far afield with his new Solar circle. It appears to be a normal steel bracer with a screaming orichalcum hawk embossed on it. While Sayn commits two motes to the bracer, he can concentrate as a miscellaneous action and call forth the spirit bound within it. The spirit takes the physical form of a steel-and-orichalcum hawk with a one-yard wingspan. The bird has the traits of a strix (see **Exalted**, p. 350) and follows its attuned master's spoken commands—even fairly complex and detailed ones. It can reenter the bracer by landing on it, but if it is destroyed while it is separate, the motivating spirit is lost forever. If that happens, the artifact becomes just a bracer. His Contacts are among those people he's aided in his travels.



ELIAS TREMALION

THE CUNNING PATRIOT

Quote: *You'll be quite safe here until the air boat arrives, Councilor Snowflake. That won't be for several hours yet, but I suspect we can keep each other entertained.*

Elias Tremalion's exasperated parents had all but given up hope of him ever growing up to be a worthwhile, productive Haslanti citizen. He affected displays of weary boredom with history and mathematics, and he always seemed to be looking down his nose at the good-natured, well-mannered

children of privilege who were supposed to be his friends.

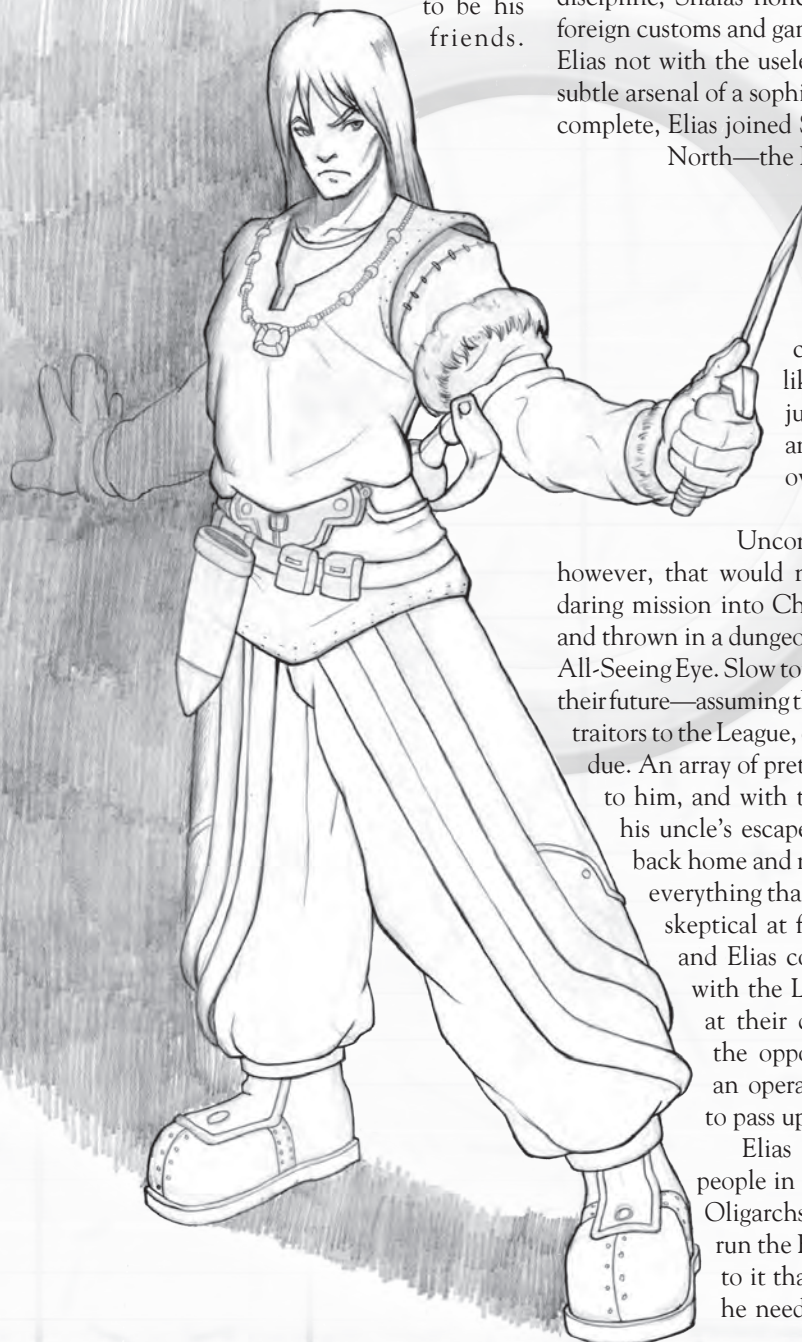
No, Elias always preferred to hang out with the rougher rapsallions who played hide-and-seek across the treacherous rooftops of Icehome—when they weren't busy making trouble or running wild all over town, of course. Elias had a sharp mind, but it seemed he would rather be a rascal than the good boy his parents wanted him to be. And every year he got worse instead of growing out of it.

At their wits' end, Elias's parents turned to Shalas, Elias's shady uncle. He saw the kind of boy Elias was and gladly agreed to take him in and raise him right. Cowed by Shalas's commanding presence, Elias feared he was in for years of stentorian, militaristic tyranny. He was not, however, as good a judge of character as Shalas was. Forgoing strict discipline, Shalas honed Elias's sharp mind with ciphers, foreign customs and games of strategy instead. He equipped Elias not with the useless skills of an effete noble, but the subtle arsenal of a sophisticated spy. When his training was complete, Elias joined Shalas as his aide in the Ears of the North—the Haslanti League's espionage service.

They worked together in the Speakers of Zephyr and Storm, carrying out espionage missions under the aegis of the Haslanti diplomatic corps. Elias got to travel and serve his country, and Uncle Shalas treated him like an important grownup. Then, in just a few short years, he actually *was* an important grownup poised to take over when Shalas retired.

If not for the intervention of the Unconquered Sun in Elias's 23rd year, however, that would never have happened. While on a daring mission into Cherak, Elias and Shalas were caught and thrown in a dungeon by a Dragon-Blooded agent of the All-Seeing Eye. Slow torture and death seemed all that lay in their future—assuming they didn't break and make themselves traitors to the League, of course—until Elias's destiny came due. An array of preternatural abilities became available to him, and with them, he was able to affect his and his uncle's escape. They eventually made their way back home and reported to the Council of Oligarchs everything that had happened. The Oligarchs were skeptical at first, but Shalas smoothed the way, and Elias convinced them that his loyalty lay with the League and that all his powers were at their disposal. They remained wary, but the opportunity presented by having such an operative in their employ was too good to pass up.

Elias is now one of the most important people in the Haslanti League, behind the 12 Oligarchs and the Grandmothers who secretly run the Ears of the North. The Oligarchs see to it that he has all the support and money he needs to do what he does best, and the



Grandmothers see to it that he's kept too busy to uncover their existence.

Motivation: To protect the Haslanti League and spread its power and influence throughout the North

Caste: Night

Anima Banner: A white horse rears up, waving its golden hooves and tossing its golden mane.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Foolhardy Contempt

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 1, Dodge 3, Integrity 1, Investigation 1, Larceny 5, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue, Others: High Realm, Northern Tribal Dialects) 2, Lore 1, Martial Arts 1, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Presence 2, Resistance 1, Ride 2, Socialize 2, Stealth 4, Thrown 1

Backgrounds: Backing 4, Artifact 1, Artifact 1, Influence 1, Resources 4

Charms:

Excellencies: Dodge (1st), Presence (1st), Thrown (1st)

Dodge: Shadow Over Water

Larceny: Flawless Pickpocketing Technique, Lock-Opening Touch, Stealing from Plain Sight Spirit

Resistance: Body-Mending Meditation

Stealth: Easily Overlooked Presence Method, Mental Invisibility Technique

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Feathersteel Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags T

Feathersteel Slashing Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Thrown Feathersteel Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 5L, Rate 3, Range 25

Soak: 8L/7B (Orichalcum chain shirt, +7L/5B, Hardness: 3L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 12 **Peripheral Essence:** 26 (29)

Committed Essence: 3

Other Notes: Elias's Artifact ratings represent an orichalcum chain shirt and a collar of dawn's cleansing light. He found both items in the hidden tomb of a First Age Solar, which he discovered secreted away beneath the castle in Cherak where he was imprisoned on the night of his Exaltation. He also owns a slashing sword and a set of throwing knives (all made of feathersteel). Thanks to the Backing of the Haslanti government and Influence within the Ears of the North, he is also allowed occasional, temporary access to artifacts in the government's keeping, including a belt of shadow walking, a folding glider, a sling of deadly prowess or other smaller utilitarian wonders per the needs of his current mission. The Shapers of Form—the technical engineers of the Ears of the North—assess those needs before each mission at their Windcreche facility. The master of that facility is a Djala immigrant named Kaiyu, whom the Council lured to the League by offering him obscene sums of money.



FAKA KUN

THE NOTORIOUS LIBERATOR

Quote: *You deserve not so much as a dinar of this. I'm giving it to the people who do.*

Faka Kun was one of the lucky ones. Sure, she grew up a slave to a snakeman named Nisius Chen, but he didn't buy her for sex or hard labor. No, he trained her to be the star acrobat in the five-ring Gerontine Circus, of which he was the ringleader. He also trained her to be a cat burglar, using her to wring more money out of the towns the Gerontine visited than mere ticket sales and concessions could ever drum up. Nisius even let her set aside her cut of the criminal proceeds toward buying her eventual freedom. Faka Kun eagerly took every job Nisius suggested, hoping to one day make her way to White Refuge—the free Djala enclave out in the Southern desert. She was not the first Djala acrobat Nisius had worked into an early grave chasing that dream, but unrealistic hope was better than no hope at all.

It was in pursuit of White Refuge that Faka Kun came to recognize her Celestial destiny. The circus was performing in the Lap, and she was trying to lift a set of jade razor claws from the imperial satrap's mansion. She got in all right and even managed to find the razor claws, but she tripped an alarm on the way out. At that moment, she could have surrendered or relinquished her prize, but she didn't do either. Her freedom was riding on getting out with the goods—she had to try. As she made her decision, a rush of conviction accompanied it. The Laplander guards quickly cornered her, but they were no match for the Unconquered Sun's newest Night Caste.

Faka Kun returned home reinvigorated, but she didn't go straight to Nisius. Instead, she went to her fellow slaves and told them what had happened. It broke her heart to see the spirit drain from their faces as they listened to her.

That was it, they said. She would disappear from their lives to go do... whatever the Exalted did... but they would still be slaves until they died. So Faka Kun made the second fateful decision of that evening. Rather than take her prize to Nisius and buy her freedom with it, she kept it and stole the Djala out of the Gerontine instead. When word of the theft at the satrap's mansion reached Nisius, he had not a slave left to his name. When word of that theft got to him shortly thereafter, Faka Kun had returned once more for the circus's cash box. When the frantic snakeman discovered that theft, Faka Kun had already sold the razor claws

to Nisius's own underworld contact and exchanged the day's take in ticket sales from paper scrip to hard silver dinars. The next morning, she spent all that money buying supplies, transportation and a guide to see them all safely off to White Refuge.

To her surprise as much as theirs, she gave the leftover money to the keepers of the Djala enclave as soon as she got there and turned around to leave once more. There were still more Djala out there with nobody looking out for them, she explained, not to mention too many rich fools with nobody looking out for their money. If

she didn't do anything about that, nobody would.

And so she walked away. Yet, it was not the last she and White Refuge saw of each other. In the years since her Exaltation, she has returned many times, always with more Djala looking for a new life where they can be their own masters. They are the lucky ones.

Motivation: To liberate the Djala people and help them build a free nation of their own

Caste: Night

Anima Banner: A spider of violet shadows rises up on its rear legs, its eight eyes gleaming with motes of Essence.





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

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

Virtue Flaw: Heart of Tears

Abilities: Athletics 3 (Acrobatics +1), Awareness 3, Dodge 3, Investigation 3, Larceny 5, Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: Riverspeak) 1, Medicine 1, Melee 1, Performance 3 (Acrobatics +1), Ride 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 3, Thrown 4

Backgrounds: Cult 1, Followers 4, Resources 4

Charms:

Athletics: Graceful Crane Stance, Monkey Leap Technique, Spider Foot Style

Investigation: Courtier's Eye Technique

Larceny: Flawless Pickpocket Technique, Lock-Opening Touch, Stealing from Plain Sight Spirit

Stealth: Easily Overlooked Presence Method

Thrown: Returning Weapon Concentration, Spirit Weapons

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Perfect Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags T

Thrown Perfect Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 6L, Rate 3, Range 25

Soak: 1L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15

Peripheral Essence: 36

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Like all Djala, Faka Kun has the Small deficiency and the Skin Color pox. (The Longevity pox and Enlightened Essence blight to which all Djala are likewise heir are subsumed into the greater benefits of her Solar Exaltation.)

Faka Kun's Followers rating refers back to the faithful Djala at White Refuge who would do anything she asked of them. Her Cult rating refers to a small-but-growing group of Djala whose hero worship of their liberator has evolved into something more. Faka Kun is not yet aware of the presence of this cult, nor has it made its existence known to the general populace of White Refuge.

JIUNAN NIGHTWARDEN

THE RESTLESS FUNERIST

Quote: *You and I are not so different, spirit. Let us see who can lay the other to rest.*

Jiunan Nightwarden believed he was the man he would be until the day he died. He was a respectful, pragmatic funerist in the Morticians' Order of Sijan. It was his duty to observe the proper rites to placate the dead, and he was content to remain in the bleak city until the day his future replacement performed the old familiar rites over him. Yet, an instant of pure, irrational love changed everything.

The heart-wrenching flare occurred in Jiunan's 23rd year, on the day a delegation from Port Calin brought a woman to Sijan to die. She seemed no older than Jiunan and in no worse health, and she was beautiful. All the living are beautiful in that city, but she shone like the stars on a moonless night. As her escorts led her to the mortwrights, Jiunan followed silently. She remained in their care for some time, and all Jiunan could do was wait, hoping to catch one last glimpse of her.

Shortly, a second delegation arrived. It consisted of four armored nemissaries and a terrible figure in white robes and a broad, conical hat of woven bones. The figure carried a gruesome battle-axe of moaning soulsteel. His name was White Bone Sinner—a deathknight envoy of the Walker in Darkness. The deathknight summoned a deadspeaker and the Calinti woman's guards and withdrew to speak to the mortwrights. Hours later, the Calinti guards departed with expressions equally disturbed and relieved. The deathknight's party departed later. The Calinti woman left with them.

Jiunan's heart skipped. His breath caught. Alive, the woman had been beautiful; dead, she was simply impossible. Hopelessly rapt, Jiunan followed the grim party across Sijan, working up his courage. The shadows seemed to deepen and move with him as he crept ever closer. Finally, before the delegation could make it across the Bridge of the Fallen and disappear into the Underworld, Jiunan caught up and took the Calinti woman's cold, dead hand. He had only enough time to ask her if she wanted to go with the deathknight. She shook her head, and the look in her eyes burned itself into Jiunan's memory as a golden ring flashed into existence on his forehead. The deathknight turned, his shocked eyes blazing...

A brief, intense battle ensued. Jiunan wrestled away the deathknight's hideous weapon and turned its unwieldy mass against the nemissaries, who were too slow to react. White Bone Sinner put up more of a fight, but Jiunan's only aim was to keep the deathknight at bay. As he fainted and hacked and slashed with his stolen weapon, monopolizing the deathknight's attention, the Calinti woman made her escape. When she was gone, Jiunan tackled White Bone Sinner off the Setting Bridge into the Avarice River. He isn't exactly sure what happened after that. The next day, he awoke on the shore miles away downstream with bone





needles sticking out of his left arm and the soulsteel axe in the mud beside him. Of White Bone Sinner there was no sign. The Calinti woman was nowhere to be seen either. Yet, someone had dragged the axe out of the river to lay it beside him, and someone had left a trail of delicate footprints into the forest. Jiunan could still smell the mortwrights' perfume in the air.

He rose and set out after her at once, but he could not find her. Not that day or the next or the next... But she's out there somewhere, and Jiunan knows he isn't the only one looking for her.

Motivation: To find the woman and force the Walker in Darkness to grant her freedom

Caste: Night

Anima Banner: Flocks of ethereal raitons disperse in all directions from the gnarled branches of a bone-white tree.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Ascetic Drive

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Dodge 3, Integrity 1, Investigation 1, Lore 3, Medicine 1, Melee 5 (*Grimcleaver* +1), Occult 5 (*Spirits* +1, *Undead* +1), Presence 1, Resistance 1, Ride 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Artifact 1, Contacts 2, Resources 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Dodge (1st), Melee (2nd)

Dodge: Shadow over Water

Melee: Call the Blade, Iron Raptor Technique, Summoning the Loyal Steel

Occult: Ghost-Eating Technique, Spirit-Cutting Attack, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Spirit-Repelling Diagram

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV—, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Exceptional Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 6L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags T

Soulsteel Grimcleaver: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 15L/4, Parry DV 5, Rate 2, Tags O

Long Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 5L, Rate 3, Range 200

Thrown Exceptional Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 6L, Rate 3, Range 25

Soak: 10L/9B (Orichalcum breastplate, +8L/6B, Hardness: 3L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 14

Peripheral Essence: 28 (35)

Committed Essence: 7

Other Notes: Jiunan Nightwarden is only minimally attuned to his Artifact soulsteel grimcleaver, which allows him to wield it but without the magical material bonus. Unwilling to accept it as wholly his own, he has not given it a name. (Before Nightwarden took it, the weapon was known as Champion's Dirge.) His other Artifact rating refers to an orichalcum breastplate he bought from a shady artifact dealer in Nexus's Undercity. He still maintains Contacts among the Morticians' Order.

ADMIRAL SAND

THE ORDER-CONFERRING TRADER

Quote: *I'm offering you a chance to do the right thing, Sultan. I urge you to take it.*

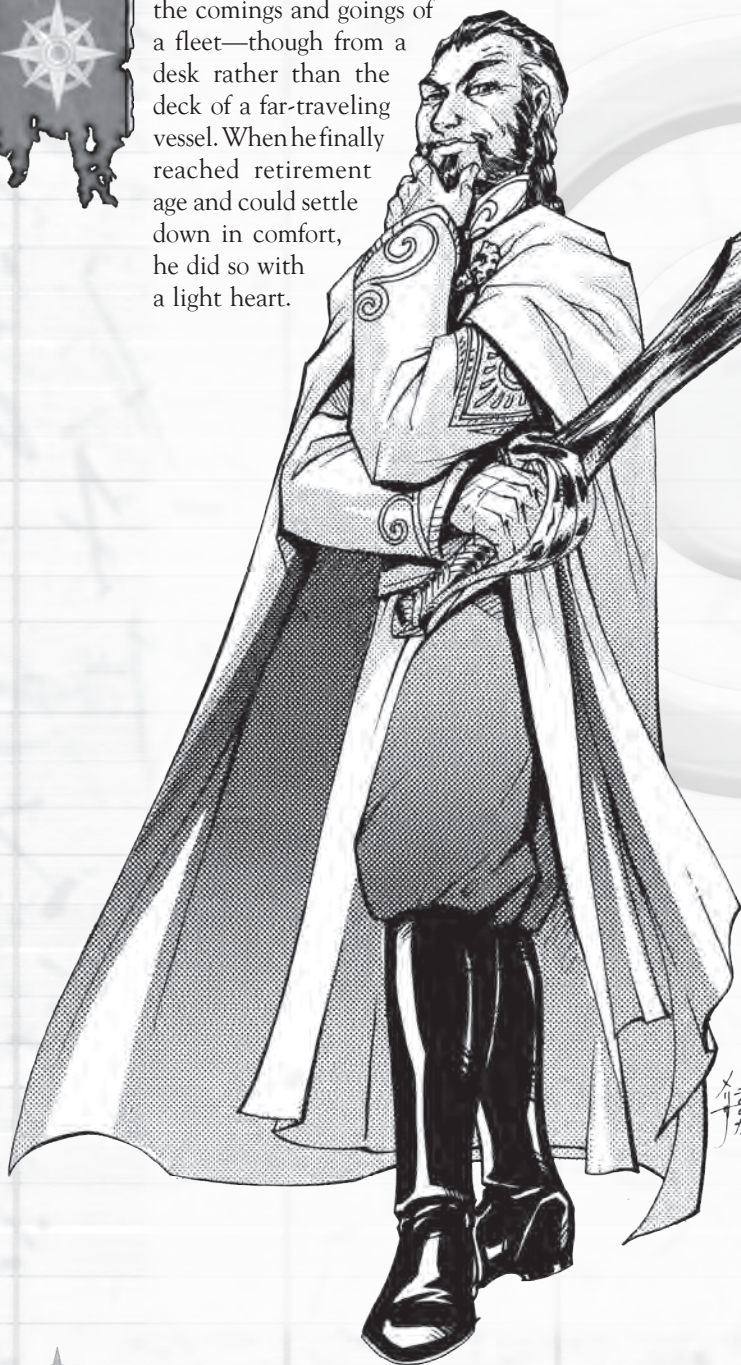
In the twilight of a long life, the man named Admiral Sand had much for which to be thankful. As a youth, he had made good money aboard a merchant dunerunner traversing the sandy trade routes of the Sun's Sea. As an adult, he had become a respected captain of his own trusty dunerunner, claiming his own trade routes and forging strong relationships in the desert communities they connected. By early middle age, he had made himself an admiral, organizing the comings and goings of a fleet—though from a desk rather than the deck of a far-traveling vessel. When he finally reached retirement age and could settle down in comfort, he did so with a light heart.

Never once had he mortgaged his honor, neither out of fear nor for the rush of easy jade. Of his many accomplishments, the one of which he was most proud was helping to engineer the gradual transformation of the loose community of like-minded traders at Oasis, the aptly named desert community where he lived, into a strong mercantile confederation of good-natured commercial pioneers.

Yet, when a man is blessed by a long, good life and faces no more challenges, he becomes complacent. That curse afflicted Sand, and he almost lost everything he'd worked so hard to build. While he concerned himself with the simple pleasures of a retired life of leisure, his young confederation began to wither. As its elders grew old and retired, their vain and greedy sons took over for them. Unlike Sand and their fathers, the younger dons looked out for only their own interests to the exclusion of all others. Unlike those before them, the young dons cheated and betrayed each other, cannibalizing their economy for personal gain rather than feeding it for the community's welfare.

Sand could not say now when he realized that things were out of control. He simply looked around one day and saw that his bright, peaceful Oasis was now shabby, its people petty, its fountains dribbling dirty water. And it wasn't just Oasis that was in decline. The news from outside showed that the rest of the South was headed the same way. Perhaps all of Creation was slowly coming undone. It had to be stopped, Sand realized, and in a moment of clarity, he saw how that could be accomplished. Starting at Oasis, he could set the world on a path to righteousness. First, he would have to confront those who had let his home come to its current deplorable state. He burst in on a raucous meeting of the young dons, demanding that they answer for their sins and sloth. They wanted to dismiss him as a raving old man past his prime, but his fury was undeniable. So too was the white-gold ring-and-circle mark upon his forehead and the gleaming saber of sunlight that had appeared in his hand. Minutes later, more than two-thirds of the dons lay dead. The rest were too terrified to flee. With his newfound power, he bound them in oaths of obligation, taking control of the confederation he had helped to found. In no time at all, he had cleaned up and restored Oasis and reinvigorated its commercial pioneers once more.

It was a good first step, like irrigating a wound to keep out infection, but now comes the hard part. It means establishing trade supremacy over the Guild. It means building a network of trade routes and lines of communication throughout the South before the Realm's legions and the Wyld Hunt get any ideas about interfering. It means growing that network out into the rest of the world and eventually onto the Blessed Isle. That last will mean connecting the power of the scattered Solar and Lunar Exalted (no small task in itself) and somehow proving to the Dragon-Blooded of the Scarlet Empire that their ways of ruthless self-gratification are more



harmful than beneficial to Creation in the long run. (That they don't already see this baffles and frustrates him.) He doesn't necessarily think the other Exalted need to band together to crush the Terrestrials' armies on the field of battle. What's more important is to convince the Dragon-Blooded to change their ways and work together with their betters for the greater good.

Admiral Sand can see clearly every step of his grand design from cleaning up Oasis to cleaning up the Blessed Isle, and he knows it will be the challenging, bloody work of many mortal lifetimes. All the same, he's eager to see it done. Never again will he allow himself to grow complacent.

Motivation: To connect and improve the lives of Creation's people through a network of upright and virtuous free trade

Caste: Eclipse

Anima Banner: Dust devils leap and gyrate around one another.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Heart of Flint

Abilities: Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 1, Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: Forest-tongue, Low Realm, Riverspeak) 3, Lore 1, Melee 4, Performance 2, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Ride, Sail 4, Socialize 2, Survival 1

Backgrounds: Followers 3, Influence 3, Resources 5

Charms:

Excellencies: Melee (1st)

Bureaucracy: Frugal Merchant Method

Melee: Call the Blade; Glorious Solar Saber; One Weapon, Two Blows; Peony Blossom Attack

Resistance: Hauberk-Lightening Gesture, Whirlwind Armor-Donning Prana

Sail: Salty Dog Method, Invincible Admiral Method

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Chiaroscuro Glass Slashing Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags P

Glorious Solar Saber: Speed 3, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L, Parry DV 4, Rate unlimited

Soak: 9L/9B (Chiaroscuran glass reinforced breastplate, +7L/6B, -1 mobility penalty)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 14 **Peripheral Essence:** 35

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Admiral Sand's Glorious Solar Saber Charm grants him a slashing sword of golden sunlight with Speed 3, Accuracy +1, Damage +2L, Defense +1 and Rate 3. He personally captains the dunerunner *Desert Eagle*, though he owns an entire fleet of the sand ships. His Followers rating refers to the merchant citizens and surviving dons of Oasis, as well as the crews of his dunerunner fleet. The Influence of his mercantile interests is felt throughout the South.

Exalted

MIRROR FLAG

THE THESPIAN PROVOCATEUR

Quote: *Ignore no longer righteous fury's call. The time has come for petty kings to fall.*

Once upon a time, a rich Guild factor in the city of Port Calin had a lovely young daughter who was his pride and joy. She had a quick mind, a nimble body, a good heart and a pretty face. The factor wanted nothing more than for his lovely girl to take up the family business and become a rich Guild factor herself. But the girl loved art and beauty more than money, and she fled Port Calin for Nexus, the City of 10,000 Sins. Free of her father's unrealistic expectations, she lived there happily ever after.

Once upon a time, there lived a beautiful and talented actress in Nexus, the poisoned heart of the Scavenger Lands. She deigned to fall in love with a poet and be his muse, but he took ill and began to waste away before her eyes. Her inspiration, the actress knew, was driving her beloved into an early grave. The poet had not yet composed the masterpiece that was worthy of being the last thing he would ever write, so the actress abandoned him. (As much as she loved him, the actress loved his talent more.) The poet's tears fell on his sickbed, and his withered hand clutched at the air where she had been. The poet never died, and the actress lived happily ever after.

Once upon a time, there lived a woman who toured the Scavenger Lands in a traveling carnival with those who considered themselves her peers. Addicted to bright morning and to the adulation of an amazed crowd, the performer desired to spin for the gods of Great Forks a glorious tale that would win her their adoring patronage. In that tale, she

was partnered with a dishonest carnival barker who used his legitimate travels to conceal criminal activities. The heroic champions of Great Forks uncovered this illicit activity in the tale's second act—as heroic champions inevitably do—and confronted the criminal partners. While speaking in her defense, the performer was dramatically, perhaps conveniently, graced by the Unconquered Sun and spoke so eloquently that the Spinner of Glorious Tales himself came to listen. The duplicitous barker was executed for his crimes, but the unknowing performer saw to it that the rest of the carnival's crew was spared. Talespinner took her in to educate her, and she lived happily ever after.

Upon this Time of Tumult, there exists a Solar Exalt of the Eclipse Caste who tours the countryside independently but not alone. She has inherited enviable sums of money and vast holdings from her deceased Guild factor father. She owns the traveling carnival show with which she had lived and trained for so many years before her Exaltation. Upon her face, she wears a magical mask made for her by Shalrina, Daimyo of Faces. Hidden in the wings behind her is the well-meaning Cult of the Illuminated, which took her in and educated her after her Exaltation. In the shadows that the Cult casts are the subtle Chosen of the Maidens who consider the reemerging Solar Exalted to be Creation's best hope for salvation. With so many advantages, this Eclipse Caste walks to and fro on the Threshold, and up and down in it, urging the Children of Earth toward revolution. Tyranny is her enemy; freedom is her inspiration. Her name (today) is Mirror Flag. Because of her, the people of Creation will live happily ever after...

...if any of these stories are true.

Motivation: To direct the grand drama of Creation's unfolding history to her liking

Caste: Eclipse
Anima Banner:

A gold-framed mirror rotates, reflecting an endless series of dissimilar faces.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Heart of Tears



Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, *Bureaucracy* 2, Dodge 2, Larceny 5, *Linguistics* (Native: *Riverspeak*; Others: *Forest-Tongue*, *High Realm*, *Low Realm*) 3, Lore 1, *Occult* 2, *Performance* 4, *Presence* 3, *Socialize* 3, Thrown 1, War 2 (*Planning* +2)

Backgrounds: Artifact 1, Backing 3, Followers 2, Resources 3

Charms:

Excellencies: *Bureaucracy* (1st), Larceny (1st), *Performance* (1st), War (1st)

Larceny: Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise, Perfect Mirror

Performance: Respect Commanding Attitude

Socialize: Mastery of Small Manners, Wise-Eyed Courtier Method

War: Rout-Stemming Gesture

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Baton: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 8L, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags T

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 4L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3, Tags T

Thrown Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 4L, Rate 3, Range 15

Thrown Baton: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 5B, Rate 2, Range 10

Soak: 6L/10B (Uniform, +5L/8B, -1 mobility penalty, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3

Willpower: 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15

Peripheral Essence: 35 (36)

Committed Essence: 1

Other Notes: Mirror Flag's Artifact rating refers to a reflective orichalcum player's mask crafted for her by Shalrina, Daimyo of Faces. The user must commit one mote to activate the mask. When attuned, it can switch at the wearer's will between a comedy mask, a tragedy mask, an expressionless face and a featureless blank (through which an attuned wearer can still see quite clearly). Wearing it and activating it adds an internal +2 bonus to Mirror Flag's *Performance*-based acting rolls. Observers also suffer a -2 external penalty to rolls to determine the wearer's true identity or motives.

Her Backing rating refers to the assistance the Cult of the Illuminated provides, and her Followers rating refers to the members of her troupe. The iconic uniform she wears incorporates subtle pads, plates and other reinforcements in the clothing, cape and cowl. The uniform provides the same protection as an exceptional reinforced buff jacket.

SWAN

THE DASHING DIPLOMAT

Quote: *We can rise above the legacy of the First Age. We must.*

His father was a career naval officer in the Coral Archipelago, but the sailor's life was not for Swan. Instead, he chose to join the diplomatic corps. It offered all the glory and civil service with none of the bloodshed. While his elder brothers became sailors and marines, and his sister cemented a political alliance through marriage, Swan learned history, culture, geography, politics, outdoor survival and martial arts. When his adult life dawned, he left home as a junior diplomat to work his nation's will in the world at large. He traveled, he bargained, he maneuvered, he mingled. He was every bit the Coral Archipelago's romantic ideal of the heroic traveling diplomat.

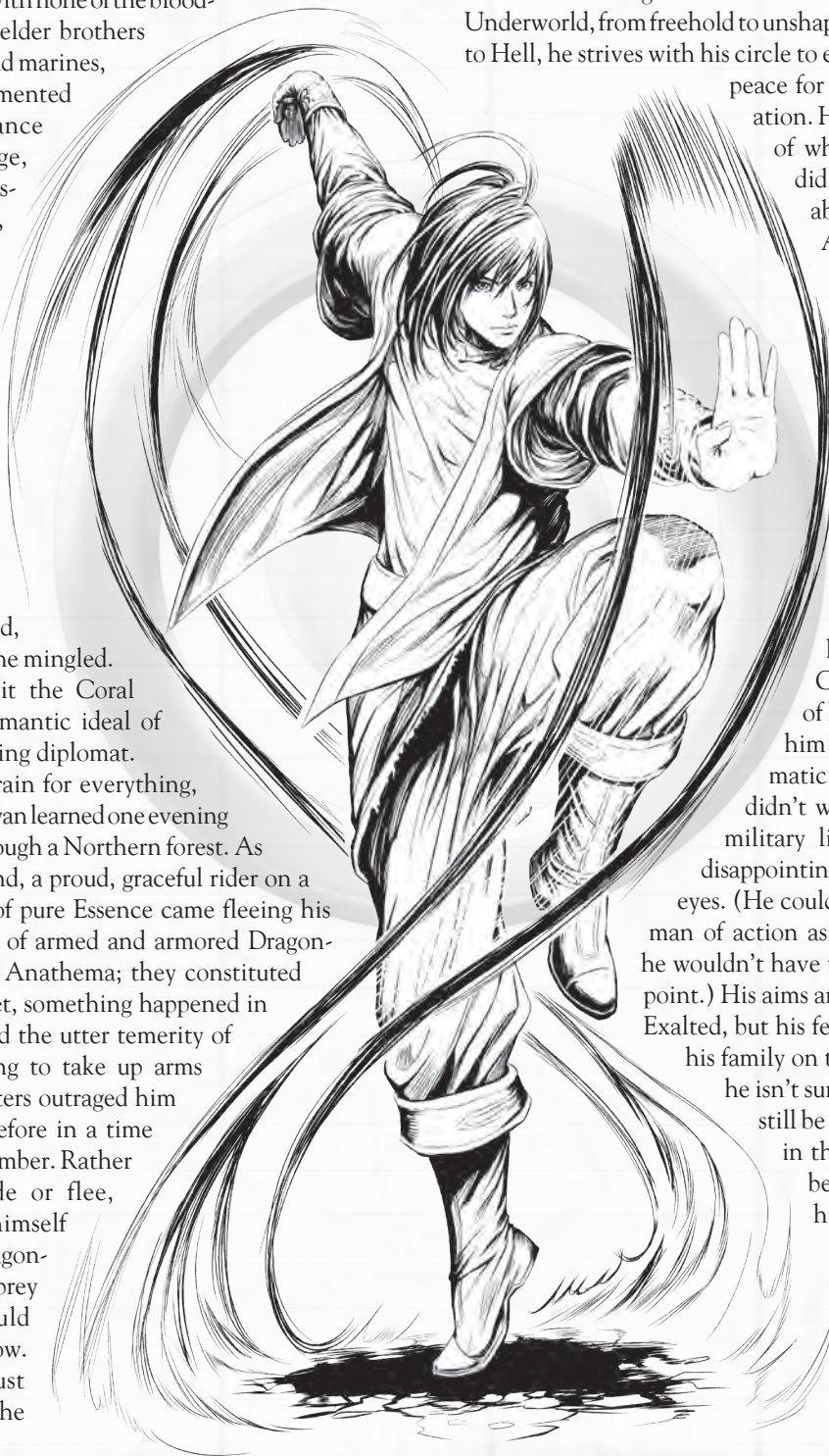
One can't train for everything, though, which Swan learned one evening by a roadside through a Northern forest. As he rounded a bend, a proud, graceful rider on a glittering horse of pure Essence came fleeing his way from a pack of armed and armored Dragon-Bloods. She was Anathema; they constituted a Wyld Hunt. Yet, something happened in Swan's mind, and the utter temerity of Terrestrials daring to take up arms against their betters outraged him as it had once before in a time he couldn't remember. Rather than stand aside or flee, he interposed himself between the Dragon-Bloods and their prey before they could land a killing blow. His courage must have impressed the

Unconquered Sun, for that great god's power suddenly flooded into him and gave him the ability to make his stand matter. He and the once-fleeing Solar—whose name was Arianna—turned the tables on the Wyld Hunt and killed them side by side.

Much has happened since then, and Swan's worldview has expanded with each new day. His bravery and diplomatic training serve him well in his new role as one of the Quills of Heaven. Traveling from nation to nation, from shadowland to Underworld, from freehold to unshaped raksha, from Heaven to Hell, he strives with his circle to ease conflicts and spread

peace for the betterment of Creation. He has some inkling now of why the Dragon-Blooded did what they did to bring about the end of the First Age, and he's glad of that knowledge. Perhaps he can use it to keep the same thing from happening all over again. Perhaps, if he and others like him work hard enough, the Third Age can outshine the previous two and last forever.

Swan has an intense desire to make his family back in the Coral Archipelago proud of him. That feeling drove him to join the Coral diplomatic corps originally, as he didn't want his distaste for the military lifestyle to seem like a disappointing weakness in his father's eyes. (He could still be a well-traveled man of action as a junior diplomat, but he wouldn't have to kill people to make a point.) His aims are grander now that he's Exalted, but his feelings still hark back to his family on the rare occasions when he isn't sure what to do. Would he still be able to look his brothers in the eye? Would his sister be inclined to brag about him to her friends? Would his father sadly shake his head and walk away? Would his mother cry? A large part of the reason he works so hard to use his new power for the



good of Creation is that he wants his family to be able to look upon his Exaltation as an enviable honor rather than a mark of shame.

His circlemate Arianna fascinates him. He feels both devoted to and responsible for her. If she had never come along or hadn't needed his help when she did, Swan believes, he might never have Exalted. She's the most intelligent, passionate, striking woman he's ever met, and her fate seems to be inextricably bound with his (judging by how often destiny throws them together). This is not to say that he necessarily likes her or the things she does, though. Arianna is awfully intense and usually more condescending than considerate. She treats him like he's an annoying little brother sometimes, although he's a year older and much more widely traveled than her. He might love her, but if he does, he isn't sure. He's never felt the same way about anyone else.

Making matters even more complicated is the First Age Lunar huntress Lilith. She swooped down to him in the form of a snowy white owl one night as he camped by the roadside and informed him that she and he had been married some 3,000 years ago. She was referring, of course, to the Solar whose Exaltation Swan had come to possess, but it made an impression nonetheless. The moment he saw her face, he remembered her as a nervous teenager and himself as an anxious young man with a terrible war looming over them both. He remembered holding her, rescuing her, fighting beside her and bidding her fly to him before his heart broke with longing. It felt like he, personally, had loved her once and that he could again. Only now, she terrifies him. She seems to want something from him but won't tell him what that is. She's even hinted that Swan's life hangs in the balance, though he can't imagine why that should be. It most likely has to do with whomever she was *actually* married to in the First Age, but that will prove cold comfort to Swan if she tears his head off in the present.

And, as if all that weren't enough, Arianna doesn't like her.

Motivation: To bind Creation into a peaceful, cohesive whole through treaties, alliances and pacts

Caste: Eclipse

Anima Banner: A filmy white swan spreads its wings against the sun.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Heart of Flint

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 3 (*Making Deals* +2), Dodge 3 (*Thrown Attacks* +2), Integrity 1, Investigation 2, Linguistics (*Native: Seatongue; Others: High Realm, Low Realm, Riverspeak*) 3, Lore 1, Martial Arts 4 (*Multiple Opponents* +2), Performance 2, Presence 2, Resistance 1, Ride 1, Sail 2, Socialize 3, Survival 1, Thrown 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Influence 2, Resources 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Bureaucracy (2nd)

Athletics: Graceful Crane Stance

Bureaucracy: Speed the Wheels

Linguistics: Sagacious Reading of Intent

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique

Socialize: Mastery of Small Manners, Wise-Eyed Courtier Method

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Snake Style: Serpentine Evasion, Snake Form, Striking Cobra Technique

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 3B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soak: 5L/4B (Chain shirt, +3L/1B, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 (6 versus Thrown attacks) **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 12

Peripheral Essence: 30

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Swan's history as a diplomat of Coral have left him with Contacts and Influence throughout the nations of the West.

THEY WERE ALL
CRIMINALS, I PROMISE.
THEY COULDN'T BE
REFORMED.

CRACK!!!

THEY GAVE US
NO CH-YIKES!

YOU SOLD THEM TO
THE GUILD TO ENRICH
YOUR KINGDOM!

THEY WERE YOUR
OWN PEOPLE!

YOUR OWN
PEOPLE!

WAIT! I WAS
JUSTIFIED!

I WAS JUS-

SMASH!

THERE IS NO
JUSTIFICATION.



CHAPTER TWO

THE LUNAR EXALTED

The Chosen of Luna were once mates to the Solar Lawgivers and trusted Stewards of the Old Realm. After the Usurpation, the Lunar Exalted retreated to Creation's edge, biding their time and devising the means to one day replace the hated Scarlet Empire. Now, the chaos of the Time of Tumult offers the opportunity for which the Lunar Silver Pact has long waited, if the return of Lawgivers (and the debut of their twisted counterparts) doesn't doom the endeavor.

What follow are a number of famous and infamous Lunar Exalts of differing levels of experience to use as allies or antagonists in **Exalted** series.

KAJEHA LEF

BRIDE OF LUNA

Quote: *The Changing Lady tells me you must go to the Lapis Court. I shall guide you; we leave at once.*

Twenty years ago, Kajeha Lef was a Bride of Ahlat—one of the maiden warriors sworn to the Southern God of War and Cattle in the nation of Harborhead. She served Ahlat with utmost fervor, slaying enemies in his name and capturing cattle for his sacrifices. Despite her deeds, the god never came to consummate their marriage. Kajeha Lef endured... and Luna noticed.

Who can say why the Changing Lady chose Kajeha Lef? But Luna did, and she made the war god an offer he dared not refuse. Luna claimed Kajeha Lef for herself. The Bride of Ahlat became the Bride of Luna. Their marriage was consummated. Some Lunars say it has borne offspring, though of what nature they hardly dare to speculate.

The Silver Pact honors the Bride of Luna, but she neither attends its councils nor participates in its politics. Kajeha Lef serves Luna directly, as her enforcer and assassin within Creation. Anyone who destroys temples to the Changing Lady or persecutes her worshipers becomes the prey of Kajeha Lef. The Changing Lady also sends Lef on missions into the Wyld to slay Fair Folk and other enemies of Creation. Death is Kajeha Lef's love offering, and she gives it again and again. Of late, Luna has directed Kajeha Lef to assist young Solars and other Exalted who need guides through the Wyld, and so gain their trust and obligations to repay the favor.

Unlike many Lunars, Kajeha Lef has not chosen to develop a war form: She prefers to fight in human form, using the spear-oriented combat skills she developed as a Bride of Ahlat. She uses animal forms ranging from a jerboa to an elephant, however, to approach her targets.

In her human form, Kajeha Lef is a woman of medium height with a wiry build, dark brown skin and hair turned tawny with brown streaks (from the spots). She wears a white kilt, breastband and cloak, with moonsilver hearthstone bracers.

Motivation: Kill the enemies of Luna

Caste: Full Moon

Anima Banner: A huge leopard of gray-spotted silver fire

Spirit Shape: Leopard

Tell: Leopard spots in her hair or fur

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

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

Virtue Flaw: The Curse of the Lone Wolf

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 1, Dodge 4, Integrity 2, Investigation 1, Larceny 1, Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: Old Realm) 1, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 1 (First Aid +2), Melee 4 (Spears +2), Presence 2 (Terrify +2), Resistance 3, Ride 2, Stealth 2, Survival 4 (Wyld +2), Thrown 3, War 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Heart's Blood 3, Manse 3, Manse 1, Mentor 5, Reputation 4

Knacks: Humble Mouse Shape, Prey's Skin Disguise, Towering Beast Form

Charms:

Excellencies: Dexterity (1st, Instinctive Dexterity Unity), Perception (2nd, Instinctive Perception Unity), Stamina (1st), Strength (1st)

Dexterity: Golden Tiger Stance, Graceful Crane

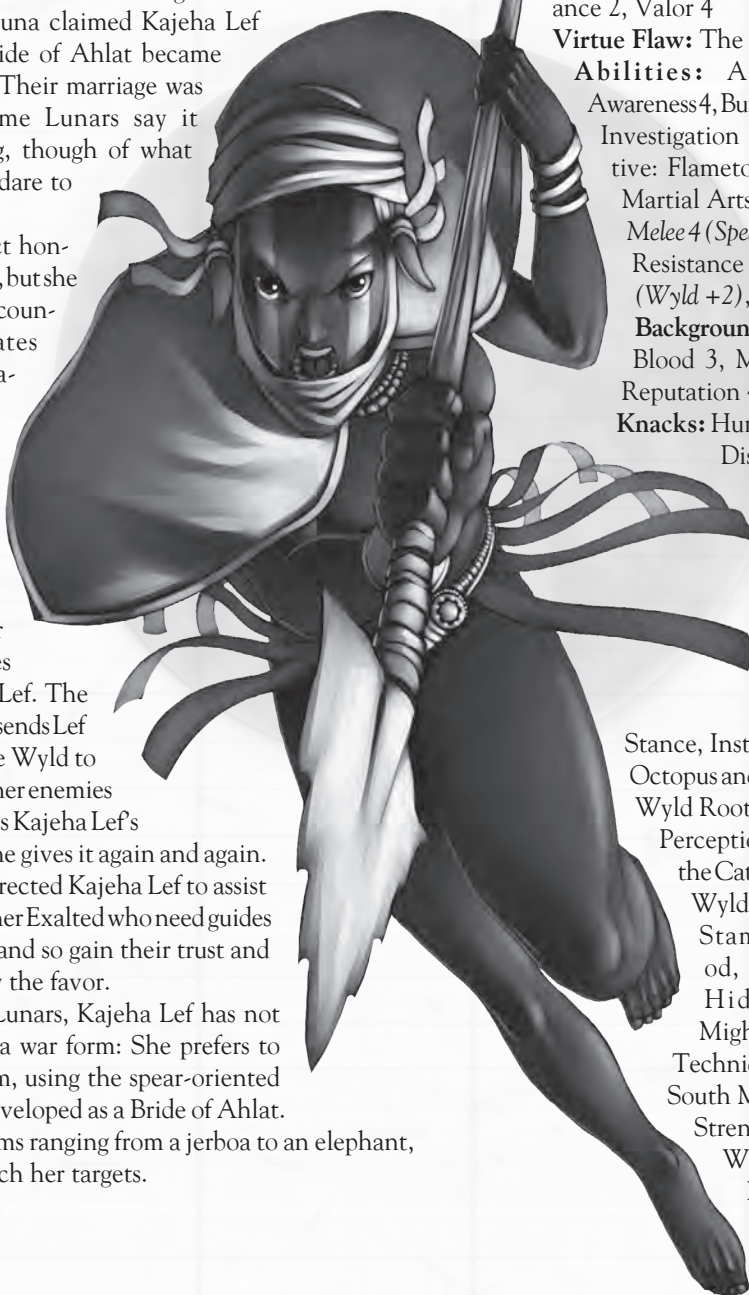
Stance, Instinct-Driven Beast Movement, Octopus and Spider Barrage, Spreading the Wyld Roots, Wasp Sting Blur

Perception: Blood on the Wind, Eye of the Cat, Resisting the Lure of Madness, Wyld-Sensing Instincts

Stamina: Bruise-Relief Method, Halting the Scarlet Flow, Hide-Toughening Essence, Might-Bolstering Blow, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Relentless Lunar Fury, South Mastery Technique

Strength: Burrowing Devil Strike

Wits: Lodestone Reckoning Method





Join Battle: 8

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 7B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Moonsilver Dire Lance (Luna's Kiss): Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 12L/12L, Parry DV 8, Rate 2, Tags 2, L, R

Composite Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L*, Range 250, Rate 3, Tags 2, B

* Uses broadhead arrows.

Soak: 4L/4B (Moonsilver hearthstone bracers, +2L/0B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/
Incap

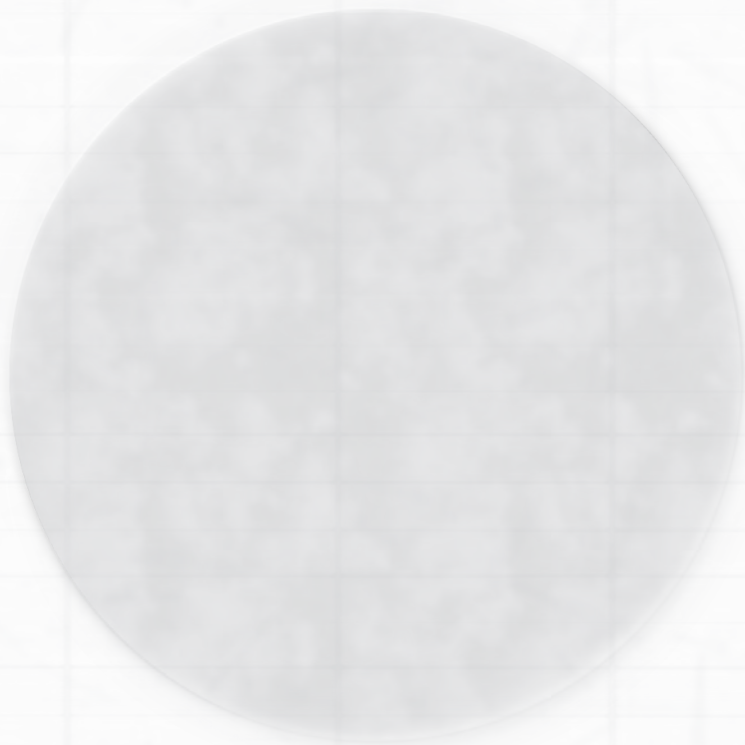
Dodge DV: 8 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 20 **Peripheral Essence:** 39 (48)

Committed Essence: 9

Other Notes: Kajeha Lef's Artifact ratings refer to a moon-silver dire lance and a pair of moonsilver hearthstone bracers, gifts from Luna herself. The bracers carry a jewel of the hungry fire (see **Exalted**, p. 383), while her dire lance, Luna's Kiss, carries an orb of the unnoticed predator (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 103). These hearthstones belong to a pair of Manses located deep in the sahel of southern Harborhead. Her Reputation stems from her intimate relationship with Luna herself, who among other things, acts as her Mentor.



STRENGTH-OF-MANY

SCOURGE OF SLAVERS

Quote: *I'll kill you quickly. You won't suffer the way your victims have suffered. It's better than you deserve, but I feel merciful today.*

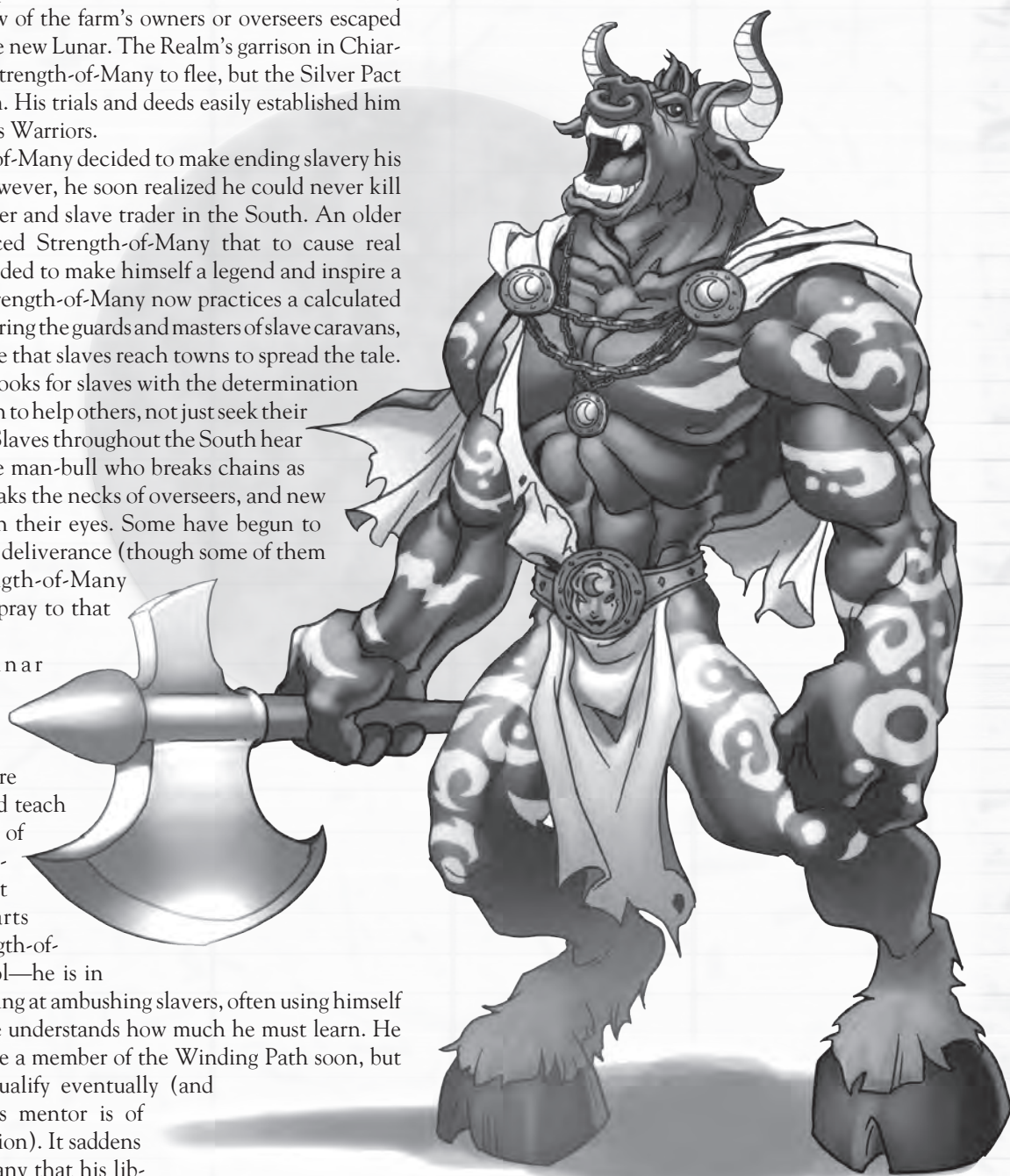
The immense grain farms around Chiaroscuro need many slaves to work them. The boy who became Strength-of-Many grew up as one such slave. The overseers came to fear his strength and spirit. After the young slave broke the neck of an overseer who tried to rape a slave girl, his owners decided to whip him to death... and with the 28th stroke, he Exalted. Few of the farm's owners or overseers escaped the wrath of the new Lunar. The Realm's garrison in Chiaroscuro forced Strength-of-Many to flee, but the Silver Pact soon found him. His trials and deeds easily established him as one of Luna's Warriors.

Strength-of-Many decided to make ending slavery his life's work. However, he soon realized he could never kill every slave taker and slave trader in the South. An older Lunar convinced Strength-of-Many that to cause real change, he needed to make himself a legend and inspire a movement. Strength-of-Many now practices a calculated terror—massacring the guards and masters of slave caravans, but making sure that slaves reach towns to spread the tale. Moreover, he looks for slaves with the determination and compassion to help others, not just seek their own freedom. Slaves throughout the South hear the story of the man-bull who breaks chains as easily as he breaks the necks of overseers, and new hope flickers in their eyes. Some have begun to pray to him for deliverance (though some of them mistake Strength-of-Many for Ahlat and pray to that god instead).

The Lunar revolutionary knows this is only a start. He must build a cadre of followers and teach them the arts of war. First, however, he must know these arts himself. Strength-of-Many is no fool—he is in fact quite cunning at ambushing slavers, often using himself as bait—but he understands how much he must learn. He will not become a member of the Winding Path soon, but he hopes to qualify eventually (and he suspects his mentor is of that Lunar faction). It saddens Strength-of-Many that his lib-

erations often result in the deaths of slaves when they flee blindly into the wilderness or loot and burn their owners' houses without thought for the reprisals that must come, but at least they die without their chains. Strength-of-Many often hides his compassion and sorrow behind gruff words, but he cares deeply about the people he rescues.

In his human form, Strength-of-Many is an amazingly tall and muscular man with weathered brown skin and an untidy mop of red-brown hair. His spirit form is a longhorn bull of similar coloring. In his war form, the Lunar becomes a man-bull standing a full 10 feet tall, counting his horns.





He generally wears a kilt and cloak with a loose cowl or a pelt wrapped around his shoulders.

Strength-of-Many wields a moonsilver grimcleaver. In his war form's hand, the massive weapon looks almost dainty. When he cannot carry the grimcleaver (for instance, if he poses as a wandering simpleton to lure slave takers or infiltrates the slaves at a plantation), he crushes his foes with hooves, horns, fists and raw strength.

Motivation: End slavery. While he's at it, end slavers.

Caste: Full Moon

Anima Banner: A ghost-pale bull with fiery eyes.

Spirit Shape: Bull

Tell: Cattle hooves for feet

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Curse of the Mother Hen

Abilities: *Athletics* 3, *Awareness* 3, *Dodge* 2, *Investigation* 1, *Lore* 1, *Martial Arts* 3, *Melee* 2, *Presence* 2, *Resistance* 3, *Stealth* 2, *Survival* 3, *Thrown* 2

Backgrounds: *Artifact* 2, *Cult* 1, *Heart's Blood* 2, *Mentor* 2, *Reputation* 3

Knacks: Deadly Beastman Transformation, Life of the Hummingbird

Charms:

Excellencies—*Stamina* (1st), *Strength* (1st)

Stamina—Bruise-Relief Method, Ox-Body Technique, Relentless Lunar Fury

Strength—Impressions of Strength (Rocks-to-Pebbles Attitude), Roused Bear Throw

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 8B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

MoonsilverGrimcleaver(CrescentRazor):Speed5,Accuracy9, Damage 17L/4, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags O

War Form:

Gore: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 11L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 11L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Moonsilver Grimcleaver (Crescent Razor): Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 18L/4, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Soak: 2L/4B; 5L/7B in war form

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 14 **Peripheral Essence:** 27 (32)

Committed Essence: 5

Other Notes: In his war form, Strength-of-Many gains +1 to his Strength, Dexterity and Stamina, as well as the positive aspects of the following mutations: Great Hooves, Horns, Thick Skin.

Strength-of-Many's Artifact rating represents Crescent Razor, his terrible moonsilver grimcleaver. His Reputation is among the South's slave population, many of whom are aware of his legend. Some of those slaves even pray to him for rescue, leading to his dot in Cult. His Mentor is Ka-Koshu, a Lunar elder of high renown.



LILITH

CONFLICTED HUNTRESS

Quote: *Such bright and beautiful Sun-Children. Should I kill you, before you grow up and become monsters?*

In the First Age, Lilith was already one of the most powerful Lunars. The so-called "Huntress Queen" slew all who angered her or her husband, the Solar Exalt Desus, and she was as famous for her wifely devotion to him as for her lethal prowess. If she sometimes showed injuries that never came from battle, other lords of Creation smirked and joked that the famous couple liked to play rough.

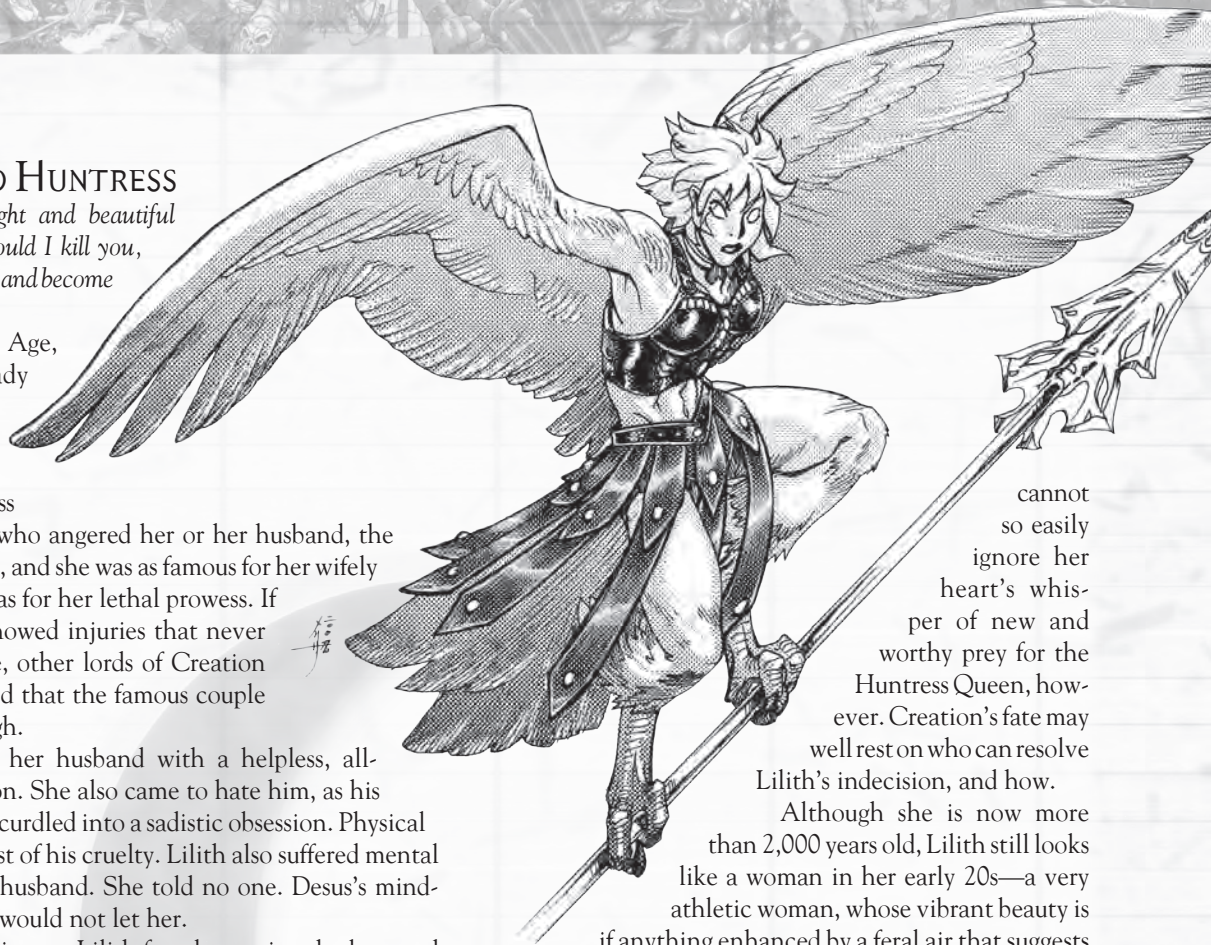
Lilith loved her husband with a helpless, all-consuming passion. She also came to hate him, as his early love for her curdled into a sadistic obsession. Physical abuse was the least of his cruelty. Lilith also suffered mental torture from her husband. She told no one. Desus's mind-twisting Charms would not let her.

The Usurpation set Lilith free, but seeing the love and hate of her life murdered broke the Lunar's mind. Until recently, she spent most of her time in animal form, doing her best to forget herself. It took the best hunters in the Silver Pact to find her for her tattooing.

The return of the Solars calls Lilith back to self-awareness for the first time in centuries and gives her a purpose. Desus lives again—or at least his Exaltation does—and so do the great, heroic paragons of virtue who let her suffer for centuries.

Lilith is no friend to the Solar Exalted, to put it mildly. She has not yet decided what to do to them but vows two things: They will know her pain. And, she will not accept a return to old ways and old stations. If any Solars think they can call the Lunars to heel as they once did, Lilith will rip their hearts out and eat them. While Lilith once had a place in the Lunar faction called the Seneschals of the Sun Kings (because Desus wished it), she now loathes the organization. They too had best treat Lilith with care, for few of them could survive her wrath. At least the Silver Pact now knows the true story of her marriage and has Lilith's warning not to trust the new Solar Exalted too much.

For all her bitterness, Lilith remains a Steward. She cannot avoid noticing the threats to Creation: Deathlords, Fair Folk, demons and more. She tries to tell herself that Creation is no longer her concern. The old *Lawgivers* (a title that makes her spit) pushed the Stewards aside to claim sole mastery of Creation: Let their heirs, then, sort out its problems! Lilith



cannot so easily ignore her heart's whisper of new and worthy prey for the Huntress Queen, however. Creation's fate may well rest on who can resolve Lilith's indecision, and how.

Although she is now more than 2,000 years old, Lilith still looks like a woman in her early 20s—a very athletic woman, whose vibrant beauty is if anything enhanced by a feral air that suggests she could kill you in a heartbeat. In her true form,

she has dark hair streaked with white and gray owl feathers. She wears a moonsilver breastplate, bracers and greaves.

Motivation: Resolve... issues... regarding the Solar Exalted

Caste: Changing Moon

Spirit Shape: A white spotted owl

Anima Banner: A wing-like cloak of white feathers. Or maybe they are blades.

Tell: Feathers in her hair.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 8, Stamina 8; Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5; Perception 6, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

Virtues: Compassion 3, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 5

Virtue Flaw: Curse of the Raging Bull

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 6, Awareness 6, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Water) 3, Dodge 6, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Larceny 5, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Forest-Tongue, Old Realm, Seatongue, Skytongue) 4, Lore 4 (Natural History +2), Martial Arts 7, Medicine 3, Melee 4 (Spears +2), Occult 3, Performance 4, Presence 4, Resistance 6, Ride 2, Sail 1, Socialize 4, Stealth 6, Survival 6, Thrown 2, War 1 (Ambush +3)

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Artifact 1, Heart's Blood 4, Manse 2, Solar Bond 5

Knacks: Changing Plumage Mastery, Constant Quicksilver Rearrangement, Deadly Beastman Transformation, Emerald Grasshopper Form, Flickering Star Infusion, Hearth-and-



Flame Shell, Humble Mouse Shape, Hybrid Body Rearrangement, Illimitable Beast Declaration, Intimate Training Recollection, Laurels-and-Ivy Technique, Life of the Hummingbird, Lightning-Change Style, Prey's Skin Disguise, Quicksilver Second Face, Subtle Silver Declaration, Twin-Faced Hero

Charms:

Excellencies: Appearance (1st), Charisma (1st), Dexterity (1st, Impossible Dexterity Improvement, Instinctive Dexterity Unity), Manipulation (1st, Flawless Manipulation Focus, Impossible Manipulation Improvement, Instinctive Manipulation Unity), Perception (1st), Stamina (2nd), Strength (1st, Flawless Strength Focus), Wits (1st)

Appearance: Clover Can't Be Found, Irresistible Silver Spirit, Observed Predator Instinct, One of the Herd, Perfect Symmetry

Charisma: Boundary-Marking Meditation, Cobra Hypnotic Method, Dog-Tongue Method

Dexterity: Coiled Serpent Strike, Diligent Hive Imitation, Flawless Dexterity Focus, Flight of the Sparrow, Flowing Body Ascension, Flowing Body Evasion, Furious Hound Pursuit, Golden Tiger Stance, Graceful Crane Stance, Greedy Mosquito Bite, Ground-Denying Defense, Instinct-Driven Beast Movement, Light-Footed Mountain Goat Stance, Lightning Stroke Attack, Octopus and Spider Barrage, Predator Distraction Method, Secure Cat Stepping, Snake Body Technique, Spreading the Wyld Roots, Twin-Fang Technique, Wary Swallow Method, Wasp Sting Blur, Wind-Dancing Method

Intelligence: Righteous Lion Defense, True-to-the-Pack Dedication

Manipulation: Butterfly Eyes Defense, Butterfly Eyes Fist, Butterfly Eyes Tread, Cat-Face Presentation, Commanded to Fly, Falling Leaf Distraction, False Burrow Pursuit, Labyrinth of the Beast, Lost Mirror Flight, Mask of White Jade, Mirror Sight Dismay, Perfection of the Mockingbird

Perception: Blood on the Wind, Eagle Eye Advantage, Eye of the Cat, Inevitable Spoor Discovery, Keen Hearing and Touch Technique, Keen Smell and Taste Technique, Sense-Borrowing Method, Wolf Eye Advantage, Wyld-Sensing Instincts

Stamina: Bear Sleep Technique, Bruise-Relief Method, Durable Battle Mind, East Mastery Technique, External Hide Perfection, Frenzied Bear Fortification, Halting the Scarlet Flow, Hide-Toughening Essence, Luna's Fortitude, Might-Bolstering Blow, Moonsilver Stomach Conversion, North Mastery Technique, Ox-Body Technique (x5), Relentless Lunar Fury, Silver Lunar Resolution, South Mastery Technique, Steadfast Yeddim Meditation, Wound-Mastering Body Evolution

Strength: Agitation of the Swarm Technique, Burrowing Devil Strike, Claws of the Silver Moon, Ferocious Biting Tooth, Flesh-Tearing Entanglement, Impressions of Strength (Ogre's Loving Caress, Undeniable Might), Inviting the Winter Wolf, Jaws of the River Dragon, Lightning Stroke

Attack, Prey-Hobbling Bite, Throat-Baring Hold, Unstoppable Lunar Wound

Wits: Furious Unhappy Recourse, Hungry Eagle Method, Many-Armed Monkey Style, Many-Pockets Meditation, Meerkat Alertness Practice, Predator and Prey Recognition, Secure Den Prana, The Spider's Trap Door, Thieving Magpie Prana

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Lunar Hero Style: All Charms

White Reaper Style: All Charms

Join Battle: 12

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 6B, Parry DV 9 Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 9B, Parry DV 7 Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 15, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Moonsilver Dire Lance (Luna's Fang): Speed 5, Accuracy 18, Damage 14L/12L, Parry DV 9, Rate 2, Tags 2, L, R

Moonsilver Short Powerbow (Luna's Bite): Speed 6, Accuracy 13, Damage 10L*, Range 350, Rate 2, Tags 2, B

War Form:

Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 17, Damage 9L, Parry DV 9, Rate 3, Tags N

Talon Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 12L, Parry DV 7, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 16, Damage 7B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Moonsilver Dire Lance (Luna's Fang): Speed 5, Accuracy 19, Damage 15L/12L, Parry DV 10, Rate 2, Tags 2, L, R

Moonsilver Short Powerbow (Luna's Bite): Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 11L*, Range 350, Rate 2, Tags 2, B

* Uses broadhead arrows.

Soak: 12L/12B; 13L/13B in war form (Moonsilver hearthstone bracers, +2L/0B; and moonsilver breastplate, +6L/4B, Hardness 2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 13 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 8

Personal Essence: 24 **Peripheral Essence:** 53 (68)

Committed Essence: 15

Other Notes: In her war form, Lilith gains +1 Strength, Dexterity and Stamina, and the positive effects of the following mutations: Feathers, Night Vision, Small, Talons, Wings. Also, using Hybrid Body Rearrangement, Lilith can activate any of the following mutations as a shapeshifting action that costs one mote: Chameleon, Gills, Enhanced Sight, Armored Hide.

Lilith's Artifact ratings represent her moonsilver breastplate, dire lance, powerbow and hearthstone bracers. Her one surviving Manse produces the opal of the hunted fixed in Luna's Fang.

MA-HA-SUCHI

SAVAGE WARLORD

Quote: *Did you imagine we would reason together like civilized human beings?*

In the High First Age, few Exalted could match the seductive elegance of Ma-Ha-Suchi. The Lunar sometimes slew enemies on the battlefield, but he preferred the subtler combat of the salon and bedchamber. Even the Fair Folk, whose beauty is the stuff of dreams, ground their teeth in envy of Ma-Ha-Suchi, the Wolf with the Red Roses.

When the Usurpation began, Ma-Ha-Suchi wasn't predisposed to living inconspicuously. He became the subject of numerous Wyld Hunts before giving up and hiding in the Wyld... for too long. By the time the Silver Pact devised its tattoos, the Lunar fashion plate had become a bestial freak. Ma-Ha-Suchi used all his fabled persuasive powers to convince the Silver Pact

to tattoo him instead of killing him so his Exaltation could find a new, unmutated host.

Had its leaders spent more time learning Ma-Ha-Suchi's character, they might well have put him down. The disfigured Lunar now hated art, beauty and civilization as fervently as he once loved them. When the raksha invaded, he fought them with the courage of despair, and when they retreated, Ma-Ha-Suchi saw a world remade in his own ruined image.

Then humanity started to rebuild, led by the Dragon-Blooded and their Empress. Some Lunars tried to shape their own societies in competition with the Realm. Ma-Ha-Suchi became one of the most powerful and eloquent Lunars to reject that program. He claimed civilization was a mistake from the beginning.

He reclaimed his ancient manse in the East and transformed it from an art museum and pleasure palace into a grim ruin adorned with the skulls of human victims. Tribes throughout the central East worship him out of fear as he drives them to greater savagery and hatred of their civilized neighbors. Ma-Ha-Suchi also breeds races of beastmen in his own image. These Half-Caste beastmen become leaders in Ma-Ha-Suchi's brutal horde.

Ma-Ha-Suchi wields vast power through his Charms and his raw physical prowess, but not as much as he could at his age, for he has not raised his Essence since the Usurpation. That would require a vigil of meditation upon Luna and his own spiritual development—and Ma-Ha-Suchi knows in his heart that he's fallen from his duty as a Steward. He tells other Lunars, and himself, he acts for the good of humanity and Creation by stripping away the pernicious lie that's civilization. Ma-Ha-Suchi cannot confront his own monstrous vanity, which demands that the entire world share his ruin.

In his true form, Ma-Ha-Suchi is a man-like figure, about eight feet tall, covered in shaggy white fur, with goat's legs and a lupine head bearing goat's horns. He speaks in a weirdly bell-toned, high-pitched voice.

Motivation: Destroy all beauty and civilization

Caste: Changing Moon

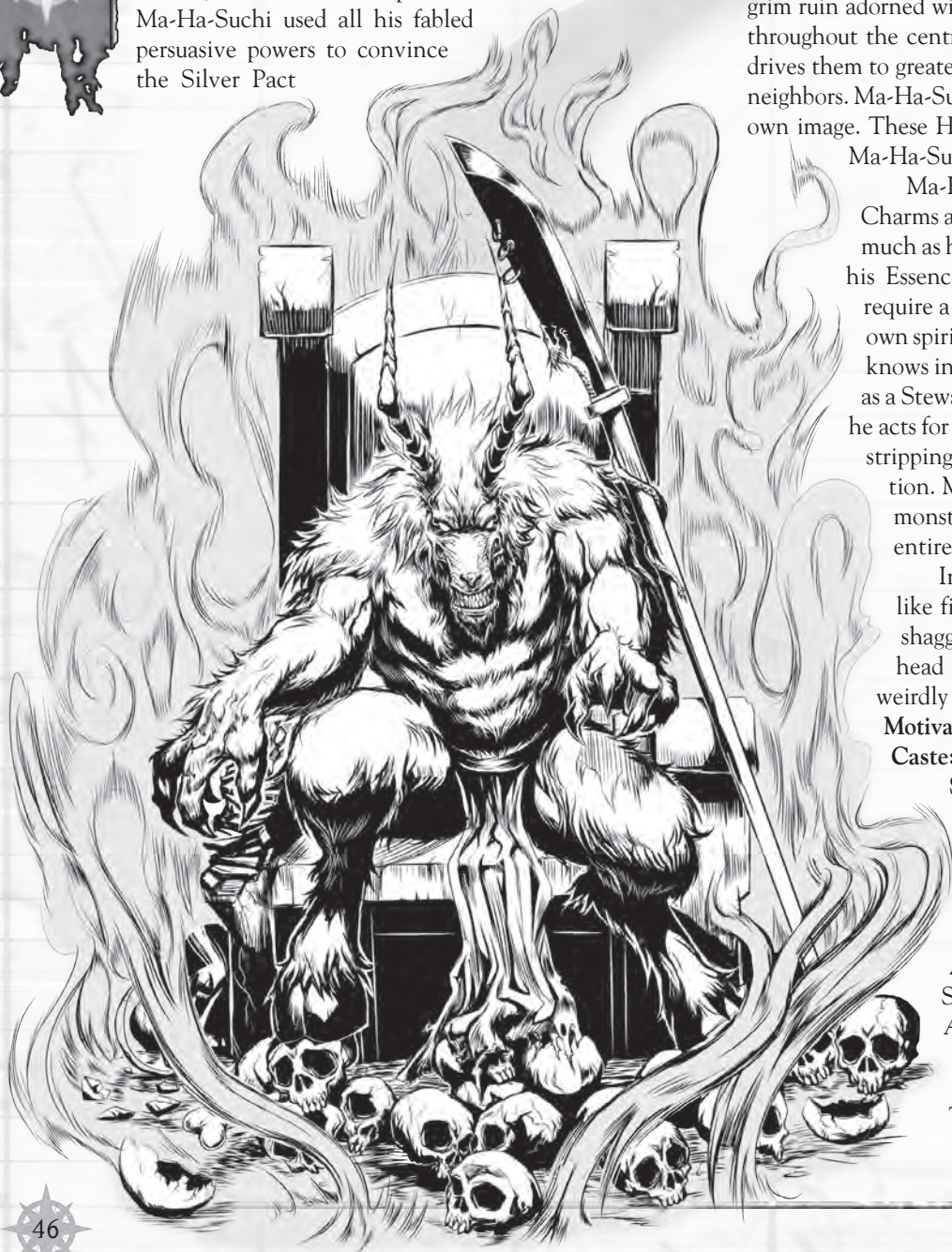
Spirit Shape: An oversized, white-furred wolf with hooves and small horns

Anima Banner: Jerking, swirling light and shadow behind a giant set of fangs.

Tell: Sharp canines and small horns

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6; Charisma 7, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5; Perception 6, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

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



Virtue Flaw: The Curse of the Raging Bull

Abilities: Archery 4 (Showing Off +2), Athletics 6, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Earth) 1 (Demolition +3), Dodge 6, Integrity 4, Investigation 4, Larceny 5, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Eastern Barbarian Tongues, Flametongue, Forest-Tongue, Old Realm, Riverspeak, Seatongue, Skytongue) 7, Lore 4, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 2, Melee 5, Occult 4, Performance 6, Presence 6, Resistance 4, Ride 3, Sail 3, Socialize 6, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Thrown 4, War 3 (Terrorism +2)

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Artifact 2, Artifact 1, Backing (Wardens of Gaia) 4, Cult 4, Followers 5, Heart's Blood 4, Manse 4, Reputation (Silver Pact) 5, Resources 3

Merits & Flaws: Greater Curse (4-pt. Flaw)

Knacks: Changing Plumage Mastery, Compassionate Mirror Nature, Courtesan's Possession, Deadly Beastman Transformation, Flickering Star Infusion, Honing the Stolen Form, Humble Mouse Shape, Insidious Lunar Transformation, Life of the Hummingbird, Lunar Blood Shaping Technique, Luna's Hidden Face, Perfected Hybrid Interaction, Prey's Skin Disguise, Quicksilver Second Face, Towering Beast Form, Twin-Faced Hero

Charms:

Excellencies: Appearance (2nd), Charisma (1st, Instinctive Charisma Unity), Dexterity (1st, 3rd, Instinctive Dexterity Unity), Intelligence (1st), Manipulation (1st, 3rd, Instinctive Manipulation Unity), Perception (1st), Strength (1st), Stamina (2nd, 3rd, Instinctive Stamina Unity), Wits (2nd)

Appearance: Glance-Oration Technique, Hide of the Cunning Hunter, Irresistible Silver Spirit, New Friend Aroma, Observed Predator Instinct, Perfect Symmetry, Stance-as-Thought Stride

Charisma: Boundary Marking Meditation, Charismatic Lunar Trick, Cobra Hypnotic Method, Dog-Tongue Method, Face of the Moon Concealment, Foe-Turning Rebuke, Forgetful Victim Prana, Hard-Nosed Denial Style, Herd Reinforcement Stance, Instinct Memory Insertion, Maintaining the Pack, Mind-Blanking Fear Technique, Outworld-Forsaking Stance, Perfect Fear Scent, Ranging Wolf Marking, Rapid-Speech Technique, Scathing Lunar Condemnation, Secret Speech Method, Subtle Silver Command, Terrifying Lust Infliction, Unnoticed Confusion Attack

Dexterity: Cat-Falling Attitude, Flight of the Sparrow, Furious Hound Pursuit, Golden Tiger Stance, Graceful Crane Stance, Instinct-Driven Beast Movement, Light-Footed Mountain Goat Stance, Pack and Flock Guidance, Secure Cat Stepping

Intelligence: Counting the Elephant's Wrinkles, Form-Fixing Method, Righteous Lion Defense, Shadowland Circle Necromancy

Manipulation: Butterfly Eyes Defense, Butterfly Eyes Tread, Cat-Face Presentation, Chattering Magpie Infliction, Commanded to Fly, Falling Leaf Distraction, False Burrow Gift, False Burrow Pursuit, Feeding the Bear Progression, Labyrinth of the Beast, Lost Mirror Flight, Mask of White Jade, Mirror Sight Dismay, School Becomes Shark Formation, School in the Reeds Technique, Third-Veil Suggestion

Perception: Blood-Kin Sense, Heightened Smell and Taste Method, Keen Hearing and Touch Technique, Keen Smell and Taste Method, Motive-Dissecting Eye, Wolf Ear Advantage, Wyld-Sensing Instincts

Stamina: Bruise-Relief Method, Durable Battle-Mind, East Mastery Technique, External Hide Perfection, Halting the Scarlet Flow, Hide-Toughening Essence, Might-Bolstering Blow, Moonsilver Stomach Conversion, Ox-Body Technique (x4), Purging the Tarnished Silver, Relentless Lunar Fury, Steadfast Yeddim Meditation

Strength: Claws of the Silver Moon, Foe-Marking Style, Form-Destroying Touch, Impressions of Strength (Rock-to-Pebbles Attitude), Lightning Flash Might Methodology, Shell-Crushing Atemi, Subduing the Honored Foe, Tearing Claw Atemi, Unstoppable Lunar Wound

Wits: Meerkat Alertness Practice, Serpent's Tooth Reply, Silver-Swift Retort

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Lunar Hero Style: All Charms

Spells:

Shadowlands Circle: Banish Ghost, Bone Puppet Dance, Dusk Eyes, Iron Countermagic, Raise the Skeletal Horde, Shade Prison Amulet, Summon Ghost, Trolling the Dark Waters, White Bone Emissary

Join Battle: 10

Attacks:

Bite: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 8L, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 7B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 9L, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Hoof Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 12B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 11, Damage 7B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Soak: 3L/6B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 10

Willpower: 8

Essence: 7

Personal Essence: 23

Peripheral Essence: 58 (64)

Committed Essence: 6

Other Notes: Ma-Ha-Suchi's default shape is now his war form, and his listed Attributes reflect that. He also has the following mutations: Cheetah's Pace, Disturbing Voice, Fangs, Fire Adaptation, Hooves, Horns, Inexhaustible, Night Vision, Large, Tail, Talons, Thick Skin.

Ma-Ha-Suchi retains none of his ancient panoply. Instead, he now wields a moonsilver dire lance. He also possesses a moonsilver belt that has the same effect as a hearthstone amulet.

The Nameless Lair of Ma-Ha-Suchi is a four-dot Lunar Manse. It produces a gem of the shining moon's glory. This hearthstone gives its bearer a three-die bonus on all Charisma-related rolls. Ma-Ha-Suchi wears it in his belt.



RED JAWS

UNSEEN PROTECTOR

Quote: *Of course I found you.*

An old hunter set out on a winter day. He knew all the dangers that could come to a man alone in the woods, but he was also deeply stubborn. Besides, he needed to eat. A blizzard rose. The nearest cave held a sleeping bear, his knife broke as he tried to cut boughs for a shelter, and he knew he would freeze if he took refuge in a snow-burrow. So the stubborn old hunter set out for home. He knew he would die, but he refused to just give up.

Along the way, he was Exalted. He perceived this as meeting Luna in the form of a boy who walked atop the crust of the snow. Luna told him that his days of hunting for food and money were over: He would hunt greater prey, for a nobler cause. The old hunter never did bother to go home.

The other Lunars called him Red Jaws for the circumstance in which they found him, and the old hunter thought that as good a name as any. His trials proved unexpectedly difficult, for Red Jaws was an *extraordinary* hunter. He had great physical skills, but also a keen eye and mind to read the faint signs of animals' activities and a wit to bluff or trick animals into his traps. The Silver Pact settled on the Changing Moon as his caste.

Red Jaws stayed a hunter. The Silver Pact sends other novice Lunars to learn hunting and wilderness skills from him, for his prowess is remarkable even by Lunar standards.

The faction called the Swords of Luna gave Red Jaws a chance to use his skills against malignant Fair Folk and monsters out of the Wyld. Across the North, things that hunt men find themselves hunted in turn. The mortal ravagers who capture their fellow humans for fey masters are the Lunar's special prey. Red Jaws sees it as his mission—his stewardship—to protect the villages and farmsteads of the North from such threats. He does not show himself to the people he protects, however, nor do anything to let them know he has defended them, for he regards glory seeking as childish.

In his human form, Red Jaws looks like a sturdy old man with long gray hair, beard and mustache. A scar crosses one eye, and a ball of moonsilver fills the empty socket. In war form, Red Jaws becomes an eight-foot-tall wolf-man with a red-brown pelt shot with gray. In this form, he seldom wears more than a breechcloth and a harness for his bow and



daiklave. In every form, he keeps the scar and the glittering silver eye, along with lupine ears.

Motivation: Hunt threats from the Wyld

Caste: Changing Moon

Anima Banner: A great wolf of dark blue shadow with bright silver highlights

Spirit Shape: Wolf

Tell: Pointed and fur-fringed wolf ears

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

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



Virtue Flaw: The Curse of the Humble Sloth

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Craft (Wood) 1, Dodge 2, Investigation 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 4, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Stealth 3, *Survival* 4

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Backing 1, Heart's Blood 2, Reputation 1, Tattoo Artifact 1

Knacks: Deadly Beastman Transformation

Charms:

Excellencies: Charisma (1st), Dexterity (1st), Perception (1st)

Charisma: Dog-Tongue Method

Dexterity: Wasp Sting Blur

Perception: Inevitable Spoor Discovery, Keen Hearing Method

Stamina: Relentless Lunar Fury

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Moonsilver Daiklave (Gleaming Revelation): Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 9L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Long Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L*, Range 200, Rate 3, Tags 2, B

War Form:

Bite: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 4L, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags N

Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 4L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 7L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 4L, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Moonsilver Daiklave (Gleaming Revelation): Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 10L, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

Long Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 6L*, Range 200, Rate 3, Tags 2, B

* Uses broadhead arrows.

Soak: 2L/4B; 4L/6B in war form

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 (5 in war form)

Willpower: 6

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 14

Peripheral Essence: 26 (32)

Committed Essence: 6

Other Notes: In his war form, Red Jaws adds +1 to his Strength, Dexterity and Stamina. He also gains the positive effects of the following mutations: Air Adaptation, Claws, Fangs, Fur, Night Vision, Wolf's Pace.

Red Jaws Artifact rating refers to his moonsilver daiklave, which he took from a raksha noble. His tattoo artifact was created by the elder No Moon who gave Red Jaws his tattoos. The Silver Shadow saw the moonsilver ink flowing into the socket of its own accord, and taking the hint, wrought it into a hearthstone amulet. Since Red Jaws has not yet acquired a manse, the amulet-eye merely changes size and shape to match his other forms. As a member of the Swords of Luna, he has its Backing, and his forays against the Wyld for that august body has earned him a Reputation among the Silver Pact as a whole.

TAMUZ

THE MASTER PLANNER

Quote: *Before you draw your weapon, there's something you should know...*

Tamuz is one of the finest strategic thinkers of any Age. As a mortal, he competed with Dragon-Blooded cadets—and surpassed them by working longer and harder. It helped he was a genius, but Luna rewarded his drive with Exaltation, and he rose rapidly through the Deliberative military thereafter.

Then, his Solar mate Queen Chiara withdrew Tamuz from the Deliberative's army to help administer her domain. Although each Lunar is bonded to a Solar partner, there was no love between them. Still, civilian life enabled Tamuz to become the protégé of Ingosh Silverclaws, and he introduced Tamuz to politics and social engineering.

Chiara made Tamuz stay in their domain while she attended the fatal banquet in Meru. He dutifully fought the Usurpation until he realized the cause was hopeless. Then, he joined Ingosh in the Wyld. They and other Lunars

spent centuries there in analysis and debate. In time, these led to the Lunar program called the Thousand Streams River. Tamuz fought his greatest battle during the Fair Folk invasion that ended the First Age—and then, with Creation in ruins, he and his fellow Lunars initiated their plan to build new societies.

Tamuz chose the Delzahn. He created the figure of “Tamas Khan” to unite the Delzahn and lead them to conquer Chiaroscuro. As planned, the Delzahn became a dual culture, half desert nomad and half urban sophisticate. To this day, Tamuz remains active as the secret guiding hand of the Delzahn.

In his human form, Tamuz looks like a fit, middle-aged man with swarthy skin, salt-and-pepper hair and a small, neatly trimmed beard and mustache. He generally wears the clothes of a natty Delzahn aristocrat.

Motivation: Reconstruct human society by Thousand Streams River principles

Caste: Changing Moon

Anima Banner: Deep blues and silver-tinged browns that surround piercing eyes.

Spirit Shape: A sleek, fit gazelle hound.

Tell: No matter Tamuz's form, his shadow has perked, peaked ears.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6; Charisma 7, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5; Perception 6, Intelligence 7, Wits 6

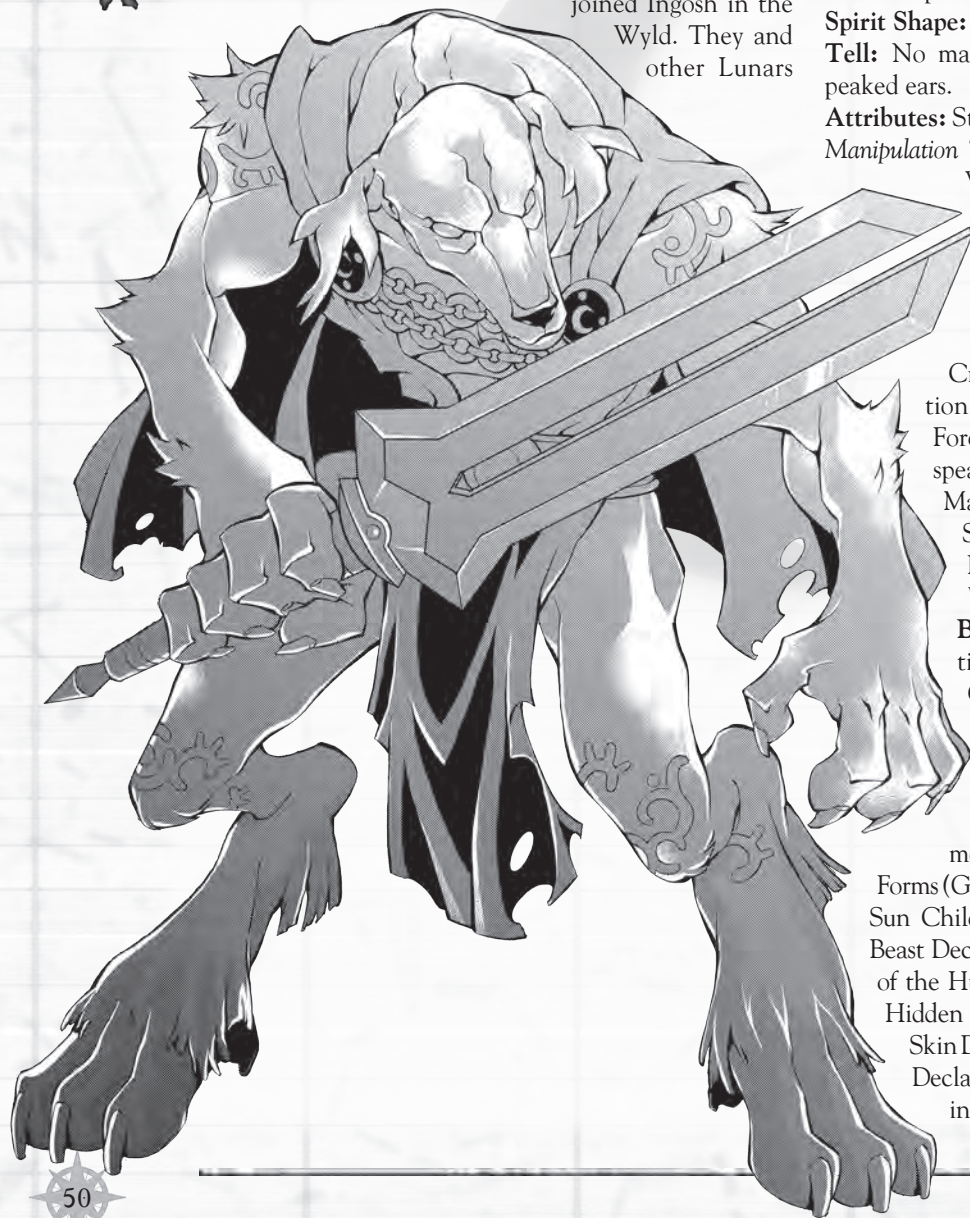
Virtues: Compassion 4, Conviction 4, Temperance 3, Valor 5

Virtue Flaw: The Curse of the Lone Wolf

Abilities: Archery 5 (Sniping +2), Athletics 4, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 5, Craft (Earth) 4, Craft (Fire) 4, Dodge 6, Integrity 5, Investigation 4, Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: Forest-Tongue, Low Realm, Old Realm, River-speak, Southern Barbarian Tongues) 5, Lore 5, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 3, Melee 6 (Disarming +2, Swords +1), Occult 5, Performance 5, Presence 5, Resistance 5, Ride 5, Sail 5, Socialize 6, Survival 5, War 6 (The South +3)

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Artifact 4, Artifact 3, Artifact 3, Artifact 2, Backing (Winding Road) 5, Cult 4, Heart's Blood 5, Influence 4, Manse 3, Reputation (Silver Pact) 5, Solar Bond 3

Knacks: Changing Plumage Mastery, Compassionate Mirror Nature, Deadly Beastman Transformation, Devastating Ogre Enhancement, Emperor Ox Expansion, Essential Mirror Forms (Green Sun Child), Flickering Star Infusion, Green Sun Child, Heart-Theft of the Behemoth, Illimitable Beast Declaration, Intimate Training Recollection, Life of the Hummingbird, Lightning Change Style, Luna's Hidden Face, Mountainous Spirit Expression, Prey's Skin Disguise, Quicksilver Second Face, Subtle Silver Declaration, Terrifying Beastman Alteration, Towering Beast Form



Excellencies: Appearance (2nd), Charisma (1st, Flawless Charisma Focus [Command +1, Persuade +1], Instinctive Charisma Unity), Dexterity (1st), Intelligence (1st, 2nd, Flawless Intelligence Focus [Subtle Reasoning +1, Conceptual Leaps +2]), Manipulation (1st, Instinctive Manipulation Unity), Perception (2nd), Stamina (2nd), Strength (1st), Wits (1st)

Dexterity: Becoming Water's Envy, Flight of the Sparrow, Flowing Body Ascension, Flowing Body Evasion, Furious Hound Pursuit, Golden Tiger Stance, Graceful Crane Stance, Ground-Denying Defense, Instinct-Driven Beast Movement, Lightning Stroke Attack, Mist-Walking Prana, Octopus and Spider Barrage, Pack and Flock Guidance, Secure Cat Stepping, Twin Fang Technique, Wary Swallow Method, Wasp Sting Blur, Wind-Dancing Method

Intelligence: Burgeoning Wyld Infliction, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Eagle-Fish Transition Prophecy, Form-Fixing Method, Harmony with Reality Technique, Inevitable Genius Insight, Lessons in the Blood, Predator's Insight, Righteous Lion Defense, Ritual of Lunar Stability, Shadowland Circle Necromancy, Still Pond Infliction, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Withdrawal of Assumptions

Manipulation: First in School Assumption, School Becomes
Shark Formation, School in the Reeds Technique

Perception: Bird Falls from Flock Targeting, Blood-Kin Sense, Diving Hawk Inspiration, Eagle Eye Advantage, Eye of the Cat, God-Cutting Essence, Leaf-Falling Scrutiny, Motive-Dissecting Eye, Resisting the Lure of Madness, Sense-Borrowing Method, Watchful Spider Stance, Wolf Ear Advantage, Wyld-Sensing Instincts

Stamina: Bruise-Relief Method, Durable Battle-Mind, External Hide Perfection, Frenzied Bear Fortification, Halting the Scarlet Flow, Hide-Toughening Essence, Native Son's Grace, North Mastery Technique, Ox-Body Technique (x4), Relentless Lunar Fury, Relentless Lunar Horde, Silver Lunar Resolution (x3), South Mastery Technique, Steadfast Yeddin Meditation, Unstoppable Juggernaut Incarnation

Strength: Subduing the Honored Foe

Wits: Lodestone Reckoning Manner, Many-Pockets Meditation, Meerkat Alertness Practice, Predator and Prey Recognition, Secure Den Prana, Spider's Trap Door, Thieving Magpie Prana

Emerald Circle: Coin of Distant Vision, Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Hound of the Five Winds, Infallible Messenger, Personal Tempest, Raising the Earth's Bones, Stormwind Rider,

Sapphire Circle: Demon of the Second Circle, Rolling Earth
Carpet, Sapphire Circle Banishment, Sapphire Counterma-
gic, Summoning the Heart of Darkness

Join Battle: 11

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 5B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 8B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 12, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Moonsilver Reaver Daiklave (Bull's Horns): Speed 5, Accuracy 19, Damage 14L/3, Parry DV 8, Rate 2
Moonsilver Long Powerbow (Parliament of Rooks): Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 10L*, Range 450, Rate 3

Bite: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 8L, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 7B, Parry DV 8, Rate 3
Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 9L, Parry DV 8, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 9B, Parry DV 6, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 7B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Moonsilver Reaver Daiklave (Bull's Horns): Speed 5, Accuracy 21, Damage 16L/3, Parry DV 9, Rate 2
Moonsilver Long Powerbow (Parliament of Rooks): Speed 6, Accuracy 16, Damage 12L*, Range 450, Rate 3

Soak: 15L/15B; 16L/17B in war form (Moonsilver reinforced breastplate, +10L/9B, +1 fatigue value; and moonsilver hearthstone bracers, +2L/0B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 12 (13 in war form) **Willpower:** 9

Essence: 8

Personal Essence: 26 Peripheral Essence: 51 (70)

Committed Essence: 19

Other Notes: In his war form, Tamuz benefits from +2 Strength, Dexterity and Stamina and the positive aspects of the following mutations: Cheetah's Pace, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Taste and Scent, Fangs, Fire Adaptation, Inexhaustible, Night Vision, Tail, Talons, Thick Skin.

His daiklave eliminates an opposing unit's bonus to close combat defense due to formation. Unsheathed in combat, it grants a four-die bonus to rolls to control a unit. It bears a jewel of fire sense. His powerbow multiplies each arrow it fires, eliminating any formation-based bonus to defense against ranged combat in mass combat. It bears a sentinel's stone. His most useful artifact may be his breastplate. If he commits 10 motes to it at the start of a battle, he ensures that most of his soldiers survive. This reduces the time he needs to recover each point of lost Magnitude by (Essence) days. Finally, his right bracer carries the potent One Will Gem, a three-dot Solar hearthstone that conveys a commander's will to his troops without the need for relays, increasing the unit's Drill by two and its Might by one.

ANJA SILVERCLAWS

SEEKER OF SECRETS

Quote: *Don't worry. I'll probably escape to tell of your horrible death.*

Anja came from the lower aristocracy of Thorns—that was. Her family lost its fortune (and many members) in the disastrous attempt to conquer the Scavenger Lands, and its members lost their lives fighting against the Mask of Winters's invasion. Anja survived because she hid among the city's poor and did whatever was necessary to eat and not get killed. She begged and stole from beggars. She gave herself to men and ghosts. She had one lover, the son of an expatriate Realm patrician who sought to form a resistance movement. Like Anja, this young man did what was necessary to survive. They managed one significant deed: Anja smuggled herself out of Thorns along with a dozen younger children of slain nobles, artisans and other leading citizens. The night after Anja left the Thorns shadowland, she Exalted. Anja understood very little of the tumble of memories from another life, but she understood two things very well: There were others like her, and they had power to raise nations and cast them down.

Anja flaunted her shapeshifting powers. A Wyld Hunt soon came but so did a retrieval pack from the Silver Pact. Her trials went extremely well, Anja thought, and revealed more about her Exaltation. To her delight, she bore the Exaltation of Ingosh Silverclaws, one of the greatest of all Lunar heroes. She dubbed herself Anja Silverclaws, a bit of arrogance that offended every Lunar it did not amuse.

From the start, Anja knew she wanted to free Thorns from the Mask of Winters. She knew she was too young and weak to challenge even the Deathlord's servants—but she had a

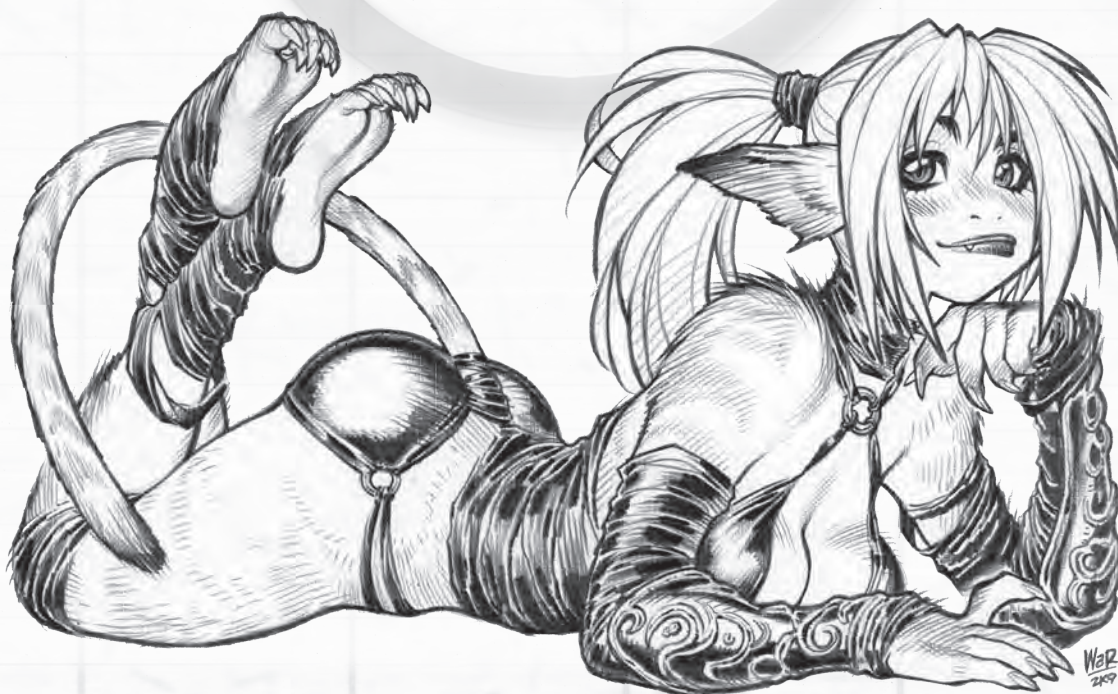
head full of information about life and death in the shadowed city. Surely, her elders could do something with it.

Anja's dossier came to the attention of Ma-Ha-Suchi, a very old and powerful Steward. It confirmed what he already suspected about the Mask of Winters's identity. While other projects required his immediate attention (such as plotting the destruction of all civilization), he assigned one of his Lunar acolytes to train Anja as a spy to gather more information about Thorns.

Thus did Anja become associated with (if not exactly a member of) the Wardens of Gaia. She is too practical and diplomatic to tell her teacher that she likes civilization very much and Ma-Ha-Suchi is a howling maniac. They agree, however, that Deathlords and shadowlands are bad for Creation—and who but the Stewards can oppose them?

Anja Silverclaws joins other Lunars on their adventures as a way to make contacts and collect favors, but Thorns receives most of her attention. She is very good at infiltration and eavesdropping. In Thorns itself, she relies as much as possible on animal forms and mundane stealth and concealment: She knows that any use of Essence might reveal her supernatural nature, and even a rat might hold a possessing ghost. These expeditions bring the Silver Pact precious information about the Mask of Winters's regime. Anja also leaves encouraging messages and the occasional obol with members of Thorns's resistance, though she does not reveal herself. To her shock, she finds that her former lover is now one of the Mask of Winters's deathknights. Anja vows to kill him someday.

In her human form, Anja Silverclaws is a beautiful young woman with long, straight, platinum blond hair. If she takes human form in Thorns, she disguises herself with dirt and rags. Anja prefers to wear tight but revealing garments, with ornamental bracers and greaves. She likes to surround herself





with nice things. Her spirit form is a fluffy white house cat. When other Lunars point out that she does not have silver claws, Anja says she will... and they will be sharp indeed.

Anja knows she is not yet much of a fighter, though, so she relies on stealth, surprise and cheating. She advises fellow Lunars that sleeping enemies are much easier to defeat. She also uses poison and won't hear any nonsense about "dishonorable weapons." Stewards must defend Creation by any means necessary, she says, lest the entire world suffer the fate of her homeland.

Motivation: Rescue Thorns

Caste: No Moon

Anima Banner: A stylized cat of shadows.

Spirit Shape: House cat

Tell: Sharp, feline nails on her hands and feet.

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Curse of the Heartless Weasel

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 1, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, *Investigation* 3, Larceny 2, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: High Realm) 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 1, Melee 2, Occult 1, Socialize 3, Stealth 3, *Survival* 1, Thrown 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Heart's Blood 1, Mentor 2, Reputation (Silver Pact) 1, Resources 1

Knacks: Hybrid Body Rearrangement

Charms:

Excellencies: *Dexterity* (1st), *Intelligence* (1st), *Perception* (1st)

Appearance: Hide of the Cunning Hunter

Dexterity: Graceful Crane Stance

Intelligence: Counting the Elephant's Wrinkles

Perception: Eye of the Cat

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch (Claws): Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B (2L), Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick (Claws): Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B (5L), Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Exceptional Knife: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L + poison*, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags T

Exceptional Knife, Thrown: Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 5L + poison*, Range 25, Rate 3

* Arrow Frog Venom; Damage 8L, Toxicity 4, Tolerance —/—, Penalty -4

Soak: 1L/2B; 2L/3B with Fur

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 14

Peripheral Essence: 32

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Anja Silverclaws's Hybrid Body Rearrangement gives her the following mutations to call on: Claws, Fur, Gazelle's Pace, Night vision and Prehensile Tail.

Anja has Contacts within Thorns, in the form of people and places she knows are worth spying on. Her Mentor is in Ma-Ha-Suchi's extremist wing of the Wardens of Gaia, but Anja does not expect to join the faction. She has a Reputation due to the Exaltation she carries but is determined to make her own name, too. Anja carried nothing out of Thorns but an heirloom dagger; her current meager Resources come largely through theft from Thorns's mercantile and diplomatic representatives in the Scavenger Lands. She owns no artifacts or hearthstones and does not intend to, for now: She guesses the Mask of Winters would easily detect such devices.

SWIMS IN SHADOWS

MISSIONARY SHAMAN

Quote: *You forget your place, spirit! Heed me, lest greater powers chastise you.*

Many modern Lunars take a new name after Exaltation to reflect their new identity. Swims in Shadows does not. He comes from a tribe that lives on one of the small volcanic islands in the Southwest, most of which are too small to appear on any map. Swims in Shadows was the tribe's shaman, an expert at dealing with the small gods and elementals of the sea. Sometimes, this meant diving deep into the spirits' oceanic home, where the sun's light fades to a deep blue glow: Swims in Shadows excelled through his lung capacity as well as his persuasive talents. Once, he even met an awesome and frightening Moonchild who spoke for Leviathan, the Great Whale God his people had long revered. Of course, the shaman humbly gave what assistance was possible for a mortal spirit-dealer.

Swims in Shadows Exalted as he tried to assemble a coalition of spirits against a marauding child of Siakal: He vowed to keep diving until he died or a reluctant spirit agreed, and he discovered that he no longer needed to breathe air. The Silver Pact found Swims in Shadows within days. The shaman learned that his people's god, Leviathan, was actually an ancient Lunar and had noted the shaman for cultivation as a minion. Naturally, Swims in Shadows pledged his loyalty to Leviathan.

This pledge incidentally made Swims in Shadows a member of the Seneschals of the Sun Kings, a Lunar faction devoted to Solar rule. Even if there were no Lawgivers to do the ruling, the Seneschals tried to preserve the traditions—including keeping the spirit courts deferent to the Celestial Exalted.

Swims in Shadows thus continues his profession as a spirit negotiator. He cannot yet force spirits to obey, but he's very good at talking them into going along with Seneschal programs. As an adept in the Art of Elemental Summoning (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 136), he can beckon a wide variety of elementals or create wards against them. Against gods, he remains limited to persuasion—but his Lunar Charms make him exceptionally convincing. Swims in Shadows continues to mediate between Southwestern mortals and the supernatural world, but he also spreads the word that Lunars outrank the spirits. The Exalted shaman gains power and prestige rapidly among the island tribes.

In his human form, Swims in Shadows looks like a lean man in his 30s, with dark bronze skin and black hair. He wears a breechcloth and the elaborately ornamented collar and feathered headdress that identify him as an island tribe shaman. His animal form is a bull shark.

Swims in Shadows prefers not to fight, since he is not very good at it, even as a shark-man. Among Southwestern mortals and spirits, he expects his status as a shaman to protect him from most harm. If he cannot intimidate enemies through his fearsome appearance, he surrenders... and sets out





to defeat them through social combat. If a mission requires greater physical force, the shaman asks other Lunars for help. Conversely, when other Lunars need an expert negotiator, they can call on Swims in Shadows.

Motivation: Restore Exalted dominion over the spirit world

Caste: No Moon

Anima Banner: The shadow of a bull shark surrounded by a sapphire glow.

Spirit Shape: Bull shark

Tell: Shark teeth

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

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

Virtue Flaw: Curse of the Heartless Weasel

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 1, Investigation 2, Linguistics (Native: Seatongue; Others: Old Realm) 1, Lore 2, Martial Arts 2, Melee 1, Occult 3 (Art of Elemental Summoning Adept +2), *Performance* 3, Presence 3, *Survival* 2

Backgrounds: Backing 1, Heart's Blood 1, Influence 2, Mentor 3

Knacks: Deadly Beastman Transformation

Charms:

Excellencies: Charisma (1st)

Charisma: Perfect Fear Scent

Perception: All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight, Eye of the Cat, Instinctive Essence Prediction

Stamina: West Mastery Technique

Wits: Lodestone Reckoning Manner

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Short Spear: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 6L, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags R

War Form:

Bite: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 8L, Parry DV —, Rate 2, Tags N

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Short Spear: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 7L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags R

Soak: 2L/4B; 5L/7B in war form

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15

Peripheral Essence: 36

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: In his war form, Swims in Shadows adds +1 to his Strength, Dexterity and Stamina. He also gains the positive effects of the following mutations: Gills, Night Vision, Shark Teeth and Thick Skin.

Leviathan does not personally act as Mentor to Swims in Shadows, but one of his cronies does. Swims in Shadows often acts at the indirect behest of the Great Whale God. See **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. II—The West**, pages 141-144 for a description of Leviathan and his goals.

Swims in Shadows has the Backing of the Seneschals of the Sun Kings.

MADAME VERT

CRUSADER FOR THE CASTELESS

Quote: *Don't pretend you didn't have a choice. Everyone always has a choice.*

Rallin Vert initially thought she was lucky to marry a savant of the Salinan Society, a far-flung association of thaumaturges seeking occult wisdom in the natural world (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex*, pp. 126-127). Drashig Tarn was an intelligent and learned man—but never quite intelligent and learned enough to excel among his peers. It gnawed at him. Tarn also treated his wife like a slave. Vert endured her marriage for 10 years. Along the way, she found that she was smarter than her husband. Certainly, she took greater care. Vert gradually trained Tarn to let her fashion all his talismans and measure the ingredients for his potions. She thereby likely saved many lives among his clients.

Freedom came when Tarn decided to summon a demon, brushing aside all of Vert's diplomatically phrased objections.

Once summoned, the demon promptly killed him. Vert, however, both Exalted and remembered Tarn's gilded demon-scorching celestial spear. The demon didn't stay long.

The widow Vert spent the next few years discovering what she was. Small gods and elementals in the nearby forest told her about the Moonchildren. The lore in Tarn's library, along with her own insight and experience, eventually led to her self-initiation as a Salinan sorcerer.

In time, the Silver Pact found Madame Vert. So did a Wyld Hunt. Madame Vert felt grateful for the rescue; less so when one rescuer said that as a sorcerer, she would certainly need to join the Crossroad Society (as he had) and become a No Moon (as he was). Memories of her controlling husband inspired Madame Vert to tell the Lunar what he could do with his caste tattoos, the Crossroad Society and the Silver Pact as a whole.

When she cooled down, Madame Vert thought better of the last point. She resumed contact with other Lunars but held off on accepting a caste: She vows not to surrender one drop of freedom until she knows completely what she gains and loses. Until then, she works to prove her worth to the Silver Pact as a casteless Lunar... and to make every Moonchild who calls her "Unblooded" or "Bastard of Luna" eat his words.

Madame Vert finds her personality shifting with her shape. In her human form, she carefully maintains the identity of Tarn's meek widow. She makes a modest living as a calligrapher-scribe, while other Salinan thaumaturges use her late husband's library and lab free of charge. This enables her to maintain contact with the local chapter and gain information from them. In animal or beastman forms, however, Vert

revels in her freedom and becomes daring and sensuous. In Limit

Break, this aspect of her personality runs wild, and she does things she later regrets. (However, the mayor's handsome, muscular and extremely eligible son doesn't regret the moonlit night when Madame Vert broke into his room.

He thinks he coupled with a goddess and wants to find her again.)





Madame Vert regards herself as her city's protector. In this capacity, she terrorizes (though rarely kills) assorted threats to society. Her greatest adventure to date involved driving a gang of petty brigands from the nearby forest. She also offers other Lunars her skills as a sorcerer: As yet, she knows only countermagic and elemental summoning, but it's a start.

In her human form, Madame Vert looks like a shorter than average woman in her late 20s with straight brown hair, large eyes and a very small mouth and chin. She still wears a white linen mourning-shawl over her shapeless blouse and long skirt. Her spirit form is a tree strider, a long-limbed, arboreal relative of the more common claw strider. Madame Vert's war form stands seven feet tall on long, taloned legs. Green scales cover her body, and a crest of long spines replaces the hair on her fanged, crocodilian head. A long, lashing tail extends behind her. In this form, Madame Vert does not wear more than jewelry and a few wisps of translucent silk. She believes her war form is far more beautiful than her human form, and when she applies Essence to this belief, she makes it true.

Motivation: Find a place in the Silver Pact without submitting to anyone

Caste: Casteless

Anima Banner: Green tree strider amidst shifting silver lights and dark shadows

Spirit Shape: Tree Strider

Tell: Scales about the eyes

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

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

Virtue Flaw: The Curse of the Drunken Monkey

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Craft (Air) 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 1, Investigation 1, Linguistics (Native: Rivertongue; Others: Forest-Tongue, Old Realm) 2, Lore 3, Martial Arts 3, *Occult* 3, Performance 1, Presence 1, Socialize 1, *Survival* 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Heart's Blood 1, Resources 2, Taboo 2

Knacks: Deadly Beastman Transformation, Life of the Hummingbird

Charms:

Excellencies: Appearance (1st)

Dexterity: Foot-Trapping Counter, Rabid Beast Attitude, Thousand Claw Infliction

Intelligence: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Emerald Countermagic, Summon Elemental

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 2B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

War Form:

Bite: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 3L, Parry DV —, Rate 2, Tags N

Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick/Rake: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soak: 2L/3B; 3L/5B in war form

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5

Willpower: 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15

Peripheral Essence: 36

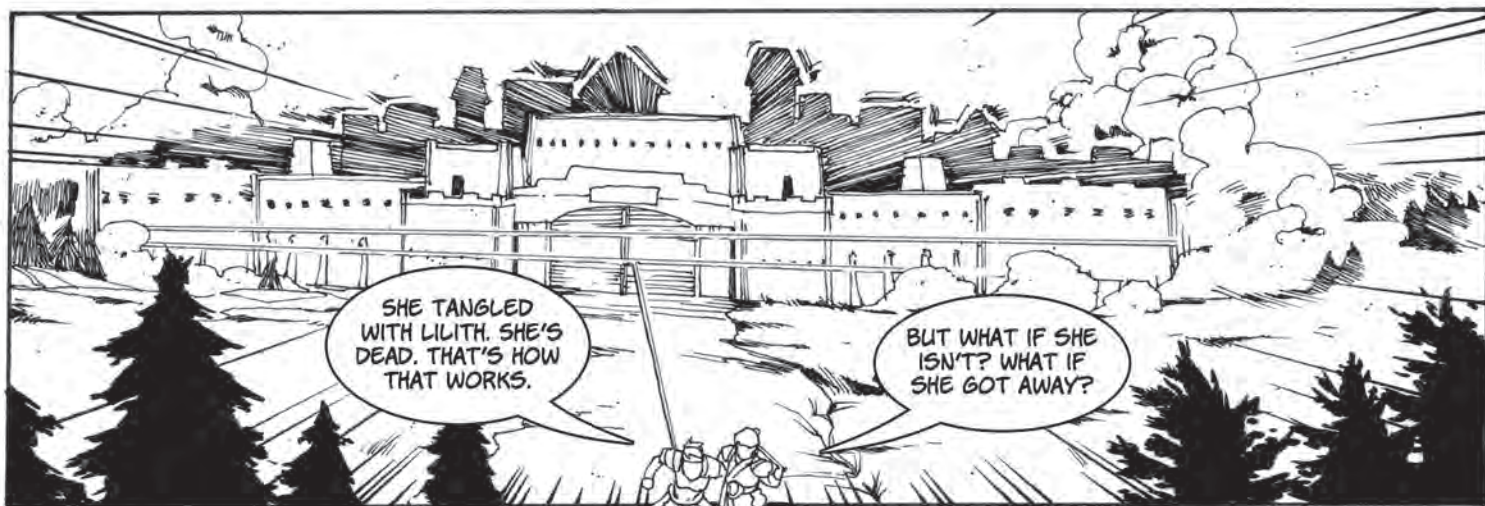
Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: In her war form, Madame Vert gains +1 to her Strength, Dexterity and Stamina. She also gains the positive effect of these mutations: Brachiation x2 (see **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. III—The East**, p. 149), Fangs, Scales, Tail, Talons.

Madame Vert has no true allies among local spirits but propitiates a few of them through her Taboos. Most notably, she never wears any wool, leather or other animal-derived clothing except silk and never combines beans and grains in her meals. Her Contacts are among the thaumaturges of the Salinan Society.



I'M NOT SAYING SHE
ISN'T DEAD. I'M SAYING
WHAT IF SHE ISN'T?



SHE TANGLED
WITH LILITH. SHE'S
DEAD. THAT'S HOW
THAT WORKS.

BUT WHAT IF SHE
ISN'T? WHAT IF
SHE GOT AWAY?



FROM LILITH?
HOW, EXACTLY?

MAYBE SHE
CEASED TO EXIST.
LIKE WITH THE
SCRIPTURE OF
ABSENCE.

THAT WOULDN'T
MAKE US THINK
SHE WAS DEAD.

NOT WHILE SHE DIDN'T
EXIST, NO. BUT ONCE
SHE DID AGAIN...



IT'S A NEAT IDEA,
BUT IT'S WISFUL
THINKING.

HERE.

WOULD YOU LIKE
TO MAKE A WAGER
ON THAT?



CHAPTER THREE

THE SIDEREAL EXALTED

The Chosen of the Maidens once acted as Viziers to the Solar rulers of Creation and used their influence in an attempt to curb the Lawgivers' ever-growing excesses. In the end, though, the Sidereals' own hubris led them to plot the Solars' destruction at the Dragon-Bloods' hands. The Sidereal Exalted have since acted as the secret masters of the world, subtly guiding and protecting the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate and the modern Realm. Now, the Five-Score Fellowship grows ever more fractious just as the world is in more danger than ever from external enemies and internal conflict.

What follow are a number of famous and infamous Sidereal Exalts of differing levels of experience to use as allies or antagonists in **Exalted** series.

AYESHA URA

THE GOLD FACTION LEADER

Quote: *This world could be so much better if people would only take a chance on hope!*

Ayesha Ura was born during the chaos of the Usurpation, somewhere in the Southeast, but raised in Heaven as a ward of the Bronze Faction. When she came of age, she received the Exaltation of Tammiz Ushun, the slain leader of the Gold Faction. Ayesha resisted this heritage for centuries. Indeed, no less than Bronze Faction leader Chejop Kejak became first her mentor, then her lover. Ironically, Kejak forced Ayesha to join the Gold Faction by pressing her to initiate into the Celestial Circle of sorcery. Ayesha had to make a great sacrifice... and she chose to embrace the memories of Tammiz Ushun and abandon the Bronze Faction.

Ayesha's rise to leadership of the Gold Faction took about a decade. It helped that there was very little Gold Faction left. Over the centuries, she restored the faction—first as a minority opposed to Bronze Faction dominance in the Bureau of Destiny, and then as a serious challenger when the Jade Prison broke and the faction suddenly had many Solars to exploit.

Like her onetime mentor and archrival Kejak, Ayesha excels at multitasking and delegation. In addition to leading the Gold Faction, she is the highest-ranking Chosen of Journeys in the Bureau of Destiny. She chairs the Eastern Convention, the Convention on Essence-Wielders and the Sub-Convention on Demons. She is also the puppet master behind Shen Aru, the figurehead leader of the Cult of the Illuminated. Somehow, she even finds time for special Bureau missions such as investigating the undersea wreckage of the Jade Prison.

Fifteen centuries in Heaven's secret service should leave Ayesha Ura cynical. She isn't. She truly believes that restoring the Solar Exalted to rulership of Creation will bring back all the Old Realm's glories, and this time, the Viziers can prevent the Lawgivers from going mad. She has set Creation on this path, and she brooks no opposition.

Ayesha is also one of the Viziers' top experts on sorcery and occult matters in general.

Ayesha even learned a good deal of thaumaturgy, to broaden her arcane studies and to fall back on when true sorcery could blow her cover. She looks forward to grooming a Lawgiver to initiation into the Adamant Circle, so she can finally study the apex of the art (if only by proxy). Ayesha favors the Salinan school and trains other Exalted in its methods. However, her need to work with sorcerers and texts of other schools seems to prevent Ayesha from attaining full Salinan Enlightenment—much to her frustration. Supernatural martial arts, on the other hand, bore Ayesha, and she never bothered to learn any.

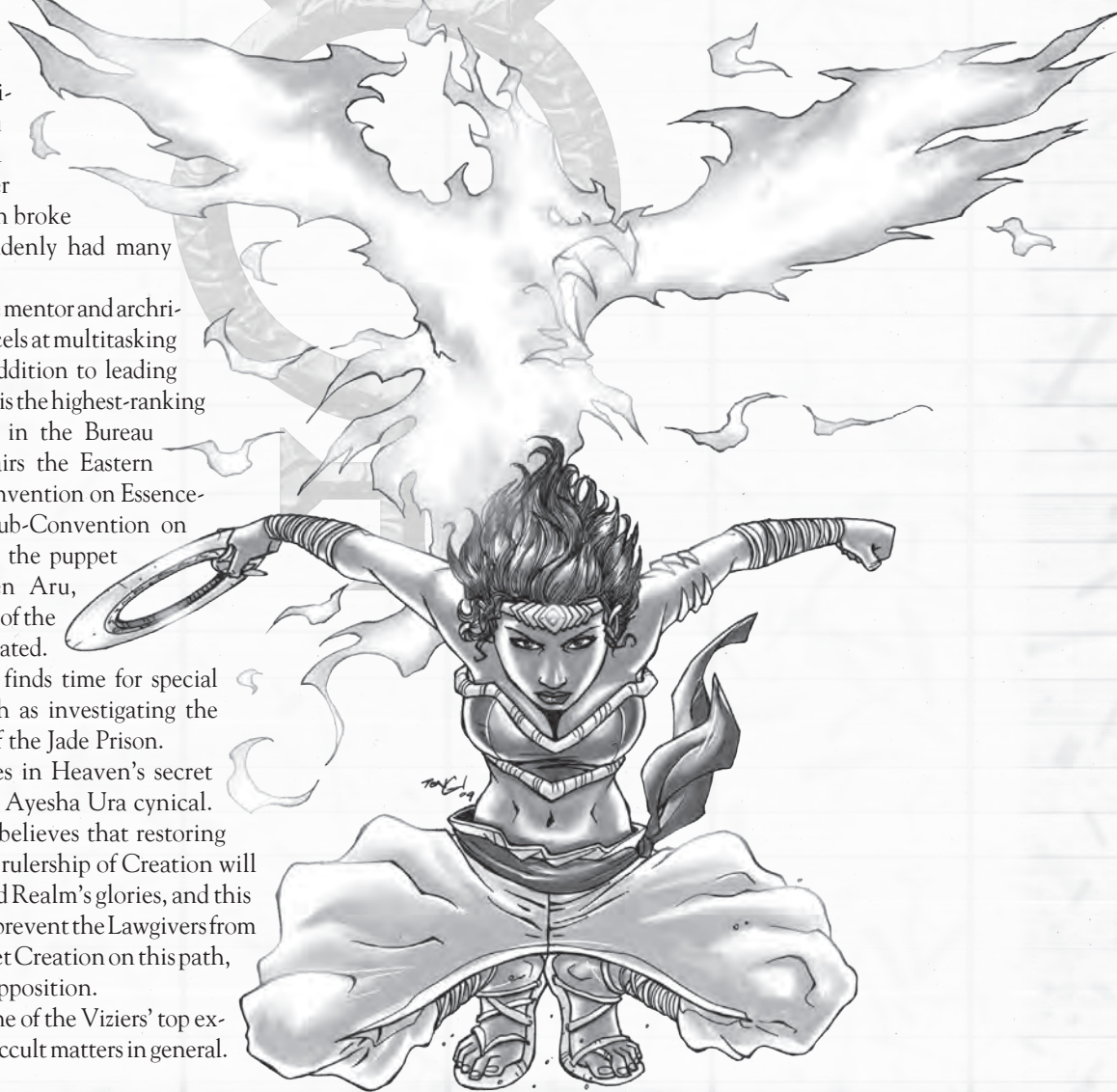
At 15 centuries old, Ayesha Ura looks like a slim and beautiful woman in her 20s. Her large, dark amber eyes seem to glow next to her dark skin and curly black hair, while her bright smile and easy laughter charm those who meet her.

For all her skill at bureaucratic infighting and scheming, Ayesha is one of Heaven's leading socialites. She does some of her best work at parties.

Motivation: Restore the Solar Deliberative

Limit Break: Harbingers' Flawed Fate

Caste: Journeys



Anima Banner: A globe of bladelike golden rays.

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 4, *Bureaucracy* 6, Craft (Fate) 5, Dodge 4, Integrity 5, Investigation 5, Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: Forest-Tongue, High Realm, Old Realm) 3, Lore 4, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 3, *Occult* 8 (*Art of Astrology: Master +3, Art of Geomancy: Master +3, Art of Spirit Beckoning: Master +3, Art of Warding & Exorcism: Master +3*), *Performance* 6, Presence 3, *Resistance* 5, *Ride* 5, *Sail* 5, *Socialize* 6, *Stealth* 2, *Survival* 5, *Thrown* 4, War 2

Backgrounds: Acquaintances 3, Allies 3, Artifact 3, Artifact 2, Artifact 1, Backing 5, Celestial Manse 3, Familiar 5, Followers 2, Salary 3

Colleges: The Banner 2, *The Captain* 3, *The Gull* 3, *The Haywain* 2, *The Key* 2, *The Mast* 3, *The Messenger* 5, *The Pillar* 2, *The Ship's Wheel* 5, *The Sorcerer* 3, *The Spear* 1, *The Treasure Trove* 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Craft (3rd), Integrity (2nd), *Occult* (2nd), *Performance* (3rd), *Resistance* (2nd), *Ride* (1st, 3rd, Propitious *Ride* Alignment), *Sail* (2nd, *Fateful*), *Socialize* (1st, 3rd, *Fateful*), *Survival* (3rd, Propitious *Survival* Alignment), *Thrown* (3rd, *Fateful*),

Athletics: Forward-Thinking Technique, Unswerving Juggernaut Practice

Craft: Destiny-Knitting Entanglement, Excellent Implementation of Objectives, Mending Warped Designs, World-Shaping Artistic Vision (Boat Journeys +1, Parties +2)

Integrity: Stern Essence Replenishment

Investigation: Auspicious Prospects for Journeys

Occult: All Charms

Performance: Faultless Ceremony, Heart-Brightening Presentation Style, Perfection in Life

Presence: Force Decision

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x5), Someone Else's Destiny

Ride: All Charms

Sail: All Charms

Socialize: All Charms

Survival: All Charms

Thrown: Essence Thorn Practice, Life Gets Worse Approach, Pain-Amplification Stratagem, Shadow Piercing Needle, Willful Weapon Method

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Conjuring the Azure Chariot, Demon of the First Circle, *Emerald Circle* Banishment, *Emerald* Countermagic, Eye of Alliance, Flight of Separation, The Horse that Travels Land and Water, Infallible Messenger, Keel Cleaves the Clouds, Malediction of the Distorted Compass, Open the Spirit Door, The Parting of the Seas, Sleep of Stony

Safety, Sorcerer's Irresistible Puppetry, The Spy Who Walks in Darkness, Storm Rider Enchantment, Stormwind Rider, Theft of Memory

Sapphire Circle: Cloud Trapeze, Demon of the Second Circle, Eternal Crystalline Encasement, The Faithful Ally, Gift of Knowledge, Hidden Judges of the Secret Flame, Ivory Orchid Pavilion, Mercury's Deliverance, Outside Worlds Within, Rolling Earth Carpet, *Sapphire Circle* Banishment, *Sapphire* Countermagic, Servant of Infallible Location, Shadows of the Ancient Past, Summon Spirit Boat, Summon the Heavenly Portal, Summoning the Heart of Darkness, Swift Spirit of Winged Transportation, Threefold Binding of the Heart, Travel Without Distance, Voices of Distant Regard, Wheel of the Turning Heavens, Whirlwind of Fate

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Starmetal Bane Disc (The Whirling Mercury): Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 13L, Parry DV 6, Rate 2, Tags T

Starmetal Bane Disc (The Whirling Mercury)*: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 13L, Range 30, Rate 2

* Usable with Martial Arts or thrown.

Soak: 7L/7B (Starmetal chain shirt, +5L/3B, Hardness: 3L/3B, reduces attacker's damage rolls by a -1 external penalty)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 9 **Willpower:** 9

Essence: 8

Personal Essence: 25

Peripheral Essence: 64 (73)

Committed Essence: 9

Other Notes: Ayesha Ura's Artifact rating refers to three items. The first is the Whirling Mercury, a martial arts weapon called a bane disc. It resembles an oversized wind-fire wheel. It can be thrown as well as wielded in close combat; it returns instantly to its wielder's hand after each throw, ready to be thrown on her next action. In addition, by spending two motes and succeeding in striking with the weapon, Ura may have the bane disk remove the target from battle, as it pushes him 30 yards backward. If anything obstructs his path, the target hits it for one level of bashing damage and ends his movement. The second Artifact's a starmetal chain shirt. The last is a dragon tear tiara, in which Ayesha wears the hearthstone of her Celestial Manse, a gem of sorcery.

Ayesha Ura's Familiar is Everlasting Dawn, a garda bird. Ayesha Ura arranged to be present at his genesis, and he imprinted on her. The garda is Ayesha's liaison to the Court of the Orderly Flame.

Ayesha Ura has the complete Backing of the Gold Faction she heads, as well as Allies and Followers within the Cult of Illuminated.



SHEPHERD OF THE NORTH STAR

THE FRIENDLY STRANGER

Quote: *I can't imagine who they are. Let's go say hello.*

Shepherd of the North Star grew up in Whitewall, but unlike most people of that city, he loved to explore beyond its invulnerable walls. He became an apprentice cartographer, mapping the mountains and valleys around the city as prospectors sought new mines and the city's military sought Wyld pockets, small shadowlands and Fair Folk freeholds that could become threats. The young cartographer Exalted when the merchant caravan he accompanied became lost in a blizzard. Shepherd of the North Star gained his new name by guiding the lost caravan through 200 miles of wilderness to safety at Gethamane.

As an agent of the Bureau of Destiny, Shepherd specializes in guiding travelers and explorers, making sure they reach their destinations—or not. He takes every opportunity to meet new people and visit new cultures. Nothing pleases him more than arranging a friendly meeting between two societies. The Viziers' factional intrigues bore him, and though Shepherd's ambivalence towards the factions limits his advancement in the Bureau of Destiny, he also manages to avoid antagonizing anyone. Some within the Bureau see Shepherd as a calming influence when circumstances force Gold and Bronze Faction Sidereals to work together. He's also worked amicably with people ranging from Dynasts to Solars, though of course they rarely know his true nature or identity.

Indeed, Shepherd of the North Star gets along with most folk. He says that people can't help but like you if you show you like them—a maxim he has put to the test in settings ranging from icewalker campgrounds to the soirees of Nexus tycoons. Often, he gets so wrapped up in meeting new people or seeing new places that he loses track of time. Other Sidereals tease him about being the only Harbinger who is perpetually late.

Shepherd of the North Star is a slender man of medium height. His cornsilk-blond hair forms an untidy mop in front and a long braid in back. He favors layered and embroidered silken robes and a high-collared cloak but will wear rougher clothes to blend into his surroundings. Shepherd carries a

starmetal serpent-sting staff of plain design, so it can pass as a simple walking staff.

Motivation: Bring all Creation's cultures into contact

Limit Break: Harbingers' Flawed Fate

Caste: Chosen of Journeys

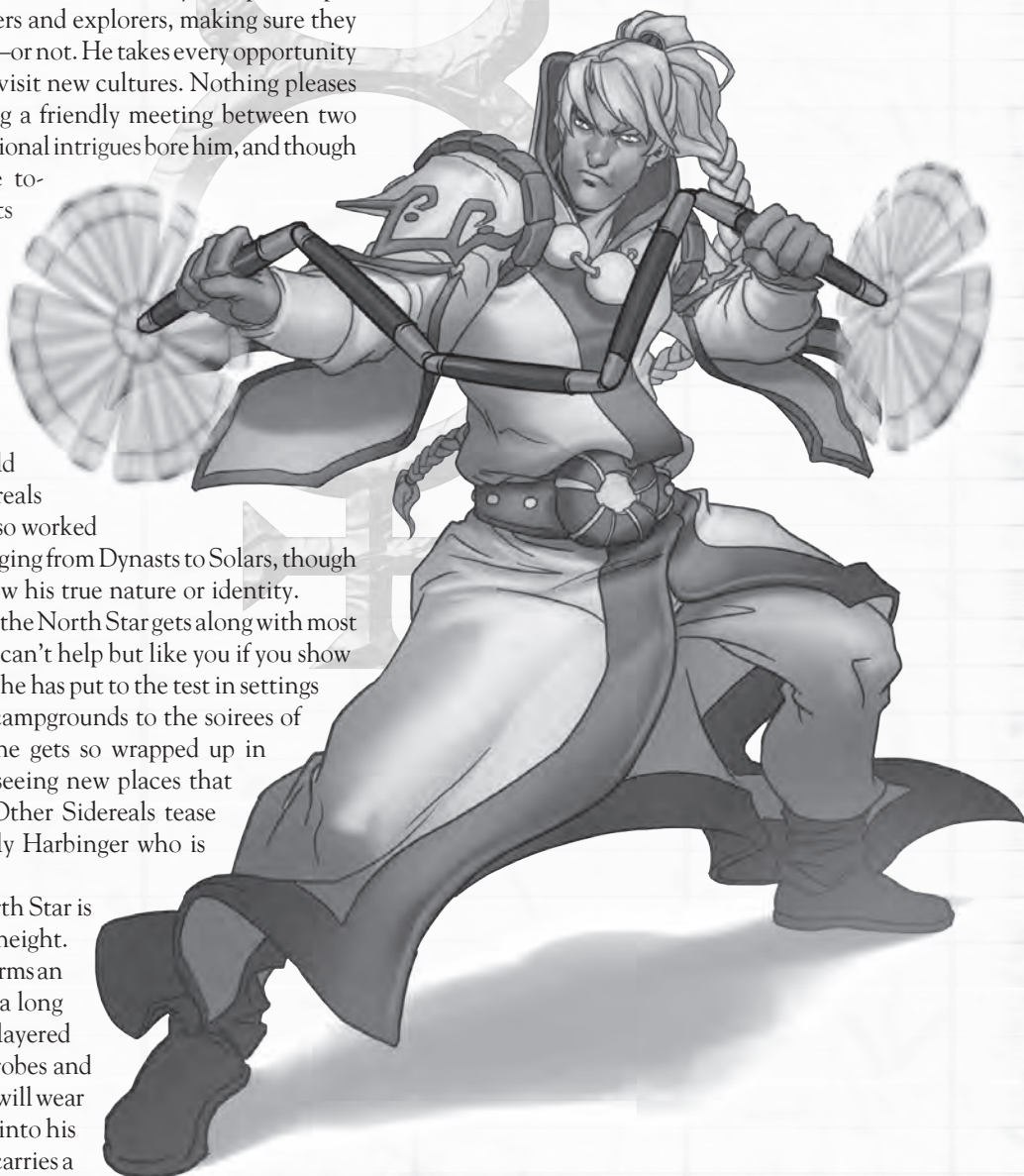
Anima Banner: Golden glow with sparkles like snowfall.

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 3, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Others: Old Realm, Northern Barbarian Tongues, Riverspeak) 3, Lore 3, Martial Arts 5, Occult 2, Performance 3, Resistance 3, Ride 4, Sail 3, Socialize 4, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Backgrounds: Acquaintances 2, Allies 1, Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Connections 3, Familiar 3, Salary 2, Sifu 2





Colleges: The Captain 2, The Gull 1, *The Messenger* 3, The Pillar 3, *The Ship's Wheel* 3, The Sword 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Dodge (3rd), Martial Arts (Fateful), Survival (3rd) Athletics: Unswerving Juggernaut Principle

Awareness: Wise Choice

Dodge: Absence, Duck Fate

Investigation: Auspicious Prospects for Journeys

Linguistics: Blue Vervain Binding

Lore: Methodology of Secrets

Resistance: Optimistic Security Practice, Water and Fire Treaty

Ride: Godly Companion, Ordained Bridle of Mercury, Spirit-Shape Companion

Sail: Salt into Ash Sleight, Stone Skipping Spirit, Walls of Salt and Ash (Malfean)

Socialize: Fortuitous Fellowship

Survival: Becoming the Wilderness

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Celestial Monkey Style: All Charms

Violet Bier of Sorrows Style: All Charms

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 2B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Starmetal Serpent-Sting Staff: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 15B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3, Tags M, P

Soak: 7L/7B (Silken armor, +5L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 6

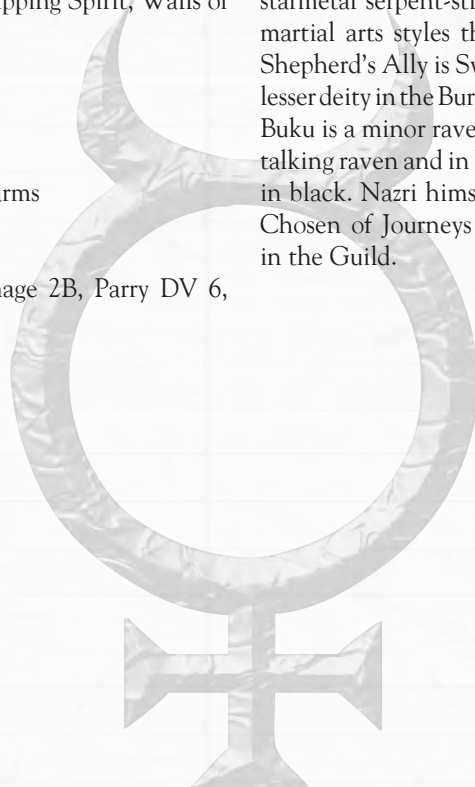
Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 14

Peripheral Essence: 32 (39)

Committed Essence: 7

Other Notes: Shepherd of the North Star's Artifact ratings represent his robes, which are actually silken armor, and his starmetal serpent-sting staff. This armor can be used with martial arts styles that normally forbid the use of armor. Shepherd's Ally is Sweet Lament, Queen of Nightingales, a lesser deity in the Bureau of Nature and his lover. His Familiar Buku is a minor raven deity who manifests in Creation as a talking raven and in Heaven as a raven-headed man dressed in black. Nazri himself acts as the young Exalt's Sifu. The Chosen of Journeys has carefully cultivated Connections in the Guild.



IRON SIAKA

THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Quote: *Hey, demon! The Dulcet Consolator has a present for you!*

Iron Siaka's father retired from the Imperial Marines to become a dockworker in Eagle's Launch, and he raised his offspring as a loyal daughter of the Realm. However, his drinking also kept the family poor, so Iron Siaka began her own life of toil at an early age. Sometimes, she glimpsed the Dragon-Blooded as they arrived and departed the city. The knowledge that such grand folk existed and lived lives of beauty and adventure somehow made Iron Siaka's corner of Creation seem brighter.

When a horrible humanoid sea beast erupted from the water to attack a Dynast on the dock, Iron Siaka didn't run. She hid, but only to watch her hero defeat the monster. Only, he didn't. The monster's silver claws drew blood once, twice, thrice. The Dynast was failing—and Iron Siaka found herself picking up a gaff hook and charging the monster herself. Somehow, she knew that this particular Dynast must not die now... She bought the Dynast a moment to recover and rejoin the battle. Faced with two enemies, the bestial Anathema retreated. When the Dynast thanked Iron Siaka for her help, it was the proudest, happiest moment of her life. And then the great lord said, in a tone of sudden suspicion, "What's that mark on your forehead?" and held his daiklave on guard against her.

Here is not your destiny, nor your joy. The words in her head sent Iron Siaka running. A member of the Bronze Faction found her, explained what she was and took her to Yu-Shan for training.

Iron Siaka remains a loyal daughter of the Realm. Even though she knows the truth about the Realm and herself, members of the Scarlet Dynasty awe her just a bit and make her shy. Iron Siaka has no such regard for gods, though. They can be friends but nevermore objects of reverence.

Some fellow Viziers think Iron Siaka should be one of Mars's Chosen, for she has great skill in battle and a formidable temper. For her, though, beating the crap out of enemies is a deeply visceral pleasure. She also enjoys carousing with stevedores, sailors and marines, whether in the ports of Creation or the celestial

docks where the Golden Barque sets sail and lands. She loathes all creatures of darkness for the misery they bring to ordinary folk. While she's hardly fanatical in her Bronze Faction sympathies, Iron Siaka thinks the "Gold Stars" and Independents are foolish not to support the Realm. After all, who else in Creation is in a place to hold back the horrors from beyond?

As one of the most martial Joybringers, Iron Siaka finds herself a bit of a fish out of water in the Cerulean Lute.

She doesn't particularly care much for sorcery, arcane engineering or the soft styles of martial arts typically practiced by most other Chosen of Venus. Iron Siaka is quite good at Sidereal astrology, though, and the pattern spiders seem to like her forceful calligraphy. She has used false identities to establish some influence in the Imperial Navy, particularly the Water Fleet.

Iron Siaka is big boned and strong, with a rather mannish face. An azure headband barely controls her untidy, mouse-brown hair. Nevertheless, certain women find her attractive, which is good for Iron Siaka since she prefers such women to men. She typically wears canvas pants bloused into boots, a buff coat reinforced with starmetal plates and pauldrons, and studded leather bracers. Her favorite weapon is a goremaul of extraordinary workmanship she's named the Dulcet Consolator.

Motivation: Beat up creatures of darkness until they get the message and leave Creation alone. Now, *that* would be serenity.

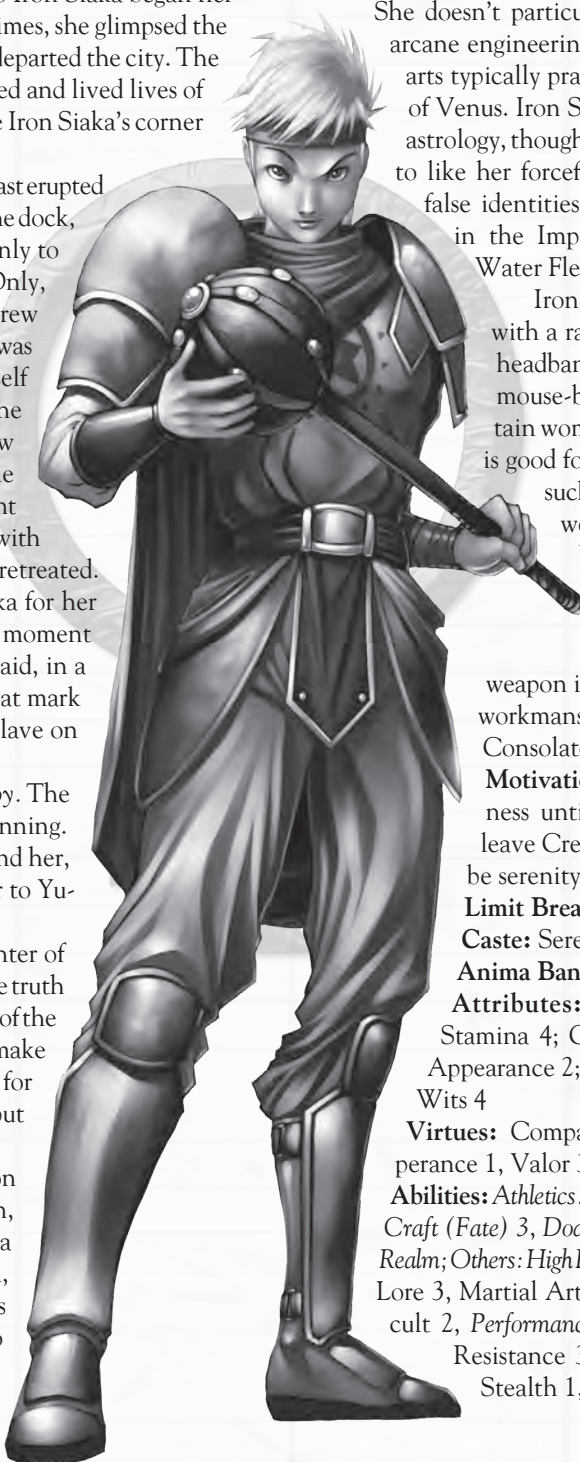
Limit Break: Joybringers' Flawed Fate
Caste: Serenity

Anima Banner: A harsh blue glare.

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Fate) 3, Dodge 4, Linguistics (Native: Low Realm; Others: High Realm, Old Realm, Seatongue) 3, Lore 3, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 3, Melee 5, Occult 2, Performance 3 (Prayer +2), Presence 3, Resistance 3, Ride 1, Sail 1, Socialize 3, Stealth 1, War 1





Backgrounds: Acquaintances 3, Allies 2, Artifact 3, Backing 1, Celestial Manse 1, Connections 2, Salary 2, Sifu 1

Colleges: *The Ewer* 2, *The Lovers* 3, *The Mast* 1, *The Musician* 2, *The Pillar* 3, *The Shield* 1, *The Spear* 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Athletics (3rd), Martial Arts (Fateful), Melee (3rd), Performance (Fateful), Socialize (1st) Athletics: Forgotten Earth

Awareness: Prior Warning

Dodge: Absence

Linguistics: Favorable Inflection Procedure

Melee: Harmony of Blows, Impeding the Flow, Orchestration of Mirrored Fates

Performance: Defense of Shining Joy, Perfection in Life

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style: All Charms

Water Dragon Style: All Charms

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 7B, Parry DV 2, Rate 4, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Starmetal Goremaul (The Dulcet Consolator): Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 20B/4, Parry DV 5, Rate 2, Tags O, P

Soak: 9L/14B (Starmetal reinforced buff jacket, +7L/10B, Hardness: 6L/6B, -1 mobility penalty, reduces attacker's damage rolls by a -1 external penalty)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 14 **Peripheral Essence:** 31 (39)

Committed Essence: 8

Other Notes: Iron Siaka's Artifact ratings refer to her buff jacket of starmetal and celestial silk and her starmetal goremaul, both of which are tuned to work harmoniously with Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style's Weapon-Tuning Resonance. The goremaul's hearthstone socket holds the hearthstone from her Celestial Manse in Yu-Shan, a Sidereal version of the lullaby stone. Iron Siaka is notorious among younger Viziers for being able to take a nap *anywhere*. She possesses Connections in the Imperial Navy and the Backing of the Sidereal Bronze Faction. Her Allies are gods and Joybringers of the Cerulean Lute of Harmony, and her Sifu is one of these gods (and a sometime lover of hers as well).

CRIMSON BANNER EXECUTIONER

THE ENIGMATIC ASSASSIN

Quote: *Call it... repaying a debt from another life. Compensation for another's failure.*

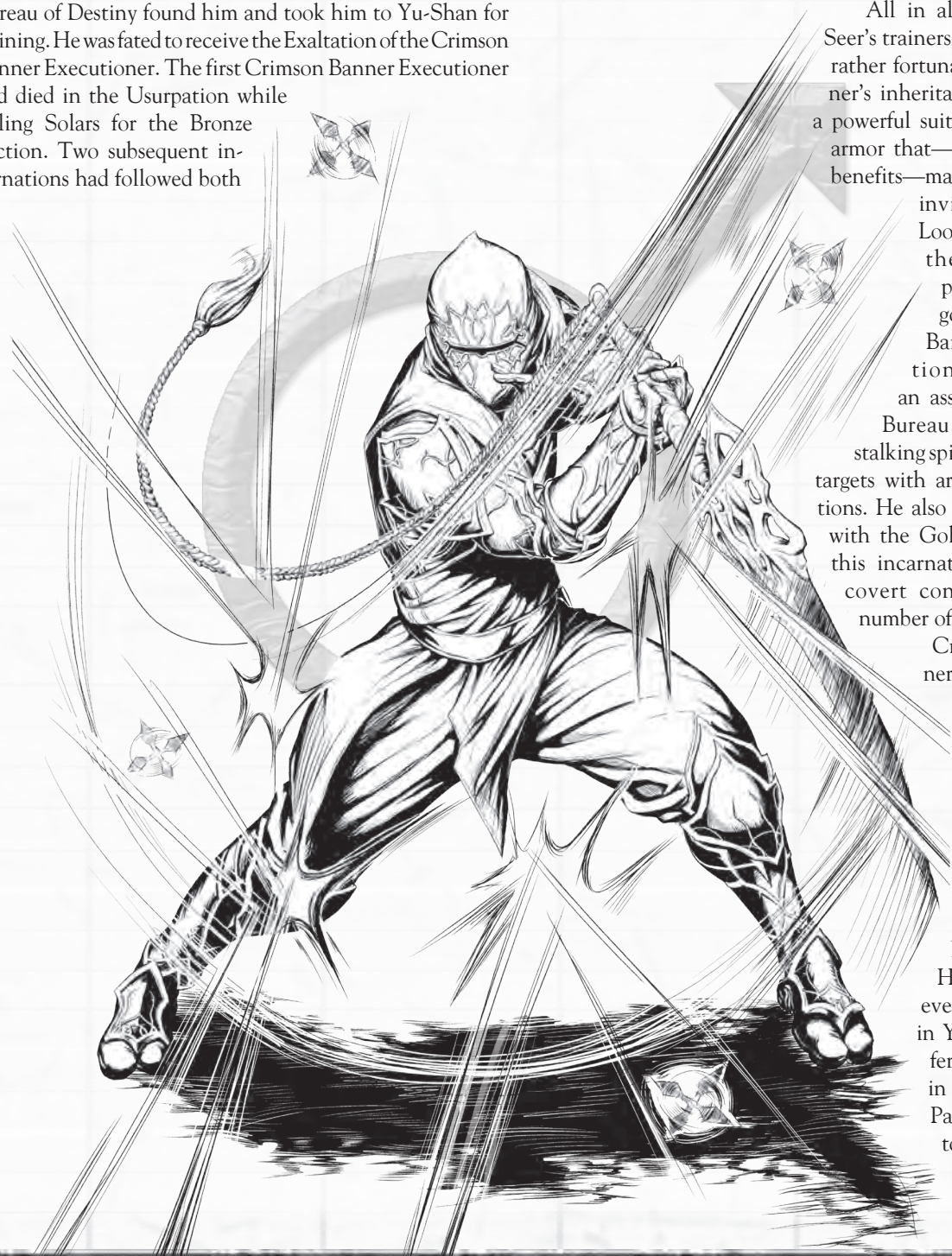
The youth who would become the Crimson Banner Executioner was born in Chiaroscuro to a jeweler raped by a minor Delzahn noble. The young half-breed got in a lot of fights over his mixed and illegitimate parentage before the Bureau of Destiny found him and took him to Yu-Shan for training. He was fated to receive the Exaltation of the Crimson Banner Executioner. The first Crimson Banner Executioner had died in the Usurpation while killing Solars for the Bronze Faction. Two subsequent incarnations had followed both

Gold and Bronze paths, and both factions tried recruiting the young Shieldbearer-to-be.

During one training mission in Creation, the future Sidereal stumbled into a plot involving a small god who was selling prophecies—inside information gleaned from the Loom of Fate—to a Fair Folk noble. The young man Exalted while attempting to escape, slew the raksha noble and was gravely wounded by the renegade god before other Sidereals arrived. The traitorous god escaped into the Wyld, but not before warning the new Crimson Banner Executioner that he'd better not show his face in Creation again.

All in all, the young Seer's trainers agreed it was rather fortunate that Banner's inheritance included a powerful suit of magitech armor that—among other benefits—made its wearer invisible to the Loom of Fate and the prophetic powers of the gods. Crimson Banner Executioner became an assassin for the Bureau of Destiny, stalking spirits and other targets with arcane perceptions. He also chose to ally with the Gold Faction in this incarnation and has covert contact with a number of Lawgivers.

Crimson Banner Executioner is an intensely private person. He doesn't speak much. His work and training seems to consume him entirely: He doesn't even own a home in Yu-Shan, preferring to lodge in the Crimson Panoply of Victory itself. He spends so much time





in his armor that rumors spread about horrible disfigurement or a curse from the renegade god if he ever does show his face again. These rumors are deliberate plants by his superiors in the Division of Battles, as part of a long plan to draw the renegade god out of hiding. In fact, Banner has an ordinary Southerner's dark skin and close-cropped black hair but no features more distinguishing than that. Out of his armor, he could walk unnoticed down any street from Kirighast to the Lap.

In addition to developing his prowess at combat, infiltration and assassination, Banner strives to improve his skills as a magitechnician. He needs such skills to maintain his armor and hopes to work on other magitech weaponry as well. Banner delays learning supernatural martial arts in favor of these other skills. He has an excellent sifu, though: a set of memory-crystals in the armor that carry the personality of the first Crimson Banner Executioner. Banner and his predecessor do not get along especially well, not least because Banner joined the Gold Faction specifically to recompense the new Solars for murdering their First Age incarnations. Still, the first Banner has little choice but to work with her heir; she built the armor not to work for any other Exaltation.

Motivation: Surpass all previous Crimson Banner Executioners

Limit Break: Shieldbearers' Flawed Fate

Caste: Battles

Anima Banner: Swirling red, like blood in water.

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

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

Abilities: *Athletics* 3, *Awareness* 3, *Bureaucracy* 2, *Craft (Air)* 2, *Craft (Fire)* 2, *Craft (Fate)* 1, *Craft (Magitech)* 2, *Dodge* 3, *Investigation* 2, *Linguistics* (Native: Flametongue; Others: Old Realm) 1, *Lore* 2, *Martial Arts* 2, *Melee* 4, *Occult* 2, *Presence* 2, *Resistance* 2, *Socialize* 1, *Stealth* 3, *Survival* 2

Backgrounds: *Allies* 2, *Artifact* 5, *Artifact* 2, *Backing* 1, *Salary* 2, *Savant* 3, *Sifu* 2

Colleges: *The Banner* 2, *The Key* 1, *The Mask* 2, *The Spear* 2
Charms:

Excellencies: *Martial Arts* (Fateful), *Stealth* (3rd) *Athletics*: *Burn Life*, *Forgotten Earth*, *Unswerving Juggernaut Practice*

Awareness: *Prior Warning*

Investigation: *Auspicious Prospects for Battles*, *Efficient Secretary Technique*

Lore: *Methodology of Secrets*

Melee: *Harmony of Blows*, *Impeding the Flow*, *Orchestration of Mirrored Fates*, *Serenity in Blood*

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 5B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 8B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Starmetal Short Daiklaves (*Auspicious Thunder*, *Fateful Lightning*): Speed 4, Accuracy 14, Damage 10L, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Soak: 10L/15B (Armor of the unseen assassin, +8L/12B, Hardness: 4L/4B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 10 **Peripheral Essence:** 27

Committed Essence: 16

Other Notes: The Crimson Banner Executioner's Artifact ratings refer to his paired starmetal short daiklaves and his artifact armor. The armor of the unseen assassin provides a wide variety of powers and advantages; see the full description on page 88 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**. In addition, this unique suit has the personality of the original Crimson Banner Executioner uploaded in it, where it acts as the current Banner's Sifu. The Exalt has the Backing of the Sidereal Gold Faction, as well as a number of Allies in the Cult of the Illuminated.

CHEJOP KEJAK

THE BRONZE FACTION LEADER

Quote: *It is necessary.*

With the Empress missing, Chejop Kejak no longer has any rival as the most powerful Exalt in Creation. He is also probably the busiest. As the highest-ranking Chosen of Secrets in the Bureau of Destiny, he works closely with divisional director Nara-O and sometimes with Jupiter herself. Among Sidereals, he leads the Bronze Faction—plus chairs the Capital Convention and serves on every special convention. The Immaculate Order knows him as the unobtrusive special secretary and advisor to the Mouth of Peace... though few remember his name, and no one remembers that he served the previous seven Mouths of Peace as well. Somehow, he also fits in daily martial arts practice.

Much of Kejak's power comes from sheer age, for he was born shortly after the end of the Primordial War. He rose through the ranks of the Five-Score Fellowship through millennia of hard work and skilled intrigue. In time, he led a faction that sought to prevent idiosyncratic projects whose long-term effects on Creation couldn't be predicted or controlled. His political archival, Tammiz Ushun, accepted greater risks in hopes of greater benefits for Creation.

Despite their philosophical differences, the two Sidereals remained great friends for centuries.

Kejak suggested the Great Prophecy and led his faction in arguing for the overthrow of the Lawgivers. Ushun argued just as strongly that the Viziers should try to guide the Solars back to sanity and responsible rulership. When

he tried to warn the Solar Deliberative, however, Kejak sent the Dragon-Blooded death squad that killed his friend. The Sidereal grieved, but it was necessary in order for the Usurpation to proceed. He's accepted many other hard necessities since then, from the extermination of the Solars' servant races to the alliance with the Empress.

No one can accuse Chejop Kejak of self-interest, though. He spends every waking minute working. Even during martial arts practice, a secretary reads him reports, and he dictates letters. He owns an enormous palace in Yu-Shan but lives in a few rooms attached to his office. Since the defection of Ayesha Ura, he's taken no lovers. Indeed, he has no personal life at all. For all that, Kejak delegates most details to subordinates, while he works on policy and planning.

Chejop Kejak considers himself a simple man: subtle in his methods but straightforward in his goals. He protects Creation at all costs, seeking the greatest good for the greatest number. The glories of the past were an acceptable sacrifice to ensure that Creation has a future.

Kejak believes he always chooses the safest, most certain course based on the best possible information. He never hated the old Solars, even as he killed them. He doesn't hate their heirs, either, but as the Time of Tumult engulfs Creation, he once more prepares to do whatever he must to restore a safe, predictable and stable future. He does not have much time, however, as he nears the end of even a Sidereal's lifespan.

Motivation: Justify past sacrifices

Limit Break: Oracles' Flawed Fate

Caste: Secrets

Anima Banner: A hard, crystalline green

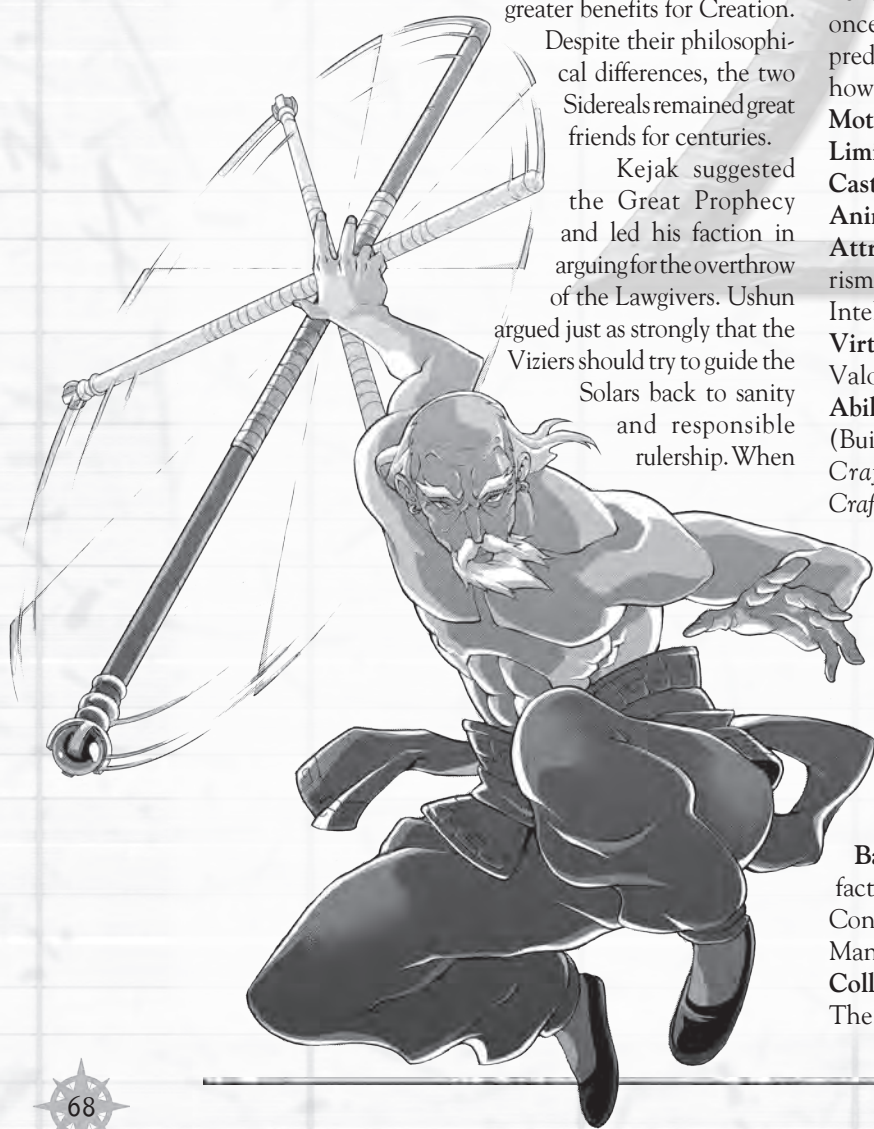
Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 7, Stamina 7; Charisma 7, Manipulation 8, Appearance 7; Perception 8, Intelligence 8, Wits 6

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

Abilities: Archery 1, Athletics 6, Awareness 8, Bureaucracy 8 (Building Institutions +1), Craft (Air) 5, Craft (Earth) 5, Craft (Fate) 8, Craft (Fire) 5, Craft (Genesis) 5, Craft (Magitech) 6, Craft (Water) 5, Craft (Wood) 5, Dodge 8, Integrity 8, Investigation 8, Larceny 6, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Holy Speech, High Realm, Low Realm, Pelagial, Riverspeak, numerous dead languages) 8 (Subtext Meanings +2), Lore 7 (Immaculate Doctrine +2), Martial Arts 8, Medicine 5, Melee 6, Occult 6, Performance 8 (Sidereal Astrology +2), Presence 6 (Unobtrusive Persuasion +2), Resistance 7, Ride 5, Sail 4, Socialize 7 (Working Meetings +2), Stealth 7, Survival 4, Thrown 5, War 4 (Fighting Creatures of Darkness +2)

Backgrounds: Acquaintances 5, Allies 5, Artifact 4, Artifact 2, Artifact 1, Backing 5, Backing 5, Celestial Manse 2, Connections 5, Connections 5, Connections 3, Manse 4, Manse 2, Reputation 5, Resources 5, Salary 5, Savant 4

Colleges: The Banner 2, The Captain 4, The Corpse 2, The Crow 2, The Ewer 2, The Gauntlet 2, The Guardians 3,



The Gull 1, The Haywain 4, *The Key* 4, The Lovers 2, *The Mask* 5, The Mast 3, The Messenger 3, The Musician 2, The Peacock 3, The Pillar 2, The Quiver 3, The Rising Smoke 2, The Shield 1, The Ship's Wheel 3, *The Sorcerer* 4, The Spear 2, The Sword 4, *The Treasure Trove* 4

Charms:

Excellencies: Awareness (1st, 3rd, Fateful), Bureaucracy (1st, Fateful), Craft (1st, Fateful), Dodge (1st, 3rd, Fateful, Propitious Dodge Alignment), Investigation (1st, Fateful), Larceny (1st), Linguistics (1st, 3rd), Lore (1st, Fateful), Martial Arts (1st, 3rd, Fateful, Propitious Martial Arts Alignment), Performance (1st, Fateful), Presence (1st, Fateful, Propitious Presence Alignment), Resistance (1st, 3rd, Fateful), Socialize (1st, Fateful), Stealth (1st, 3rd), Thrown (1st), War (1st, Fateful, Propitious War Alignment)

Adorjan: Demon-Wracking Shout

Athletics: Forgotten Earth

Awareness: Expected Pain, Prior Warning, Supernal Awareness, Wise Choice

Bureaucracy: All Charms

Craft: Destiny-Knitting Entanglement, Predestined Delivery Shaping, World-Shaping Artistic Vision (Knowledge +3)

Dodge: Absence, Avoidance Kata, Duck Fate

Integrity: Compassionate Essence Replenishment, Preservation of Resolve, Stern Essence Replenishment, Unhearing Dedication

Investigation: All Charms, including Auspicious Prospects for Battles, Journeys, Secrets and Serenity

Larceny: Avoiding the Truth Technique, Dream Confiscation Approach, Name-Pilfering Practice, Sidereal Shell Games, Thought-Swiping Distraction

Linguistics: Abandoned Words Curse, Favorable Inflection Procedure

Lore: All Charms

Melee: Harmony of Blows, Impeding the Flow, Orchestration of Mirrored Fates, Serenity in Blood

Occult: All Charms

Performance: All Charms

Presence: All Charms

Resistance: Optimistic Security Practice, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Shield of Destiny, Someone Else's Destiny, Water and Fire Legion, Water and Fire Treaty

Ride: Breaking the Wild Mortal, Glory Path, Ordained Bridle of Mercury, Spirit-Shape Companion, Yellow Path

Sail: Mirror-Shattering Method, Salt into Ash Sleight, Serendipitous Voyage, Stone Skipping Spirit, Walls of Salt and Ash (Wyld, Malfean)

Socialize: All Charms

Stealth: Blinding the Boar, Soft Presence Practice, Subordinate Inspiration Practice, Walking Outside Fate

Thrown: Essence Thorn Practice, Shadow-Piercing Needle

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Air Dragon, Five Dragon and Water Dragon Styles: Through their Form Charms

Border of Kaleidoscopic Logic, Charcoal March of Spiders, Citrine Poxes of Contagion, Prismatic Arrangement of

Creation and Violet Bier of Sorrows Styles: All Charms, including Air Aspect Terrestrial, Full Moon Lunar, Night Solar and Water Aspect Terrestrial Exalt Ways

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Burning Eyes of the Offender, Coin of Distant Vision, Corrupted Worlds, Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Countermagic, Empathic Wind, Incantation of Effective Restoration, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Infallible Messenger, Lightning Spider, Mists of Eventide, Open the Spirit Door, Paralyzing Contradiction, The Sacred Tongue, Shadowy Simulacrum of Smoke, Stormwind Rider, Summon Elemental, Summoning of the Harvest, Thunder Wolf's Howl, Virtuous Guardian of Flame

Sapphire Circle: The Battle's End, Demon of the Second Circle, The Faithful Ally, Gift of Knowledge, Hidden Judges of the Secret Flame, Hideous Confusion of Tongues, Mercury's Deliverance, Raise the Puissant Sanctum, Sapphire Circle Banishment, Sapphire Countermagic, Shadows of the Ancient Past, Summon Ghost, Summon Spirit Boat, Summon the Heavenly Portal, Threefold Binding of the Heart, Travel Without Distance, Voices of Distant Regard, Whirlwind of Fate

Join Battle: 14

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 5B, Parry DV 9, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 8B, Parry DV 7, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 15, Damage 5B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags N

Starmetal Wrackstaff (Fair Lesson): Speed 4, Accuracy 18, Damage 12L or 20B, Parry DV 9, Rate 3, Tags 2, M, P, R

Soak: 4L/7B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 13 Willpower: 10

Essence: 10

Personal Essence: 30

Peripheral Essence: 81 (87)

Committed Essence: 6

Other Notes: Chejop Kejak possesses the complete Backing of both the Sidereal Bronze Faction and the Forbidding Manse of Ivy; Connections throughout the Bureau of Destiny (5), the Immaculate Order (5) and the Scarlet Dynasty (3); and Allies within all these organizations. His ability to manage such political power has given him his Reputation as the supreme organization man.

Kejak can inflict an astrological curse on whomever he touches with his Artifact wrackstaff. He selects one Ability, and the curse raises the victim's target number with that Ability by one. The curse afflicts the person touching the staff who has the lower Essence.

Kejak also wears Artifact starmetal hearthstone bracers and an Artifact starmetal hearthstone amulet. He carries three hearthstones, the product of his Celestial Manse in Yu-Shan and two Manses he maintains on the Blessed Isle: a jewel of the celestial mandarin in the amulet, a gemstone of surface thoughts in the right bracer and a dream-stone set in the wrackstaff.



LUPO

GOLD FACTION SIFU

Quote: *Did I make you angry? How will you rule Creation if you cannot rule yourself?*

The Chosen of Secrets called While the Ax Falls died fighting alongside his friend Tammiz Ushun while trying to stop the Usurpation. The remnant Gold Faction found the inheritor of his Exaltation and raised him to remain loyal to a cause that seemed lost. Lupo objected strongly when Ayesha Ura defected from the Bronze Faction, not trusting Chejop Kejak's protégée and lover. After the two Sidereals spent three days behind closed doors working out their differences, though, Lupo withdrew his objections. He now loyally supports Ayesha as leader of the Gold Faction, for he acknowledges her superior political acumen.

Lupo is not so sure about the Cult of the Illuminated project, however. He frequently challenges Ayesha in her policy proposals where the Cult is concerned. Over the centuries, the Gold Faction tried several times to groom the inheritors of the dozen or so free Solar Exaltations as resurgent Princes of the Earth. Lupo thus met several Lawgivers and learned their flaws as well as their virtues. Among the Gold Faction leaders, Lupo probably is the most determined to keep the new generation of Solars firmly under Sidereal control and guidance. Indeed, Lupo has a strong sense of realpolitik in all matters, counterbalancing Ayesha Ura's idealism. He channels any remnant rage at the Bronze Faction into his martial arts workouts.

In the Cult, Lupo trains young Solars in supernatural martial arts—or more often, he trains the Sidereals who train the Solars, as Lupo is the Gold Faction's leading sifu with many calls on his time. Supernatural martial arts are Lupo's greatest passion. He invented the Falling Blossom Style but has never found time for his greatest ambition—to create a new Sidereal martial art. When Lupo does get a chance to train a young Lawgiver, he

tries to impart a strong sense of duty and service along with the combat Charms.

Lupo also serves on the Convention on Deathlords. He masterminds plots to uncover the secrets of those ancient ghosts, the Underworld and the Abyssal Exalted, often using Cult of the Illuminated members as catspaws. Lupo supports recruiting deathknights into the Cult, as well, in hopes of learning the reason for their strange parallelism to the Solars and perhaps turning their power against the Deathlords. He does not mention his hope to learn the deathknights' dark and frightening martial arts. Lupo has come to distrust all information the Convention receives from his fellow Chosen of Secrets, the Green Lady, as he suspects a Deathlord may have compromised her.

Many Sidereals suspect, correctly, that Lupo and Ayesha Ura are lovers. Advancing the Gold Faction agenda comes first, though, so they keep their relationship secret. Each grants the other the right to take other lovers, as this can be a powerful tool for recruitment or subversion. Anyway, as Sidereals, they will almost certainly outlive any possible rival for each other's affections. Deep down, though,

one reason Lupo wants to invent a new Sidereal martial art is lingering jealousy of Chejop Kejak: It's one of the few deeds that Ayesha's former lover never achieved.

Lupo is a tall, burly man with short red hair and a broad, heavy-boned face. He tends to wear dojo gear such as gi and sandals.

Motivation: Master the ultimate martial arts secrets

Limit Break: Oracles' Flawed Fate

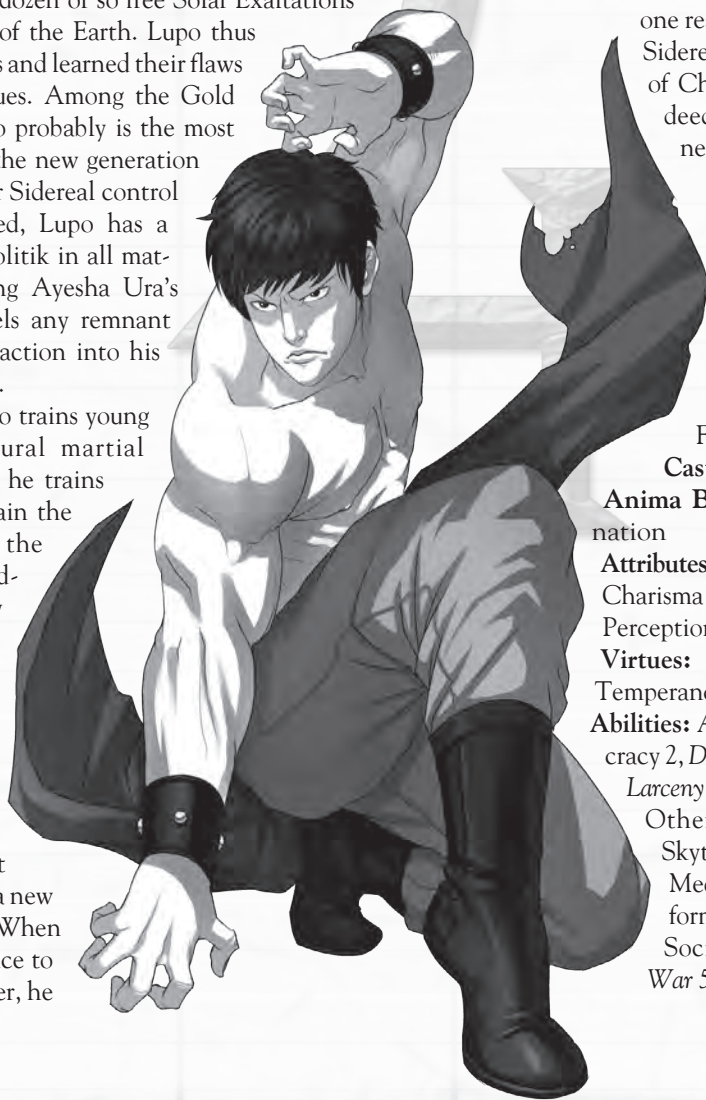
Caste: Secrets

Anima Banner: Brilliant green illumination

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 4, Integrity 4, Investigation 3, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm, Riverspeak, Skytongue) 3, Lore 4, Martial Arts 6, Medicine 3, Melee 3, Occult 2, Performance 3, Presence 5, Resistance 3, Socialize 3, Stealth 6, Survival 3, War 5





Backgrounds: Allies 1, Artifact 2, Backing 4, Celestial Manse 3, Connections 5, Salary 3

Colleges: The Gauntlet 3, *The Guardians* 3, *The Key* 4, *The Mask* 3, *The Mast* 2, *The Pillar* 1, *The Shield* 2, *The Sorcerer* 3, *The Sword* 3, *The Treasure Trove* 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Awareness (2nd, Fateful), Integrity (Fateful), Investigation (2nd), Lore (1st, Fateful), Martial Arts (1st), Performance (2nd), Stealth (1st), War (3rd) Athletics: Burn Life, Forgotten Earth

Awareness: Expected Pain, Prior Warning, Supernal Awareness

Bureaucracy: Icy Hand

Dodge: Absence, Avoidance Kata, Duck Fate

Integrity: Creation-Preserving Will, Preservation of Resolve, Unwavering Well-Being Meditation

Investigation: Auspicious Prospects for Endings, Auspicious Prospects for Journeys, Auspicious Prospects for Secrets, Efficient Secretary Technique

Larceny: Avoiding the Truth Technique, Sidereal Shell Games, Thought-Swiping Distraction

Lore: Methodology of Secrets, Of Secrets Yet Untold, Of the Shape of the World, Of Things Desired and Feared, Of Truths Best Unspoken

Medicine: Terminate Illness

Occult: Mark of Exaltation

Presence: Presence in Absence Technique

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x3)

Socialize: Cash and Murder Games, Life Without Compunction, Shun the Smiling Lady, You and Yours Stance

Stealth: All Charms

Survival: Adopting the Untamed Face, Becoming the Wilderness, Sky and Rain Mantra

War: Auspicious Recruitment Drive, Demon-Blocking Battle Pattern, Predestined Triumph Practice, Red Haze, Training Mandate of Auspicious Battle

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Ebon Shadow Style: All Charms

Falling Blossom Style: Dual Scarlet Blossom Technique, Falling Blossom Form, Living Shield Technique, Purity of Purpose Attack, Strength of Faith Meditation, Undefended Assault Method, Verse of the Martyr

Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Style: All Charms, including Air Aspect Terrestrial Exalt Ways, Changing Moon Lunar Exalt Ways, Dawn Solar Exalt Ways, Night Solar Exalt Ways, No Moon Lunar Exalt Ways, Zenith Solar Exalt Ways

Snake Style: Essence Fangs and Scales Technique, Serpentine Evasion, Snake Form, Striking Cobra Technique

Solar Hero Style: Through its Form Charm

Tiger Style: All Charms

Violet Bier of Sorrows Style: All Charms

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Starmetal Serpent-Sting Staff (Stern Sifu): Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 17B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3, Tags M, P

Soak: 3L/6B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 6

Personal Essence: 20

Peripheral Essence: 53 (58)

Committed Essence: 5

Other Notes: Lupo has the Backing of (and Allies within) the Gold Faction, as well as Connections in the Cult of the Illuminated. His Artifact serpent-sting staff carries the precision of form gemstone from his Celestial Manse.

MAY BLOSSOM

THE TROUBLEMAKER

Quote: *Was I not supposed to say that? I'm sorry, I thought everyone knew about you and the gardener!*

May Blossom was born to patricians of House Nellens, but she had many opportunities to spy on her Exalted aunts, uncles and cousins. She thus concluded that her Exalted kin were not the morally perfect paragons that her parents and Immaculate tutors claimed. In fact, their debauches would get any common folk hanged, or at least disgraced. May Blossom Exalted as she was about to perform a satirical song on this topic at a family recital, when the sunlight reflecting off a green lacquer box told her this was a *really bad idea*. When the Bureau of Destiny came to collect her, though, May Blossom left a complete record of what she knew... and paid a servant to leave it at the time and place she foresaw it would cause the greatest uproar among her Exalted relatives. She joined the Gold Faction, of course.

As one of Heaven's secret agents, May Blossom finds her early instruction within a Dynastic household almost as useful as her training from the Bureau of Destiny. She can pass as a highborn lady anywhere in the Realm or the Scavenger Lands. The Oracle specializes in seducing her way into the salons (if not necessarily the beds) of the upper classes and discovering their secret intentions or hidden connections to creatures beyond fate. She often leaves her targeted group in an uproar as hidden scandals come to light.

While May Blossom works principally as an infiltrator, she is also a nascent sorceress, and she hopes to pursue this interest in greater depth. When soft words and false identities fail, she defends herself using Wood Dragon Claw, augmented by the Violet Bier of Sorrows Style of martial arts. May Blossom prefers to avoid combat, though, as she knows it will never be her strong suit. Her third great interest is riding (her family bred racehorses), and she is an expert equestrian. Sidereal partners usually rely on May Blossom to procure mounts.

May Blossom looks like an idealized princess: slim but beautifully rounded in all the right places, with elegantly coiffed black hair. Her assured but not haughty manner has men instinctively calling her "ma'am" and offering to help her. She generally wears embroidered gowns of translucent silk, long gloves,

golden armbands and a spectacular jeweled headdress that incorporates her dragon tear tiara and hearthstone.

Motivation: Reveal the crimes and scandals of the Scarlet Dynasty

Limit Break: Oracles' Flawed Fate

Caste: Secrets

Anima Banner: Pale and featureless, unrevealing green glow.

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





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

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Fate) 2, Dodge 2, *Investigation* 2, *Larceny* 2, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Old Realm, Riverspeak) 2, *Lore* 3, Martial Arts 3, *Occult* 3, *Performance* 3 (Prayer +2), *Presence* 2, *Ride* 3, *Socialize* 2, *Stealth* 2

Backgrounds: Acquaintances 3, Artifact 2, Backing 1, Connections 2, Connections 2, Celestial Manse 1, Salary 2, Sifu 2

Colleges: The Lovers 2, The Messenger 1, *The Sorcerer* 3, *The Treasure Trove* 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Performance (2nd), Socialize (3rd)Occult: Mark of Exaltation, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Ride: Break the Wild Mortal, Ordained Bridle of Mercury

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Violet Bier of Sorrows Style: Blade of the Battle Maiden, Flight of Mercury, Secrets of Future Strife

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Emerald Countermagic, Wood Dragon Claw

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 2B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 5B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Wood Dragon's Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 8L, Parry DV 5, Rate 2, Tags N

Soak: 1L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 12 **Peripheral Essence:** 31 (33)

Committed Essence: 2

Other Notes: May Blossom lives in the Golden Tree of Eternal Celestial Glory, a condominium complex in Yu-Shan. Every apartment is a separate one-dot Celestial Manse that produces a Solar version of a gem of holiness. She wears her hearthstone in a dragon tear tiara, which accounts for her Artifact rating. The Exalt has the Backing of the Gold Faction, and she maintains Connections within House Nellens. She also possesses Connections within the Confederation of Rivers. Her Sifu is Gracious Shaia of the Cult of the Illuminated.

May Blossom typically sets her Wood Dragon's Claw at Accuracy +3, Damage +6L, Defense +4, Rate 2. She can raise the Accuracy at the expense of Defense or Damage, however.



BLACK ICE SHADOW

ABYSSAL IMPERSONATOR

Quote: So... What is worth living for?



The venerable Akiva Dulanga, Chosen of Saturn and chair of the Convention on Deathlords, forecast that her Exaltation would soon pass to a young man of Ghost-Blooded parentage, whom the Bureau of Destiny would name Black Ice Shadow. Her Convention devised a daring plan to train her replacement as the Viziers' special agent in the shadowlands and the Underworld beyond. The Sidereals abducted Black Ice Shadow soon after his birth, and small gods of death and

decay raised him in an Abyssal manse within a shadowland. Sure enough, Shadow Exalted with an unusual affinity for the necrotic power of the Underworld. He even managed to initiate himself into necromancy.

Then, the Mask of Winters conquered Thorns and revealed the existence of deathknights... who seemed very much like what the Bureau hoped Black Ice Shadow would become. Suspicion fell on the young Reckoner and everyone connected to the project. Had the Deathlords somehow fooled the Bureau of Destiny into creating a traitor to Creation?

The Division of Endings's director Wayang took responsibility for Black Ice Shadow. The young Exalt now acts as a special assistant to the God of Silence while he continues his training. No one in the Bureau of Destiny will act as Shadow's sifu, but Wayang found a replacement who inspires further suspicion: the ghost of a Dragon-Blooded swordsman who remembers the Fire Dragon Style.

Wayang believes that the Bureau of Destiny can use Black Ice Shadow's peculiar, death-tainted background and Essence. With the right Charms and equipment, he might be able to infiltrate the Deathlords' organizations. Shadow can already deceive mortals and ghosts who lack experience with real deathknights, as he summons ghosts at will and destroys zombies with but a touch.

Much of Black Ice Shadow's training, however, deals with the enigmas of life and death: when and why to end a life, and how to become a fully human creature. The young Exalt knows that he isn't good with the living. His shyness emerges as a sort of grim brusqueness. Nevertheless, Shadow has a kind heart, in his fashion; he abhors unnecessary pain and fear. He views his missions for the Bureau as opportunities to watch and learn—which unnerves fellow Sidereals, who don't know the reason for his close, silent observation of them. Neither the Gold nor Bronze Factions try to recruit him.

Black Ice Shadow is a young man of medium height with pale skin and short, spiky black hair. He dresses in black leather, a starmetal breastplate, a purple scarf and tattered purple cloak, with twin short daiklaves belted at his hips. Shadow often pulls the scarf over his mouth and nose. Though the effect is rather sinister, he usually does this to avoid inhaling small insects or ash. Black Ice Shadow looks most frightening, however, when he uses Fire Dragon Charms: Instead of the warm, yellow-to-red Essence flares that normally mark this martial arts style, ghostly greenish flames flicker about his hands and weapons, resembling the unholy pyre flame of the Underworld.

Motivation: Understand the human condition

Limit Break: Reckoners' Flawed Fate

Caste: Endings

Anima Banner: Dark purple glow that conceals more than it reveals.

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Larceny 3, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: High Realm) 1, Lore 3, Martial Arts 4, Medicine 3, Melee 4, Occult 3 (Ghosts +2), Resistance 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 4

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Backing 3, Connections 2, Manse 3, Salary 1, Sifu 1

Colleges: *The Crow* 2, *The Spear* 3, *The Sword* 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Martial Arts (Fateful)

Athletics: Forgotten Earth

Awareness: Prior Warning

Investigation: Auspicious Prospects for Endings

Medicine: Peaceable Conclusion, Smooth Transition

Occult: Shadowland Circle Necromancy

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Fire Dragon Style: Flame-Flicker Stance, Flash-Fire Technique, Perfect Blazing Blow

Spells:

Iron Circle: Master Puppeteer's Knife, Summon Ghost

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 3B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soulsteel Short Daiklaves (Liberator's Hands): Speed 4, Accuracy 12*, Damage 7L, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

* Does not include magical material bonus.

Soak: 8L/8B (Starmetal breastplate, +6L/4B, Hardness: 3L/3B, reduces attacker's damage rolls by a -1 external penalty)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 12 **Peripheral Essence:** 25 (33)

Committed Essence: 8

Other Notes: Black Ice Shadow's Artifact ratings represent the pair of soulsteel short daiklaves he wields and his starmetal breastplate. He risks trying to attune the daiklaves fully and gain the magical material bonus only if he expects a truly dire battle or tries impersonating a deathknight to someone who might be able to tell the difference between Exalted. His breastplate has a setting for the hearthstone of Black Ice Shadow's Abyssal Manse, a death-speech gemstone (see *Exalted*, p. 384). The Reckoner enjoys the Backing of and Allies within the Division of Endings, as well as Connections with Creation's shadowland dwellers. His ghostly Sifu is called the Pyre-Flame Blademaster.



KAI

THE ECCENTRIC SPECIALIST

Quote: *So sad, losing the gifts your children gave you for the after-life... NOT THAT BURYING A FEW TRINKETS MAKES UP FOR BRONZE FACTION TREASON!... Finding these grave robbers and returning the grave goods should provide at least two decades of influence in this ancestor cult.*

Many Sidereals specialize in particular activities or facets of Creation. Other Sidereals consult them when a mission involves this activity, profession or place. Kai is one such specialist.

This Chosen of Endings has attained uncommon power for a Sidereal only 350 years old. Kai is also a notable savant of First Age technology. He would be something of a celebrity among the Chosen of Endings, except... *something* happened during his long training period. He emerged from the Violet Bier of Sorrows more than half insane.

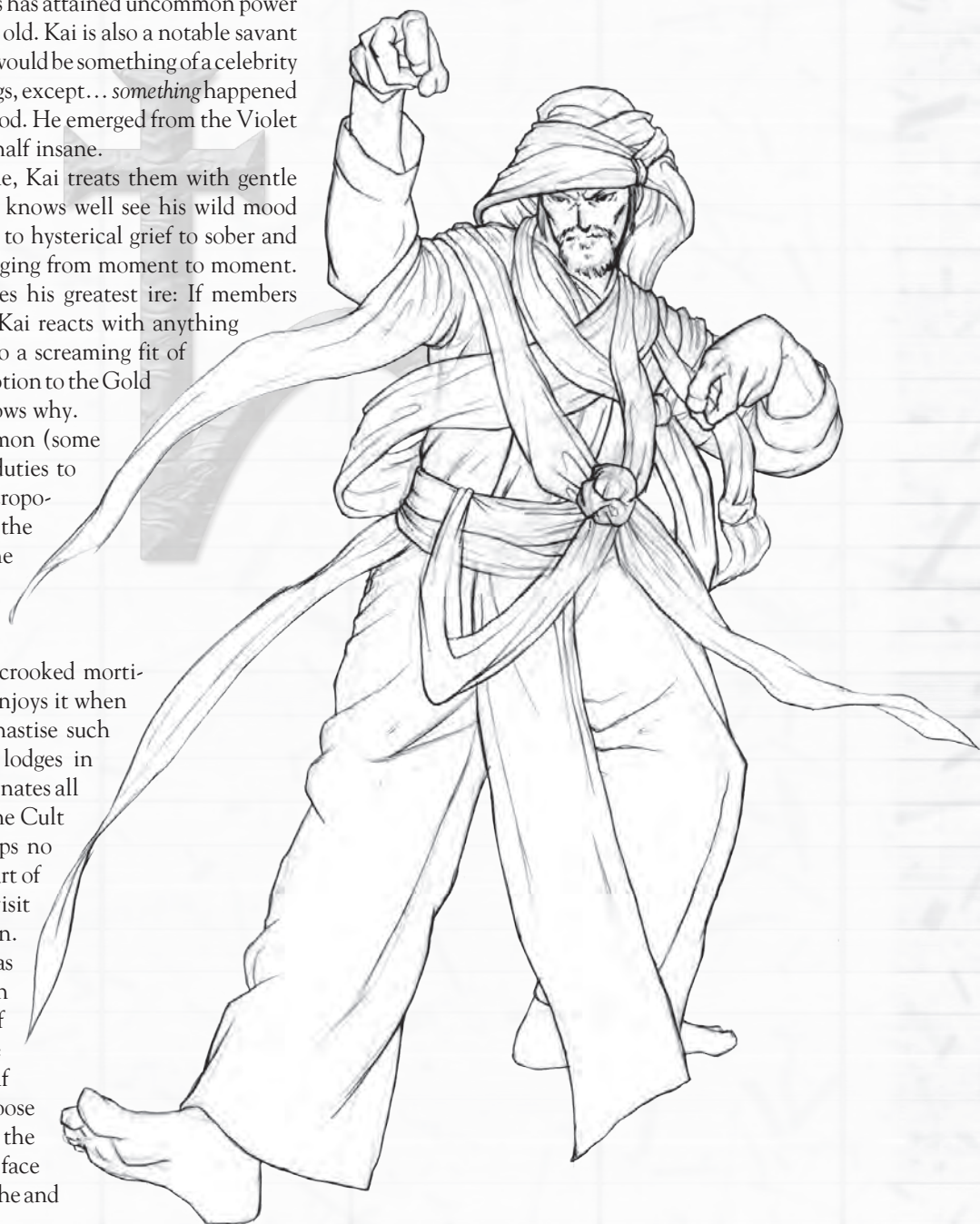
On first meeting people, Kai treats them with gentle bonhomie. Only people he knows well see his wild mood swings, from deep gratitude to hysterical grief to sober and dispassionate analysis, changing from moment to moment. The Bronze Faction receives his greatest ire: If members even mention their cause, Kai reacts with anything from stalking away coldly to a screaming fit of rage. He shows an equal devotion to the Gold Faction, though no one knows why.

Kai also shows uncommon (some say unhealthy) zeal in his duties to Saturn. He monitors the necropolises of Creation to see that the right people are buried the right way and that the right graves are robbed while others remain inviolate. He despises grave robbers and crooked morticians, though, and greatly enjoys it when his duties permit him to chastise such shady folk. Naturally, Kai lodges in an apartment in Sijan; he donates all his celestial pay packet to the Cult of the Illuminated and keeps no residence in Yu-Shan. As part of his mortuary duty, he can visit almost any place in Creation.

Although Kai Exalted as a young man, his unknown trials in the Violet Bier of Sorrows left him looking like an old one. He swaths himself in silken robes, sashes, burnoose and gloves, no matter what the heat, showing only his lined face and prematurely gray mustache and

beard. He fears the touch of skin on skin in general, and sex in particular.

For all his eccentricities, Kai gives the Bureau of Destinies exemplary service and has never been convicted of any offenses against Heaven. The Gold Faction finds him equally zealous and successful in the tasks it assigns him. Kai has become one of the best recruiters of young Solars for the Cult of the Illuminated. The task seems to focus his thoughts and give him self-control. More than any Charms Kai brings to bear, his sheer intensity of belief often convinces Lawgivers that the Cult's work is *absolutely necessary* for the good of Creation.



Motivation: End the Bronze Faction and all its works

Limit Break: Reckoners' Flawed Fate

Caste: Endings

Anima Banner: Flickering cloud of violet light

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

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 1, Valor 4

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Air) 2, Craft (Fire) 2, Craft (Fate) 3, Craft (Magitech) 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Larceny 2, Linguistics (Native: Low Realm; Others: Old Realm, Riverspeak) 2, Lore 3, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 4, Occult 4, Performance 2 (Funerals +1, Sidereal Astrology Prayers +2), Presence 4, Resistance 5, Ride 4, Socialize 3, Stealth 4, War 4

Backgrounds: Acquaintances 1, Allies 2, Artifact 2, Backing 4, Connections 3, Contacts 1, Mentor 3, Salary 1, Savant 3

Colleges: *The Corpse* 3, *The Crow* 2, *The Haywain* 2, *The Rising Smoke* 2, *The Sword* 1

Charms:

Excellencies: Athletics (Fateful), Awareness (2nd), Integrity (1st), Martial Arts (1st, Fateful), Medicine (1st) Athletics: Burn Life, Forgotten Earth, Inexorable Advance

Awareness: Conclusive Wisdom, Expected Pain, Inevitable Pursuit, Prior Warning, Supernal Awareness, Wise Choice
Dodge: Absence, Duck Fate

Integrity: Heroic Essence Replenishment

Larceny: Avoiding the Truth Technique

Medicine: Invocation of the Storm-Following Silence, Peaceable Conclusion, Smooth Transition, Terminate Illness

Occult: Celestial Circle Sorcery, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Presence: Impose Motivation

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x5), Shield of Destiny, Someone Else's Destiny

War: Auspicious Recruitment Drive, Predestined Triumph Practice

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Citrine Poxes of Contagion Style: Through its Form Charm

Mantis Style: All Charms

Violet Bier of Sorrows Style: Blade of the Battle Maiden, Secrets of Future Strife

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Assassin's Fatal Touch, Calling the Stalwart Servitor, Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Countermagic, Flight of Separation, Malediction of the Distorted Compass, Silent Words of Dreams and Nightmares, The Spy Who Walks in Darkness, Stormwind Rider, Theft of Memory

Sapphire Circle: Sapphire Banishment, Sapphire Countermagic

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 3B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 6B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Seven-Section Staff: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 10B, Parry DV 6, Rate 2, Tags M

Soak: 9L/14B (Starmetal reinforced buff jacket, +7L/10B, Hardness: 6L/6B, -1 mobility penalty, reduces attacker's damage rolls by a -1 external penalty)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 (6 with armor)

Willpower: 7

Essence: 6

Personal Essence: 19

Peripheral Essence: 50 (53)

Committed Essence: 3

Other Notes: Kai has the Backing of the Gold Faction and Connections in the Cult of the Illuminated. His Allies are from within those organizations, while his Contacts are among Creation's grave tenders. In fact, Kai's Mentor is a mid-ranking Funerist in Sijan's Morticians' Order. This gives him inside information about all matters Sijanese, in both Creation and the Underworld. Kai hopes to develop stronger ghostly connections through the Funerist.

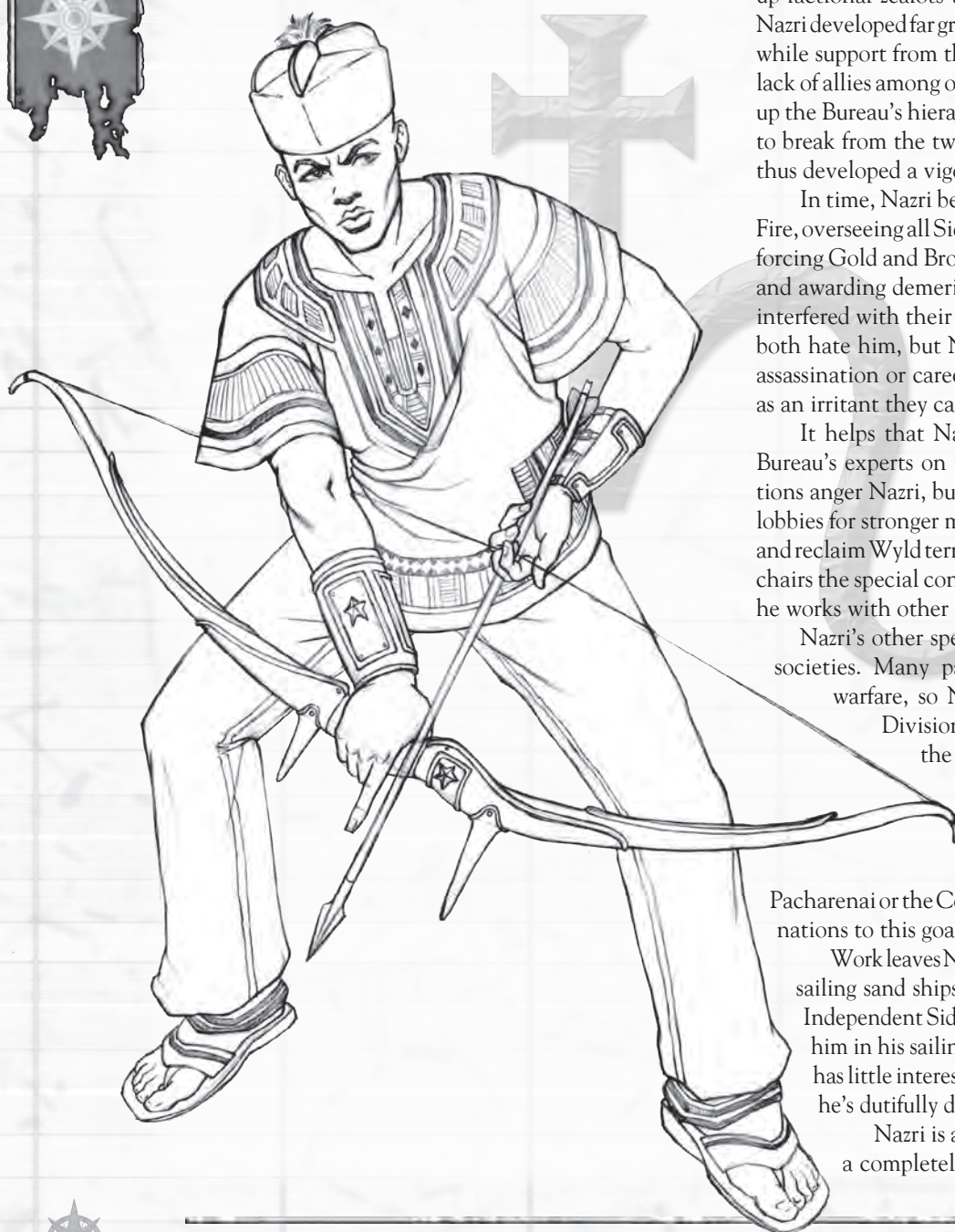


NAZRI

THE INDEPENDENT

Quote: *My dear colleagues, enlighten me. How, exactly, did your brawl in Chiaroscuro serve to protect Creation?*

Nazri Exalted immediately after the Usurpation. He began by stalking and killing a troop of masterless demons that ravaged his community. Nazri went along with the Bronze Faction's program because they had a plan for rebuilding and defending Creation, and the remnant Gold Faction didn't. Nevertheless, he never became a true believer. He also developed equally strong connections to the elemental dragon Swan Dragon, Censor of the South, and a number of other influential spirits.



Centuries later, the Great Contagion and the Fair Folk invasion destroyed almost everything that Nazri loved. The Contagion annihilated his native culture, before the Wyld consumed the land itself. In addition, Swan Dragon apparently fell battling the Fair Folk. After the Empress saved Creation, Nazri confronted the leaders of both Bronze and Gold Factions, before all the surviving Five-Score Fellowship. In a cold rage, he denounced them both as blind fools who had nearly destroyed Creation by letting their infighting distract them from their one and only duty to the Bureau of Destiny. Nazri likely would have died that hour, had not several gods declared their intent to protect him.

From then on, Nazri performed his duties with utmost zeal and adherence to procedure... and found ways to trip up factional zealots through obscure regulations. Perforce, Nazri developed far greater political skill than he ever wanted, while support from the Bureau's deities made up for Nazri's lack of allies among other Sidereals. As Nazri clawed his way up the Bureau's hierarchy, though, he inspired other Viziers to break from the two factions. The Five-Score Fellowship thus developed a vigorous group of "Independents."

In time, Nazri became the Chair for the Convention of Fire, overseeing all Sidereal activities in the South. He enjoys forcing Gold and Bronze Faction members to work together and awarding demerits for any hint that factional interests interfered with their duties. Chejop Kejak and Ayesha Ura both hate him, but Nazri has survived enough attempts at assassination or career sabotage that they both accept him as an irritant they cannot remove.

It helps that Nazri established himself as one of the Bureau's experts on the Fair Folk and the Wyld. The factions anger Nazri, but he *hates* the Fair Folk: He constantly lobbies for stronger measures to purge them from the South and reclaim Wyld territory for Creation. Naturally, Nazri also chairs the special convention on the Wyld. In this capacity, he works with other Sidereals throughout Creation.

Nazri's other specialty is war, especially wars that end societies. Many parts of the South see near-constant warfare, so Nazri must often coordinate with the Division of Battles. Hu Dai Liang, director of the Crimson Panoply of Victory, is among Nazri's friends and supporters. Nazri's avowed goal is to create a chain of powerful nations across the South that can expel Fair Folk such as the Pacharenai or the Copper Palm raiders. He sacrifices weaker nations to this goal.

Work leaves Nazri with little time for hobbies. He enjoys sailing sand ships whenever he has the chance, though. Independent Sidereals who want to curry favor often join him in his sailing vacations. Unlike some Viziers, Nazri has little interest in either martial arts or sorcery, though he's dutifully developed proficiency with both.

Nazri is a tall, lean man with jet-black skin and a completely bald head (not shaved; his long-lost

people, from the Far South, were naturally bald). The man's amiable demeanor conceals a fierce and uncompromising will. He typically wears embroidered caftans and birettas.

Motivation: End the threat of the Fair Folk

Limit Break: Reckoners' Flawed Fate

Caste: Endings

Anima Banner: A fierce, clear violet radiance

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

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 5, Temperance 3, Valor 4

Abilities: Archery 5, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 5 (*Obscure Regulations* +3), Craft (Fate) 6, Craft (Wood) 2, Dodge 4, Integrity 4, Investigation 3, Larceny 5, Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: High Holy Speech, High Realm, Low Realm, Old Realm) 4, Lore 4, Martial Arts 6, Medicine 2, Melee 2, Occult 4 (Fair Folk +3), Performance 6, Presence 6, Resistance 4, Ride 3, Sail 3 (Sand Ships +2), Socialize 4, Stealth 5, Survival 3, Thrown 2, War 5 (Battling Fair Folk +2)

Backgrounds: Acquaintances 4, Allies 4, Artifact 3, Artifact 2, Backing 4, Connections 2, Connections 3, Connections 2, Connections 4, Manse 4, Salary 4, Savant 3

Colleges: The Captain 2, *The Corpse* 3, *The Crow* 3, The Ewer 2, The Guardians 3, *The Haywain* 4, The Lovers 2, The Quiver 2, *The Rising Smoke* 3, The Shield 1, *The Sword* 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Archery (1st, Propitious Archery Alignment), Awareness (3rd), Bureaucracy (1st, Propitious Bureaucracy Alignment), Dodge (3rd, Propitious Dodge Alignment), Integrity (3rd, Propitious Integrity Alignment), Larceny (Fateful), Martial Arts (1st, Propitious Martial Arts Alignment), Performance (Fateful), Presence (1st), Sail (1st), Socialize (3rd), War (3rd) Archery: All Charms (with numerous types of transformations for Many Missiles Bow Technique, including Boulder, Fire, Iron Caltrops, Manna, Water Hole, etc.)

Awareness: Expected Pain, Prior Warning, Supernal Awareness, Wise Choice

Bureaucracy: All Charms

Craft: Excellent Implementation of Objectives, Mending Warped Designs, World-Shaping Artistic Vision (Desert +1)

Dodge: Absence, Duck Fate

Integrity: Creation-Preserving Will, Preservation of Resolve, Slick Essence Replenishment, Stern Essence Replenishment, Unwavering Well-Being Meditation

Investigation: Auspicious Prospects for Battles, Auspicious Prospects for Endings, Efficient Secretary Technique, Research Assistant Invocation

Larceny: All Charms

Lore: Methodology of Secrets, Of the Shape of the World, Of Things Desired and Feared, Of Truths Best Unspoken

Medicine: Peaceable Conclusion

Occult: Incite Decorum, Mark of Exaltation, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Performance: Heart-Brightening Presentation Style

Presence: All Charms

Resistance: Optimistic Security Practice, Ox-Body Technique (x2), Shield of Destiny, Someone Else's Destiny, Water and Fire Treaty

Ride: Breaking the Wild Mortal, Ordained Bridle of Mercury

Sail: Salt into Ash Sleight, Walls of Salt and Ash (Wyld)

Socialize: Fortuitous Fellowship

Stealth: Soft Presence Practice, Subordinate Inspiration Practice, Walking Outside Fate

War: Auspicious Recruitment Drive, Chaos-Quelling Battle Pattern, Predestined Triumph Practice, Red Haze, Training Mandate of Auspicious Battle

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Style: Changing Moon Lunar Exalt Ways, Chosen of Battles Sidereal Exalt Ways, Deadly Starmetal Offensive, Fire Aspect Terrestrial Exalt Ways, Games of Divinity Form, God Ways, Orichalcum Sheathing Stance

Violet Bier of Sorrows Style: All Charms

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 4B, Parry DV 8, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 7B, Parry DV 6, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 13, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags N

Starmetal Long Powerbow (Saturn's Messenger): Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 11L*, Range 350, Rate 3, Tags 2, B
* Uses broadhead arrows.

Soak: 3L/6B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 9 **Willpower:** 9

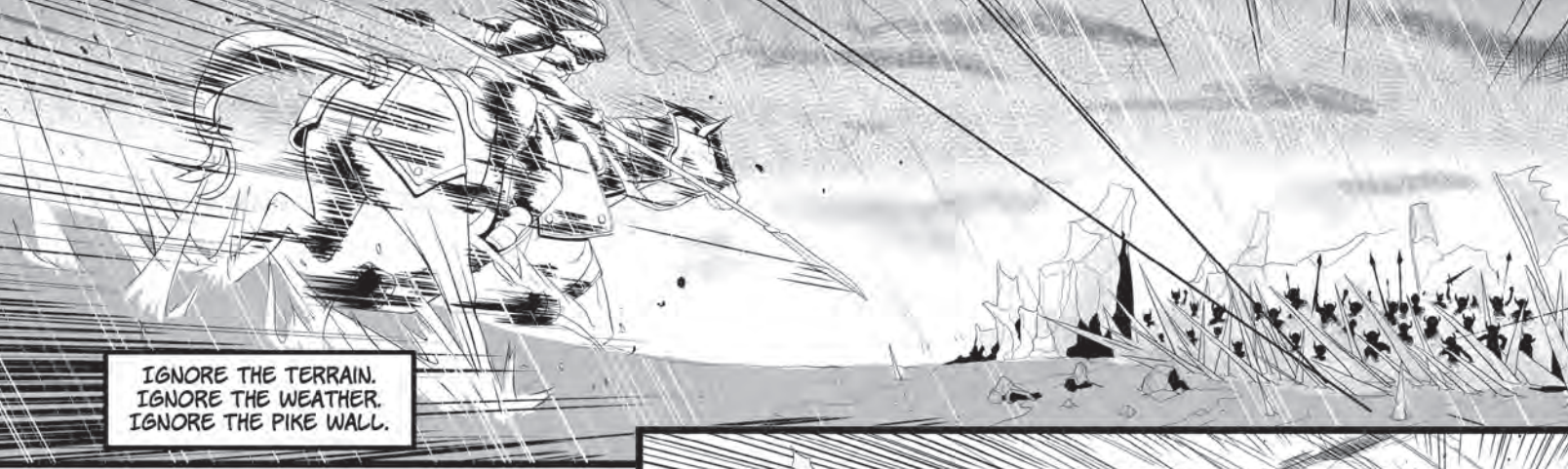
Essence: 7

Personal Essence: 23 **Peripheral Essence:** 55 (65)


Committed Essence: 10

Other Notes: Nazri's Artifact ratings refer to his starmetal powerbow and his starmetal hearthstone bracers. In his bracers, Nazri wears the hearthstone from the Convention of Fire's Manse headquarters, the Vermilion Tower; it is a gem of wise discernment. The Reckoner enjoys the Backing of the Violet Bier of Sorrows, as well as Connections in the South (4), in the Guild (3), in the Crimson Panoply of Victory (2) and among the Independent Sidereals. His Allies are made up of several of the Bureau of Destiny's most influential gods, including the Lord General of the Division of Battles.

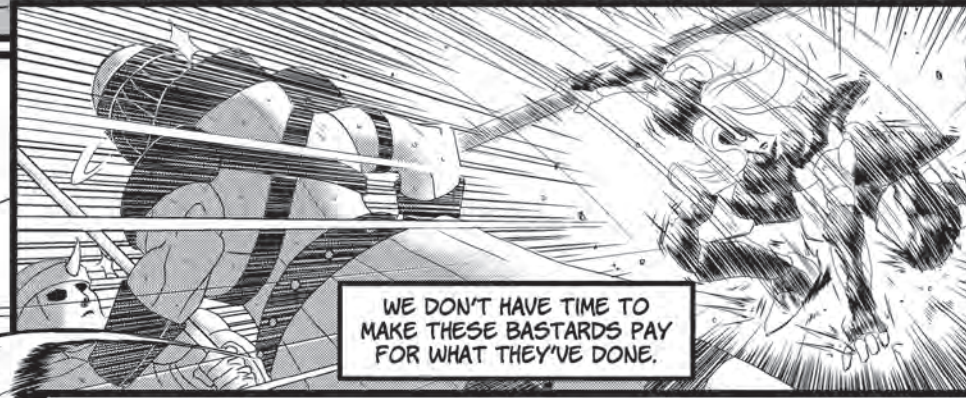




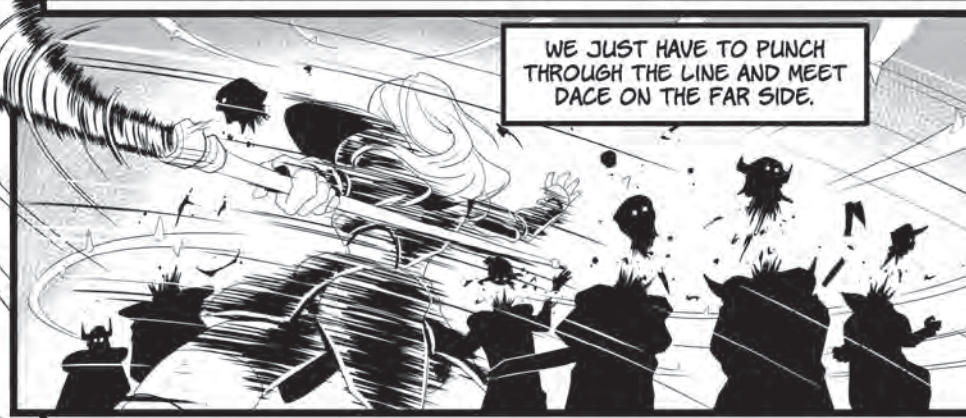
IGNORE THE TERRAIN.
IGNORE THE WEATHER.
IGNORE THE PIKE WALL.




CAPTAIN'S COUNTING ON
REINFORCEMENTS.
NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.



WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO
MAKE THESE BASTARDS PAY
FOR WHAT THEY'VE DONE.



WE JUST HAVE TO PUNCH
THROUGH THE LINE AND MEET
DACE ON THE FAR SIDE.



IT DOESN'T EVEN MATTER
IF I DIE HERE IN THE MUD...



...AS LONG AS THE MEN
GET THROUGH.

AND THEY WILL
GET THROUGH.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE TERRESTRIAL EXALTED

The most numerous of the Exalted, the Chosen of the Dragons were once the soldiers of the Celestial Exalts. At the urging of the Sidereals, however, these Dragon-Blooded usurped their betters and won the rule of Creation. Now, most Terrestrial Exalted deem themselves Princes of the Earth and all other Exalts Anathema.

What follow are a number of famous and infamous Terrestrial Exalts of differing levels of experience to use as allies or antagonists in **Exalted** series.

CATHAK MELADUS

LEGION ARTIFICER

Quote: *There, that just about does it. Alright, switch it on.*

Cathak Meladus believes that his father was a merchant who died before he was born because that is what he has always been told. This is a lie; Meladus is the product of an affair between his mother, an Exalted instructor at the House of Bells, and a famed patrician armorer named Mountain Opal. Thanks in small part to his disinclination toward personal introspection and in larger part to his generally trusting nature, Meladus has never suspected the truth.

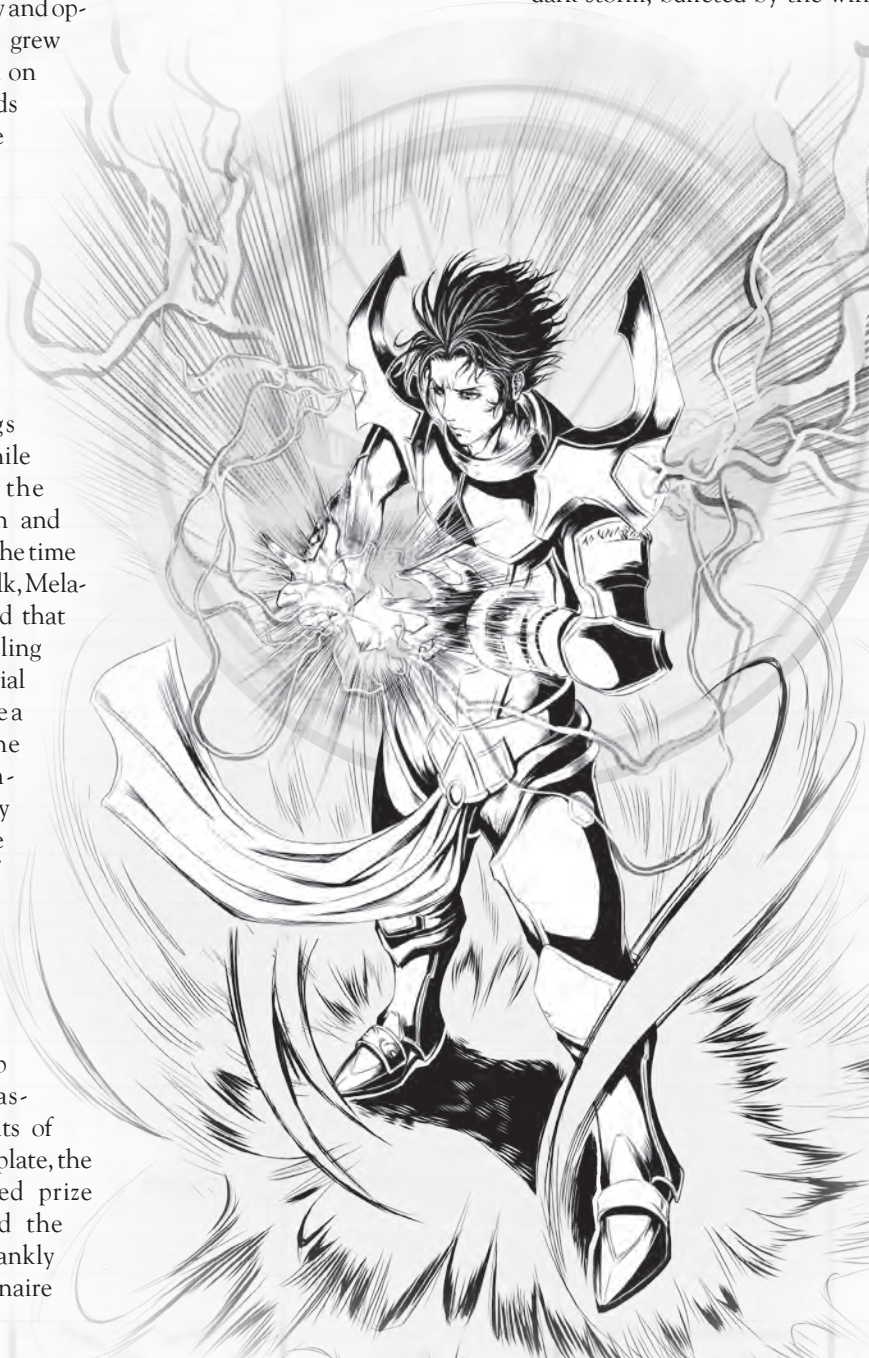
Meladus had a charmed childhood, marked by luck, opportunity and optimism. He grew up as much on the grounds of the House of Bells as at his family villa near Arjuf and conceived of a great passion for all things military while watching the cadets train and drill. From the time he could walk, Meladus believed that he had a calling in the Imperial Army, while a visit to the Opal family armory refined the focus of that passion in an unexpected direction. Staring up at the masterwork suits of articulated plate, the battle-pitted prize shields and the rows of blankly stoic legionnaire

helmets, Meladus became enraptured with the craftsmanship involved in their construction. He declared that this would be his calling, to enable the victory of the Realm through the work of his hands rather than the edge of his blade. Mountain Opal smiled, quietly proud. His mother was equally amused and annoyed. Neither realized the seriousness of the boy's intent.

Meladus's Exaltation was, oddly enough, so uneventful as to be remarkable. He was chosen by the Dragons one night at primary school while a fierce storm off the Northern seas lashed the coastline near Chanos where the academy was located. While other students slept, or attempted to sleep, Meladus dreamed of soaring through the depths of a vast dark storm, buffeted by the wind and outlined in brilliant

arcs of lightning. A particularly loud crack of thunder awoke him, and it seemed for a moment as though he'd swallowed the storm from his dreams. Surges of energy ran from his stomach through his limbs. Confused, he woke up one of the other students to ask if he looked ill but was met only with wide-eyed staring, pointing and babbling. It was the same with the next few schoolmates he roused, until the entire barracks was soon awake, staring and whispering. Having finally realized what was probably going on, the youth went off to find the barracks monitor and calmly asked what he should do.

Shortly after Exalting, Meladus realized that it would be a waste of the talents of a Prince of the Earth to enter a career as a crafter of merely



mortal armor. Rather than enrolling at the House of Bells, as he had always expected he would, he instead applied to the Heptagram to train as an artificer. There, Meladus became something of a black sheep student, uninterested in theory or laboratory work. He focused as heavily as his grades would allow on field applications and topics relevant to his intended career as a sorcerer-technician. This made him deeply unpopular with fellow students, who viewed him as an unrefined muscle-head, and also with his instructors, many of whom took umbrage at his open disinterest in and disdain for the school's primary curriculum. He managed to scrape through to graduation, mostly through hard work.

After secondary school, Meladus traveled to Thorns to visit with his sister and observe the legions in the aftermath of the Battle of Mishaka. It was there that his blissfully optimistic world-view finally ran face-first into the ugly realities of the Realm and the Threshold beyond. When Meladus questioned the tactical blunders of the campaign, the veteran soldiers laughed. During off hours, they were happy to buy him drinks and regale him with tales of incompetent officers, half-hearted attempts to integrate with the native forces, lost orders, local resentment and all the ways in which the campaign had generally been a fiasco. The waste, pointlessness and mismanagement of the Thorns campaign shocked and outraged the young Exalt, but that was nothing compared to the horror that followed. Meladus watched as reports rolled in of the advance of Juggernaut and the army of undead and Anathema that marched in the great corpse-fortress's shadow, and he prudently withdrew alongside most of the garrison. His older sister, Cathak Kreys, stayed behind to gather intelligence on the Mask of Winters's forces. She never made it out.

Meladus is now a junior officer in the Cathak legions. Though he is able to work on the First Age war machines that inspired him throughout his youth, he takes little pleasure from his labors. Now that his eyes are open to the endemic corruption of the Realm, he can see little else. A devout Melaist, Meladus believes that it falls on the uncorrupted youth of the Realm to reclaim its ideals from the self-interested politicians who are preparing to sacrifice the bastion of all that is civilized and good in Creation on the altar of their own greed. As quietly as he can, he searches for allies.

Motivation: Refocus the Realm on its core ideals

Aspect: Air

Anima Banner: A crackling blast of lightning briefly outlining incomplete mandala patterns.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 1, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Air) 2, Craft (Earth) 1, Craft (Fire) 2, Craft (Magitech) 2, Integrity 1, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Old Realm) 1, Lore 3, Martial Arts 3, Melee 3, Occult 3, Performance 1, Presence 3, Resistance 2, Ride 1, Socialize 2, War 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 4, Breeding 1, Command 1, Connections 1, Manse 3, Reputation 1, Resources 1

Charms:

Excellencies: Craft (1st)

Athletics: Effortlessly Rising Flame

Craft: Shaping Hand Style

Lore: Elemental Concentration Trance, Elemental Bolt Attack

Occult: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Emerald Countermagic

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Gauntlet: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 9B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Lightning Gauntlet (Melee): Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 10L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Boot: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 10B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Elemental Lens: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage (Varies)L, Rate 1, Range 60

Lightning Gauntlet (Ranged): Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 12L, Rate 1, Range 200

Soak: 17L/17B (Most Terrifying Armor of the Air Dragon, +15L/13B, Hardness: 7L/6B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 9

Peripheral Essence: 17 (24)

Committed Essence: 7

Other Notes: Meladus Artifact rating refers to a number of magitech devices he has at his disposal. His most prized possession is a suit of Air Dragon armor gifted to him by Mountain Opal. While the armor was ruined and nonfunctional when it came into his possession, Meladus has since restored it to full functionality and wears it into combat, using its integrated elemental lens as his primary weapon. Socketed into its three hearthstone sockets are a twice-striking lightning prism, a jewel of swift comprehension and a stone of mending flaws, products of the Manses to which he's attuned. Also in his panoply are a dragonfly's ranging eye, a lightning box and a winds slave disk.

The Air Aspect's Connections are to the Cathak legions, where he has Command over a small team of technicians responsible for maintaining the force's various Essence-powered devices. He has a Reputation among the legionnaires as an idealist.



CEVIS GHANDARVA

MASTER OF THE FOREST WITCHES

Quote: *When the Realm falls, you will know its heirs by this sign: They willingly sacrifice what they are to become something greater.*

Chose this sacrifice. Become one of the heirs of the Realm.

Cevis Ghandarva rose to power and notoriety in the early reign of the Scarlet Empress as a young and ambitious scion of a now forgotten House. From adolescence, he experienced strange visions like memories, witnessing himself strangely perfected and infinitely regal. Captivated by this vision, he commissioned a temple on the Blessed Isle and declared himself the Immaculate Dragon Mela, reborn to enlighten the Dragon-Blooded host. Instead, he became a laughingstock and a pariah, decried by the Immaculate Order as a pathetic example of the Sickly Whore, antithesis of the Petitioner of Clouds Accordant to the

Call of Battle. Disgraced and humiliated, Ghandarva fled the Blessed Isle with a small retinue of 16 Exalts and several dozen mortals who still believed in him.

In their wandering through the Threshold, Ghandarva and his followers encountered the enchanted woods in whose pool lay the Sea of Mind (see *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon Blooded*, pp. 77-80, for further details). Attuning to its waters, they found the enigma of the shining city of Atsiluth Eternal, and Ghandarva eventually claimed Domnica's Mantle from the mist of the forest, and so returned to Creation a dream that belonged to something older. With this artifact, he chose his next incarnation as the daughter of Ledaal. The Sidereals watching over that Great House discerned something seriously wrong with Demyen in her adolescence, but it wasn't until she attempted to bankrupt her House that they acted against her. Both sides badly underestimated each other, however, and Ghandarva escaped back to the Forest Witches wiser and more prosperous.

After besting seven able warriors, some of whom she had trained in her previous life, Ghandarva convinced the Forest Witches she had returned to them to rule once more. She remained bitter that her efforts to sabotage the Realm had been unsuccessful and that Domnica's Mantle was lost to her, but that did not stop her from searching for it until she had once more reclaimed its power. Weary of that life, she found rebirth in the womb of Great Forks' Spinner of Glorious Tales, who assumed female form to fulfill the infatuation that spawned Ghandarva once more.

Cevis Ghandarva's current form is that of a stern man with a bald pate and long, shimmering white hair to his waist. He has the sharp features of his divine heritage, but his blood is chiefly of the outcaste who was his father. He is always outfitted for battle and currently seeks out the location of Domnica's Mantle in preparation for his next incarnation.

Motivation: To achieve self-perfection and final enlightenment

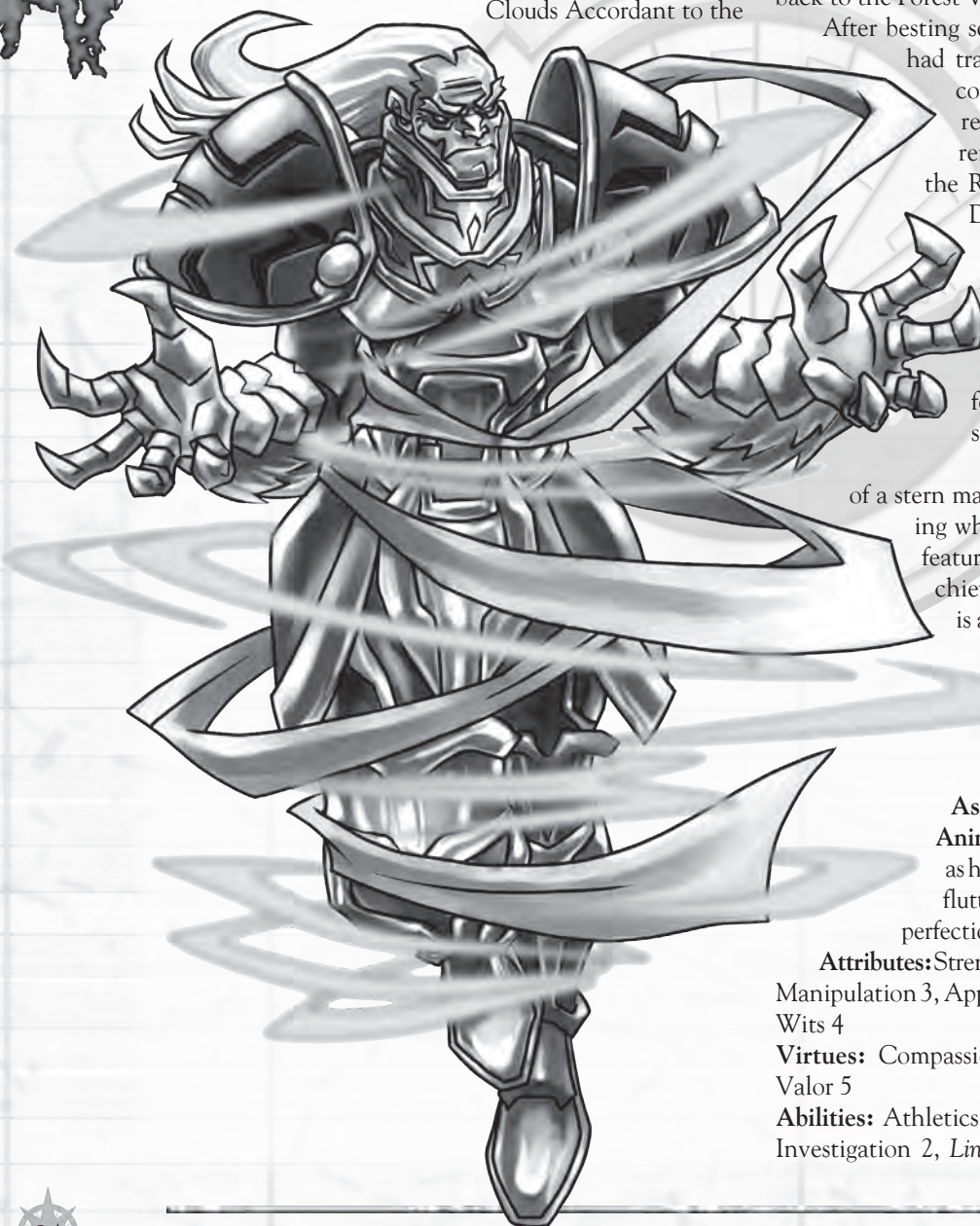
Aspect: Air

Anima: A pearly mist spreads from Ghandarva as he spends Essence, in which strange shapes flutter and dance in the madness of their perfection.

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

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 1, Valor 5

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, *Linguistics* (Native: High Realm: Others:



Forest-Tongue, Low Realm, Old Realm, Riverspeak) 4, Lore 2 (Spirits +1), Martial Arts 5 (Against Exalts +2), Medicine 1, Melee 2, Occult 3, Performance 3, Presence 5, Resistance 3, Ride 1, Socialize 2, Stealth 3, Survival 1, Thrown 2, War 3
Backgrounds: Arsenal 4, Artifact 5, Artifact 2, Breeding 2, Command 5, Connections 5, Connections 4, Connections 2, Manse 2, Manse 1, Mentor 5, Reputation 3, Resources 5

Charms:

Excellencies: Linguistics (1st), Martial Arts (1st, Terrestrial Martial Arts Reinforcement), Performance (1st), Presence (1st), Socialize (1st), War (1st, Terrestrial War Reinforcement)

Awareness: All-Encompassing Earth Sense

Linguistics: Voices on the Wind, Wind-Carried Words Technique

Lore: Elemental Concentration Trance

Occult: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Performance: New Voice Technique

Presence: Aura of Invulnerability, Glowing Coal Radiance, Warlord's Convocation

War: Blazing Courageous Swordsmen Inspiration, Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings, Phantom-Warrior Horde

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Five-Dragon Style: All Charms

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Commanding Presence of Fire, Emerald Countermagic, Stormwind Rider, Wood Dragon's Claw

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soak: 18L/20B (Blue jade superheavy plate, +15L/15B, Hardness: 10L/10B, mobility penalty -2)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 4

Personal: 14 **Peripheral:** 26 (36)

Committed: 10

Other Notes: As founder and leader of the Forest Witches, Cevis Ghandarva has control over access to a huge number of artifacts taken from throughout the region. This is represented by his impressive Arsenal rating (which doesn't even take into account Domnica's Mantle). His personal panoply of wonders is represented by his Artifact ratings. They include a suit of blue jade superheavy plate armor set with a stone of healing, a blue jade dragon tear tiara set with a stone of first impressions and a ghost cestus. In addition to his Connections among and Command of the living Forest Witches (5), Ghandarva also has Connections to Great Forks (4) and to Astiluth Eternal (2). Interestingly, his high Mentor

Background represents the instruction and advice of his prior selves. His legend has spread through the region surrounding the Forest Witches' home, giving him his Reputation as a dangerous heretic.

DOMNICA'S MANTLE (ARTIFACT N/A)

This gauzy, iridescent cloak flutters without regard for wind and bears an ornate silver clasp emblazoned with emeralds and arcane glyphs. Upon its wearer's death, he may reflexively spend one Willpower point as his last action to fray the garment into an abstract paradox that snarls itself into the weave of existence. The cloak then reforms at a new location determined by unknowable principles. If the wearer's next life looks hard and long enough, circumstances inevitably arrange for him to find Domnica's Mantle again, though it is up to him to do what is necessary to reclaim it.

The death of a Celestial Exalt releases her Exaltation, but it ignores the pull of Lytek's cabinet (or Monstrance or Lillun's womb) to seek out a suitable host on its own in accordance with Autochthon's design. Upon the Second Breath of a new Celestial, the personality and memories of the Mantle's wearer utterly subsume the new incarnation, bypassing the unnecessary formality of Lytek sanctifying the union of Exaltation and soul. The new Celestial fully remembers her last life, restoring her Motivation and Intimacies, but otherwise possesses the traits of her newly Exalted body in addition to a permanent Mentor 5 reflecting the core of her memory. She can draw upon this memory to teach herself any traits she used to possess in any prior incarnation given to Domnica's Mantle. The Storyteller may waive experience costs to allow a character who dies mid-series to restore herself and catch up to other protagonists. She still remembers her new body's life prior to Exaltation and retains that life's Intimacies, but the experiences seem hazy, like a vivid dream.

For a wearer lacking a Celestial Exaltation, the mantle carries her soul through Lethe to be reborn into a new life that fits whatever criteria the wearer desires, subject to Storyteller approval. This can include location, gender, social status and even supernatural heritage, such as divine blood or an infant destined to be a Dragon-Blood. It is not possible to pick a life that will receive Celestial Exaltation. The new life begins no sooner than a year from the death of the wearer. At some point in the reincarnation's adolescence, the personality of the former life reasserts itself with the same mechanical effects as possession by a Celestial Exaltation explained above.



TEPET ARADA

THE BITTER EX-GENERAL

Quote: *To hell with the Dynasty, to hell with House Tepet, and to hell with you!*

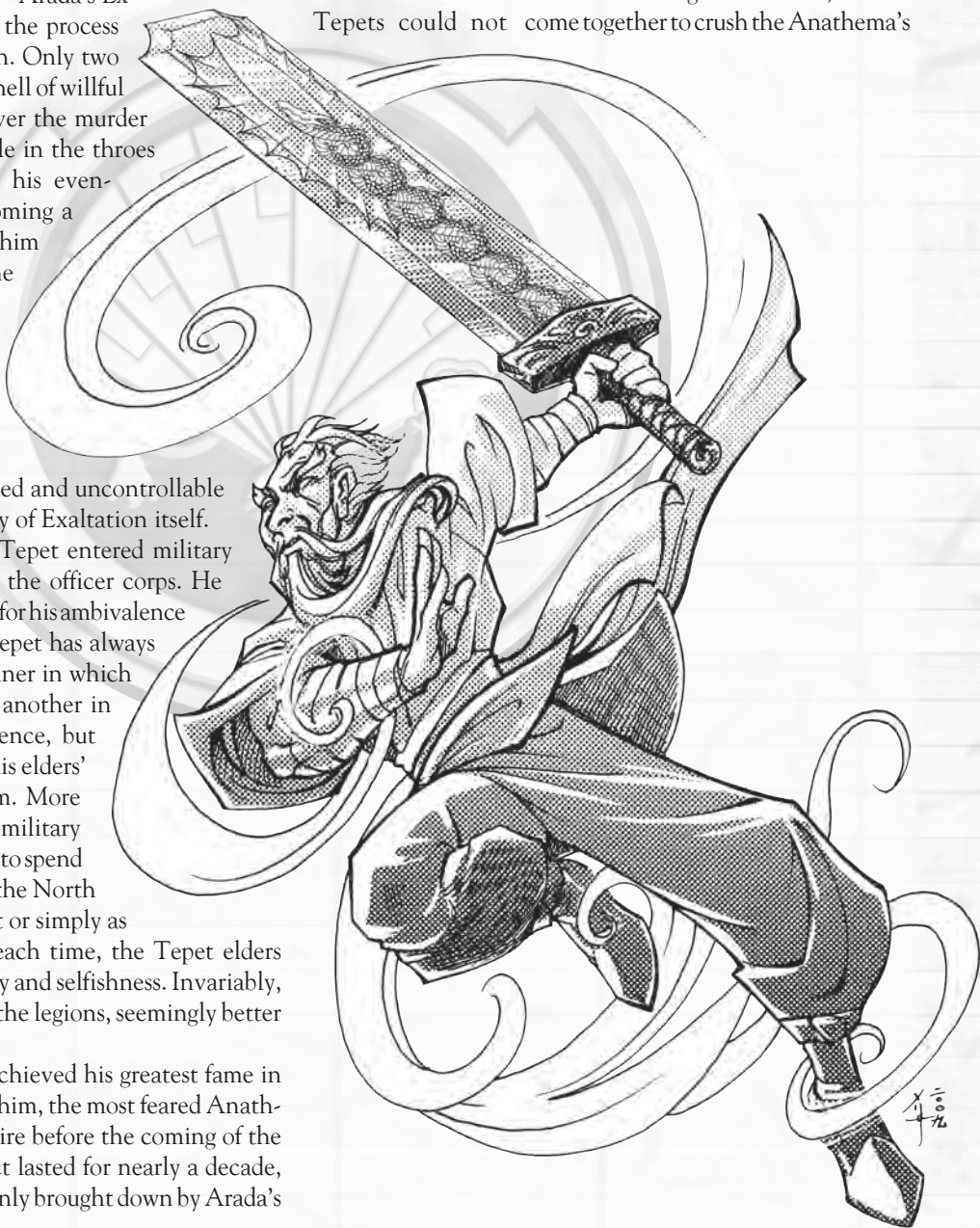
The childhood of Tepet Arada, the most decorated Dynastic military leader alive, both belied and predicted his future success. The scion of a particularly martial branch of the House Tepet, Arada began flirting with what could only be called juvenile delinquency at an early age. Long before his own Exaltation, Arada displayed the capriciousness and unpredictable anger common to those of his aspect, and his parents, despairing over his lack of self-discipline, consigned him to the Palace of the Tamed Storm. Even that did not improve his disposition at first—Arada's Exaltation came while he was in the process of beating a rival bully to death. Only two factors broke through Arada's shell of willful disobedience. One was guilt over the murder he had blindly committed while in the throes of Exaltation. The other was his eventual realization that even becoming a Dragon-Blooded would not save him from dying at the Palace of the Tamed Storm if he continued on his self-destructive path. If anything, Exaltation only made his death there more likely, for part of the Palace's mandate was the culling of those Exalted children so undisciplined and uncontrollable that they were judged unworthy of Exaltation itself.

After leaving the Palace, Tepet entered military service, quickly rising through the officer corps. He might have risen even faster save for his ambivalence about his own family. House Tepet has always been known for the brutal manner in which it pits its children against one another in order to drive them to excellence, but Arada invariably saw through his elders' games and chafed against them. More than once did he leave both military service and the Blessed Isle itself to spend a few decades as a fur trader in the North or as an explorer in the Far East or simply as a wandering adventurer, and each time, the Tepet elders gritted their teeth at his temerity and selfishness. Invariably, though, Arada would return to the legions, seemingly better for his time away.

In RY 585, Tepet Arada achieved his greatest fame in battle against the legendary Jochim, the most feared Anathema known to the Scarlet Empire before the coming of the Bull of the North. The conflict lasted for nearly a decade, and the Anathema's army was only brought down by Arada's

brilliant use of fast-group tactics. Ultimately, Arada faced Jochim in personal combat and killed him, before bearing his head back to the Blessed Isle in victory. For this feat, Tepet Arada was named the Wind Dancer, an honorific he still carries.

With his reputation and skill, it was inevitable that Tepet Arada would be tasked with slaying the Bull of the North, so, with some trepidation, Arada accepted a position as general of the Third Legion, charged with fighting against the icewalker armies. It would become the greatest failure of his long life. The Tepet legions were weakened from the beginning by infighting as the Empress seemed to deliberately assign all of the command positions to members of House Tepet who were known to hate each other. Mass unit coordination within the Third Legion was weak, and the Tepets could not come together to crush the Anathema's



forces. Then, the Empress disappeared even as the Bull was joined by additional Anathema, some of whom knew forbidden sorcery against which the Dragon-Blooded had no defense.

Tepet Arada could only watch in dismay as the other Great Houses withdrew their own forces back to the Blessed Isle, even as the Bull stepped up his attacks, now bolstered by Second Circle demons and terrifying sorcery. Then came the Battle of Futile Blood and the decimation of the entire Tepet military apparatus. Tepet Arada managed the retreat as best he could and then returned home. Once there, he resigned his commission, washed his hands of Dynastic politics and, somewhat improbably given his temperament, withdrew to an isolated manse to become a hermit. His withdrawal from society is due not just to the scope of his personal defeat but also due to his belief that the Battle of Futile Blood was unnecessary—Arada has concluded that the Empress and the Deliberative actively conspired to destroy House Tepet because they feared its military might. While this is paranoia on his part, it is also probably true.

Tepet Arada has spent the last three years in seclusion but is now finally prepared to end his hermitage. News has come to the Wind Dancer: whispers of rebellion and civil war, and always with the name of Tepet Ejava, his favorite granddaughter, whispered loudest of all. Arada has not yet decided whether his beloved Roseblack is fit to take the Scarlet Throne or whether she must be brought low before her planned coup shatters what is left of the Empire. He hopes to come to some decision on that matter before he meets her soon.

Motivation: None, at the moment. Previously, it was “To defend the Realm from its enemies,” but Arada has abandoned that goal and is searching for some new purpose for his life.

Aspect: Air

Anima Banner: A bitterly cold wind accompanied by a patina of ice that spreads across the ground at his feet.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 3 (Join Battle +2), Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 6 (Melee Attack +3), Integrity 5, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Low Realm, Old Realm, Skytongue, Riverspeak, Tribal Tongues) 5, Lore 4 (Strategy +1, Tactics +2), Martial Arts 5, Melee 5 (Multiple Opponents +3), Performance 1, Presence 5 (Leadership +3), Resistance 5 (Old +3), Ride 2, Socialize 2, Survival 3, Thrown 5, War 5 (Fast Attacks +3)

Backgrounds: Artifact 5, Breeding 4, Connections 4, Reputation 5

Merits & Flaws: Favored Weapon (2 pt. Merit—Relentless Wind)

Charms:

Excellencies: Athletics (1st), Dodge (1st and 3rd), Integrity (1st), Linguistics (1st and 2nd), Martial Arts (all general Charms), Melee (1st, 2nd, 3rd, Terrestrial Melee Reinforcement), Presence (1st), Thrown (1st), War (1st, Terrestrial War Reinforcement)

Athletics: Effortlessly Rising Flame, Falling Star Maneuver
Dodge: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, plus Evasive Elemental Dispersion from **Dreams of the First Age**

Integrity: Chaos-Warding Prana, Defense-From-Anathema Method, Inviolable Dragon Spirit, Oath of the Ten-Thousand Dragons, Ten-Thousand Dragons Fight as One

Linguistics: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Melee: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Occult: Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique, Spirit-Grounding Shout

Presence: Aura of Invulnerability, Glowing Coal Radiance
Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x 5)

Thrown: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

War: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Orgiastic Fugitive Style: All Charms

Five-Dragon Style: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Join Battle: 10

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 4, Accuracy 11, Damage 3B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 4, Accuracy 10, Damage 6B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Blue Jade Daiklave (Relentless Wind): Speed 3, Accuracy 14, Damage 10L, Parry DV 7, Rate 3, Tags P

Soak: 9L/11B (Silken armor, +6L/6B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/
Incap

Dodge DV: 10 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 6

Personal Essence: 18 **Peripheral Essence:** 32 (47)

Committed Essence: 15

Other Notes: Tepet Arada's daiklave, Relentless Wind, is enchanted to inflict piercing damage. Arada gains a +1 Accuracy and Defense bonus with it due to his Favored Weapon Merit. In addition to that wonder, Arada's panoply of Artifacts also includes a set of silken armor and a pair of blue jade hearthstone bracers. Arada still possesses Connections within the Imperial Army, stemming from his Reputation as one of the finest generals the Realm possesses.

MNEMON

THE FIRST AMONG EQUALS

Quote: *Power is not a means to an end. It is the only end worth seeking.*

All recipients of Exaltation are made the better for it, but few Dragon-Bloods have been elevated by it as much as Mnemon. Before her Exaltation, Mnemon was a quiet, insecure slip of a girl, utterly terrified of her mother, the Scarlet Empress, and her brothers, Sesus and Ragara. Her early life was unremarkable, so much so that the Sidereal assigned to monitor her expected the Empress to kill Mnemon for her weakness and timidity. Then came Exaltation. Mnemon's Second Breath brought with it not only an understanding of Essence, as normal, but also remarkable insights into sorcery,

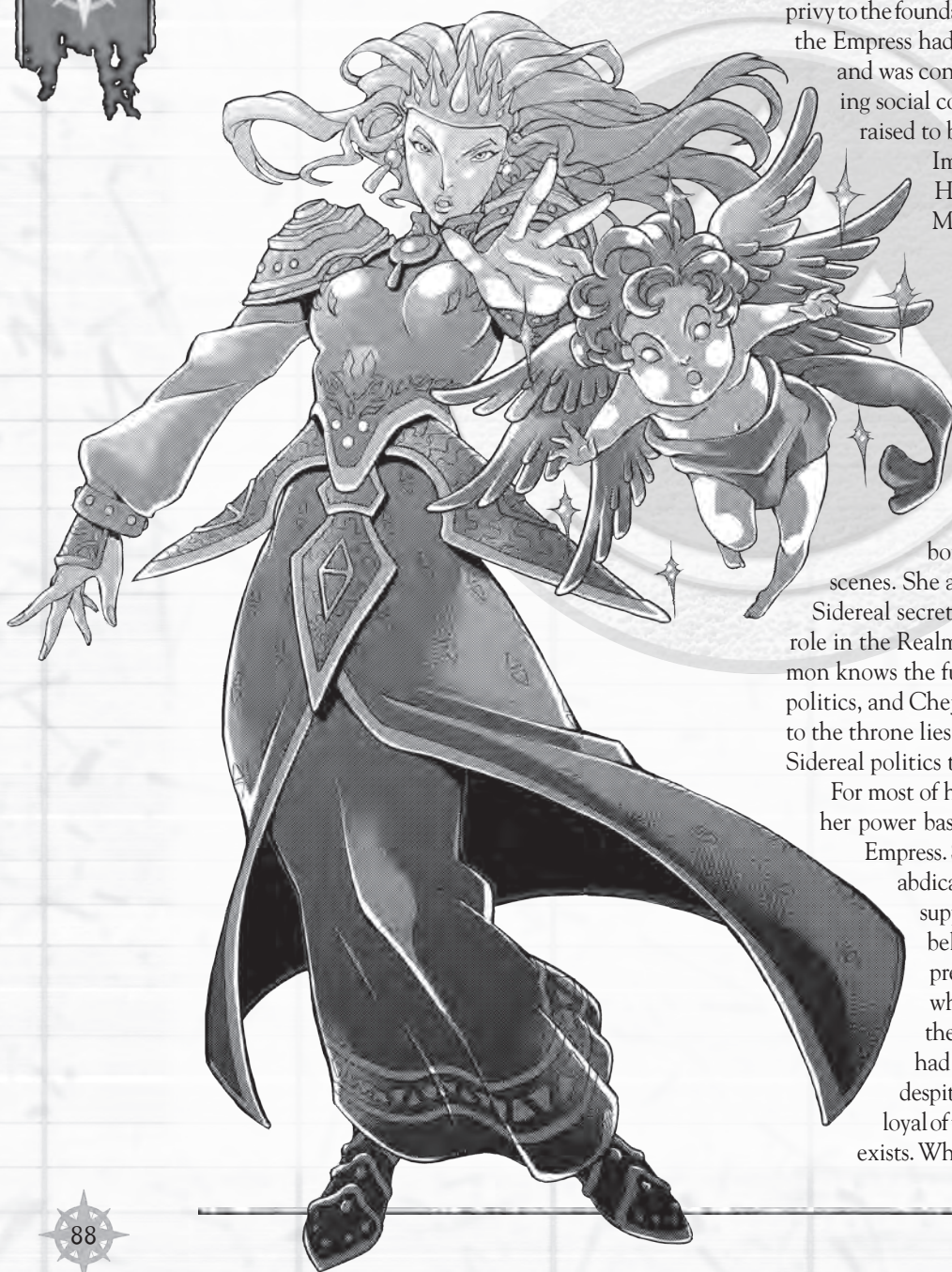
combat and social politics, as well as seemingly immeasurable reserves of will. It came during a sparring match with one of her tutors (secretly a Bronze Faction observer), and the girl who once could barely throw a punch nearly killed a Sidereal martial artist not with Essence, but simple strength of will.

In the four centuries since, Mnemon has, through single-minded ambition, built her House into one of the Realm's dominant powers. The parallels between Mnemon and her mother are apparent to most observers who knew them both. Like her mother, Mnemon's guided by an insatiable ambition and fueled by an irresistible force of will. Like her mother, Mnemon's supernally skilled at sorcery, combat and politics. Mnemon has even demonstrated signs of her mother's unusual longevity. Perhaps the biggest difference between the two lies in their attitudes toward the Immaculate Order. To the Empress, the Order was simply another tool in her arsenal. Having been privy to the foundation of the modern Immaculate Philosophy, the Empress had no illusions about its theological accuracy

and was content to value it solely as a means of exercising social control. Lacking such insights, Mnemon was raised to be a true believer. She strongly supports the Immaculate Order in all things, and only the Heptagram draws more students from House Mnemon than the Cloister of Wisdom.

That said, while Mnemon's faith is genuine, it's not without pragmatism. She's well aware of the extent to which the Iselsi have insinuated themselves into the upper echelons of the Order, and if she became Empress, rooting them out would become one of her primary objectives. More importantly, she's been aware from an early age of the existence of the Sidereal Exalted and of the role they play in manipulating both the Order and the Realm from behind the scenes. She also knows that her mother was privy to the Sidereal secret, so Mnemon accepts the necessity of their role in the Realm's maintenance. Of course, not even Mnemon knows the full scope of Sidereal involvement in Realm politics, and Chejop Kejak's chief objection to her ascension to the throne lies in the fact that he'd have to reveal more of Sidereal politics to her than to a less informed claimant.

For most of her life, Mnemon's built both her House and her power base with the goal of eventually replacing the Empress. She long ago realized her mother would never abdicate, but neither did Mnemon truly desire to supplant her. Taking the long view, Mnemon believed that eventually whatever obscure magic preserved her mother's youth was bound to fail, at which point Mnemon anticipated being offered the throne by acclimation, as no other candidate had the skills necessary for the job. Consequently, despite her ambition, Mnemon was among the most loyal of the Empress's children. That loyalty no longer exists. When the Empress disappeared, Mnemon's peers



immediately began jostling for power, but Mnemon's always known true power comes from knowledge, so she set herself to uncovering what happened to her mother. Not long ago, she discovered the awful truth.

That truth's lent a new urgency to Mnemon's machinations. She was content before to play a long game. Now, she's desperate to claim the Scarlet Throne, for only from that seat can she prepare the Realm for what's to come.

Motivation: To ascend to the Scarlet Throne

Aspect: Earth

Anima Banner: A swirl of brilliant white crystals erupts from the ground at Mnemon's feet to orbit about her.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 5, Craft (Earth) 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 5 (Fulfilling Motivation +3), Investigation 3, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Mountain Folk, Old Realm, Riverspeak) 3, Lore 7, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 2, Melee 5, Occult 7, Performance 2, Presence 5, Resistance 5, Ride 2, Socialize 4, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Thrown 3, War 3

Backgrounds: Artifact 5, Breeding 6 (Legendary Breeding), Manse 5, Reputation (Immaculate Order) 4, Reputation (Scarlet Empire) 4, Reputation (Sorcerers) 5, Resources 5, Savant 2. These include only those Backgrounds that are intrinsic to Mnemon as an individual and that she can easily bring to bear at any given time. As the head of one of the Great Houses and one of the most politically and personally powerful of the Empress's surviving children, Mnemon arguably possesses N/A ratings in Arsenal, Backing, Influence and Resources.

Merits & Flaws: Legendary Breeding (3-pt. Merit), Sorcery Focus (4-pt. Merit)

Charms:

Excellencies: Awareness (1st, 2nd), Bureaucracy (2nd, 3rd, Terrestrial Bureaucracy Reinforcement), Integrity (1st, 2nd, 3rd, Terrestrial Integrity Reinforcement), Lore (1st, 2nd, 3rd, Terrestrial Lore Reinforcement), Martial Arts (1st, 2nd), Occult (1st, 2nd, 3rd, Terrestrial Occult Reinforcement), Resistance (1st, 2nd, 3rd), Socialize (1st, 3rd)

Athletics: Effortlessly Rising Flame, Falling Star Maneuver
Awareness: All-Encompassing Earth Sense, Feeling the Dragon's Bones

Integrity: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, plus Thicker Than Stone
Lore: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, plus Endless Coils Enlightenment
Melee: Dragon-Graced Weapon, Ghost-Fire Blade, Refining the Inner Blade

Occult: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Presence: Auspicious First Meeting Attitude, Passion Transmitting Nuance

Resistance: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, including Ox-Body Technique (x 3)

Socialize: Brother-Against-Brother Insinuation, Warm-Faced Seduction Style

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Jade Mountain Style: All Charms

Five-Dragon Style: All Charms

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Burning Eyes of the Offender, Coin of Distant Vision, Corrupted Words, Curse of Slavish Humility, Death of Obsidian Butterflies, Demon of the First Circle*, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, the Eye and the Mouth, Flying Guillotine, Fugue of Truth, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Infallible Messenger, Internal Flame, Peacock Shadow Eyes, Private Plaza of Downcast Eyes, Raising the Earth's Bones, Ritual of Elemental Empowerment, the Sacred Tongue, Silent Words of Dreams and Nightmares, the Spy Who Walks in Darkness, Summon Elemental, Theft of Memory, Unbreakable Bones of Stone, Unconquerable Self

* Mnemon can also cast Demon of the Second Circle by virtue of the Emerald Thurible.

Join Battle: 8

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 2B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1 Tags C, N, P

White Jade Daiklave (Weeping Sword of Sorrows): Speed 4, Accuracy 12, Damage 8L + poison*, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

* Mnemon's daiklave also generates a magical poison that inflicts the effects of arrow frog venom on any who suffer even one level of lethal damage from a strike.

Soak: 12L/12B (White jade reinforced breastplate, +10L/9B, Hardness: 8L/8B, mobility penalty -1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 10

Essence: 7

Personal Essence: 23 **Peripheral Essence:** 39 (58)

Committed Essence: 19

Other Notes: Mnemon's Artifact rating represents her daiklave, breastplate, dragon tear tiara and the infamous Emerald Thurible. Any Celestial Exalt who attunes to this artifact can cast Demon of the First Circle, Demon of the Second Circle and Demon of the Third Circle without actually learning those spells. Dragon-Blooded and Dragon Kings may summon First and Second Circle demons with the Thurible, and mortals may summon First Circle demons. The Thurible normally costs eight motes to attune, but mortals can attune to it by committing two Willpower and suffering a lethal health level of damage that can't heal while the commitment lasts. The Earth Aspect's breastplate is set with a gem of immortality, while her tiara is set with a gem of safe harvest.



RAGARA MYRRUN

GRANDMASTER OF THE IMMACULATE ORDER

Quote: *Though the enlightenment I seek still eludes me, I shall persevere.*

His skin is a deep earthen brown, as cool and hard as marble. His age does not wrinkle him so much as fissure his face with cracks around the faceted jewels of his eyes. Ragara Myrrun is a legend among the ranks of the Immaculate Order, a prodigy in the eyes of the Sidereal Exalted and an inspiration to the whole of the Dragon-Blooded Host. He is the great-grandson of the Scarlet Empress, grandson of Ragara and an implacable student of the mysteries of Essence since drawing the Second Breath at the age of 11. No one in his family showed much surprise when he joined the Immaculate Order to seek the sublime martial truths of the Elemental Dragons.

At the Cloister of Wisdom, Myrrun exceeded expectations and then his instructors, absorbing and internalizing the teachings of Earth Dragon Style to full mastery within a decade. This accomplishment would have been sufficient for much honor, but the taste of enlightenment only deepened his hunger. That burning need to know fanned into the roaring conflagration of Fire Dragon Style, and in dual mastery, he won greater praise, and his sifu thought that surely he would go on to a great career in the Wyld Hunt. Still he remained unsatisfied, and the cycle repeated again and again to the incredulity and awe of the Order. A century and a half later, Myrrun realized he had become an Immaculate Grandmaster, the youngest Terrestrial to do so in recorded history and one of only three such paragons alive in the modern era. That was centuries ago, and he has never stopped learning.

Anys Syn, Chosen of Mars, originally designed the Immaculate Styles in the days following the Great Uprising as a weapon for the nascent Wyld Hunt. When she learned of Myrrun, she felt she had finally found a student worthy of her efforts so long ago and approached him with the truth of her nature and the secret origin

of his power. He shed one crystalline tear for the shattering of his faith, but no more, for the Immaculate Order is a force of good in Creation, and he remains dedicated to its teachings, if not its history. Thrice, his sifu has brought him to Yu-Shan for particularly exotic training, but mostly he remains within the Palace Sublime as its resident bodhisattva, teaching only the most brilliant students and giving occasional demonstrations when humbly bid by the Mouth of Peace.

Myrrun is likely the most powerful Dragon-Blooded martial artist in Creation, but he knows enough of Creation's truths to realize how small this makes him. The Blossoming of the Perfected Lotus eludes him, and this is unacceptable. Anys Syn encourages him, guides him and believes he will be the first Terrestrial in whom the Lotus may bloom. From this flower, seeds may fall upon the fertile fields of the Dragon-Blooded Host, forever changing and uplifting their race into something more than even the Elemental Dragons dared conceive. This is her dream. Myrrun dreams simpler things. He has no idea what life will be like when he succeeds and cannot imagine living at the summit of enlightenment without further room to climb. He seeks apotheosis because he must, because it is there.

Motivation: Cultivate the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus within his soul

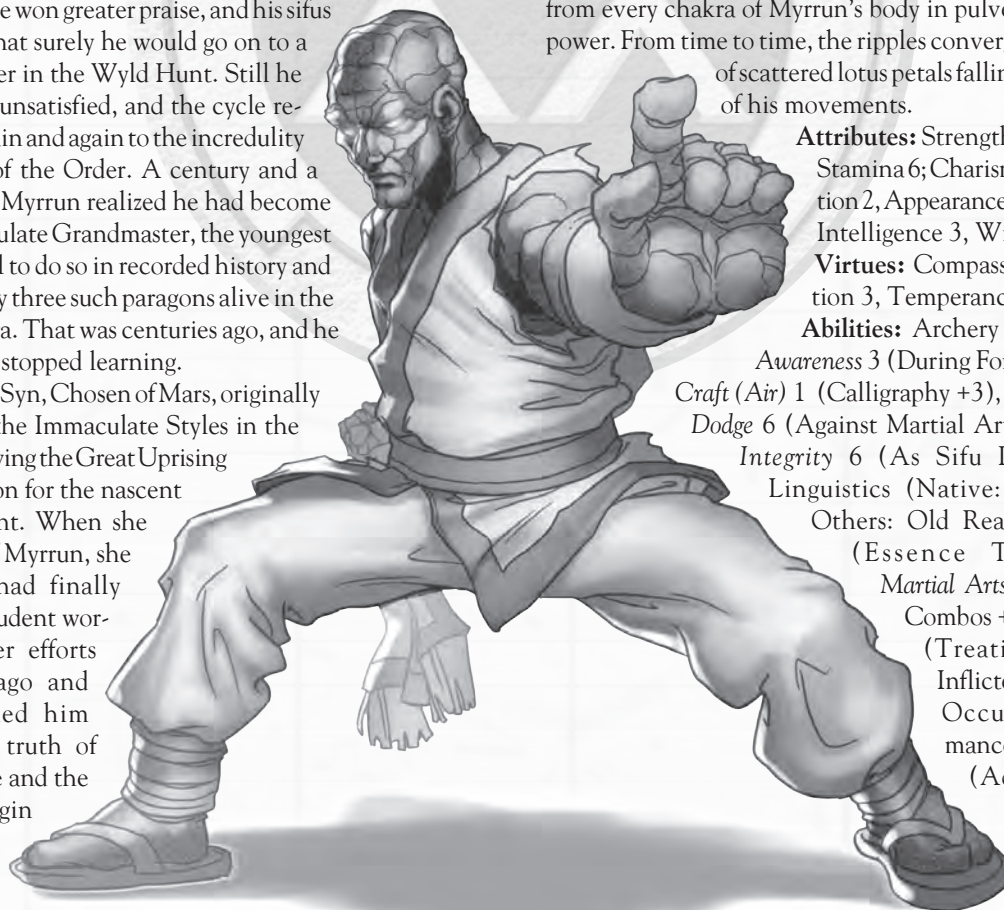
Aspect: Earth

Anima: As his anima flares, ripples of seismic force emerge from every chakra of Myrrun's body in pulverizing waves of power. From time to time, the ripples converge into a mirage of scattered lotus petals falling from the path of his movements.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

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

Abilities: Archery 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 3 (During Formal Duels +3), Craft (Air) 1 (Calligraphy +3), Craft (Earth) 2, Dodge 6 (Against Martial Arts Attacks +3), Integrity 6 (As Sifu Instructs +2), Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Old Realm) 1, Lore 4 (Essence Theory +1), Martial Arts 6 (Inter-Style Combos +3), Medicine 2 (Treating Harm He Inflicted +3), Melee 1, Occult 1, Performance 1, Presence 1 (Addressing Im-



maculate Martial Artists +3), *Resistance* 6 (Surviving Training Accidents +1), Ride 1, Socialize 2, Survival 1 (While On Meditative Retreats +3), War 1

Backgrounds: Arsenal 3, Artifact 5, Backing 3, Breeding 5, Cult 1-2, Manse 4, Mentor 5, Reputation 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Awareness (1st), Dodge (1st, 3rd), Integrity (3rd), Martial Arts (1st, 3rd, Terrestrial Martial Arts Reinforcement), Resistance (1st, 3rd)

Awareness: All-Encompassing Earth Sense, Feeling the Dragon's Bones

Dodge: Hopping Firecracker Evasion, Safety Among Enemies, Smoldering Karma Strike, Threshold Warding Stance, Virtuous Negation Defense

Integrity: Chaos-Warding Prana, Defense-From-Anathema Method, Inviolable Dragon Spirit, Oath of the Ten-Thousand Dragons (Immaculate Order), Ten-Thousand Dragons Fight As One, Unflagging Vengeance Meditation, Unsleeping Earth Meditation, Untiring Earth Meditation

Lore: Elemental Concentration Trance, Elemental Empowerment Meditation, Eternal Mind Meditation

Martial Arts: All general Martial Arts Charms, Moment of Daana'd, Pasiap's Humility; plus Drowning in Understanding Kata from **Dreams of the First Age**

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x6), Unbreathing Earth Meditation, Uneating Earth Meditation, Unfeeling Earth Meditation

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Air Dragon, Celestial Monkey, Earth Dragon, Ebon Shadow, Fire Dragon, Five-Dragon, Jade Mountain, Mantis, Terrestrial Hero, Violet Bier of Sorrows, Water Dragon and Wood Dragon Style: All Charms

Join Battle: 7 (10 in formal duels)

Attacks:

Punch (White Jade Perfected Kata Bracers): Speed 5, Accuracy 17 (23), Damage 6B (12B/L), Parry DV 7 (10), Rate 3 (5), Tags N

Kick (White Jade Perfected Kata Bracers): Speed 5, Accuracy 16 (22), Damage 9B (15B/L), Parry DV 5 (8), Rate 2 (4), Tags N

Clinch (White Jade Perfected Kata Bracers): Speed 6, Accuracy 16 (22), Damage 6B (12B/L), Parry DV –, Rate 1 (3), Tags C, N, P

Soak: 8L/9B or 14L/15B (Silken armor, +5L/3B; white jade perfected kata bracers, +6L/6B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 9 **Willpower:** 10

Essence: 6

Personal: 21 **Peripheral:** 49 (+16 from skin-mount amulets)

Committed: 10

Other Notes: Ragara Myrrun's Artifact rating refers to his silken armor and four skin-mount amulets, both gifts from his grandfather Ragara himself. Into his skin-mount amulets are set four hearthstones: a seven leaping dragon stone, a kata-sculpting gem, a hardened spirit gemstone and a memorial iron. His Arsenal rating refers to the white jade perfected kata bracers on permanent loan to him from the Immaculate Order. The Order is also the source of Myrrun's Backing and Reputation as an Immaculate Grandmaster. Unfortunately, his renown has led to a small Cult that venerates the monk. Its rating fluctuates as it is stamped out as heresy by the Order in one area but crops up elsewhere, with new members drawn by his legend. The Earth Aspect's Mentor is none other than Anys Syn, the developer of the Immaculate martial art styles.

BOOM!

Anys Syn plans to teach Ragara Myrrun Prismatic Arrangement of Creation style. This is not the first such attempt to initiate a Terrestrial Exalt into the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus. In each prior attempt, at the moment of enlightenment when the student first activated a Sidereal Style Charm, that student's anima fatally collapsed its elemental aspect into raw Gaian Essence, exploding in a burst of Primordial power as a one-time environmental hazard upon everything in a mile radius with Damage (student's Essence x 10)L and Trauma (student's Essence rating).

Anys Syn's hubristic optimism aside, the rules of **Exalted** do not make Myrrun special. Should this attempt succeed, it will only be by Storyteller fiat as a change to the setting. Storytellers should think very carefully before establishing this precedent or inadvertently stealing the spotlight from players' protagonists by making someone "more special" than they can be. On the other hand, Myrrun's ascension could begin an over-the-top "I'll Form the Head" series in which he earns Gaia's full attention, evolving the Dragon-Blooded race into Creation's saviors against the apocalyptic threats posed by her imprisoned and slain siblings.

VITALI PROSERIA

MISTRESS OF ATSILUTH ETERNAL

Quote: *The Sea shall rise.*

Vitali Proseria has ruled over the Sea of Mind for three centuries (see *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded*, pp. 77-80), having laid the seeds for her coup long before she died. She now hopes to increase the power of the Sea of Mind to the point that all Creation becomes nothing more than a reflection of itself beneath the dream

of Atsiluth Eternal. She currently rules over the council of 23 other elders and a single guest representative from the courts of the Ebon Dragon who has established the Black Scale Embassy within the Sea.

Proseria fears the Shadow of All Things and his designs for her realm, but she also honors his power. He has found a hidden path to the Sea of Mind, after all, and what has allowed darkness in may yet allow the fathomless dreams of her hope to illumine existence. She would understand this hidden path or else seal it forever if she cannot.

Vitali Proseria appears as a woman in a long, flowing black cloak that hoods her face in constant shadow, revealing only full, youthful lips and a gracefully sculpted chin. The spiked pauldrons of her white jade armor adorn her shoulders, jutting out from her cloak. When she shows her hands, they betray a monstrous mien, overlong and clawed. She rarely leaves the Sea of Mind to interact with Creation, so she is rarely seen by its denizens.

Motivation: To establish the Sea of Mind as a self-sustaining reality and rule over it forever, leaving all other realms of existence mere shadows

Aspect: Earth

Anima: Choking black dust falls from her as she spends Essence, trailing behind her in a phantasmagoria of unnatural erosion. At her anima's height, she is more trail than woman, a presence defined by her path and the grasping claws ahead of it.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 5 (Cowing Bureaucrats +1), Dodge 3, Integrity 1, Investigation 4, Larceny 2, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Forest-Tongue, Old Realm, Riverspeak) 3, Lore 3 (Atsiluth Eternal +1), Martial Arts 5 (Smashfists +1), Melee 2, Occult 3, Performance 4 (Oratory +2), Presence 4 (Coalition Leadership +2), Resistance 2, Ride 2, Socialize 4 (Political Manipulation +2), Stealth 2, Survival 2

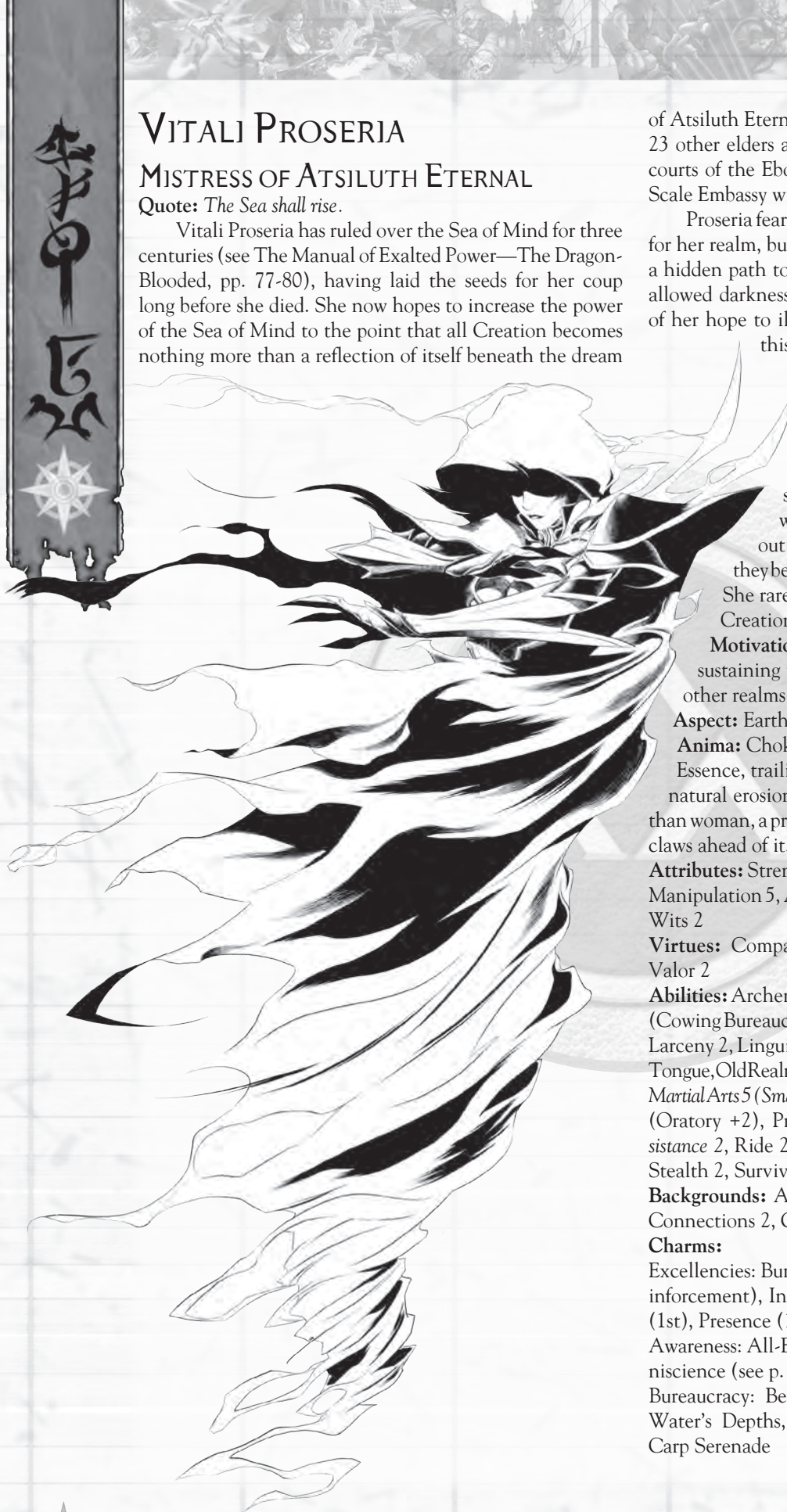
Backgrounds: Allies 2, Artifact 4, Backing 5, Breeding 4, Connections 2, Connections 3, Henchmen 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Bureaucracy (1st, Terrestrial Bureaucracy Reinforcement), Investigation (1st), Lore (1st), Martial Arts (1st), Presence (1st)

Awareness: All-Encompassing Earth Sense, Atsiluth's Omniscience (see p. 160), Feeling the Dragon's Bones

Bureaucracy: Benevolent Master's Blessing, Finding the Water's Depths, Thoughtful Gift Technique, Thrashing Carp Serenade



Dodge: Threshold Warding Stance, Hopping Firecracker Evasion

Investigation: Falsehood Unearthing Attitude, Scent-of-Crime Method

Larceny: Observer Awareness Method

Lore: Elemental Bolt Attack, Elemental Burst Technique

Martial Arts: All general Martial Arts Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Occult: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Presence: Aura of Invulnerability, Glowing Coal Radiance,

Terrifying Earth Dragon Roar

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Terrestrial Hero Style: All Charms from **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Death of Obsidian Butterflies, Demon of the First Circle, Impenetrable Frost Barrier, Infallible Messenger, Sworn Brothers' Oath

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 2B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

White Jade Smashfist Punch (Surgeon and End to Mourning): Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 10B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2, Tags M, P

White Jade Smashfist Clinch (Surgeon and End to Mourning): Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 9B, Parry DV –, Rate 2, Tags C, M, P

Soak: 14L/17B (White Jade Articulated Plate, +12L/14B, Hardness: 8L/8B, mobility penalty -2)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 9

Essence: 4

Personal: 17 **Peripheral:** 26 (38)

Committed: 12

Other Notes: Proseria's Artifact rating refers to her jade articulated plate armor, her paired jade smashfists and a walking stone. The walking stone is a liquid crystal of water from the Sea of Mind that can adhere to any suit of real armor, including warstriders. With the stone so attached and while wearing the armor, she is effectively real from the perspective of Creation for the purposes of all interaction but remains invisible within her armor. Without this medium, she functionally does not exist from the perspective of Creation and can do nothing to interact with anything outside of the Sea of Mind. If she summons a demon, she summons it into the Sea of Mind for the period of its binding, and it remains similarly limited in its ability to interact with reality. First Circle demons who leave the Sea and return to Malfeas lose all Willpower points from despair; many kill themselves.

The Exalt's other Backgrounds stem for her position of authority in the Forest Witches. She possesses Allies, Connections (3) and Henchmen within the Witches and the full Backing of Atsiluth Eternal. She also has Connections (2) within the Ebon Dragon's Black Scale Embassy.

CYNIS DENOVAH AVAKU OF WAYS

THE YOUNG IDEALIST

Quote: *The Realm has given us everything we have. It is only proper that we be prepared to give everything we have back in its defense.*

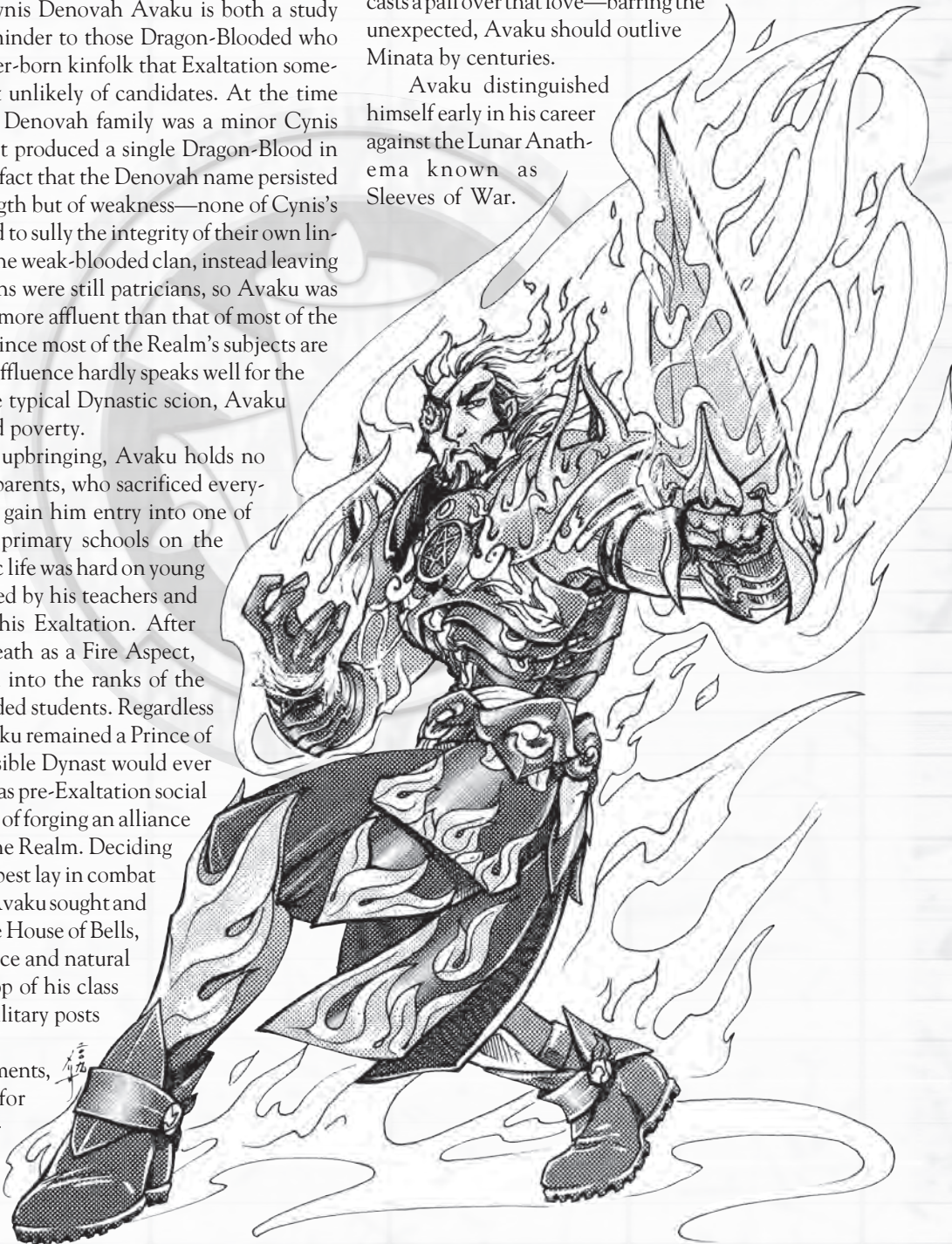
A child of poverty graced by the Immaculate Dragons and a man of deep, abiding morality in a Great House known for its debauchery, Cynis Denovah Avaku is both a study in contrasts and a reminder to those Dragon-Blooded who would scorn their lesser-born kinfolk that Exaltation sometimes claims the most unlikely of candidates. At the time of Avaku's birth, the Denovah family was a minor Cynis bloodline that had not produced a single Dragon-Blood in centuries. Indeed, the fact that the Denovah name persisted was not a sign of strength but of weakness—none of Cynis's three daughters wished to sully the integrity of their own lineages by assimilating the weak-blooded clan, instead leaving it to rot. The Denovahs were still patricians, so Avaku was raised in a lifestyle far more affluent than that of most of the Realm's subjects, but since most of the Realm's subjects are peasant farmers, that affluence hardly speaks well for the line. Compared to the typical Dynastic scion, Avaku was raised in wretched poverty.

Despite that low upbringing, Avaku holds no bitterness toward his parents, who sacrificed everything they had left to gain him entry into one of the more prestigious primary schools on the Blessed Isle. Scholastic life was hard on young Avaku, who was abused by his teachers and his peers daily until his Exaltation. After taking his Second Breath as a Fire Aspect, Avaku was welcomed into the ranks of the school's Dragon-Blooded students. Regardless of his upbringing, Avaku remained a Prince of the Earth, and no sensible Dynast would ever let something as petty as pre-Exaltation social status stand in the way of forging an alliance with a future peer of the Realm. Deciding early on that his skills best lay in combat and military matters, Avaku sought and received entry into the House of Bells, where through diligence and natural skill, he rose to the top of his class and had his pick of military posts upon graduation.

Inbetween assignments, Avaku found time for marriage, and as arranged marriages go, this one has been fairly successful.

Mnemon Caras Minata is not an Exalt, but she is a highly intelligent mortal Dynast, skilled both at maintaining a Dynastic household in her husband's absence and in guiding her husband in those aspects of Dynastic politics for which his lowly upbringing left him relatively unprepared. Minata has given Avaku two children, a son and a daughter, both of whom stand an excellent chance of receiving Exaltation. She also acts as Avaku's most trusted confidante and conscience. Over the short time of their marriage, the two have come to truly love one another, although Minata's mortal status casts a pall over that love—barring the unexpected, Avaku should outlive Minata by centuries.

Avaku distinguished himself early in his career against the Lunar Anathema known as Sleeves of War.



He has since served two tours in the West fighting against Fair Folk incursions into Realm satrapies. Most recently, Avaku assisted a Wyld Hunt detachment sponsored by his House in killing an Anathema who had been interfering with Cynis interests in the Threshold. Although devoted to the Immaculate Philosophy and convinced of the danger of the Anathema, this last encounter has shaken Avaku more than even he realizes—the Hunt's target turned out to be a nothing more than a boy younger than Avaku's own son who bore the caste mark of a Deceiver, and the "Cynis interests" that led to Avaku's involvement was nothing more than opium shipments targeted toward the boy's hometown.

Although he has spoken of his misgivings about the incident to no one but his wife, the truth of the matter is that Avaku is having a crisis of faith. A remarkably kind-hearted and compassionate individual (for a Dragon-Blooded and definitely for a Cynis), Avaku now finds difficulty in reconciling the morality of the Immaculate Philosophy with the reality of murdering a child in cold blood. He finds even more difficulty in reconciling the Philosophy's views on the spiritual perfection of the Dragon-Blooded with the utter depravity of his own Great House.

Avaku's ultimate goal is to see House Denovah elevated to a position equal to the three bloodlines that currently rule House Cynis: Wisel, Belar and Falen. Of course, the three matriarchs of those families are still quite active and will never tolerate any serious effort to add a fourth branch to the family tree, but Avaku intends to cross that bridge when he comes to it. In any case, with only two offspring, neither of whom has Exalted yet, such an ambition would take centuries to fulfill, and there is much for the young Cynis to do in the meantime.

Politically, Cynis Denovah Avaku is a great admirer of the Roseblack and would prefer to see her on the Scarlet Throne before any of the other likely candidates. He has little to offer her by way of support, but he would be honored to follow her into battle. He might be more ambivalent when he realizes just how bloody a civil war is likely to be. Avaku might also be willing to support Cathak Cainan, but he thinks Mnemon would make a poor Empress, despite the fact that his wife, Minata, is of Mnemon's house and his own ambitions might well be advanced if Mnemon were victorious.

Motivation: To establish House Denovah as a political power in its own right

Aspect: Fire

Anima Banner: A coruscating heat-haze that radiates from his body, blurring the air around him.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 1, Dodge 4, Integrity 1, Lore 2, Martial Arts 1, Medicine 1, Melee 4 (Daiklave +2), Performance 1, Presence 4, Resistance 3, Ride 2, Socialize 2, Survival 2, Stealth 1, Thrown 1, War 3

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Artifact 3, Breeding 1, Command 2, Connections 2, Reputation 2

Merits & Flaws: Enemy (3-pt. Flaw—an old school rival who Avaku partially crippled at the House of Bells), Diminished Vision (3-pt. Flaw—missing an eye)

Charms:

Excellencies: Athletics (1st), Awareness (1st), Dodge (1st), Melee (1st), War (1st, Terrestrial War Reinforcement)

Athletics: Effortlessly Rising Flame, Falling Star Maneuver
Awareness: All-Encompassing Earth Sense, Feeling the Dragon's Bones

Dodge: Hopping Firecracker Evasion, Threshold Warding Stance, Virtuous Negation Defense

Melee: Dragon-Graced Weapon, Ghost-Fire Blade, Refining the Inner Blade

Presence: Aura of Invulnerability, Glowing Coal Radiance

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x 3)

War: Blazing Courageous Swordsmen Inspiration, Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings, Phantom-Warrior Horde

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 7B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Red Jade Reaver Daiklave (Kiss of Thunder): Speed 4, Accuracy 12, Damage 14L/3, Parry DV 5, Rate 2, Tags O

Long Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 6L*, Rate 3, Range 200, Tags 2, B

* Uses broadhead arrows.

Soak: 12L/12B (Red jade reinforced breastplate, +10L/9B, Hardness: 8L/8B, -1 mobility penalty; and target shield, +1 difficulty to hit)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 11 **Peripheral Essence:** 18 (28)

Committed Essence: 10

Other Notes: Avaku's Allies, Command, Connections and Reputation Backgrounds all pertain to the Imperial Army. His Artifact rating relates to his red jade reinforced breastplate and reaver daiklave, as well as a pair of perfected boots, all gifts from House Cynis upon his graduation with honors from the House of Bells. The secrets of his high Breeding are harder to fathom.



KARAL LINWEI

FIELD FORCE TAIMYO

Quote: *Infantry are for holding a position; specialists are for seizing an objective.*

This attitude, accompanied by the razor-edge brilliance to apply it properly, has made Karal Linwei one of Lookshy's most successful commanders ever. Her star has risen far and seems poised to go all the way to the top—if not struck down prematurely by scandal or worse.

Linwei rose through the ranks to become the youngest taimyo in Legion records since Nefvarin himself, assuming command of the First Field Force at the tender age of 72. She served with particular distinction in the war against Thorns, relentlessly throwing her rangers, war machines and commando units against weak portions of the Realm's puppet-ally. These attacks badly disrupted the enemy's lines of communication and supply, producing chaos all out of proportion to the number of troops killed or fortifications destroyed but still lacked for glory. It was only during the Battle of Mishaka that Linwei finally had the opportunity to face off against veteran units commanded by hardened troops from the Blessed Isle and equipped comparably to her own. During that fight, she personally destroyed two warstriders and captured four more; disabled a lightning ballista emplacement with sappers and firedust charges; and after being forced to abandon her own badly damaged warstrider, faced down a talonlord in dragon armor and slew him using the sharpened edge of a shoulder plate that had fallen from her 'strider.

For these accomplishments and others besides, Linwei has become the one to watch in the Seventh Legion—and, if possible, the one to outshine. Few manage. After the Battle of Mishaka, Linwei became the youngest (and newest) appointee to the General Staff. She finds the increased bureaucratic duties a greater challenge than any battlefield feat but is honing her organizational and political skills with the same zeal she applies to the battlefield. Many believe she may be the next Legion chumyo, once this current business with the Mask of Winters is resolved.

Simply put, Linwei cares more about the well being of the Seventh Legion and the successful execution of its mission than anything else. She is an idealist but also a realist. Linwei knows that she must become intimately familiar with every ugly flaw and failing of Lookshy in order to lead it to overcome these defects. Incompetence and corruption often provoke terrible outbursts of rage from the taimyo; these outbursts are as carefully rehearsed as any other aspect of her military or political operations. As a figure of authority,

she knows she has enemies and would prefer that she provide any "weaknesses" they might intuit, rather than allowing them to find real failings. Despite her relative youth, and the fact that she is not by any means the head of her Gens, Linwei is often referred to as "the Karal" due to her perceived epitomization of the family's virtues.

Politically, Linwei is a Mercenary, believing that the current status quo is the best way for the Seventh Legion to preserve its security and prosperity, but she is not married to the position. If a genuine opportunity arose to increase the Legion's standing in the Scavenger Lands—or even to resurrect the Shogunate—she would advocate rushing to capitalize.



For all of the Karal's administrative competence, political savvy, battlefield genius and personal charisma, she is currently embroiled in a scandal—some more properly would call it a crisis—that threatens to potentially end her career... or even to provoke a civil war within Lookshy. A little over a year ago, Linwei received a series of reports, each more alarming than the last. The Fair Folk had attacked the village of Rana, where her oldest daughter, Fire Orchid, had gone to live out her retirement, and burned her daughter's villa to the ground. Worse, the invaders had been routed by a warrior glowing with the terrible radiance of the Anathema—a warrior wearing red armor of the First Field Force and answering to the name Karal Fire Orchid.

Linwei has made a public show of disavowing the rumors. This is a misunderstanding or some cruel scheme by her enemies or by the enemies of Lookshy. She will not hear her daughter spoken of as Anathema, and her rage when faced with such accusations is no act at all. Only the quick action of one of her aides has prevented her from breaking the Seventh Legion's ban on dueling over the matter already. Her two Exalted sons, the twins Vosa and Kalim, believe their mother simply does not wish to acknowledge the truth of the matter.

They are wrong. Linwei is aware that the evidence of the Anathema in red's true identity is undeniable. Her public grief and rage, while genuine, buy her time. She is unwilling to lose either her career or her daughter and is searching for some solution that may preserve both. She's already dispatched the twins to follow their sister's trail, in order to gather more information—the more she knows about Fire Orchid's activities, the longer she can fend off her political rivals (and allies) with explanations and excuses. Ultimately, Linwei has resolved that she will not act on the matter without having confronted Fire Orchid face to face. She will look into her daughter's eyes and see either the soldier she raised or a demon in residence.

Recently, unknown even to the twins, Linwei has surreptitiously enlisted the aid of a Solar Anathema to bring Fire Orchid back to Lookshy alive.

Motivation: To lead, protect and serve the Seventh Legion

Aspect: Fire

Anima Banner: An enormous flame-etched blade, suspended point down, with a dragon curling around it.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2 (Ambushes + 1), Bureaucracy 3 (Seventh Legion + 1), Dodge 1, Integrity 2, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Flametongue, Forest-Tongue, High Realm) 3, Lore 2, Martial Arts 2, Melee 5

(Daiklave + 2), Occult 2, Performance 2 (Inspiring Troops + 1), Presence 3 (Impassioned Speech + 2), Resistance 3, Ride 2, Socialize 3 (Seventh Legion + 1), Stealth 1, Survival 1, War 5 (First Field Force + 3).

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Arsenal 5, Backing 5, Breeding 3, Command 5, Connections 3, Manse 3, Reputation 4, Resources 3, Retainers 4

Charms:

Excellencies: Bureaucracy (3rd), Melee (1st, Terrestrial Melee Reinforcement), Presence (1st), War (1st, Terrestrial War Reinforcement)

Athletics: Effortlessly Rising Flame, Falling Star Maneuver

Integrity: Unsleping Earth Meditation

Linguistics: Wind-Carried Words Technique

Lore: Elemental Bolt Attack

Melee: Blinding Spark Distraction, Dragon-Graced Weapon, Portentous Comet Deflecting Mode, Ringing Anvil Onslaught, Threshing Floor Technique

Presence: Auspicious First Meeting Attitude, Glowing Coal Radiance, Unbearable Taunt Technique

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique

War: Blazing Courageous Swordsmen Inspiration, Dragon-Seared Battlefield, Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings, Phantom-Warrior Horde, Ramparts of Obedient Earth

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Red Jade Reaper Daiklave (The Unimpeded Flame): Speed 3, Accuracy 16, Damage 8L, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Soak: 11L/12B (Red jade lamellar armor, +8L/9B, Hardness: 5L/5B, mobility penalty -1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 14 **Peripheral Essence:** 35

Committed Essence: 8

Other Notes: Linwei's Allies, Arsenal, Backing, Command and Retainers all relate to her position as taimyo of the First Field Force and member of the General Staff. Her daiklave and artifact armor are her personal panoply represented by her Artifact rating, gifts from Gens Karal, as is the fire dragon's scale set into her daiklave and the Manse that produces it. Linwei may one day consolidate her Connections with Gens Karal and her Reputation as taimyo into control over the Gens, assuming the current scandal in which she is embroiled doesn't dash her chances. She often supplements herself and her troops with her Arsenal Background as each mission dictates.

SESUS RAFARA

RECALCITRANT MASTER SPY

Quote: *Sorry, it's nothing personal.*

Honed as a weapon, fire is quick, effective, terrifying and destroys without remorse. Given its proper respect, cared for, tended to and nurtured, such a weapon becomes the indisputable proof of one's power. Brandished carelessly and selfishly, fire will soon incinerate the one who wields it. If only House Sesus had understood these tenets when it commandeered the life of Sesus Rafara.

The result of an experiment by Sesus spymasters to create a secret weapon in their war for House superiority, Rafara was removed from primary school early, reared by nannies and educated by private tutors. Her caretakers doted on her and provided her with a happy childhood, which was not in accordance with either the plans of the House or the temperament of her bitter, socially frustrated Exalted parents. Her mother, who owned a fleet of siaka-hunting ships, finally took corrective action by bringing her daughter along to observe the family business. Once well out to sea, the day's actual education began—Rafara was forced to watch as her mother drew a knife across the cheeks of both of her doting nannies before pushing them overboard. She had just marked Rafara's own cheek—whether as a warning or an actual prelude to murder, she still does not know—when the young girl's rage Exalted her. She landed one solid hit before her mother knocked her unconscious.

After that, her family effectively sold her to House Sesus. She was schooled far from home, civilization and family at a First Age manse near Bright Obelisk, where she was given instruction in the ways of espionage and assassination by the House spymasters. As part of her training, she was denied the life experiences and social inculcations of a young Dynast. The idea was that, as an outsider, she would more effectively see through the foibles and transparencies of those around her, burdened by none of the blind spots that might be created by the life of one raised within the Realm.

In all of these things, House Sesus succeeded more spectacularly than it could have imagined. Rafara has been responsible for the death of several troublesome Dragon-Blooded and countless patricians who overstepped their bounds; she has been a primary cog in the engine of information House Sesus uses to wield power over others through bribery and blackmail, and her talent for thievery has brought the House more than its share of undue good fortune at the expense of friend and foe alike. Yet, in all of this, they failed in the worst way of all when they failed Sesus Rafara. For the good of her House, she was made to sacrifice the life of wonder and prosperity due to all Exalted Dynasts and was given no choice in the matter—her sacrifice was not voluntary.

To make matters worse, Rafara was schooled in Realm society, cultural mores and etiquette, the psychology of her peers and the rites of the Immaculate Order as an outsider, her training flensed of all bias and belief, so that she was inured with a recognition of all the privilege and happiness she was missing out on even as she was taught to emulate and understand these things just well enough to move amongst her would-be fellows undetected. The cruelty of this treatment was compounded by the betrayals she was forced to endure, as part of her training was focused on making her an island of contempt against all uncontrolled feeling. The war on her trust involved giving her what she most wanted: friends, lovers, peers, the benefits of Dragon-Blooded youth—all of whom betrayed her in the end, revealing by treachery that all things sweet must turn sour and that love and happiness are illusions.

There will be no parties for Rafara, no marriage, no children, no life of recognition and respect and indolent luxury. But there may be revenge. Tepet Ejava is among the many targets the House demands she gather information on, and nearly alone among the Dynasts she has observed, Ejava



seems to cleave to the ideals the Realm espouses (as opposed to the corruption it practices). More than that, she appears to have the power and skill to maybe, just maybe, actually make a difference in the coming days, if she is not murdered first for being too upright and talented. Rafara has decided to invisibly lend whatever aid she can to the Roseblack for as long as she is able. Her rebellion is minor, perhaps, in the grand scheme of things, but it satisfies her in a way that all of her work on behalf of the House she has grown to loathe never has.

She grows bolder as events in the Realm move toward the tipping point.

Motivation: Protect and support Tepet Ejava

Aspect: Fire

Anima Banner: A flame-etched dragon spiraling in upon itself.

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

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

Abilities: *Athletics* 5, *Awareness* 3 (Eavesdropping + 1), *Dodge* 5, *Integrity* 3, *Investigation* 4 (*Spying* + 2), *Larceny* 4 (*Breaking and Entering* + 1), *Lore* 2, *Martial Arts* 3, *Medicine* 2, *Melee* 3 (*Assassination* + 1), *Occult* 2, *Performance* 1, *Presence* 2, *Ride* 2, *Sail* 2, *Socialize* 1, *Stealth* 5, *War* 2

Backgrounds: *Allies* 2, *Artifact* 2, *Backing* 3, *Breeding* 1, *Command* 1, *Manse* 2, *Resources* 3

Charms:

Excellencies: *Awareness* (3rd), *Dodge* (1st), *Integrity* (1st), *Larceny* (1st), *Melee* (1st), *Stealth* (1st)

Athletics: *Bellows-Pumping Stride*, *Dancing Ember Stride*, *Effortlessly Rising Flame*, *Falling Star Maneuver*, *Incense Smoke Ladder*

Awareness: *All-Encompassing Earth Sense*, *Feeling the Dragon's Bones*

Dodge: *Elemental Defense Technique*, *Hopping Firecracker Evasion*, *Safety Among Enemies*, *Smoldering Karma Strike*, *Threshold-Warding Stance*, *Virtuous Negation Defense*, *Unassailable Body of Fire Defense*

Integrity: *Unsleeping Earth Meditation*, *Untiring Earth Meditation*

Melee: *Blinking Spark Distraction*, *Dragon-Graced Weapon*

Larceny: *Ears of the Snowy Owl*, *Naked Thief Style*, *Observer Awareness Method*, *Precise Ink Technique*

Occult: *Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique*

Presence: *Auspicious First Meeting Attitude*

Stealth: *Distracting Breeze Meditation*, *Dragon Shroud Technique*, *Feeling-the-Air Technique*, *Soundless Action Prana*, *Trackless Passage Style*, *Wind-Walking Technique*, *Zone of Silence Stance*

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 2B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Punch Dagger: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 4L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Slashing Sword: Speed 3, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 8 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 13

Peripheral Essence: 28 (34)

Committed Essence: 6

Other Notes: Rafara possesses both the *Backing of* and *Allies* within House Sesus. She also has *Command* of a small unit of mortal ninja provided by the House. The *Fire Aspect's Artifact* rating represents a collar of dawn's cleansing light, a red jade hearthstone amulet and a pair of red jade hearthstone bracers. She has a salt gem of the spirit's eye set in her amulet and a stone of healing socketed into her right bracer.

PELEPS ARAMIDA

ADMIRAL OF THE IMPERIAL NAVY

Quote: *Batten down the hatches, and prepare to dive.*

Aramida knew from a young age that she would follow in the footsteps of her mother, Peleps Autasia. Aramida saw her only rarely, but she can still remember the times when Autasia would return home, bringing with her tales of wonder and woe, of heart-stopping terrors of the deep, of villains that formed Aramida's personal gallery of childhood bogies and of faraway places and glorious battles. From these tales sprang Aramida's unadulterated love for her mother and her desire to be a part of the Realm thalassocracy.

Aramida Exalted upon learning her mother's ship had sunk: following nothing less than a primal urge to be one with the water, she dove into the sea and stood on the ocean bottom, wracked with grief. When Aramida finally got

hold of her senses, she came to the surface and found comfort in a strange, impossible idea—that in dying, her mother had passed Aramida her Exaltation.

Her years in the House of Bells were well spent. It was during this time that, in a brutal training exercise, Aramida had her first brush with death when one of her teammates died in a gruesome accident. The cadet she remembers only as Stump (for his stout, squat constitution) was crushed between two ships when he used his body to turn aside the other ship's ram and fell between them as they scathed each other's hulls. His heroism led Aramida's outmatched team of juniors to board and squash their seniors. That night, as they drank to Stump's memory, Aramida considered his example. The lesson of his sacrifice would come to greatly influence her ideas of what service to the Realm means.

Those ideas would be further tested and refined by a long, often humbling, sometimes illustrious career. Having spent nearly two centuries on the water, Aramida has proven herself time and time again in countless battles, rising from a trireme trierarch running escort against the threat of Skullstone harriers to the admiral of a portion of the Realm's Water Fleet.

At the heart of her doctrine are these tenets: Service to the Realm requires a willingness to sacrifice, and while following orders is essential to maintaining the system of service that keeps the Imperial Navy running, reliable results are more important than following protocol. In her words, "Obedience is essential, but only success allows you to advance." Aramida requires order, but she also leans upon free thinking, instinct, creativity and a willingness to work outside the lines and bend orders to get the job done.

Aramida is not especially devout, but she prays, meditates and believes in the solidity the Immaculate Philosophy offers in uncertain times. She knows of the real, sensible contrast it gives in a world full of evil spirits and Anathema, beset on all sides by otherworldly powers. Her faith and belief has given her crew a sense of continuity and forges a lasting



impression on those who see what happens when a crew is emboldened by divine mandate and a trierarch who serves as a physical example of the rightness of their cause.

Exemplar of the siege defender, Aramida knows that the Imperial Navy is the Scarlet Empire's first line of defense. In part inspired by her mother's death, Aramida has turned her military power on the threats against her home that come from beyond Creation by way of her seas. In this, she has made a career out of struggling against the odds, of facing foes that both outnumber and overpower her and coming out on top.

Aramida has always sought to contain the Wyld, patrolling nearby waters and routing the pirate colonies that sometimes form on its borders. Her stance on the Anathema, never favorable to begin with, was polarized by a brush with Lyta, and her daring and narrow defeat of a deathknight out of Skullstone has served to underline her opposition to the sovereign of Darkmist. However, a recent attack on her ship, *Dragon's Fury*, has led her campaign in a new direction.

Kalabarettes, the Brine Groom, demon of the Second Circle, attached himself to the irreplaceable engine of her vessel in an attempt to destroy it. After a desperate battle, Aramida pinned the demon to the engine core with her daiklave, sealing it there until she could make it to port, where she could summon the proper sorcerous authorities to deal with her hijacker. However, when she learned that freeing the demon to destroy it would also result in the loss of her ship, Aramida chose to sail on with the demon irreconcilably pinned to the heart of *Dragon's Fury*. Now she uses it as an oracle to guide her fleet in its efforts to clean up the seepage of Kimberly, efforts that have brought it into conflict with the Lintha and, more recently, one of the Green Sun Princes.

Motivation: Command with honor and distinction

Aspect: Water

Anima Banner: An upswelling of waves dozens of feet into the air, finally breaking apart to reveal a dragon with wings like sails.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, *Bureaucracy* 1, Craft (Wood) 3, Integrity 2, *Investigation* 2, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Guild Cant, Low Realm, Seatongue, Western Tribal Tongues) 4, Lore 3, *Martial Arts* 2, Medicine 2, *Melee* 5, Performance 1, *Presence* 4, Resistance 4, Ride 1, *Sail* 5 (*First Age Vessels* + 1), Socialize 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Thrown 2, War 4 (*Naval Tactics* + 2)

Backgrounds: Arsenal 4, Artifact 4, Backing 4, Breeding 2, Command 3, Connections 1, Reputation 3, Resources 4

Charms:

Excellencies: Archery (3rd, Terrestrial Archery Reinforcement), Melee (1st, Terrestrial Melee Reinforcement), Presence (1st), Sail (1st, 3rd, Terrestrial Sail Reinforcement), War (1st, Terrestrial War Reinforcement)

Archery: Dragon-Graced Arrow, Dragonfly Finds Mate, Seven-Year Swarm Volley, Swallows Defend the Nest

Linguistics: Voices on the Wind, Wind-Carried Words Technique

Lore: Elemental Bolt Attack, Elemental Burst Technique

Melee: Dragon-Graced Weapon, Ghost-Fire Blade, Portentous Comet-Deflecting Mode, Refining the Inner Blade

Presence: Aura of Invulnerability, Glowing Coal Radiance

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x3)

Sail: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, plus Waves Like Clouds Voyage from **Dreams of the First Age**

War: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 8B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

BlackJadeReaperDaiklave (Blood-RedWave-Road): Speed 3, Accuracy 13, Damage 10L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Exceptional Composite Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 9L*, Rate 4, Range 300, Tags 2, B

* Uses frog crotch arrows.

Soak: 9L/12B (Yorai rapid-response armor, +7L/8B, Hardness: 3L/3B, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 5

Personal Essence: 14 **Peripheral Essence:** 24 (37)

Committed Essence: 13

Other Notes: Aramida's Arsenal, Backing and Command all relate to her high position within the Imperial Navy, and she possesses a Reputation as a successful maverick thanks to her accomplishments there. She has also over her long career cultivated Connections in the Imperial Army. A product of her Arsenal, Aramida's command craft, the *Dragon's Fury*, is a *Swift Midday Brilliance*-class warship still mounting one of its original light implosion bows. The admiral's Artifact rating refers to her yorai rapid-response armor, with its integrated elemental lens and Essence-scriving visor, and her jade reaper daiklave.

PELEPS DELED

THE RIGHTEOUS ZEALOT

Quote: *There is no such thing as “a disagreement of Immaculate interpretation.” There is merely the right interpretation... and the wrong one.*

It is not uncommon for Dragon-Blooded of exceptional power and position to be hated by their peers. It is more unusual for a Dragon-Blood to achieve such power and status because of the hatred and contempt of such peers. Such is the tale of Peleps Deled. Born into a distinguished Peleps line, Deled developed a powerful bond at an early age with an uncle, Peleps Dehan, a high-ranking Immaculate monk who doted on the young Dynast and tried to inculcate a devotion to the Immaculate Philosophy within him. In this, Dehan was far more successful than he had ever intended—by early childhood, Deled had developed an unhealthy obsession with Immaculate dogma. In an effort to humble the boy, whose religious mania had grown frightening to his family, Dehan demonstrated a Water Dragon Style kata to

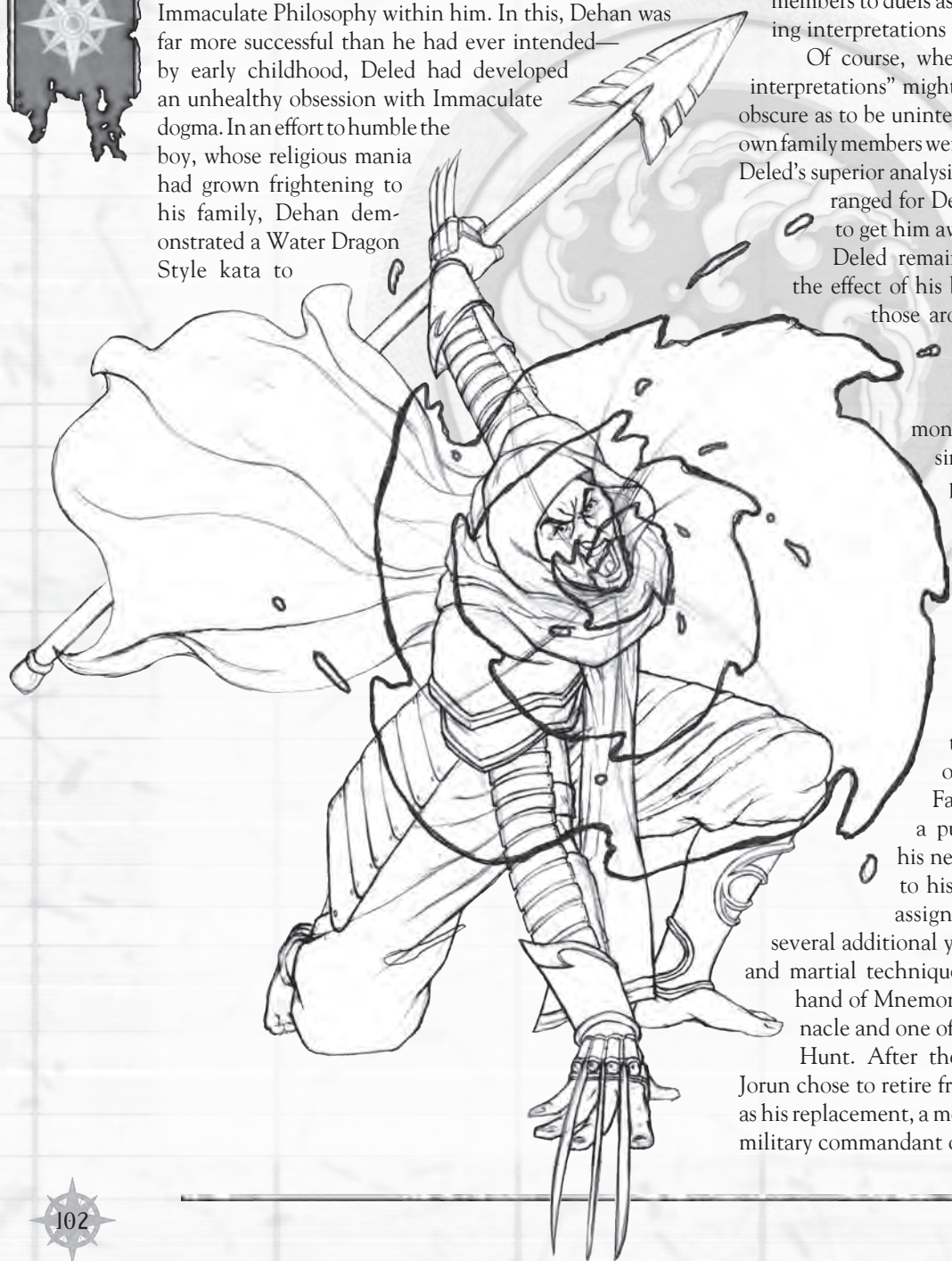
Deled, knowing that the last few steps of the lengthy and complicated kata were impossible for mortals to perform.

If Dehan's goal was to give Deled a dose of humility, the plan failed utterly. Deled soon became obsessed with the kata, practicing it for days at a time and eschewing food, drink or company while he performed the same moves again and again. After seven days and a thousand and one attempts, Deled performed the kata perfectly and was rewarded by Exaltation. And having been, as he saw it, blessed by the Dragons themselves for his devotion and spiritual perfection, Deled's arrogance and religious mania deepened into madness. The young Dragon-Blood quickly demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for Immaculate martial arts, and he took to challenging friends, fellow students and even family members to duels as a way of settling disputes over differing interpretations of the Immaculate texts.

Of course, where Deled was concerned, “differing interpretations” might mean disagreement over a point so obscure as to be unintelligible to others. After several of his own family members were crippled for refusing to acknowledge Deled's superior analysis of minor doctrinal issues, Dehan arranged for Deled to enter the Cloister of Wisdom to get him away from his own family. For his part, Deled remained completely unconcerned about the effect of his bullying and abrasive personality on those around him. If anything, his behavior

worsened at the Cloister of Wisdom, culminating in his cold-blooded murder of a fellow monk during a sparring match. The monk's sin? She had disagreed with him on the proper translation of a difficult-to-read Immaculate passage written in Old Realm, suggesting that the phrase in question might be “by the Dragons” instead of “of the Dragons.”

This was the final straw for the elder monks, who gave Deled a choice between becoming a permanent member of the Wyld Hunt or the subject of an official inquiry into the monk's death. Far from viewing the assignment as a punishment, Deled eagerly accepted his new post as one supremely appropriate to his skills and piety. Although his new assignment required Deled to undergo several additional years of training in advanced warfare and martial techniques, he eventually became the right hand of Mnemon Jorun, then the Master of the Pinnacle and one of the preeminent leaders of the Wyld Hunt. After the Empress disappeared, the elderly Jorun chose to retire from service, and he appointed Deled as his replacement, a move that infuriated Cathak Titus, the military commandant of the Pinnacle and Deled's immedi-



ate superior. Refusing to serve under a religious zealot with a penchant for sadism, Titus transferred back to his family's legions, taking his military command with him.

Even in this most recent elevation, Deled's advancement was ultimately the result of his personal weaknesses rather than his strengths. Officially, Jorun appointed Deled as Master of the Pinnacle because the position called for a strongly religious viewpoint and required an unmatched devotion to the principles of the Immaculate Order. The true reason was that elements within House Cathak wished to end their support for the Pinnacle and move their forces closer to home, so those elders blackmailed Jorun into putting the universally hated Deled into the leadership role as a way of providing political cover for their withdrawal. Titus, for his part, is totally unaware of his own House's role in elevating his rival to the position that should have been his, and both Titus and Deled have played nicely into House Cathak's hands.

Deprived of most Dynastic support, Deled has made do as best he can. His demands for more monks to serve the Hunt have been filled with the cast-offs of other monasteries, young monks who have angered some superior or otherwise committed some sin for which the penalty is exile to the Pinnacle of the Hunt. For many of these monks, the posting is a death sentence—Deled personally grills every new recruit on the Immaculate texts before testing their martial arts training, and fatal “accidents” are common among those who offend Deled with some gross misstatement of canon.

Deled's foibles are so well known that they play a significant role in the recent decline of the Hunt's fortunes. Several Houses deliberately assign troublemakers and malcontents to second the Hunt, knowing that Deled may cripple or kill them for some imagined slight, thereby giving the House grounds to withdraw all aid. Indeed, many Dragon-Blooded who still see the Hunt as essential to Realm security nevertheless starve the Pinnacle of support in hopes that Deled will die in battle or else fail against an Anathema so badly that he will have to be removed. Once a more effective leader takes command of the Pinnacle, it is possible that several Great Houses will reevaluate their decisions to withdraw from the Hunt.

Deled cares little for the Realm's political future. While he has no love for the Regent, Deled would oppose placing anyone else on the Scarlet Throne—he really does believe that the Scarlet Empress holds the special favor of the Immaculate Dragons and that she will eventually return to reclaim her throne. If push came to shove, however, Deled would probably support Cathak Cainan over all other claimants due to the elder Cathak's strong support for the Hunt.

Motivation: To reshape the Immaculate Order according to his own philosophical views

Aspect: Water

Anima Banner: A swirling miasma of dark water, accompanied by the sound of pounding surf.

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

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 5, Temperance 2, Valor 4

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 3 (Spot Ambush +2), Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 5 (Versus Ranged Attacks +2), Investigation 4, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Low Realm) 1, Lore 3, Martial Arts 5 (Versus Other Martial Artists +3), Melee 4, Occult 2 (Spirits +2), Performance 3, Presence 2 (Intimidation +3), Resistance 4, Ride 3, Sail 2, Socialize 2 (Discern Truth +2), Stealth 3 (Ambush +2), Survival 3, Thrown 3

Backgrounds: Artifact 4, Backing 4, Breeding 3, Manse 3, Reputation 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Athletics (1st, 2nd), Dodge (1st), Investigation (2nd), Martial Arts (1st, 2nd, 3rd, Terrestrial Martial Arts Reinforcement)

Athletics: Bellows-Pumping Stride, Effortlessly Rising Flame, Falling Star Maneuver

Dodge: Elemental Defense Technique, Hopping Firecracker Evasion, Safety Among Enemies, Threshold Warding Stance

Martial Arts: All general Martial Arts Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, Pasiap's Humility, Moment of Daana'd

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x 3)

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Water Dragon Style: All Charms

Join Battle: 8

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Black Jade Razor Claws (Claws of Daana'd): Speed 4, Accuracy 14, Damage 10L, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags M

Black Jade Dire Lance (Sting of Daana'd): Speed 4, Accuracy 11, Damage 13L/12L, Parry DV 6, Rate 2, Tags 2, L, R

Soak: 12L/13B (Black jade reinforced breastplate, 10L/9B, Hardness: 8L/8B, mobility penalty -1).

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 9

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 16 **Peripheral Essence:** 26 (39)

Committed Essence: 16

Other Notes: Deled's Artifact rating refers to his black jade hearthstone amulet razor claws, dire lance and reinforced breastplate. His Backing is from the Wyld Hunt, and his Reputation is in the Martial Arts World. Attuned to a number of Manses on the Blessed Isle and the Northern satrapies, he bears the hearthstones for three of them. A freedom stone is set in the hearthstone amulet he wears at his neck, while a sphere of balance and a labyrinthine eye are both set into his dire lance.



TERESU GIDO

LOOKSHYAN SOHEI

Quote: *By the Dragons, I'll show you your proper place, spirit.*

Teresu Gido experienced a late Exaltation, at the age of 19. By that time, he had already given up any hope of being Chosen by the Dragons, and that failure of faith continues to haunt him almost two centuries later. Feeling that he had been granted a second chance to be all he could be, Gido swore that he would never again accept from himself anything less than all he had to give. Seeking to express the utmost power of his Exaltation, he enrolled at the Lookshy Academy of Sorcery—what is now known as the Old School—to become a sohei.

His career as a sorcerer-priest was marked by dedication, sacrifice and heroism above and beyond the call of duty. He fought spirits of all sorts, Fair Folk more times than he could count and, on two occasions, even found himself staring across the battlefield at one of the Anathema. The first of those fights constituted one of the very few failures of Gido's career and left him with an ugly scar across his chest and stomach. He consoles himself with the fact that, in the second battle, he personally landed the killing blow against a demon burning with the stolen light of the midday sun.

After more than a century of service to the Seventh Legion, Gido requested to be moved to reserve duty so that he might pursue some of his personal interests. He lectures at the Valkhawsen Academy twice a week during the seasons of Fire and Water and stays involved in politics, but mostly, Gido watches and polices the activity of spirits throughout the River Province.

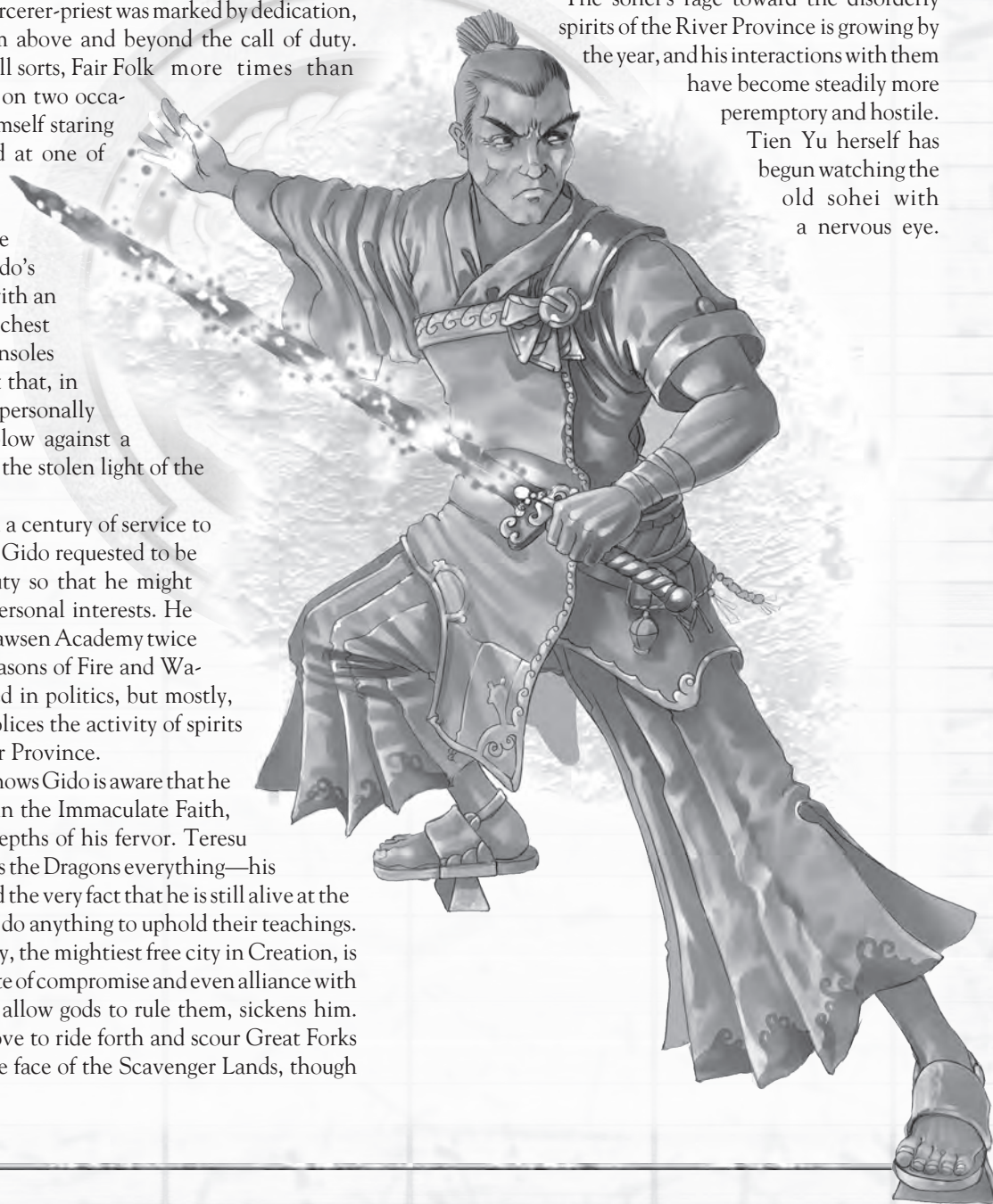
Everyone who knows Gido is aware that he is a devout believer in the Immaculate Faith, but few realize the depths of his fervor. Teresu Gido believes he owes the Dragons everything—his career, his success and the very fact that he is still alive at the age of 211. He would do anything to uphold their teachings. The fact that Lookshy, the mightiest free city in Creation, is forced to exist in a state of compromise and even alliance with heretics who openly allow gods to rule them, sickens him. Gido would dearly love to ride forth and scour Great Forks in particular from the face of the Scavenger Lands, though

Nexus is little better. Politically, he is a hard-line Purist, although he only discusses his politics frankly in private.

The spirits of the Scavenger Lands, Gido believes, must be brought to heel. He is convinced that the resurgence of the Anathema and the appearance of the Mask of Winters are either the doing of corrupt, lazy and selfish gods or the result of the Dragons, disgusted with the fallen state of the world, withdrawing their protection from Creation. He treats any other lines of conjecture with open scorn—the chains of Danaa'd have fallen from the gates of the Underworld, after all. There are rumors that the daughter of a Seventh Legion Field Force commander has been possessed by one of the Anathema. What else could provoke such calamity but a cosmic order allowed to fall completely out of balance?

The sohei's rage toward the disorderly spirits of the River Province is growing by the year, and his interactions with them have become steadily more peremptory and hostile.

Tien Yu herself has begun watching the old sohei with a nervous eye.



His hate for the gods of the River Province, however, is nothing compared to his loathing for their offspring. Gido considers the God-Blooded to be nothing less than a living affront to the ordained celestial order. He refuses to set foot in Great Forks due to the teeming masses of such abominations in residence and cheerfully volunteers himself for any mission involving the extermination of some half-spirit upstart. He hasn't graduated to openly attacking divine by-blows without provocation... yet... but the excuses he uses to prevent himself from doing so ring increasingly hollow to his own ears.

Gido made numerous friends and sponsored a number of promising officers during his career, and most of those young soldiers have now settled into positions of real authority. Few in Lookshy realize exactly how many strings Gido could pull, were he sufficiently motivated to do so; it is easily within his power to requisition entire units of special forces personnel and equipment. He has not, as of yet, reached the point of cashing in his favors and calling on his allies, but that day is coming. If word of Karal Linwei's plans make it back to him, that might be enough to tip the matter over into open battle.

Gido is exceedingly tall and saber-thin, with only slight blue-green highlights in his hair to indicate his heritage. His blood is fairly thin and of poor stock for such a powerful Exalt, and almost two centuries of pushing his Essence to the limit have taken their toll. Gido does not look old, precisely, but his face is drawn and his hair is notably thinning.

Motivation: Put the spirits of the River Province in their place by any means necessary

Aspect: Water

Anima Banner: A darkening of the anima to jet-black, struck through with bright blue lines of cavitation.

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

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 3

Abilities: Archery 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 2, Integrity 4, Investigation 3, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Old Realm, Forest-Tongue, High Realm) 3, Lore 4 (Theology + 3), Martial Arts 5, Melee 2, Occult 5 (*Art of Warding and Exorcism* Master +3, *Spirits* + 3), Performance 2, Presence 4, Ride 2, Socialize 4, Stealth 1, War 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Breeding 1, Command 1, Connections 3, Connections 2, Connections 1, Connections 2, Connections 3, Connections 2, Reputation 3, Resources 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Martial Arts (1st), Occult (1st), Integrity (3rd)

Integrity: Oath of the Ten-Thousand Dragons, Ten-Thousand Dragons Fight as One, Unflagging Vengeance Meditation

Investigation: Scent-of-Crime Method

Linguistics: Wind-Carried Words Technique

Lore: Elemental Bolt Attack

Occult: Devonian Absorption, Spirit-Chaining Strike, Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique, Spirit-Grounding Shout, Spirit-Shredding Attack, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Five-Dragon Style: Through its Form Charm

Terrestrial Hero Style: All Charms listed in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Burning Eyes of the Offender, Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Flying Guillotine, Hound of the Five Winds, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Infallible Messenger, Invulnerable Skin of Bronze, Open the Spirit Door, Spirit Sword, Summon Elemental, Unstoppable Fountain of the Depths, the Violent Opening of Closed Portals, Wood Dragon's Claw

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 2B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Straight Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 11, Damage 5L, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Soak: 4L/6B (Buff jacket, +3L/4B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 5

Personal Essence: 13

Peripheral Essence: 36

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Teresu Gido is extremely well connected, with Allies throughout Lookshy and the Scavenger Lands and Connections in many facets of Lookshyan society including the Base Liaison Staff (3), the Stores Directorate (3), the General Staff (2), the Operations Directorate (2), Valkhawsen (2) and Gens Teresu (1). He currently has Command over a fang of young sohei in training and possesses a Reputation as a sohei throughout the River Province.

RAGARA BHAGWEI

DOMINIE OF THE HEPTAGRAM

Quote: *Do not despair, Child of Earth. Your ailment is known to me. You will be made whole.*

Understanding Ragara Bhagwei requires one to be aware of two facts. First: as the child of a union between Cynis and Ragara, Bhagwei's birth was attributed to a mortal consort of Ragara to prevent him from being named as an heir to both Houses and accumulating a lethally unhealthy amount of political importance thereby. Second: even before his Exaltation, Bhagwei had surpassed his master, the Immaculate monk Oakthorn, in the field of academics, most especially in his knowledge of medicine. The first fact served to form his stance on Dynastic politics, while the latter was only the first in a long procession of extraordinary accomplishments.

Having cultivated his medical talents to the pinnacle of mortal mastery while still in his teens, Bhagwei was first drawn into his destiny by capturing the attention of the Scarlet Empress herself. She presented him with a challenge: her lover had been poisoned with an unknown toxin, and if Bhagwei couldn't cure the girl within five days, she would die, and in his grandmother's disappointment, he would join her. For four days, Bhagwei studied and researched in vain. Eventually, exhausted, he sank into meditation and turned away from the fruitless harvest of material knowledge. He felt the roots of his Essence spread through the accumulated wisdom within him, and even more, it felt as though they reached beyond, into the very underpinnings of Creation itself. When he arose on the fifth morning, the answer flowed from him as naturally as the viridian anima that buffeted him.

The Empress rewarded the new Exalt with his life, her congratulations and enrollment at the Versino.

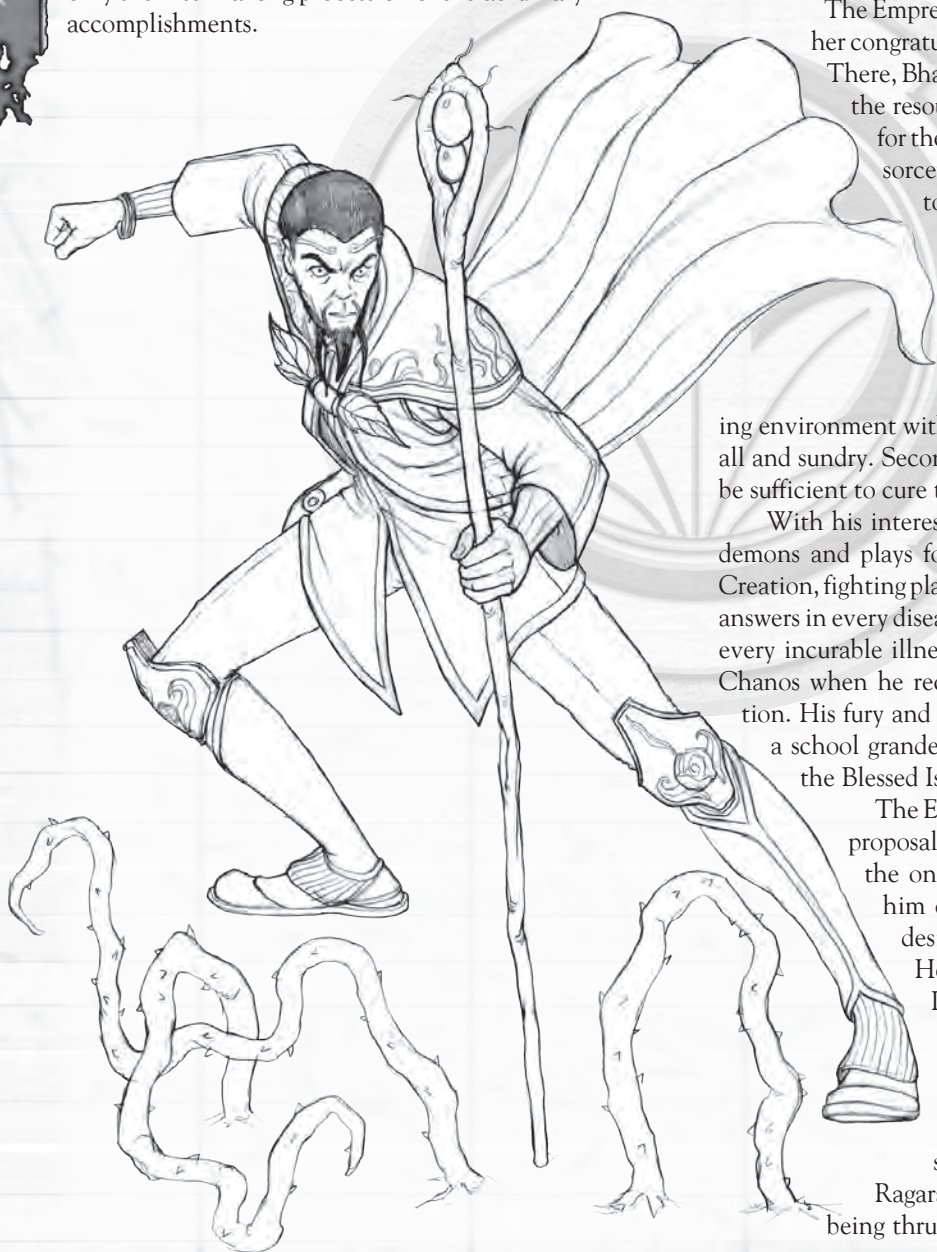
There, Bhagwei's medical study expanded with all the resources of a magical institution designed for the Chosen. He was put on the path of the sorcerer as well and folded both disciplines together, one enriching the other. In addition, he discovered two important things while studying at the Versino. First: his hatred for Mnemon, who devoured the resources of the Versino in her quest to master spells of conquest and onslaught and disrupted the learning environment with her endless need for the attention of all and sundry. Second: the suspicion that his talent might be sufficient to cure the Great Contagion.

With his interest so diverged from the summoning of demons and plays for power, he spent a time wandering Creation, fighting plagues, healing the sick and searching for answers in every disease studied, every medicine discovered, every incurable illness remedied. So it was that he was in Chanos when he received word of the Versino's destruction. His fury and mourning were blunted by a vision of a school grander in every regard. He hurried back to the Blessed Isle.

The Empress responded favorably toward his proposal to erect a new institution to replace the one that had been destroyed. She gave him charge over every aspect of its grand design, and a quarter century later, the Heptagram welcomed its first students.

It stands as the greatest achievement of Bhagwei's life, the premiere sorcerous institution in all Creation. From its halls and lecterns, he has armed the Realm with most of her greatest sorcerers and mystic artificers.

Ragara Bhagwei has taken every step to avoid being thrust into the play for the vacant Scarlet



Throne. Between the generations of sorcerers who have bowed and called him master and the truth of his bloodline, Bhagwei believes he has a strong claim to the Throne. He doesn't want it, however, and believes those who do to be fools. He's made his life's work the study of the Great Contagion, and he already rules over his own empire of sorts, as the dominie of the Heptagram. Should the Realm fall, he is confident his academy will still stand, and if the world that follows no longer needs the Scarlet Empire, it will still need the light of hope and knowledge that shines from the tower candle that is the Heptagram. And even if it does not, he still has his mendicant's cloak and walking stick. His quest to solve the puzzle of the Great Contagion would continue.

Motivation: Unravel the mysteries of the Great Contagion
Aspect: Wood

Anima Banner: A tree with infinitely, recursively branching limbs that fades away into a haze of leaves on the verge of unveiling some grand and transcendental pattern.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2; Perception 4, Intelligence 6, Wits 4

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 4, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 5 (*Research* + 2), Linguistics 3 (Native: High Realm; Others: Old Realm, Riverspeak, Skytongue), Lore 5 (*History* + 2), Martial Arts 4, Medicine 6 (*Plague* + 3), Melee 1, Occult 5, Performance 3, Presence 3, Resistance 2, Ride 3, Socialize 3, Survival 3, War 1

Backgrounds: Arsenal 5, Artifact 4, Backing 5, Breeding 4, Connections 5, Manse 5, Reputation 4, Resources 5

Charms:

Excellencies: Archery (3rd), Awareness (1st), Dodge (1st), Investigation (1st), Medicine (1st, 3rd), Occult (1st)
 Investigation: Falsehood-Unearthing Attitude, Scent-of-Crime Method

Lore: Elemental Bolt Attack, Elemental Concentration Trance, Elemental Empowerment Meditation

Medicine: Disease-Banishing Technique, Dread Infection Strike, Grievous Wound Alteration Energy, Infection-Banishing Prana, Jade Crucible Method, Madness-Analyzing Stare, Most Beneficent Seed of the Five Dragons, Purity of Mind Method, Verdant Curtain of Serenity, Wound-Closing Touch

Occult: Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique, Spirit-Grounding Shout, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x2)

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Becoming the Wood Friend, Burning Eyes of the Offender, Corrupted Words, Death of Obsidian Butterflies, Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, the Eye and the Mouth, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Open the Spirit Door, Paralyzing Contradiction, Spoke the Wooden Face, Sprouting Shackles of Doom, Stormwind Rider, Summon Elemental, Written Upon the Water, more (see "Other Notes")

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 2B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Green Jade Wrackstaff (First Shoot): Speed 3, Accuracy 9, Damage 7L or 15B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags 2, M, P*, R

* Applies only to thrusts with the chisel end.

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 6

Personal Essence: 18 **Peripheral Essence:** 31 (47)

Committed Essence: 16

Other Notes: Bhagwei has mastered many more spells than those listed, including a number of highly specialized spells of his own design. The spells above are simply those he employs most often. Bhagwei's Artifact rating represents the Wood Aspect's personal panoply—a resplendent satchel of healing, a green jade wrackstaff, two green jade hearthstone amulets and the unique Harrowed Daughter's Paleskin Cowl—while his Arsenal rating represents the resources of the Heptagram itself, which he might draw upon as dominie. His Backing and Connections are at the Heptagram as well, while his Reputation is as a savant among his peers Creation-wide. Bhagwei has access to a number of hearthstones. He wears a stone of easy breath and a third hand orb in his two hearthstone amulets (the latter stone is the hearthstone of the Dominie's Tower, which in addition to its usual powers, may cause the bell atop that tower to toll at the bearer's will). He also has a gem of visitations and dragon willow agate socketed into his wrackstaff. His stone of refuge typically remains set in the instrument of regrowth within his satchel of healing, while his ignition gem frequently is without a setting.



LIEUTENANT RISA

THE TWICE-LOST EGG

Quote: *There's always a choice.*

Life for Risa began in a resort town on the Jade Coast where her mother ran a spa for idle Dynasts. She never knew who her father was—only that he was blessedly careless. When she Exalted at the age of 12, visitors from House V'neef took a shine to her and opened immediate adoption negotiations with her dazzled mother. Risa left for the Scarlet Prefecture that night and never looked back.

Dynastic life was wonderful, but it felt like something was missing. To Risa, Dragon-Bloods were supposed to fight monsters, hunt Anathema and spread the Immaculate faith. Yet, none of the girls in her adopted family wanted that life, and they treated her like a stupid peasant for desiring it. The only person who harbored similar fantasies was a handsome boy her age whom House Tepet had adopted. When he left home to attend the House of Bells, Risa surprised no one by following him. Yet, when the boy washed out of the school in less than a year, Risa moved on without him and didn't look back.

Risa graduated with honors, but her first posting fell short of her girlhood ideals. She volunteered for duty out in the Threshold, but an influential aunt had her sent to remote Greyfalls. Risa's assignment was ostensibly to try to whip the outpost into shape ahead of a forthcoming inspection by the Empress herself. It was not until the idealistic girl arrived at her new home that she learned how many naïve soldiers had received those same orders before her. Rather than finding adventure, Risa instead found herself surrounded by fools and slackers who would just as soon keep House Cynis flush with jade as keep a wary eye on the Eastern Bordermarches.

The worst of the lot was Winglord Ragara Fucian, Risa's immediate superior. When he wasn't abusing his Nuri auxiliary or looking for some means to sell captured "enemy combatants" to the Fair Folk, he pawed at his Dragon-Blooded subordinates, offering promotions in exchange for gratuitous favors. Risa wanted to kill the randy imbecile, but before she could, word came in from a flood of terrified refugees that an Anathema was on the loose with an army a day's march west and probably intended to conquer Greyfalls

next. Hoping to earn himself a transfer back to the Blessed Isle, Fucian mustered his wing and prepared to go out hunting. Every one of his senior Terrestrial subordinates wisely backed out, as none of them were professional shikari. Annoyed, Fucian ordered Risa to accompany him—not least because she was the only one of his subordinates who'd never condescended to sleep with him.

Two days later, they came upon the Anathema's force with its back to a river. Fucian's sloppy field deployment squandered the element of surprise, however, and allowed the Anathema's cavalry to achieve an immediate stalemate through superior tactics and coordination. Before a drop of blood was shed, the leader—who called himself Dace—broke off to address his foes. He had no designs on Greyfalls, he claimed. (The "refugees," it turned out, were actually defeated invaders whom a local king had hired the Anathema's men to oust.) He bore Greyfalls no ill will and offered to discuss a non-aggression treaty. Fucian countered with a demand for an immediate one-on-one duel to the death.

Risa offered to fight in her idiot winglord's stead, but Fucian was too full of ignorant vainglory. He threw himself at the Anathema, rushing headlong into the jaws of ugly defeat. In seconds, his body hit the ground, followed by his



head and then finally his jade goremaul. As Fucian's men looked on in horror, the Anathema approached Risa next. When the glowing warrior stopped and looked up at her, she couldn't help but feel small beside him.

"You're not like him," the man said to her. He shone like the sun breaking through dark clouds. "I can use you."

Risa's head swam as she made the hardest decision of her life. She raised her weapon and gave a signal. Shocked and appalled, the Imperial soldiers followed her last order and withdrew. Risa stayed. She didn't look back.

Motivation: To support the pursuit of Captain Dace's goals

Aspect: Wood

Anima Banner: Green vines covered in long thorns whip wildly, lashing those who don't keep their distance.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 1, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, *Bureaucracy* 3 (Commerce+2), Dodge 3, Integrity 1, Investigation 1, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Low Realm, Riverspeak, Forest-Tongue) 3, Lore 2, Martial Arts 1, *Medicine* 1, *Melee* 4 (*Dire Lance* +1), Occult 1, *Performance* 1, Presence 1, Resistance 3, *Ride* 5 (*Battlefield* +2), Socialize 2, Stealth 1, *Survival* 3, *War* 4 (*Cavalry* +1)

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Breeding 3, Command 1, Reputation 2, Resources 2

Charms:

Excellencies: *Ride* (2nd), *War* (1st, Terrestrial War Reinforcement)

Melee: Dragon-Graced Weapon

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique

Ride: Ebony Spur Technique, Great Heart Companion, Heaven-Granted Riding Technique

War: Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings, Tireless Footfalls
Cadence

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV—, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

GreenJadeDireLance(Shrike'sDesiring):Speed4,Accuracy11, Damage 12L/12L, Parry DV 6, Rate 2, Tags 2,L,R

Soak: 9L/9B (Reinforced breastplate, +7L/6B, -2 mobility penalty, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 11 **Peripheral Essence:** 15 (25)

Committed Essence: 10

Other Notes: Risa's Artifact rating refers to her jade saddle and her dire lance, Shrike's Desiring, both gifts from her V'neef sponsors upon her graduation from the House of Bells. Her Reputation rating reflects the low esteem in which her family on the Blessed Isle holds her. At best, she's a victim of Anathema mesmerism. At worst, she's a traitorous ingrate. The V'neef now know Risa as either "the Twice-Lost Egg" or "that damned girl," depending on how philosophically they reflect on her heartbreaking betrayal.

Risa's Command rating refers to a scale of Captain Dace's best and bravest. For additional pay, these soldiers receive special training similar to what Risa received at the House of Bells. Dace occasionally allows this force, with Risa in command, to hire out on its own at a premium rate. The rest of the time, however, its constituents integrate seamlessly into the main force and uplift the whole.

TEPET EJAVA, THE ROSEBLACK

THE GENERAL WHO WOULD BE SHOGUN

Quote: *Well, I hadn't planned on committing treason today, but here we are.*

The granddaughter of the legendary general Tepet Arada, Tepet Ejava was conceived of two high-ranking officers serving on the frontlines of one of the Realm's campaigns. Her mother refused to surrender command just because of the inconvenience of nursing an infant while on maneuvers, and clever smiths jury-rigged Tepet Ellora's breastplate to accommodate a tiny suckling infant. Upon Ellora's return to the Blessed Isle, she was castigated by her father, Arada, for being so cavalier with a Dynastic newborn, but after getting over his anger, the Wind Dancer was immediately taken by his new grandchild. While he never publicly doted on her, Ejava benefited greatly from her grandfather's patronage, and her admission to the House of Bells awaited only the seeming formality of Exaltation.

That formality was satisfied when Ejava Exalted during her 11th year, a relatively young age for a Terrestrial Exaltation. But she never rested on her laurels or relied on her connections. Diligent, patient and driven, Ejava strove for excellence even beyond the standards of excellence set for her by her Dragon-Blooded peers. After graduating from the House of Bells with the highest marks, Ejava had her choice of assignments. Early success in putting down a peasant uprising in Chanos Prefecture brought her a measure of fame as well as valuable battlefield experience. From there, she used the Imperial Army to see the world like few inhabitants of the Age of Sorrows ever could.

Ejava's most famous success was the Battle of Tamrin Plain, the tactics of which are still taught at the House of Bells. Initially assigned to assist a Nellens ranching concern against bandits in the Northern Threshold, the Roseblack suddenly found herself vastly outnumbered and caught between 500 beastmen led by a powerful Lunar Anathema on one side and an equivalent force of Fair Folk hobgoblins on the other. In a brilliant tactical display, Ejava managed to divert the beastmen force into the ranks of the hobgoblins, forcing them to fight one another. The Lunar escaped, but his minions were wiped out, as were the Fair Folk forces and the bandits.

The Battle of Tamrin Plain led to her assignment as a dragonlord to the Third Legion in the Northeastern Threshold. Regrettably for all concerned, that posting was brief. Jealous rivals stymied her efforts to devise an effective strategy for dealing with the opposing barbarian armies, and eventually, her superior reassigned her to the Blessed Isle where she was to lobby the

Deliberative for reinforcements. Ejava arrived in the Imperial City just in time to learn of the disastrous Battle of Futile Blood and the destruction of her family's fortunes.

While the Tepet legions were no more, other opportunities remained, but the Roseblack realized that if such opportunities were to be realized, she would need a force she could mold to her own needs without having to answer to some superior officer likely to be her inferior in acumen. Although she received offers to join the command staffs of many of the Realm's leading generals, Ejava spurned them all for the one position attainable that would give her total control over an entire legion. Unfortunately, it was the Red-Piss Legion, and Ejava's family was mortified when she accepted command over it. But Ejava saw a value in the Vermillion Legion that others did not: total loyalty. To Ejava, the soldiers of the Red-Piss Legion were the castoffs of the Realm, a massive fighting force whose officer corps



consisted almost entirely of Dragon-Blooded cut off from their own Houses. It has taken her years of persistent training and drilling (and the quiet removal of those officers who were incompetent rather than simply bull-headed), but today, the Vermillion is a crack fighting force whose degenerate reputation is a mask for its brutal efficiency and its dedication to the first truly great commander it has ever had.

Of course, a sword that is never unsheathed is a poor weapon, indeed. Though not a pious woman, Tepet Ejava is intensely patriotic. If the Scarlet Empress were to return tomorrow, she would be the first to swear fealty. However, there are no signs the Empress will return tomorrow, the next day or any day thereafter, and in the meantime, the Realm and Creation both slide toward oblivion. Seeing no one else who could possibly seize control of the Realm and maintain it, the Roseblack has come to an awful realization: that she is most likely the best person to sit on the Scarlet Throne. Having accepted that truth, Ejava has become surprisingly calm about the prospect of treason, coup d'etat and bloody civil war against her own kinsmen. She has quietly purged her inner circle of anyone who would not follow her path, and under her leadership, the Red-Piss Legion has become more than a match for any other legion. For now, Ejava waits. Tepet Arada has sent word that he is coming to the Southeast to meet with her. Whether it is to join her cause or to take her head remains to be seen.

Motivation: To save the Realm from dissolution by any means necessary

Aspect: Wood

Anima Banner: A swirling mass of razor-sharp black thorns.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 4, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Low Realm, Old Realm, Riverspeak) 3, Lore 3, Martial Arts 3, *Medicine* 1, *Melee* 4 (*Duels* +2), Occult 2, *Performance* 3, *Presence* 4 (*Command* +3), Resistance 2, *Ride* 1, *Sail* 1, *Socialize* 2, *Stealth* 3, *Survival* 2, *Thrown* 4, *War* 5 (*Unexpected Tactics* +2)

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Arsenal 2, Artifact 4, Backing 1, Breeding 3, Command 5, Connections 3, Connections 3, Connections 3, Henchmen 2, Manse 3, Mentor 2, Reputation 3, Resources 4

Charms:

Excellencies: Archery (3rd), Athletics (1st), Awareness (1st), Dodge (1st), Investigation (1st), Martial Arts (1st), *Melee* (1st, 2nd, Terrestrial *Melee* Reinforcement), *Performance* (1st), Resistance (3rd), *Socialize* (1st), *Survival* (1st), *Thrown* (3rd), *War* (1st, 2nd, Terrestrial *War* Reinforcement)

Archery: Dragon-Graced Arrow, Swallow Defends the Nest
Athletics: Effortlessly Rising Flame, Falling Star Maneuver, Bellows-Pumping Stride

Awareness: All-Encompassing Earth Sense

Dodge: Threshold Warding Stance, Hopping Firecracker Evasion

Integrity: Unsleeping Earth Meditation, Untiring Earth Meditation

Linguistics: Wind-Carried Words Technique

Lore: Elemental Bolt Attack, Elemental Burst Technique

Melee: Blinding Spark Distraction, Dragon-Graced Weapon, Ghost-Fire Blade, Refining the Inner Blade

Presence: Aura of Invulnerability, Glowing Coal Radiance, Moth to the Candle, Passion Transmuting Nuance, Terrifying Wood Dragon Roar, Unbearable Taunt Technique

Resistance: Impervious Skin of Stone Meditation, Ox-Body Technique (x2), Strength of Stone Technique

Stealth: Distracting Breeze Meditation, Trackless Passage Style

Thrown: Vengeful Gust Counterattack, Whirlwind Shield Form

War: Armor-Hardening Concentration, Blazing Courageous Swordsmen Inspiration, Dragon-Seared Battlefield, Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings, Phantom-Warrior Horde, Tireless Footfalls Cadence

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Green Jade Daiklave (Thorn): Speed 4, Accuracy 10, Damage 10L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Soak: 14L/17B (Green jade articulated plate, +12L/14B, Hardness: 8L/8B, -2 mobility penalty; and shield, +1 difficulty to hit)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

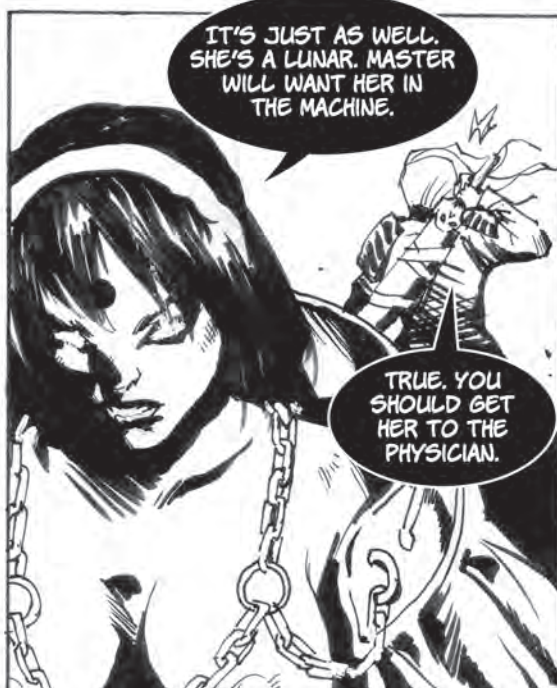
Dodge DV: 5 (4 in armor) **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 14 **Peripheral Essence:** 19 (35)

Committed Essence: 16

Other Notes: Ejava's Allies, Arsenal, Command and Reputation Backgrounds all pertain to her standing in the Imperial Army, while her Henchmen rating represents her personal guard. In addition to Connections she has in the Imperial Army, the Roseblack also has Connections in the All-Seeing Eye and the Great Houses, as well as the Backing of House Tepet and the support of her Mentor Tepet Arada. Her Artifact rating refers to her green jade daiklave and articulated plate armor, as well as an artifact mask. Ejava bears a freedom stone, a salt gem of the spirit's eye and a stone of healing. (The salt gem of the spirit's eye is a two-dot hearthstone that makes its bearer invisible to dematerialized spirits.) She possesses a hearthstone setting on her daiklave and her armor, so she typically keeps the freedom stone socketed into the weapon and the salt gem of the spirit's eye socketed into her armor.





CHAPTER FIVE

THE ABYSSAL EXALTED

The Chosen of the Neverborn are new and dangerous enemies of Creation, crafted by the slain Primordials and their Deathlord servants from Solar Exaltations corrupted to the service of death and empowered with the Essence of Oblivion. Now, these deathknights are tasked with riding forth from the Underworld into Creation to end all life.

What follow are a number of famous and infamous Abyssal Exalts of differing levels of experience to use as allies or (more likely) antagonists in **Exalted** series.

THE MAIDEN OF THE MIRTHLESS SMILE

THE MASTER STRATEGIST

Quote: *They've taken the bait. Send the nemissary-raitions to signal the envelopment.*

The youngest member of her Circle, the Maiden of the Mirthless Smile is also its cruelest and, alone among them, deliberately sought the unholy power she now wields. The Maiden was born in the outskirts of Thorns, the pampered youngest daughter of a wealthy plantation owner. Even as a toddler, there was something indeterminately *wrong* about Shanku Kenda. She would stare at her slave nanny like she stared at her toys. As soon as she could walk, her parents began to find small animals she had captured and toyed with, often still alive with various organs half removed. First it was mice and cats. Then her brother went missing, only six at the time and scarcely a year older than her. He was never found. But she learned. It wasn't

that anatomy itself interested her. She wasn't fascinated by how things worked. Just by pain.

Kenda's nanny was the next to disappear when the girl was strong enough by age 12 to carry out the murder. All the while, Kenda's parents never suspected. They underestimated her and bought her pretty dresses that she dutifully wore and learned to clean the bloodstains from. Fooling them became a game, and she planned a thousand different murders for them that she managed to avoid only by venting her growing resentment on other prey. In adolescence, she heard stories of the conquest of Thorns and the Deathlord who now reigned there, and in those stories, she finally found a hope bigger than her next kill.



One night, Kenda decided it was time and butchered her family. Her mother was the last to die with a look of astonished horror on her face that makes the Maiden giggle to this day. After setting fire to her childhood home, the gawky teenager set out to find the Deathlord who would become her master. He sensed her from afar, of course, and was intrigued at this child who strode into darkness unafraid and unburdened by conscience. And then he found something else, something remarkable. The Neverborn already spoke to her. The hissing murmur of their hate echoed in her head, faintly but undeniably. Her Essence bore no sign of ghost ancestry or necromantic contamination, leaving him at a loss to explain her communion, but he was not about to argue with an obvious sign from his masters. He met her personally before she reached the edge of his domain, ordering her stop and speak with him lest she be destroyed.

In the face of this great and terrible horror that was neither so terrible nor great as she had hoped in her dreams, Kenda smiled her perfect smile and walked on until his glance seized her heart and dropped her in a convulsing heap. Marveling at her dedication, if not so much at her prudence, the Deathlord rescued her on the brink of her last heartbeat with the offer of Exaltation. The tainted power slid into her soul as neatly as if it had been crafted for the purpose.

Since that night, she has served as the least subtle instrument of the Mask of Winter's will, his mailed fist to crush all who would gainsay him. If his Maiden is rash at times and seldom sees the long-term benefit in postponing her violence, at least he cannot fault her zeal. The time will almost certainly come when the Deathlord must punish her failure with torments even she cannot imagine, but the withered vestiges of his compassion hope that time is yet far off. He also fears the Neverborn have plans for the Maiden that they have not shared with him, plans that may not even involve him. Such plans cannot be good for anyone.

Motivation: Spit on the ashes of Creation

Caste: Dusk

Anima Banner: When iconic, twisted humanoid shapes in various dynamic poses of agony flicker and writhe around the Maiden, constantly torn asunder in bloody sprays of power and then replaced by new figures rising from the center of the blaze.

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

Virtues: Compassion 1 (Flawed), Conviction 3, Temperance 1, Valor 4

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Dodge 3 (*Against Lower Essence Foes +2*), Integrity 3 (*Ignoring Pleas For Mercy +1*), Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Old Realm) 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 3 (*Attacking Those Who Have Surrendered +1*), Melee 5 (*Crippling Attacks +1, Daiklaves +2*), Presence 3, Stealth 3 (*Amidst Walking Dead +2*), Survival 1, War 5 (*Kill Them All +1*)

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Artifact 2, Cult 1, Liege 3, Whispers 1

Charms:

Excellencies: Athletics (3rd), Melee (1st), War (1st)

Athletics: Falling Scythe Attack

Melee: Artful Maiming Onslaught, Death-Deflecting Technique (Conviction Flaw of Abyssal Invulnerability), Elegant Flowing Deflection, Five Shadow Feint, Savage Shade Style, Unfurling Iron Lotus, Vengeful Riposte

Combos: Wolf Catching the Snake's Tail (Artful Maiming Onslaught, Death-Deflecting Technique, Vengeful Riposte)

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick (with iron boots): Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 7B (10B), Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N (M)

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soulsteel Grand Daiklave (Ironic Jest): Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 16L/4 (drains 2m per wounding hit), Parry DV 6, Rate 2, Tags 2, O, P, R

Soak: 10L/14B (Soulsteel reinforced buff jacket, +9L/12B, Hardness: 6L/6B, -1 mobility penalty)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 (5 against Essence 1 enemies) **Willpower:** 8 **Essence:** 2

Personal: 14

Peripheral: 20 (31)

Committed: 11

Other Notes: The Maiden's Artifact values refer to her soulsteel daiklave, Ironic Jest, and her soulsteel reinforced buff jacket, Lascivious Shielding Talons. Her Cult is composed of the scattered survivors of the massacres she performs in the name of her Liege, the Mask of Winters, who spread awed horror stories of her prowess.



THE FALLEN WOLF OF THE CUTTING SEA

THE EXILE OF SKULLSTONE

Quote: *Do I represent the Silver Prince? Ha! Were it in my power, I'd consign his twisted soul to Oblivion.*

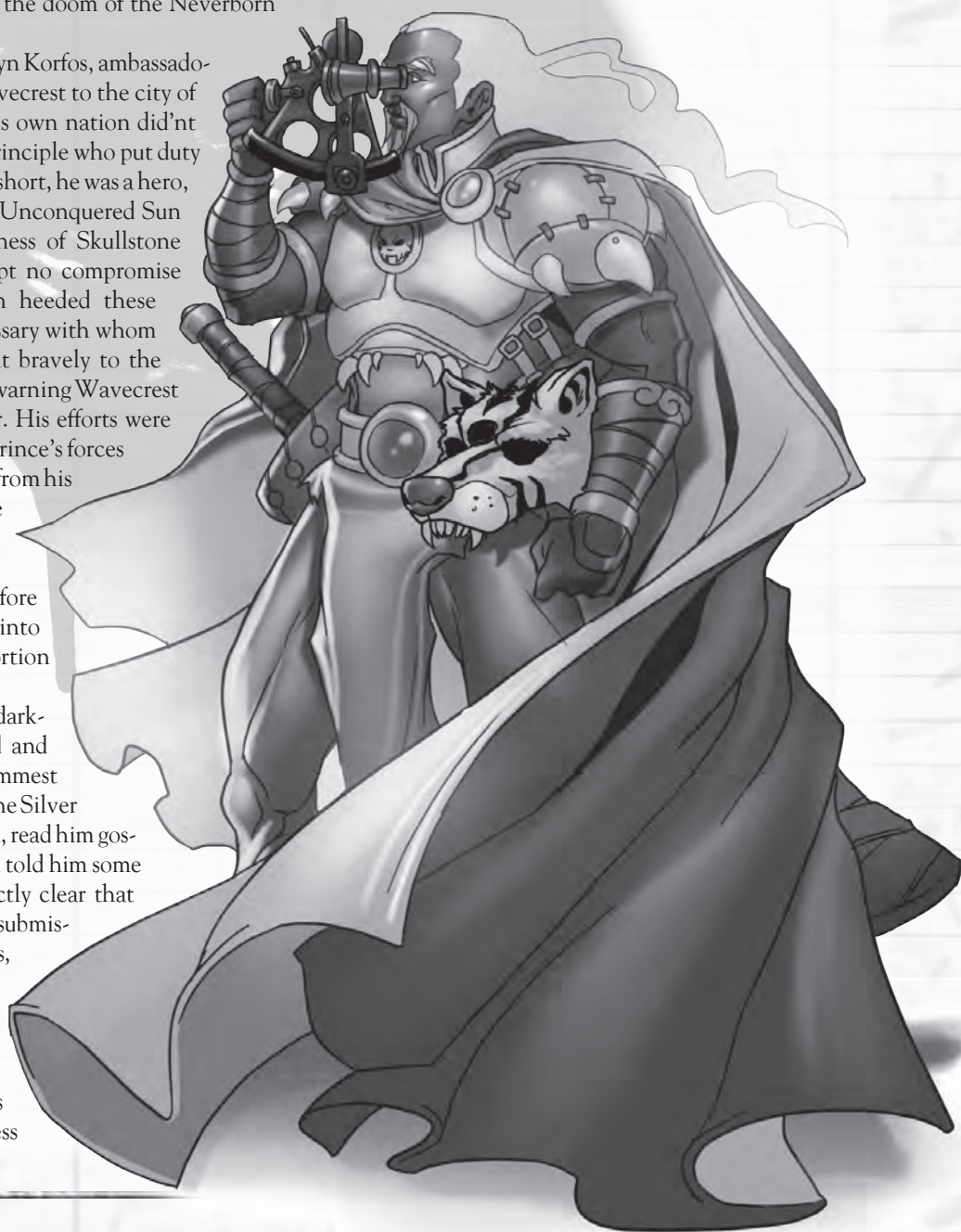
If the majority of Abyssals are not necessarily happy with the monsters they have become, most at least accept the fact. Not so the seafarer titled the Fallen Wolf of the Cutting Sea, whose forced exile from Skullstone is the only point of happiness in his otherwise tortured existence. It gives him hope he will find a way to return to the light and face the Bodhisattva armed with the Unconquered Sun's holy fury. Such dreams are little more than idle fantasy at this point, however, because he remains caged by the twin prisons of his Monstrance and the doom of the Neverborn on his soul.

Once, Fallen Wolf was Jalyn Korfos, ambassadorial aide and junior spy for Wavecrest to the city of Onyx. He was great even if his own nation didn't know his greatness, a man of principle who put duty ahead of self-advancement. In short, he was a hero, and as a hero, the light of the Unconquered Sun found him even in the darkness of Skullstone with a commandment "Accept no compromise with the unrighteous!" Jalyn heeded these words and destroyed the nemissary with whom he was negotiating and fought bravely to the docks in hopes of escaping and warning Wavecrest of the true evil of its neighbor. His efforts were insufficient to stop the Silver Prince's forces from capturing him mere steps from his ship and dragging him before the Deathlord. He spit at the feet of Skullstone's liege and swore holy vengeance before his undead jailors threw him into a Monstrance of Celestial Portion forged just for him.

Jalyn lingered for days in darkness, his Essence extinguished and unable to reignite even the dimmest spark to hold back the gloom. The Silver Prince visited him, taunted him, read him gospels of the Neverborn and even told him some of his secrets to make it perfectly clear that Jalyn would kneel in absolute submission or die. Between the sermons, cajoling and confessional whispers, the Deathlord visited all manner of torments on him. Each visit, Jalyn spit between the bars of his cage. As the days wore on, however, the relentless

torture eroded even Jalyn's great will. When the Whispers of the Neverborn spoke to him in a dry rasping demand to "Take the power, for even the Silver Prince must fall in time," the Zenith finally surrendered to darkness, and his fair visage aged many decades in the heartbeat that followed.

The Silver Prince named his new vassal Fallen Wolf of the Cutting Sea, mocking the now-withered anima of a wolf he inherited from the First Age Solar who last bore his Exaltation. The new deathknight served with only the greatest reluctance, but a combination of Charms and threats against his Monstrance kept him in line when it counted, and his feeble resistance in less urgent situations amused the Bodhisattva in less critical moments for a while. Such amusement wore thin with time, though, especially after Fallen Wolf pulled back from a naval battle with enemy gods at a key moment to let the Dusk Caste Ebon Siaka get



beaten within an inch of her life. Fallen Wolf had only been ordered not to strike her himself, after all. This was the last straw. The Silver Prince exiled the wayward deathknight from his islands with only his single zombie-crewed ship, his personal weapons, provisions for a month and a stern commandment never to return without permission. Even this mercy was more than the Deathlord wanted to give, but his Neverborn master quietly warned that it was not yet time for the deathknight to die, ending all discussion.

Since his exile, the Fallen Wolf of the Cutting Sea has wandered the West aimlessly, spending as much time as possible at sea to prevent his Dark Fate from blighting the lands where he steps ashore. The Silver Prince has stated he is on indefinite assignment as an “ambassador of goodwill” to the West and a champion of righteous ancestor ghosts. That Fallen Wolf is neither does not warm the welcome he finds from those who have heard these rumors.

When provisions run low or the need for companionship besides the Whispers in his head grows overwhelming, Fallen Wolf finds port and fights as an antiheroic crusader against demons, raksha, cruel gods and mortal villains, doing his best to be a hero in spite of the hideous miracles the Neverborn unleash to undo his labors. Every so often, the Silver Prince appears in visions to check in with him and offer a full pardon if only he will accept his proper place at the side of darkness. These visions always end with Fallen Wolf spitting on the deck. The deathknight’s latest idea is to find other Abyssals who would dare rebel and gather them into a fighting force mighty enough to raid their lieges’ citadels and destroy the Monstrances that chain their souls. He believes that his recently discovered power to access Solar Charms is a sign from the Unconquered Sun that he may yet walk in light once more.

Motivation: Destroy the Silver Prince (primary), Earn Redemption (from Unhesitating Dedication)

Caste: Midnight

Anima Banner: When iconic, a mournful wolf rises out of the cold silver-blue light and writhing shadows of Fallen Wolf’s anima, lifting its emaciated head to howl silently at an uncaring sky.

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

Virtues: Compassion 4, Conviction 3, Temperance 2 (Flawed), Valor 4

Abilities: Athletics 2 (Onboard Ships +1), Awareness 2 (In Fog +2), Bureaucracy 1 (Wavecrest +1), Craft (Wood) 2 (Ships +3), Integrity 5 (*Upholding Virtue* +3), Linguistics (Native: Seatongue, Old Realm) 1, Lore 3, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 4, Occult 4, Performance 1 (*I Mean You No Harm* +1), Presence 4 (*Diplomatic Negotiations* +1, *Inspiring Heroism* +1), Resistance 5, Sail 5 (*Through Fog* +1), Socialize 3, Survival 2 (*Oceanic* +3)

Backgrounds: Abyssal Command 1, Artifact 4, Artifact 2, Cult 1, Resources 2, Whispers 3

Charms:

Abyssal:

Excellencies: Integrity (2nd, Integrity Essence Flow), Lore (2nd), Melee (2nd, Infinite Melee Mastery, Ravening Mouth of Melee), Presence (1st), Resistance (2nd), Sail (2nd)

Integrity: Eternal Enmity Approach (hates the deceitful propaganda of the Silver Prince’s benevolence), Heart of Darkness, Lesser Horrors Scorned, Unconquered Hero’s Faith

Lore: Essence Engorgement Technique

Melee: Elegant Flowing Deflection, Five Shadow Feint, Unfurling Iron Lotus, Vengeful Riposte

Occult: Corpus-Rending Blow, God-Slaying Torment, Spirit-Sensing Meditation

Presence: Broken Heart Triumph (Fallen Wolf more often uses Unconquered Hero’s Faith to manifest You Can Be More), Poisoning the Will

Resistance: Armor-Calling Kata, Cadaverous Torpor Technique, Ghost-Armor Prana, Injury-Absorbing Discipline, Ox-Body Technique, Spirit-Hardened Frame, Wounds Mean Nothing

Sail: All Charms from **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Abyssals**, plus Shambling Crew Enlightenment and Voiceless Admiralty Dread (see p. 160)

Solar:

Integrity: Phoenix Renewal Tactics (Compassion), Unhesitating Dedication

Join Battle: 5 (7 in fog)

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 4B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 7B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soulsteel Reaver Daiklave (Wounding Voice Within): Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 13L/3 (drains 4m per wounding hit), Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags: O

Soak: 16L/20B (Soulsteel articulated plate, +14L/16B, Hardness: 9L/9B, -2 mobility penalty, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2

Willpower: 8

Essence: 4

Personal: 20

Peripheral: 38 (49)

Committed: 11

Other Notes: Fallen Wolf’s Abyssal Command refers to his zombie crew, while his Cult is composed of Grateful natives whom Resonance has yet to slay. The Abyssal’s Artifact rating refers to his soulsteel articulated plate armor and his soulsteel daiklave. Fallen Wolf of the Cutting Sea also owns a large yacht (see **Scroll of Kings**, p. 145) originally named *Blackwave Stalker* by the Silver Prince, but which the deathknight has rechristened *Hope Undrowned* since his exile, bad luck be damned. He also removed the redheaded figurehead from the ship’s prow as an open challenge to the storm mothers. None have yet obliged.



THE LADY OF DARKNESS IN BLOODSTAINED ROBES

THE HIGH PRIESTESS

Quote: *My children, I bring you the blood of the master. In a world of suffering, it brings peace.*

Before the Mask of Winters found her, the mortal who would become the Lady of Darkness in Bloodstained Robes was anything but a lady. The whore known as Rose Petals Parted spent her short, brutish life wavering between a trashy concubine and a cheap street harlot, depending on whether her latest high-society patron had grown tired enough of her whining and appalling ignorance to throw her out. Only her cleverness and guile kept patrons from slitting her throat when they evicted her and allowed her to find another high-society sap to pity her with mad hope of making a respectable woman out of her. From her dizzying array of clientele, she gradually accumulated an impressive collection of sexually transmitted diseases that left her dying

of fever and festering with sores until the other prostitutes who worked her street dumped her quivering body into the sewer to get rid of the smell.

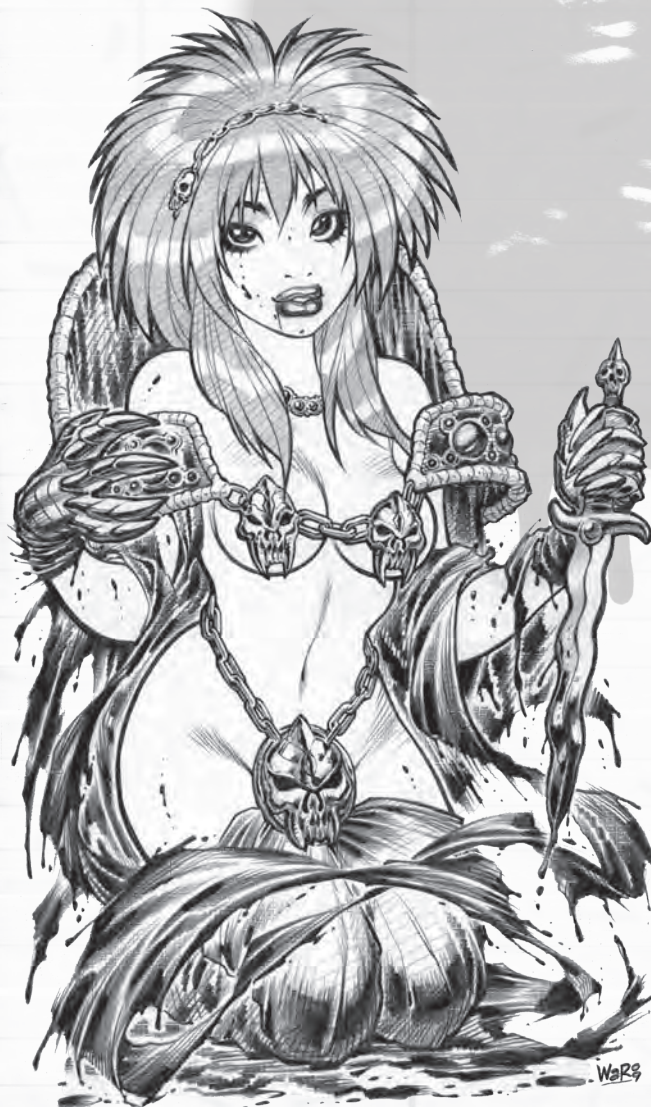
Drowning in offal and bitterness, Rose Petals Parted found something worse reaching out to her, calling her Lady with overwrought courtesy that was both mocking and the first taste of real respect she ever knew. The voice praised her hate, praised her contempt for social mores and praised her lifetime of lies slick enough to seduce even honorable Dragon-Blooded time and again.

Accepting this voice's offer of life and vengeance, the now-Exalted whore arose gasping from the river of filth and clawed her way to the bank so quietly that the rivals laughing about her demise did not hear the splash. In her rage, she tore her diseased and stinking skin and the tatters of her dress from her like a molting serpent and climbed to shriek mutilating insults at those who found her misery amusing. Against the chill of the night air, she gathered up the bloody tatters of their hides and wrapped them about her like a crimson cloak, earning the title she has answered to ever since. From there, she cut a swath of brutal revenge on all the former clients she could find until the Mask of Winters sent a team of nemissary servants to retrieve her from her petty dalliance. Under his tutelage and abuse, she became an epic tempter and his poisoned hand in distant courts.

At first, the Lady seemed an ideal Abyssal, utterly enamored of depravity and equally disgusted by life and love. However, her liege soon discovered that Exaltation had not made her more disciplined and had only sharpened her lustful appetite. For her failures, the Mask of Winters demoted her, but this did not deter her from her distracting liaisons. From time to time, her lust even serves his cause precisely, laying low some self-styled paragon of virtue who stands in the Deathlord's way, so he has yet to discipline her further and continues to channel her urges to his own ends.

Within her assigned circle, the Lady is viewed with contempt despite most of them having succumbed to her seductions with varying frequency. They hate her for this, for not pulling her weight and for daring the Neverborn's wrath with dangerous proselytizing of her own cult. In turn, she hates her circle and would love to betray them were she not more afraid of further chastisement from the Mask of Winters. She especially loathes the Maiden of the Mirthless Smile for being prettier than her, though she would never admit it. She dreams of the day that the bloodthirsty Dusk will fail and their master will let the Lady scream away that pretty face. The Lady's secret shame is that she is too distracted by her lust to hear the Whispers of the Neverborn, so she fakes communion with vague nihilistic dogma and prophecies that serve Oblivion enough that the dead titans have yet to strike her down with Resonance for taking their nameless horror in vain.

Motivation: Seduce all who believe themselves virtuous
Caste: Midnight





Anima Banner: When iconic, the Lady's anima swells into an obscene tableau of stylized images depicting the most horrific acts of Solar sexual depravity her First Age incarnation witnessed, terrible enough to scar her very Essence with their memory. From time to time, she stares in humbled astonishment at the scope and ingenuity of these perversities, redoubling her commitment to surpass them with her own conquests.

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

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 1 (Flawed), Valor 2

Abilities: Dodge 3 (*Against Those She Has Slept With* +1), Integrity 2, Investigation 4, Larceny 3, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: High Realm) 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 3 (*Catfights* +1), Performance 5, Presence 3 (*Seduction* +1, *Sounding Smart* +1), Resistance 5, Socialize 3

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Cult 2, Followers 2, Liege 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Investigation (2nd), Performance (2nd)

Investigation: Deception-Piercing Stare, Soul-Invading Glance

Performance: Haunting Apparition Trick, Irresistible Succubus Style, Soul-Desiccating Style, Withering Phantasmagoria (all three attacks)

Resistance: Spirit-Hardened Frame, Wound-Eating Invulnerability (see p. 160)

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal: 15 **Peripheral:** 36

Committed: 6

Other Notes: The Lady of Darkness in Bloodstained Robes's Liege is the Mask of Winters, but her Cult and the Followers who are its greatest ghostly believers are her own. The Lady's Artifact rating refers to the Thousandfold Obscenity Gown, her signature raiment. It's an indecent dress of deep crimson that flows and ripples to subtly accentuate its wearer's sex appeal while worn and attuned for six motes. This makes all its wearer's seduction-based social attacks against characters with Temperance 3 or less into unnatural influence (if not already) costing at least two Willpower points to resist. It can also reflexively bleed mouthfuls of delicious charnel ichor from its folds for a cost of one mote per dose, which can be consumed or transferred via five minutes of bodily contact to instantly build an Intimacy of lustful worship to the wearer that is also a mystic Poison, inflicting 3L unsoakable levels of damage when the Intimacy ends. Doses do not stack lethality.



PRINCE OF SHADOWS

THE CONSORT-CHAMPION

Quote: *As you wish, mistress.*

If anyone ever found out the mighty Prince of Shadows, Paladin of Nephwracks, was once a mere mortician's apprentice born to poverty, he would die of shame. Actually, the person who discovered his shame would die and fall screaming to Oblivion, but the Prince would be *most* embarrassed, and he fears that fate worse than any death. The Abyssal is a man of class and impeccable refinement, as beautiful now as he was once pathetically average. His long ebon hair always hangs just so, perfectly coiffed to frame his high cheekbones. His pallid complexion is more alabaster statue than animate corpse, more eternal than mere flesh. His manners are genteel. His mastery of formal etiquette is beyond reproach. He is the very paragon of nobility but for the fact that he is a classless monster underneath it all and cannot possibly measure up to the aristocrat he yearns to be.

Mamoudaki Kalanik had no hope of greatness in life, the third child of a family of black ash gatherers. His birth was a miracle, if an unwanted one, as with all births near the Black Chase. Since death had permitted him to be, his family sold him back to it. Perhaps his mother thought it was a kindness of some sort, or maybe she selfishly hoped that a child raised as an apprentice in the Morticians' Order might one day give her last rites she could otherwise never afford. Sijanese mothers are strange, and the Prince of Shadows has never cared enough to find out what became of his family. His upbringing in the Morticians' Order was mostly a long montage of active abuse and passive neglect. But it was educational. He learned the proper honors for the dead of a thousand lands, as well as how to mix the sweet spices and unguents by which corpses might be preserved long after their souls had given up their haunting.

Most of all, Mamoudaki learned that life was cheap. His life. A king's life. Butchers and saints and grand schemers all came to dust and rot in the end. To drive home the point, providence saw fit to afflict him with a fever when he stood a silent vigil his masters wouldn't let him escape. They likely knew he was dying, but to them, he was a scrawny scamp with poor manners, a furtively distracted gaze and far too many questions. He would never amount to much, certainly not in life, and if death taught him manners, that might be a second chance. Perhaps they thought it was a kindness of some sort. So Mamoudaki died.

But that was not the end. In the moments when death was certain yet his body still flickered with warmth, the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears came upon him as a whispered obscenity to tickle his loins and draw cold fingernails across his soul. Opening his eyes, he marveled at the jewels of raindrops catching the sputtering torchlight in this



moment outside time. She offered him another chance to become a master of all the things that had mastered him. He could kill those who let him die, take those who raped him, appropriate everything from those who stole his future for their petty rites. He could learn the answers to his questions. Of course, he accepted.

At the Fortress of Crimson Ice, the Abyssal learned how to behave and how to pleasure lovers properly and how to make considerably more work for his former colleagues. As he did, he changed. His features stretched to predatory elegance, and the color drained from his flesh. With each lesson, more of Mamoudaki died, and something new, something greater came to stand in his place. The first compliment he received for his toils and absolute obedience was when the Lover finally called him her Prince of Shadows and kissed him full on the lips, feeding him a gasping exhalation of stolen souls that endowed him with a taste of her power.

The Lover's kiss was a shocking gift, deemed utter folly by her peers, who feared that their new Abyssal pets might grow in power too quickly. But she knew her Prince was loyal and the kiss made him more so. He has never felt pleasure since that night, save in fading memory of it.

In pleasure's absence, the deathknight's learned to cherish other amusements. He threw himself into the art of torture with gusto. The screams of his victims' became his music. That all things that hurt must die and fade away to silence saddens him, as the Neverborn alone possess the virtue of endless suffering. Only the Lover's insistence that the Prince focus his attention on her has kept him from deepening his communion with the Whispers to exult in their pain. When the Sun dies and all is darkness, he'll have eternity to perch besides the Labyrinthine temple tombs and listen to their music.

Motivation: Teach all that exists to suffer like the Neverborn
Caste: Daybreak

Anima Banner: When iconic, shadows billow into inchoate nightmare shapes that reflect ever-changing aspects of the Neverborn. These unholy shapes drift in orbit around the central darkness of the Prince's radiant glory.

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

Virtues: Compassion 1 (Flawed), Conviction 4, Temperance 5, Valor 3

Abilities: Archery 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 2 (Sijan +1), *Craft (Fire)* 2, *Dodge* 5, Integrity 4 (Against Love +1), *Investigation* 4 (*Interrogation* +3), Linguistics 3 (Native: Riverspeak, High Realm, Skytongue, Old Realm), *Lore* 5, Martial Arts 1, *Medicine* 3, *Melee* 5 (*Goremauls* +3), *Occult* 4 (*Neverborn* +3), *Performance* 5 (*Singing* +1), *Presence* 4 (*Veiled Threats* +2, *Pillow Talk* +1), Resistance 2, Ride 1, *Socialize* 3, *Survival* 3 (*Labyrinth* +3), *Thrown* 4 (*Crypt Bolts* +3), War 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 5, Artifact 2, Artifact 1, Contacts 3, Influence 2, Influence 5, Liege 5, Underworld Manse 4, Whispers 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Integrity (2nd), Investigation (2nd), Lore (2nd), Melee (2nd), Performance (2nd), Presence (2nd), Socialize (2nd), Thrown (2nd)

Athletics: Raiton's Nimble Perch

Awareness: Void Stares Back

Dodge: All Charms from **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Abyssals** (Compassion Flaw of Abyssal Invulnerability on Flickering Wisp Technique)

Integrity: Blood Before Surrender, Undying Stagnation Defense

Investigation: Deception-Piercing Stare, Heart-Rending Cruelty Technique

Lore: Essence Engorgement Technique (x3)

Melee: Artful Maiming Onslaught, Blade-Summoning Gesture, Savage Shade Style, Void Sheath Technique

Occult: Labyrinth Circle Necromancy, Shadowlands Circle Necromancy, Spirit-Sensing Meditation, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Performance: Elegy for the Fallen, Haunting Apparition Trick, Irresistible Succubus Style, Morbid Fascination Style, Soul-Desiccating Style, Withering Phantasmagoria

Presence: Dread Lord's Demeanor (Valor resist), Killing Words Technique

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique

Socialize: Exquisite Etiquette Style, Hate-Sowing Bitterness

Survival: Maelstrom-Weathering Indifference

Thrown: Crypt Bolt Attack, Improvised Assassin's Trick

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Circle Banishment, Flight of Separation, Shadow Summons

Iron Circle: Bone Puppet Dance, Iron Countermagic, Midnight Shadow Sun, Piercing the Shroud, Rune of Sweet Passing, Seat of Deadly Splendors, Soul Brand, Summon Ghost

Onyx Circle: Exquisite Undead Aide, Infinite Footsteps, Onyx Countermagic, Rebirth into Darkness, Shadow Stones Travel

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B (8L against targets not immune to cold), Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 7B (11L against targets not immune to cold), Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 4B (8L against targets not immune to cold), Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soulsteel Goremaul (Beacon of Desolation): Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 20B/4 (24L/4 against targets not immune to cold; drains 5m per wounding hit), Parry DV 7, Rate 2, Tags: O, P

Crypt Bolt: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 10L, Rate 2 (1 per hand), Range 40

Soak: 16L/20B (Soulsteel articulated plate, +14L/16B; Hardness: 9L/9B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 5

Personal: 22

Peripheral: 71 (85)

Committed: 14

Other Notes: The Prince of Shadows Compassion-flawed Flickering Wisp Technique doesn't function in the presence of the Neverborn or his Liege, the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears. His Influence's greatest in the Underworld but extends even to Creation. As befits a being of his stature, he has Contacts among a number of Stygia's prominent ghosts. His three Artifact ratings refer to his soulsteel articulated plate armor, his soulsteel goremaul and his collar of night's sterile shade (functionally identical to a collar of dawn's cleansing light). Additional enchantments on the armor remove the usual mobility penalty and fatigue value for an additional two mote cost to attune. Set into his goremaul is an ice gem generated by his Underworld Manse.

THE SEVEN-DEGREED PHYSICIAN OF BLACK MALADIES

THE NECROTECH ARTIFICER

Quote: I suppose you're wondering how you lived through that. Don't worry, you didn't.

It is hoped that all Dynastic children will Exalt. Only in rare cases, when the parents have unrealistic standards or a child is a true prodigy, showing uncanny aptitude and talent, is Exaltation expected, taken for granted, even demanded.

Ragara Zhayom was of the latter sort, developing an obsessive fixation on anatomy and medicine when his peers were learning basic arithmetic and the rudiments of classical poetry. By the time he was bundled off to primary school, he was better qualified

as a physician than the apothecaries and herbalists of many Threshold villages. His parents boasted that their son was the greatest medical prodigy the Realm had seen since his great grand-uncle, Ragara Bhagwei, now dominie of the Heptagram.

As it turned out, only two things distinguished Zhayom from his illustrious ancestor. First, while the master of the Heptagram was motivated by a combination of pride in his own skill and a desire to be the sort of hero the Elemental Dragons had imagined when they bestowed their powers upon men, Zhayom lacked all compassion for or desire to aid his patients. Human anatomy and the many ways in which herbalism, thaumaturgy and steel could act upon it seemed like the greatest puzzle ever devised to him, and his interest in unraveling the mysteries of the flesh and becoming their master was an exercise in pure academia and ego. He awaited his Exaltation and new vistas of possibility and knowledge impatiently.

And therein lay the second difference between Zhayom and his great grand-uncle: the Dragons withheld their blessing from him. He was given a cool reception by his parents when he returned from primary school still mortal; they had already paid his way into the Heptagram and knew they had no hopes of recouping that small fortune in gifts and bribes. By his 20th birthday, he could not stand the sight of them, nor they of him, and he took the earnings from his practice within the family and relocated to the Scavenger Lands, as far from the shameful environs of his birth as his money would carry him.

It was not, however, the end of Zhayom's dealing with the Realm. He soon discovered that there was profit to be made and satisfaction to be had in catering to the surgical needs of the very wealthy in that untamed frontier, far from the scrutiny of true civilization. He cured poxes and chased illness from royalty, yes, but also became known as the man to go to if you needed... something special. He modified the bodies of slaves to suit the jaded sexual curiosity of Cynis Exalts and cut healthy organs from kidnapped serfs and other nobodies for transplant into wealthy clients. These practices kept Zhayom living in the style to which he had become accustomed; moreover, they kept him interested and helped him to forget about his failure.

To this day, the Physician does not know why he was killed. Perhaps one of his clients began to doubt his discretion after the fact, or maybe a grieving husband or father managed to track one of his clumsy hired kidnappers back to him. He is quite sure he did something to deserve it, in any case. One evening, there came a strong, insistent rap-

ping on his front door. Zhayom opened it, and a gray-faced man, grimacing, drove a knife into his forehead with a sickening crunch. He was left twitching and bleeding on his own doorstep as the stranger turned and walked away.





Incredibly, the wound was not immediately fatal. The doctor spasmed and shuddered for hours, paralyzed and in agony, as night spread its cloak across the sky and the moon rose. Finally, as his limbs begin to settle and cool, another stranger came striding up the walk, a massive man in heavy armor. "I have need of a man with your talents," he said, and his voice caused the grass to turn brown in an instant. "If you would live and serve me, then rise."

The Physician found that he was able to do so. That was the beginning of his second life.

The Seven-Degreed Physician used his modest fortune and assistance from the Mask of Winters to refurbish a manse near Celeren, which he has renamed the Sanatorium Sepulchral. There, patients are cured of the ailment known as life, and he is able to perform his works of genius without concern for such trivialities as shock-trauma or blood loss. He has recently conceived a desire to produce some wonder of necrosurgery that will seize the horrified attention of the entire world—something to upstage even the grand spectacle of Juggernaut. He considers the conquest of Great Forks in order to obtain the raw materials to fuel his vision.

Motivation: Invent a war machine to end the Second Age

Caste: Daybreak

Anima Banner: A charnel explosion of disembodied organs and slimy masses of half-clotted blood burst from the Physician's anima and swirl around him in gory luminescence when he becomes iconic.

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

Virtues: Compassion 1 (Flawed), Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 2

Abilities: *Awareness* 3, *Bureaucracy* 2, *Craft (Fire)* 5 (*Necrosurgery* +1), *Investigation* 3 (*Torture* +2), *Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Others: Low Realm, Old Realm, Riverspeak)* 3, *Lore* 3, *Medicine* 5 (*Necrosurgery* +1), *Occult* 3, *Thrown* 4, *War* 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Liege 3, Whispers 2

Charms:

Excellencies: Craft (2nd)

Craft: Eternal Embalming Preparation, Fault Finding Scrutiny, Frenzied Forge Within

Medicine: Charnel Chirurgeon Deftness, Life-Mocking Assembly

Occult: Shadowlands Circle Necromancy

Thrown: Crypt Bolt Attack, Improvised Assassin's Trick

Spells:

Iron Circle: Walking War Machine

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Surgical Scalpel (Exceptional Knife, Melee): Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 6L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3, Tags T

Surgical Scalpel (Exceptional Knife, Thrown): Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Range 25, Rate 3

Crypt Bolt: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 6L (not added to Strength), Rate 2, Range 40

Soak: 6L/8B (Gruesome smock [as exceptional buff jacket], +4L/5B, mobility penalty -1, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal: 15 **Peripheral:** 31 (36)

Committed: 5

Other Notes: The Physician's Artifact ratings refers to his instruments of living detriment, which are a set of soulsteel scalpels, bonesaws, suture needles, hammers and other grisly tools equally suited for interrogation and necrosurgery. The entire kit collectively costs five motes to attune and counts as all necessary tools for the purposes of crafting or repairing necrotech. Even better, the tools add two bonus successes to all such rolls, as well as to any Investigation social attacks aimed at extracting information through fear. Finally, use of the tools increases the length of time before a necrotech creation requires maintenance to avoid deterioration, multiplying this interval by the user's Essence rating. He employs these grisly aids in the service of his Liege, the Mask of Winters.

THE DISCIPLE OF THE SEVEN FORBIDDEN WISDOMS

THE COLD-BLOODED KILLER

Quote: *My story isn't pleasant, my dear. I don't intend to tell it to anyone. Ever.*

Those who have seen the Disciple at work in the Underworld often imagine he was a great and talented assassin in his living days—his cool gaze, handsome features and snide, superior bearing all suggest either noble birth or predatory living. Those who admire or fear the deathknight would be surprised to learn that he was once simply a boy called Rat.

The Disciple's earliest memories are of picking through a burned village, nameless in its ruin by some army or another. The boy raised himself, wandering from village to village, subsisting on scraps and garbage. Rat was ill throughout his childhood, a series of diseases permanently marking him with the deathly pallor that is common to the Abyssal Exalted long before he ever drew a Deathlord's notice. But against all likelihood, he never died and never starved, and by the time he was nine, Rat had become an accomplished thief.

Unlike most thieves, Rat didn't rob the living. Having no illusions about what the living would do to a nine-year-old thief, Rat became a grave robber, and as he grew into his teenage years, an occasional murderer as well.

In time, the small and sickly boy grew up into a tall and coldly beautiful youth. At first, he shut away the sudden attention of those around him with sneers and silence, but he soon came to realize that his aloofness made him more desirable, and that he could control and manipulate others using only his looks and their lust. Slowly, he picked up the art of socializing.

The sudden attention of wealthy men and women did not deter Rat from his traditional practices. If anything, he took even greater pleasure in his robberies. Relaxing in his latest patron's bed while watching snow or rain howl outside, he would sometimes wonder if the wealthy tradesman or spoiled noblewoman next to him would be so eager to handle his body and taste his skin if they knew he had been waist-deep in a grave the night before, sifting through bones for bits of jewelry.

In the end, it was the dead, rather than the living, that ended him. Hungry ghosts tore him open and left him bleeding out an offering on the ground to appease them. As his body cooled, the youth felt some indescribable dark presence standing behind him. When it spoke, he knew it was no petty ghost.

"Your hands are nimble, your mind quick, your soul cold. Serve me, and neither ghost nor man will ever be able to touch you again."

The Disciple never hesitated. A year of education in the arts of stealth and murder followed, and he took to them readily.

Now, he is the scourge of the Underworld, a silent assassin doing the bidding of his master... and yet, his new strength has changed him. Having power at last over the living and the dead, exercising it no longer satisfies him. The more targets who fall helplessly beneath his arrows, the less pleasure the Disciple takes in his work. When he dreams, he is a man named Nasuno Jumong, living in a golden age wrought by the hands of his brethren,





and he is strong and good and loved. When he wakes, he always finds himself briefly wishing he could still be Nasuno Jumong, for Jumong is a better man than the Disciple of the Seven Forbidden Wisdoms has ever been. While on a job in Nexus not too long ago, the Disciple ran into another Exalt, a face from a previous life—a life in which the two had been lovers. He wonders if he could resume that life in these dark and tumultuous days.

The Disciple continues to serve his master, for now... but his indecision throws unpredictable ripples through the destiny of both Creation and the Underworld. If he does not choose to dive into the darkness or set his bow against it soon, the strain of attempting to be two men at once is likely to destroy him.

Motivation: Annihilate the wicked

Caste: Day

Anima Banner: A murder of raitons wing their way upward out of the bonfire of Disciple's iconic anima, disappearing to leave behind plumes of shadow feathers falling upon him like snowflakes.

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

Virtues: Compassion 3, Conviction 2, Temperance 2, Valor 2 (Flawed)

Abilities: Archery 5 (*Within Half Base Range +2, Surprise Attacks +1*), Awareness 3, Athletics 3 (*Acrobatics +2*), Dodge 4, Investigation 3, Larceny 3 (*Breaking and Entering +1*), Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Old Realm) 1, Martial Arts 2, Presence 2, Stealth 5 (*Hiding Overhead +2*), Survival 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Liege 2, Spies 2, Whispers 1

Charms:

Excellencies: Archery (1st)

Archery: Banished Bow Arsenal, Doom Drawn and Imminent, Splinter of the Void (Bloodthirsty Arrow), Withering Feathered Maelstrom

Athletics: Raiton's Nimble Perch, Spider Pounce Technique

Dodge: Flickering Wisp Technique (Valor Flaw of Abyssal Invulnerability), Flitting Shadow Form

Larceny: Chains Cannot Hold

Stealth: Shadow Cloak Technique

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soulsteel Short Power Bow (Thirsty Fang of Contempt): Speed 6, Accuracy 12 (+2 vs. living targets), Damage 7L* (+2 vs. Living Targets), Range 250, Rate 2

* Uses broadhead arrows.

Soak: 9L/8B (Soulsteel chain shirt, +7L/5B, Hardness: 3L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 2

Personal: 11 **Peripheral:** 22 (28)

Committed: 6

Other Notes: The Disciple's Artifact rating refer to his soulsteel power bow and his soulsteel chain shirt. He monitors two networks of Spies—one in Nexus and one in Great Forks—for his Liege, the Mask of Winters.

TYPHON, THE WINK OF THE STORM'S EYE

THE AMBASSADOR TO THE CONFEDERATION OF RIVERS

Quote: *Distinguished representatives of the Confederation of Rivers, I bring dire news.*

The Mask of Winters plays a careful balance. He is at once the most overt and the subtlest of the Deathlords, open in his awesome might and the invincibility of his necromantic horde and yet cautiously diplomatic in his dealings with neighbors. He would love to crush them, of course, and the Seventh Legion most of all. But for now, he must content himself with careful games of politics while he amasses enough military force that he can remove his mask and reveal the true face of his intentions to the Scavenger Lands and then the world.

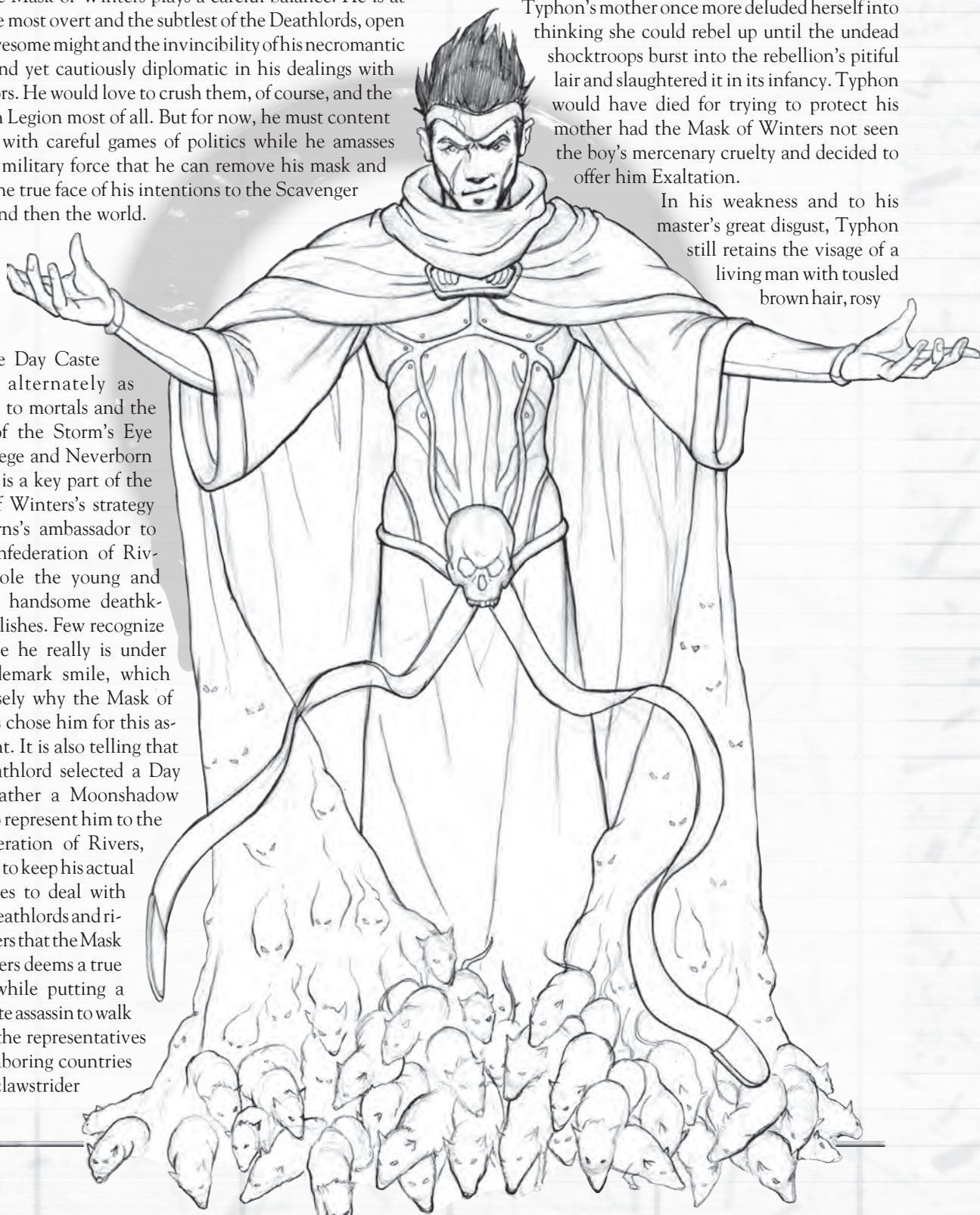
The Day Caste known alternately as Typhon to mortals and the Wink of the Storm's Eye to his liege and Neverborn masters is a key part of the Mask of Winters's strategy as Thorns's ambassador to the Confederation of Rivers, a role the young and rakishly handsome deathknight relishes. Few recognize how vile he really is under his trademark smile, which is precisely why the Mask of Winters chose him for this assignment. It is also telling that the Deathlord selected a Day Caste rather a Moonshadow Caste to represent him to the Confederation of Rivers, electing to keep his actual emissaries to deal with other Deathlords and rival powers that the Mask of Winters deems a true threat while putting a dilettante assassin to walk among the representatives of neighboring countries like a clawstrider

amidst cows. One day, the Mask of Winters will give the long-awaited order, and Typhon will slaughter all the diplomats to the Confederation as a contemptuous prelude to the devastation of their nations.

Born to a Realm family that unwisely imagined it could rebel against the Scarlet Empress and failed utterly, forcing the remnant survivors into exile in the Scavenger Lands, the young Typhon tried his hand at petty crime on the streets of Thorns. Then the Mask of Winters conquered the city, and

Typhon's mother once more deluded herself into thinking she could rebel up until the undead shocktroops burst into the rebellion's pitiful lair and slaughtered it in its infancy. Typhon would have died for trying to protect his mother had the Mask of Winters not seen the boy's mercenary cruelty and decided to offer him Exaltation.

In his weakness and to his master's great disgust, Typhon still retains the visage of a living man with tousled brown hair, rosy



cheeks and lips that appear full, slightly pouty and eminently kissable. He looks dangerous to be sure, as no one undergoes the Black Exaltation without some predatory refinement, but he seems more like someone who gets away with murder in a figurative rather than literal sense. This lie serves him and the Mask of Winters well and has led many lovers of both genders to their doom. No one will ever find their bodies or prove he was there. Sometimes, though, he secretly hopes a brilliant detective will come along and expose him just so he can just kill everyone and start a new game. It isn't that he isn't patient. He just longs for a challenge worthy of his talents.

Motivation: Savor what must soon perish

Caste: Day

Anima Banner: When iconic, Typhon's anima crawls with images of thousands of vermin. These creatures burst from beneath his skin in gory writhing masses as though chewing their way out.

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

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 2 (Flawed), Temperance 3, Valor 2

Abilities: Bureaucracy 1, Dodge 4, Integrity 3, Investigation 1, Larceny 3, Linguistics (Native: Low Realm; Others: Riverspeak) 1, Lore 1, Melee 3 (*Fighting Dirty* +1), Performance 4 (*False Rumors* +1), Presence 3, Socialize 5, Stealth 3, War 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Influence 2, Liege 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Melee (1st), Performance (1st), Socialize (1st)

Dodge: Flickering Wisp Technique (Temperance Flaw of Abyssal Invulnerability), Flitting Shadow Form

Performance: Morbid Fascination Style

Socialize: Cancerous Dissent Technique, Exquisite Etiquette Style, Honey-Tongued Serpent Attack, Imprecation of Ill Manners

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Slashing Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Soak: 7L/6B (Breastplate, +4L/2B, mobility penalty -1, fatigue value 1; ravenous swarm attire, +1L/1B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 3

Personal: 14 **Peripheral:** 35

Committed: 5

Other Notes: Typhon's Liege is the Mask of Winters, and as the Deathlord's representative to the Council of the Concordat, the Day Caste holds moderate Influence in the Confederation of Rivers. Typhon's Artifact rating refers to his ravenous swarm attire, a soulsteel variant of the infinite resplendence amulet (see *Dreams of the First Age—Lords of Creation*, p. 97) and likewise requiring a five-mote commitment. While attuned, Typhon's skull-shaped earring can produce any clothing he desires as an Essence construct, adds +1L/1B soak (that doesn't count as armor for Charms) and adds +1 bonus success on all Resistance or Survival rolls to reduce or avoid the effects of poison, disease or deleterious environmental conditions. The soulsteel magical material bonus is that the clothing may be reflexively transformed into a mobile construct of a vermin swarm for a cost of one Willpower point. The swarm contains any species of voracious ground-born pests the wearer desires and comes into being centered on its creator with a radius of (creator's Essence) yards but scuttles at its creator's move rate in accordance with telepathic directions. On each of its creator's actions' ticks, the swarm acts as an environmental hazard with Trauma 3 and 1L levels of damage, gnawing at everything in its radius other than its creator or his personal possessions. A perfect defense stops each interval of gnawing from harming that defender. Successful attacks against the swarm automatically kill individual creatures or even swaths of them, but this is not enough to slow or lessen the swarm in any meaningful way. Sufficiently large area effect attacks wipe out the swarm, breaking and preventing re-attunement to the artifact for one day.



FALLING TEARS POET

THE UNREQUITED LOVER

Quote: *I speak for the dead in these matters.*

Once, Falling Tears Poet, sometimes also known as Wisdom's Cracked Vase or the Sorrowful Calligrapher, had another name, but that is unimportant. Once, he lived in Nexus, enjoying a modest but comfortable lifestyle as a poet of significant renown. He still remembers the events that brought him to that situation, but they are also unimportant.

His lover remains important. She blew into his life one day, a chance meeting easily and expertly spun into a whirlwind romance, and soon enough, she shared his apartments. She gave him a name, but since it was as much a lie as everything else about her, he has since discarded it as unimportant. He sometimes remembers her in one way, sometimes another. He feels she would appreciate this.

Shortly after meeting his lover, the poet, always frail, grew gravely ill. That was also unimportant. Even as the cancer ravaged his body, his lover uplifted his spirit, driving him on to greater and more impassioned works of prose. What need had he of a body, or a future? He had his muse, and she filled his days with the sort of blazing white-hot inspiration that lesser artists feel once in a lifetime, if at all. He saw the world through the cracked lens of his lover's eyes, and lovingly detailed its imperfections. His words shamed those who read them or incensed them, even filling some with a great and towering sense of injustice. Nexus briefly descended into the throes of abortive social reform all too quickly choked by the mighty,

but that was unimportant, too. The primary actors had left the stage.

As muscle melted away, and the hollows in his cheeks grew gaunter, the poet's eyes blazed brighter and brighter, love and inspiration feeding the fire that consumed him. He was happy to burn. But one morning he dragged himself from his sickbed and realized that his love, his muse, had not replaced his ink or paper in three days. He hobbled through his—their—apartments, calling her name. She was gone.

He sat for a day in a drift of papers covered in his own extruded brilliance, thinking, rolling together little mannerisms, things she had said, people with whom she had associated. He unraveled her lies then, and saw the way they had used one another.



The poet's heart broke even as he stood in awe of his lover's art, her talent eclipsing his own, all unsuspected this whole time.

A fortnight later, the poet lay in his bed, too weak to move, his limbs slow struggling twigs splayed around him, surrounded by his own acrid death-stink. A part of him enjoyed the parallelism—to enter the world in tortured, helpless indignity and leave it the same way. The rest was too heartsick and empty to even anticipate the great dark journey ahead.

As his vision failed, a mighty voice shook the room and reverberated in his chest, jolting the faltering, papery engine of his heart. It spoke of another, bleaker land, one with need of a visionary and his words. It promised a black grandeur to beggar worlds and put any mere mortal thespian to shame. The poet's curiosity got the better of him. He would soldier on, despite the pain and emptiness, to see this grand vision.

The Mask of Winters did not disappoint. Falling Tears Poet looked into Oblivion and instantly understood that it had no need to look back into him. Standing on the edge of his Neverborn master's tomb, he knew he had found a new muse, one that would never abandon him, but only coil him tighter and tighter in her arms until it consumed him utterly. He awaits that day eagerly.

The Abyssal Exaltation did not mend the Sorrowful Calligrapher's body or limbs, and he hides them beneath funereal shrouds and a beautifully worked death mask. For all that his hands are withered claws and his legs trembling sticks, there is still a great and deceptive strength in him, and even greater strength in his mind and voice. He has studied sorcery and applied magic to his poems and is faintly satisfied to see them move the world. But he is also discontent—he grows to hate the fake and tawdry passion plays of ghosts, a pale and pathetic imitation of his old lover's art. He hates the Mask of Winters, an absurd caricatured villain unworthy of the power uplifting him. He even disdains the Neverborn, vast confused ghosts that they are, unappreciative and uncomprehending of the majestic nullity that awaits them if only they could bring themselves to *truly* embrace it.

Most of all, Falling Tears Poet hates the tiny voice of conscience that critically evaluates his every atrocity. It speaks in the voice of his old lover.

Motivation: Eulogize Creation on the Last Day

Caste: Moonshadow

Anima Banner: Bloody calligraphy spreads in ten thousand filaments from the heart of Poet's iconic anima, scribing

the winding erratic verses of his nightmares until the air is choked with a miasma of words.

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

Virtues: Compassion 3, Conviction 2 (Flawed), Temperance 3, Valor 2

Abilities: *Bureaucracy* 3, *Integrity* 3, *Linguistics* (Native: *Riverspeak*; Others: *Forest-Tongue*, *High Realm*, *Old Realm*) 3, *Lore* 1, *Melee* 4 (Grand Goremaul +3), *Occult* 3, *Performance* 3 (*Poetic Eloquence* +3), *Presence* 2, *Ride* 2, *Socialize* 4, *Survival* 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Liege 2, Underworld Manse 1, Whispers 1

Charms:

Excellencies: *Melee* (1st), *Socialize* (2nd)

Linguistics: Blood Calligraphy Technique, Scathing Cynic Attitude

Melee: Elegant Flowing Deflection

Occult: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Socialize: Exquisite Etiquette Style, Imprecation of Ill Manners

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Demon of the First Circle, Stormwind Rider

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV 2, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 2, Damage 6B, Parry DV –, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 2, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soulsteel Grand Goremaul: Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 19L/5 (each wounding hit drains 3m), Parry DV 4, Rate 1, Tags 2, O, P, R

Soak: 4L/6B (Buff jacket, +3L/4B, mobility penalty -1, fatigue value 2)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal: 15 **Peripheral:** 29 (37)

Committed: 8

Other Notes: Falling Tear Poet's Artifact rating refers to his soulsteel grand goremaul. In its haft is mounted a flawed gem, the hearthstone from an Underworld Manse the deathknight's Liege, the Mask of Winters, permits him attunement to.



METICULOUS OWL, ENDLESS-FACED SPITE

THE LION'S LEFT HAND

Quote: *That reminds me of a story.*

The First and Forsaken Lion is not yet so well known in Creation as the young upstart the Mask of Winters, but this tragic state of affairs is only temporary. One night, the Neverborn He Who Holds in Thrall will finally permit the oldest and mightiest Deathlord to stride into Creation with his spectral Legion Sanguinary. Then, all the pretty little gadgets of bone and flesh that the Mask of Winters calls an army shall be ground to dust and forgotten with the rest of Creation, and the living will know true fear of the dead. Until then, the First and Forsaken Lion must wait and pace the bounds of his citadel cage even as he strains against the cage of his armor, a restless monster. Woe is his left hand that must ineptly represent the Deathlord's monstrous id

with delicate subtlety, so cunning and clever that He Who Holds in Thrall does not realize the Lion's patience is not so absolute as his orders. That hand is the deathknight most recently fancying himself Meticulous

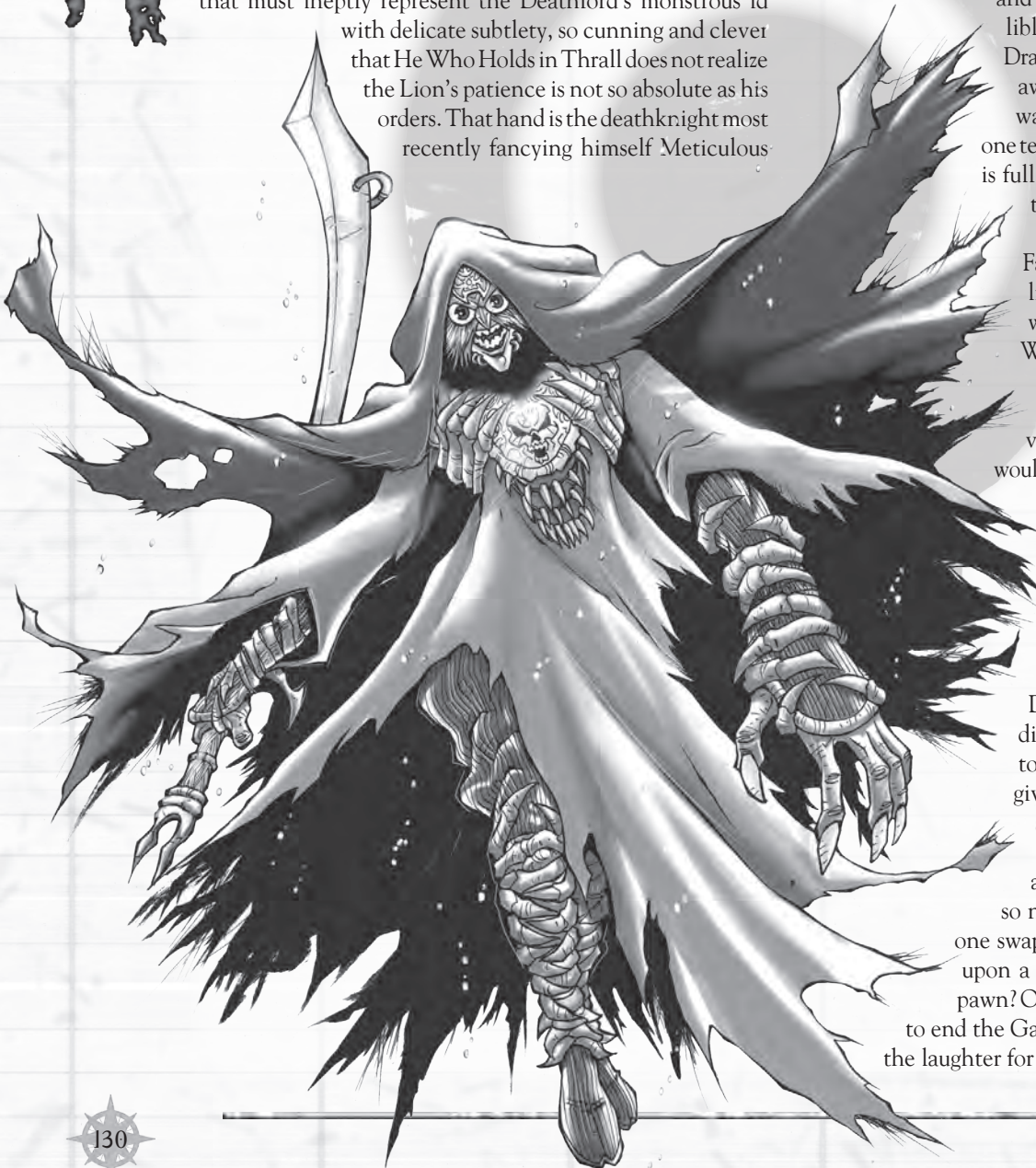
Owl but whom the Labyrinth dreads by the title Endless-Faced Spite.

Endless-Faced Spite has no past. Once upon a time, there was a pattern spider who knew otherwise, so the Abyssal made a Charm to poison the strands of fate where it walked, and so, it died. Or maybe he cast a spell. The story changes each time he tells it. Once upon a time, Endless-Faced Spite had a life, and that life must have been full of grand lies and grander truths beneath them to have forged such a remarkable individual from so hideous a body. Once, he must have been someone *very* important or at least a nobody who should have been important. The two are much the same. He says so, and so, it is likely false.

Endless-Faced Spite is not a Moonshadow Caste. The First and Forsaken Lion does not like that caste, and it is *never* wise to be the object of his dislike. Besides, the Lion's senses and memory tell him that he Exalted this Abyssal as a member of the Day Caste. Who dares suggest otherwise and raise the impossibility that he is fallible? Who dares suggest that the Ebon Dragon has infiltrated his court and won away a creature of guile from a boorish warlord to a more guileful master? No one tells that tale, and Endless-Faced Spite is full of more interesting stories to pass the time until the end of days.

Why just last month, Endless-Faced Spite saw a locust who walked like a man, and a metal-faced man who walked like a locust. Where exactly? Well, that depends on who is asking and how the story best goes. Perhaps it was in the swamps near An-Teng very close to the Lion's doorstep, and wouldn't *that* be something? Perhaps it was far away, in which case less immediate to the Lion's schemes but no less interesting to *other* audiences.

Once upon a time, there was a secret war, where demons in the shapes of men played all about the land like gateway pieces that old Dynasts shuffle about before they die. And what do the Dynasts have to do with it? Well, that would be giving away the ending before the story is told. Once upon a time, as in all war stories, there was need of a distraction, a bit of sleight of hand so no one saw the pieces shuffled, *this* one swapped for *that* one, and so on. Once upon a time, the Lion was a piece. But a pawn? Or a king? And when darkness comes to end the Games, might it be that no one hears the laughter for the howling beast of war?



Motivation: Tell a story with a *perfect* ending

Caste: Moonshadow

Anima Banner: When iconic, a great shadowy owl appears and stretches its wings so that each Old Realm character on each feather reveals the first letter of every word in a story. The rest of the letters are missing, and soon, the anima shall be different. Maybe a raiton. He's been fond of birds lately.

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

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 1 (Flawed), Temperance 4, Valor 5

Abilities: Awareness 3 (Noticing What Is Actively Hidden +2), Bureaucracy 2 (Celestial Bureaucracy +1, Paragon +1), Dodge 5, Integrity 4 (Keeping Secrets +3), Investigation 3 (Asking Nicely +3), Larceny 4 (Card Tricks +1, Shell Games +2), Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: High Holy Speech, Low Realm, Old Realm, Pelagial, Riverspeak) 5, Lore 5 (Riddles +3), Occult 3 (Darkness Outside Existence +2, Shinma +1), Performance 5 (Storytelling +3), Presence 4 (Veiled Hints +3), Resistance 2, Ride 2, Sail 1, Socialize 5 (Demons +1, Raksha +1, Yozis +1), Stealth 5 (In Plain Sight +3), Survival 3 (Labyrinth +1, Malfeas +2), Thrown 5 (Crypt Bolts +3)

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Artifact 4, Liege 5, Mentor 5, Whispers 3

Charms:

Excellencies: Awareness (2nd), Integrity (2nd), Larceny (3rd), Lore (2nd), Performance (1st), Presence (1st), Socialize (2nd), Thrown (1st, Ravening Mouth of Thrown)

Ebon Dragon: Effortless Ebon Dragon Dominance, Eldritch Secrets Mastery, First Ebon Dragon Excellency (x4), Life-Blighting Emptiness Attack, Life-Denying Hate, Loom-Snarling Deception, Shadow Spite Curse, So Speaks Ebon Dragon, Witness to Darkness

Bureaucracy: Calculated Avarice Understanding

Dodge: Flickering Wisp Technique (Valor Flaw of Abyssal Invulnerability), Flitting Shadow Form, Uncanny Impulse Evasion

Integrity: Eternal Enmity Approach (hates the truth), Five Hearts Hatred, Heart of Darkness, Lesser Horrors Scorned Investigation: Spider in Society's Web

Larceny: Chains Cannot Hold, Reality-Subverting Gesture, Unjust Appropriation Method

Linguistics: Infinite Blasphemy Glossolalia, Mystique-Spoiling Guess, Scathing Cynic Attitude

Lore: All Dreams Die, Dream-Slaying Defense, Essence Engagement Technique (x2)

Occult: Spirit-Sensing Meditation

Performance: Haunting Apparition Trick, Lies That Tell Themselves, Morbid Fascination Style, Soul-Desiccating Style

Presence: Dread Lord's Demeanor, Killing Words Technique, Poisoning the Will

Resistance: Ox-Body Technique (x2)

Ride: Soul Reins

Socialize: Exquisite Etiquette Style, Hate-Sowing Bitterness, Honey-Tongued Serpent Attack

Stealth: Atrocity Without Witness, Shadow Cloak Technique, Splinter in the Mind's Eye, Unseen Wisp Method
Thrown: Aid of Ill Wind; Burrowing Bone Maggot; Crypt Bolt Attack; Eyes Like Daggers Glance; Five Birds, One Stone; Improvised Assassin's Trick; Radiant Holocaust Flare; Smoldering Devastation Technique (see p. 160); Wicked Darts of Suffering

Join Battle: 8

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 1B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 4B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 1B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Crypt Bolt: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 20L (20A against individuals hated as an Intimacy; x2 raw damage with surprise attack), Rate 2 (1 per hand), Range 50

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 (plus bonuses from amulet, see below)

Willpower: 8

Essence: 4

Personal: 20 **Peripheral:** 58 (68)

Committed: 10

Other Notes: Meticulous Owl's Artifact rating refers to a unique artifact, Horror's Dark Prism, which is an amulet that he wears on a choker around his neck that costs him 10 motes to attune. The soulsteel and crystal device adds a variable number of successes to Stealth rolls depending on current illumination: +1 under sunlight, +5 in darkness and +3 all other situations. These bonuses also apply to his Dodge DV against ranged attacks, with half that value (rounded up) against close combat attacks. Finally, it acts as an entropic lens (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 77), doubling the base damage of his crypt bolts before adding the bonus from Eyes Like Daggers Glance. While the deathknight's Liege is the First and Forsaken Lion, his Mentor is in fact the Ebon Dragon, and his Allies are various Southern raksha nobles.

WHAT THE...?

There are no absolute answers with Endless-Faced Spite, and the manner in which his story is told is the way he might tell it. There are hints and clues in his traits, but that's all he has or offers. He's no past to speak of and an agenda so mired in deception that even the Green Lady might feel sorry for him. Storytellers are encouraged to come up with wild theories to explain his unusual collection of quirks and capabilities, the wilder the better. It is, after all, the point of the character.

WEEPING RAITON CAST ASIDE

THE ENIGMATIC ARBITER OF UNDERWORLD DISPUTES

Quote: *I am the voice of the Neverborn in these matters. Heed me well.*

As terrifying as they are themselves, even the Deathlords can feel fear. What haunts the nightmares of the mightiest of the dead is the prospect that one day their deathknights will grow powerful enough to challenge them. Such fears are not unfounded, for Weeping Raiton Cast Aside appears to be the harbinger of that fateful day.

Claiming to be the emissary of the Neverborn themselves, she arrives within the domains of the Deathlords when they least desire to be reminded of the greater powers that they serve. There is no deception in her words, and few risk the ire of her alleged masters by denying her. Legends of her exploits have spread rapidly through the courts of the Deathlords and to the general populace of the Underworld.

Among the Deathlords, the origin of Weeping Raiton Cast Aside is a matter of much debate. She might be a Deathlord or a hekatonkhire in disguise. She might be a sign that Abyssals can grow in power more quickly than their masters ever thought possible. She might even be a sign that the Neverborn have plans for the Abyssal Exalted that they not revealed to the Deathlords, and this is the most frightening possibility of all. Regardless of her origin, her power is undeniable. Her visits often leave Deathlords fearful and paranoid of their own servants, leaving those deathknights

frustrated at their lieges' sudden reticence to teach them. In their frustration, they look to other powers to instruct them, so Weeping Raiton spreads her dark gospel as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Some Deathlords obsess on her, hoping to divine the Neverborn's will for her and perhaps chain their own Abyssals in deeper slavery, but the ancient ghosts do not obsess too openly or selfishly for fear of provoking the Neverborn.

Weeping Raiton Cast Aside politely declines to comment on the subject. Attempts to steal the secret from her mind have resulted either in the Neverborn's rebuke or the revelation that Weeping Raiton Cast Aside has so irrevocably sacrificed her identity to Oblivion that her past no longer exists in a meaningful fashion.

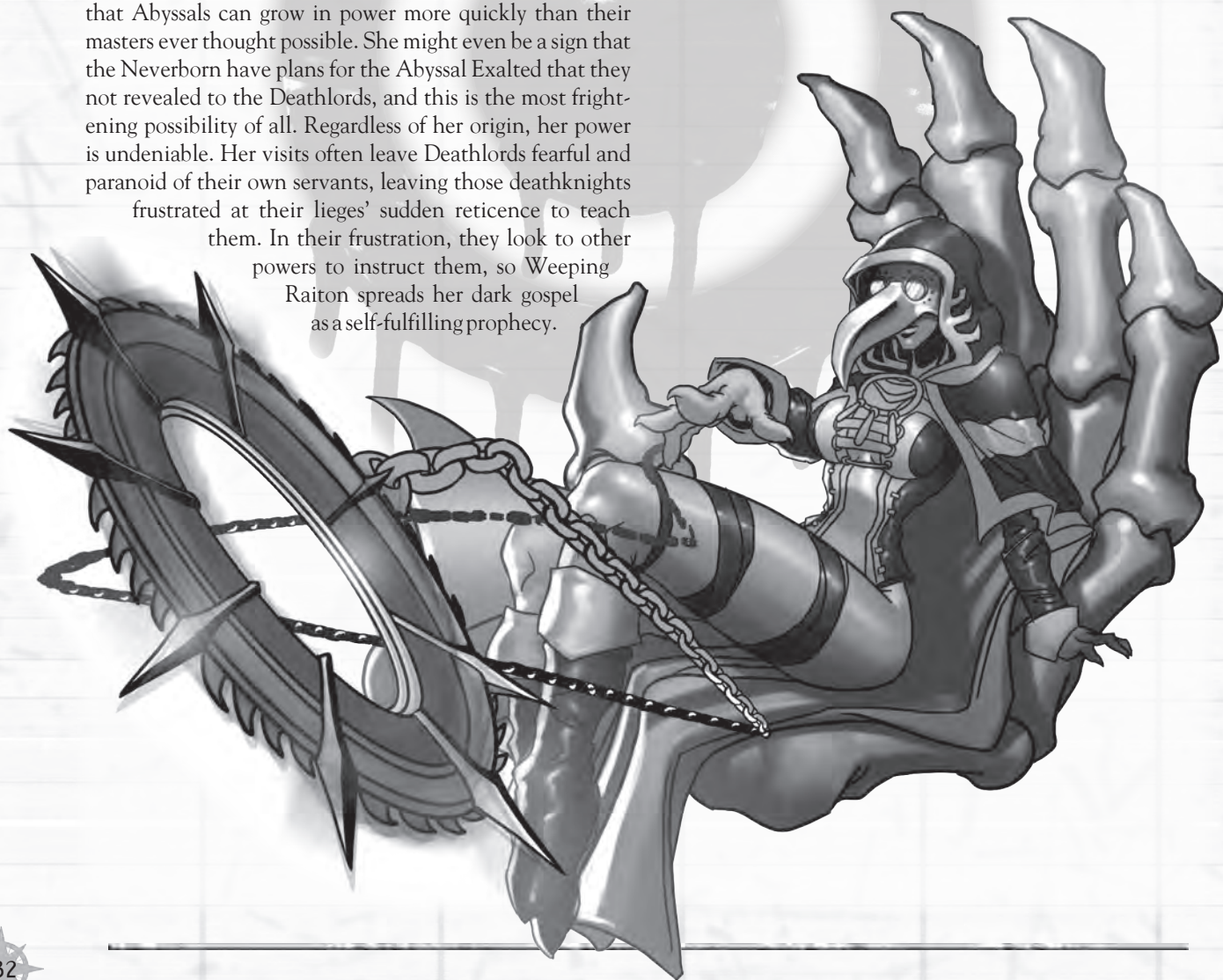
Motivation: Unite the agents of Oblivion against Creation

Caste: Moonshadow

Anima Banner: A monstrous giant raiton skull looms above Weeping Raiton as her anima achieves iconic splendor, and its mouth is full of fangs and a maw of infinite emptiness.

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

Virtues: Compassion 2 (Flawed), Conviction 4, Temperance 5, Valor 2



Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 4, Integrity 5, Investigation 4, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Forest-Tongue, Old Realm) 2, Lore 3, Martial Arts 5, Occult 5 (The Neverborn +1), Performance 3, Presence 5 (+2 Unassailable Authority), Resistance 4, Ride 1, Sail 1, Socialize 5, Survival 3 (The Labyrinth +3)

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Influence 4, Whispers 5
Charms:

Excellencies: Bureaucracy (1st), Integrity (3rd), Investigation (3rd), Martial Arts (2nd, Infinite Martial Arts Mastery, Ravening Mouth of Martial Arts), Occult (2nd, 3rd, Occult Essence Flow), Presence (1st), Socialize (2nd)

Awareness: Void Stares Back (Tainted), Ominous Portent Method

Bureaucracy: Eloquent Example Inspiration

Dodge: Flickering Wisp Technique (Conviction Flaw of Abyssal Invulnerability), Flitting Shadow Form

Integrity: Faithful Killer's Reprieve, Freedom in Slavery Understanding, Heart of Darkness, Immortal Malevolence Enslavement, Lesser Horrors Scorned, Undying Stagnation Defense

Investigation: Deception-Piercing Stare, Spider in Society's Web, Unholy Unwitting Pact

Linguistics: Scathing Cynic Attitude, Infinite Blasphemy Glossolalia (Tainted)

Occult: Celestial Circle Sorcery, Labyrinth Circle Necromancy, Shadowland Circle Necromancy, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Void Circle Necromancy

Performance: Morbid Fascination Style

Presence: Command the Dead, Dread Lord's Demeanor, Heart-Stopping Mien, Killing Words Technique, Lurking Malice Insinuation, Poisoning the Will, Soul-Flaying Gaze Resistance: Ox-Body Technique, Restless as the Dead (Tainted), Corpse Needs no Food (Tainted)

Socialize: Exquisite Etiquette Style, Hate-Sowing Bitterness, Honey-Tongued Serpent Attack

Survival: Maelstrom-Weathering Indifference

Arcanoi:

Common Ghostly Charms: Breeze-Carried Ash Form, Former Life Destruction Technique, Pyre Smoke Form, Scent of Sweet Blood

Essence-Measuring Thief Arts: Aura-Reading Technique

Scholarly Ways: Unseeming Librarian Nature

Shadow Constraint Craft: Ghostly Magistrate Perception, Illuminate Shadow Constraint

Lunar:

First Intelligence Excellency, Lessons in the Blood

Sidereal:

Auspicious Prospects for Endings, Wise Choice

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Hungry Ghost and Snake Styles: All Charms

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Flight of Separation, Flying Guillotine

Sapphire Circle: Incomparable Body Arsenal, Summoning the Heart of Darkness

Iron Circle: Banish Ghost, Emperor's Chains, Five Gifts, Iron Countermagic, Seat of Deadly Splendors, Summon Ghost

Onyx Circle: Infinite Footsteps, Onyx Countermagic, Sweet Voice Familiar

Obsidian Circle: Black Faith, Obsidian Countermagic, Summon Hekatonkhire

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 2B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 10, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soak: 6L/5B (Corpse collector's great coat, +5L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7

Willpower: 8

Essence: 5

Personal: 23

Peripheral: 50 (56)

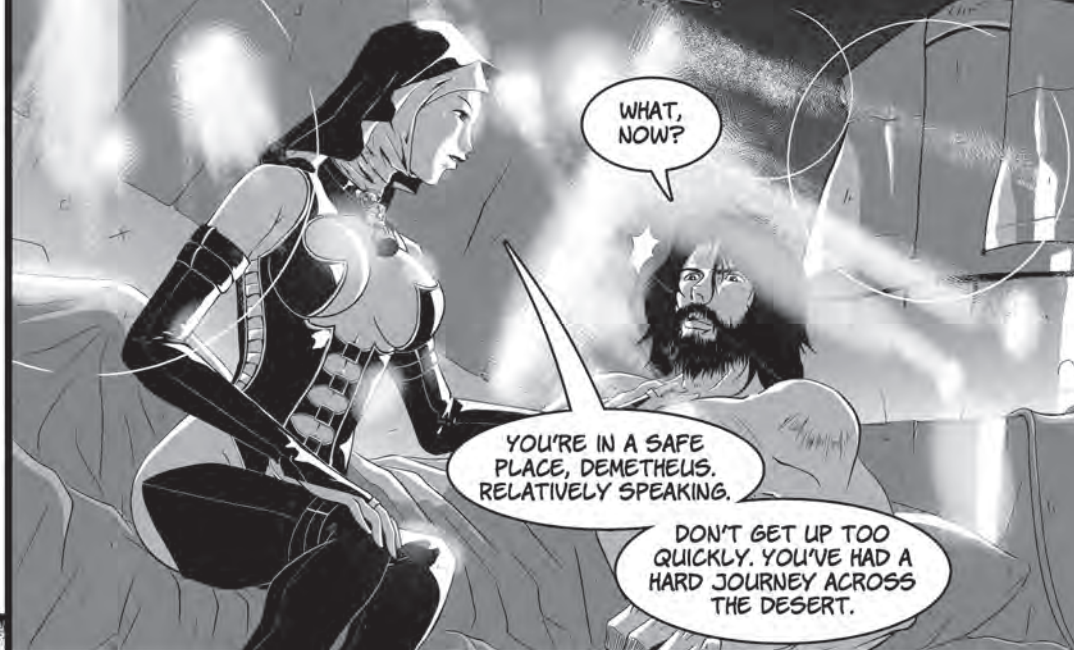
Committed: 6

Other Notes: Weeping Raiton Cast Aside no longer remembers her past before entering the Labyrinth five years ago. Her Artifact ratings refer to the Mourning-Forbidding Face and her corpse collector's great coat. The Mourning-Forbidding Face is crafted from white jade and soulsteel to resemble the avian masks of Contagion-era corpse collectors. It may be attuned for four motes and negates Appearance as a factor in Social Combat for the wearer. Weeping Raiton Cast Aside never removes her mask except when gorging upon the bodies or corpus of defeated foes. Only then does she reveal her ravaged face. Her corpse collector's great coat functions as silken armor, but it is made of the oily leather hide of some Labyrinthine beast. In addition to the soak it provides, it also renders the wearer invisible to plasmics and repels insects while attuned. Exposing it to sunlight in Creation for a minute causes it to lose attunement, and it cannot be re-attuned while so exposed. As a supposed representative of the Neverborn, the deathknight enjoys remarkable Influence in the courts of the Deathlords.



YAWN

FINALLY COMING
AROUND, I SEE.



WHAT,
NOW?

YOU'RE IN A SAFE
PLACE, DEMETHEUS.
RELATIVELY SPEAKING.

DON'T GET UP TOO
QUICKLY. YOU'VE HAD A
HARD JOURNEY ACROSS
THE DESERT.



IT'S IRONIC,
ACTUALLY. WE'VE
BEEN REACHING OUT
TO YOU FOR
MONTHS.

AND YET HERE,
ALL ON YOUR OWN,
YOU'VE STUMBLER
RIGHT INTO OUR ARMS.



WHAT DO YOU
MEAN? WHERE
AM I?

HERE, LET ME
SHOW YOU.



YOU'RE RIGHT
WHERE DESTINY'S
BEEN LEADING YOU.



AW, HELL...



CHAPTER SIX

THE INFERNAL EXALTED

The Chosen of the Yozis are new and dangerous enemies of Creation, created by the Yozis from Solar Exaltations twisted to the service of Hell and empowered with the Essence of Malfeas. Now, these Green Sun Princes are tasked with traveling from the Demon City into Creation to transform it to a hell on earth. Only then may the Yozis escape the eternal prison of their own flesh.

What follow are a number of famous and infamous Abyssal Exalts of differing levels of experience to use as allies or (more likely) antagonists in **Exalted** series.

CEARR

THE SAVAGE BARBARIAN

Quote: *Fly, little man! I'll even give you a head start.*

Cearr was born the eldest son of High Chief Sgian of Talinin, a small tribal nation bordering both Linowan and Halta in the Northeast. Cearr grew up strong, tough and mean—all good qualities in a Talinin warrior. When he was old enough, he joined the other members of his tribe in their battles against Haltan bandits, Fair Folk ravagers and barbarian raiders. After proving himself time and again in combat, he earned the right to lead other warriors into battle. Eventually, his father named him his tanaiste, or second-in-command and heir-apparent. Cearr's future, and that of his people, seemed assured. Fate, however, is a fickle mistress.

A proud but savage folk, the Talinin lacked both Exalted and divine patrons, relying instead on their own shrewdness and fighting prowess to maintain their independence and way of life. For centuries, the Talinin chieftains had managed to play the two larger nations of Halta and Linowan off one another to the Talinin's benefit. All that changed with the coming of the Bull of the North and his army. Allying with the two neighboring states of Bloody River and Ardeleth, members of the Bull's Solar circle pushed the two states to assault Talinin as a prelude to the conquest of Linowan. With little choice, Sgain threw his lot in with the Linowan and found his people conscripted to fight a proxy war against the Solars' own proxies. With Linowan support, the Talinin held out for over a year, testament to the Talinin people's valor and prowess. When the Solars themselves entered the fray, however, it was no contest.

The High Chief's forces, and Cearr as their head, were conscripted

by the Realm's Tepet legions when they joined the fight on the Linowan's behalf. So it was that Cearr experienced combat among the Lords of Creation for the first time. Whirlwinds of fire and tsunamis of earth swept the battlefield, while lions of shining gold as large as wagons tore through whole divisions and boulders rained down from barges flying high above the struggle. It was just too much for a mortal man to face. When a winged demon with the head of a wolf swept down among his men, raining death from a wicked bow of glass as the wind whipped around him like a hurricane, Cearr's courage faltered for the first time in his life. Close enough to feel the heat of the demon's foul breath on his face when the creature landed to face the survivors, Cearr hesitated. At first, he thought to charge the beast and was about to rally his men for that purpose.



Then, he locked eyes with the mad thing. It seemed to read his intent, and it smiled at the prospect. Cearr's nerve broke, and he fled the battlefield, leaving his men without a leader and creating a hole in the Realm defense to be exploited. The battle was effectively over.

A more personal battle was soon to be fought by Cearr, however. The man ran heedlessly, deep into the redwood forest. When it counted the most, he had failed his people, his father and himself. The Talinin were no more, and it was his fault. Exhausted, he collapsed in a heap, screaming himself hoarse in frustration and shame. As his voice faltered, he heard another. It explained that what happened had not been his fault, that the battles of the Exalted were beyond the ken of mortal men. It suggested that, had he been Exalted as well, the conflict would have turned out differently. Then, it offered him the chance to join the ranks of the Chosen and gain vengeance for the wrongs done him. With nothing left to lose, Cearr agreed. As he did, a crimson erymanthus manifested itself before him. This blood-ape leapt upon the hapless barbarian, and its mouth distended unnaturally wide, allowing the demon to swallow Cearr whole.

Cearr spent five days in his demon chrysalis as his body, mind and soul were bent to the Yozi's service. With a flash of green light, the new Infernal Exalt burst from his chrysalis grotesque to stand defiantly within the Haltan forest. A hobgoblin patrol were the Green Sun Prince's first victims as he made his way to the suspended city of Sal-Maneth, where he knew with certainty his First Age incarnation had been laid to rest. Once there, he made his way to the tomb of his predecessor, slaughtering a number of that city's scholars en route. In this tomb, he found what he'd come for, a beautiful orichalcum grimcleaver that had served him in another life, and would again... with certain modifications. Cearr then carved a swath of destruction across the East, following the directions of the demon he'd merged with to the crack through which it had entered Creation. He then strode for five days across the wasteland of Cecelyne to reach his master, the Demon city Malfeas.

Now properly armed and trained, the Slayer Cearr stalks the Northeast, following his master's commands and, when left to his own devices, bringing mayhem and carnage to those unfortunates he meets, which also serves his master Malfeas. Cearr is a powerful man, with a wide, hirsute frame, a head of coarse red hair and extra long arms and pronounced fangs (the product of the man's merger with a blood-ape). He still dresses a belted plaid, and he paints his face with woad if he knows he's going into battle, both customs of the lost Talinin. Tales in the East of his now-tarnished and twisted orichalcum axe and his slavering, biting shield seem to confirm him as one of the fearful Forsaken, and he does nothing to correct such assumptions.

Motivation: Revenge himself on those who shamed him.

Urge: Tear out the world's still-beating heart (Malfean)

Caste: Slayer

Anima Banner: A demonic ape of verdigrised brass beats its chest in fury

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Dodge 2, Linguistics (Native: Forest-Tongue; Others: Riverspeak) 1, Martial Arts 4, Melee 3 (Axes +2), Presence 1, Resistance 3, Stealth 1, Survival 3 (In Malfeas +1), Thrown 2, War 3

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Artifact 2, Backing 1, Cult 1, Influence 1, Manse 3, Unwoven Coadjicator 1

Merits & Flaws: Barbarian (3-pt. Flaw)

Charms:

Excellencies: *Malfeas* (1st—x3)

Adorjan: Joy in Violence Approach, Wind-Born Stride

Malfeas: By Pain Reforged, Hardened Devil Body, Scar Writ Saga Shield

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Infernal Monster Style: God-Smashing Blow, Raging Behemoth Charge, Retribution Will Follow, Infernal Monster Form

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags N, P

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags N, P

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Hungry Shield (Ragemaw): Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 4L, Parry DV special, Rate 1, Tags N

Tainted Orichalcum Grimcleaver (Hatebringer): Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 16L/4, Parry DV 6, Rate 3, Tags O

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 16 **Peripheral Essence:** 29 (37)

Committed Essence: 8

Other Notes: Cearr's Artifact ratings refer to his tainted orichalcum grimcleaver and his hungry shield, both products of the Illustrious Forge's demonic artificers. Set into the haft of his great axe is a bloody knuckle stone, a hearthstone of Malfeas. It enhances its bearer's unarmed attacks, but at a cost. All of his unarmed strikes are piercing, but whenever he inflicts damage with an unarmed strike, he suffers one unsoakable health level of bashing damage.

Like all Green Sun Princes, the Slayer possesses the Backing of his Yozi patron, Influence over that Yozi's spawn and a Cult that recognizes the Exalt's affiliation with the Yozi and venerates him for it. At times, Cearr's erymanthus Unwoven Coadjicator speaks to him, especially to offer advice about surviving the mean streets of the Demon City.



SULUMOR

THE WAN STAVROPHORE

Quote: *This land will soon be ours, my children. Praise Cecelyne!*

As one of the dune people, Sulumor was raised in one of the harshest environments in Creation, the desert wasteland near Gem in the Far South. The elders of her tribe taught the girl the ways of her people: how to avoid the burning rays of the sun, the art of the ambush and the many uses of the human animal. At 12 years of age, she killed her first man, devouring his heart in the way of the moon folk and carving her own breathing tube from his thighbone. Her parents were rightly proud, and it was intimated by the tribe's shaman that she would one day join him in his duties.

When she came of age, however, and was presented to the desert wind spirits for confirmation, those spirits rejected her. The head of their court, a great air dragon named Jugo, claimed to sense a dark veil over her destiny and ordered her banished from his sight. Sulumor pleaded elegantly in her defense, using all she had learned from her shaman master to cajole the mighty spirit, but her defiance of his edict only served to infuriate the dragon. He ordered her forcibly removed from the court. The malicious djinn who bore her away carried her far into the rocky depths of the desert before dropping her as an unconscious heap and whirling home. She awoke when the first rays of the sun struck her pale, vulnerable skin.

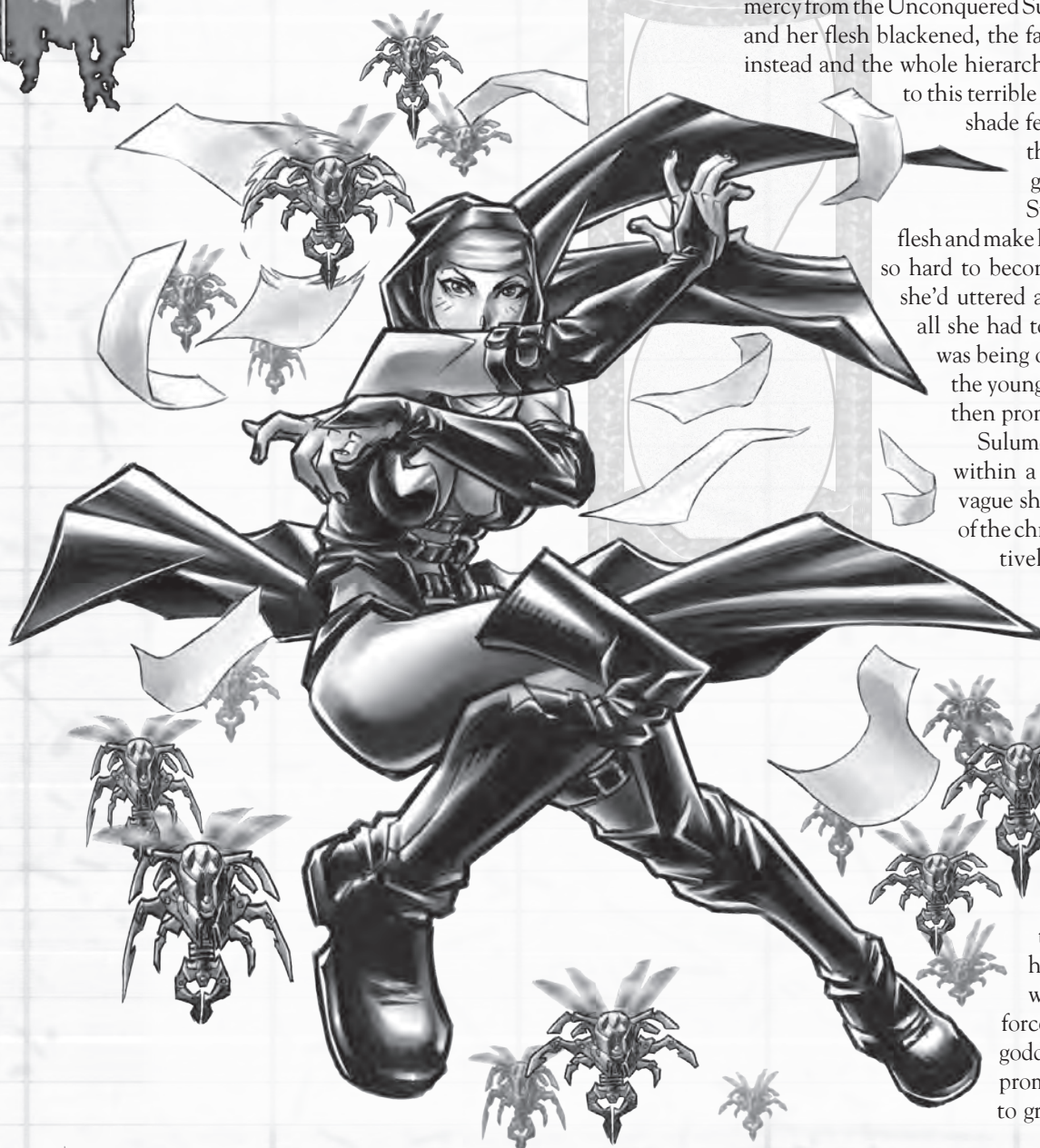
Light seared Sulumor's flesh as she clawed in vain at the rocky ground with bloody hands, seeking to escape the sun's terrible brilliance. At first, Sulumor thought to pray for mercy from the Unconquered Sun, but as the pain intensified and her flesh blackened, the failed shaman cursed the god instead and the whole hierarchy of spirits that had led her

to this terrible fate. As she did so, a cooling shade fell upon her, painting her in the rainbow colors of stained glass. A voice offered to save Sulumor, to soothe her ravaged flesh and make her the priestess she'd trained so hard to become. If she meant the curses she'd uttered and would see the gods fall, all she had to do was accept the gift she was being offered. Dying and in agony, the young dune person readily agreed, then promptly passed out.

Sulumor awakened five nights later within a polychromatic husk in the vague shape of a wasp. Breaking free of the chrysalis grotesque, she instinctively summoned a peghedu steed

through sorcery and sped off across the wastes to her tribe. To the dune people, her return from the rocky desert depths in better health than when she left seemed nothing less than a miracle.

And the Malefactor had no reason to dispute this view. It was a miracle. There were greater forces in the wastes, she explained to her tribesmen, than the petty wind spirits they placated, forces more powerful than the goddess Luna herself. Sulumor promised the dune people a rise to greatness if they but followed





her masters as well. Many were swayed by her honeyed words, but most of the elders of the tribe, including the shaman who'd mentored her, refused to follow her. These all died screaming in a swarm of obsidian wasps.

Sulumor now leads her tribe, and she hopes eventually to control all of the dune people of the South and to lead them to conquer the entire direction. It's only fitting, after all, that she regain her title as Queen of the South with her army composed of the very slaves her former incarnation designed.

Sulumor is a beautiful albino woman who carries herself with the regal bearing of a monarch but garbs herself in the accoutrements of a lowly stavrophore. The only colors on her pale form are her iridescent eyes. Those eyes and her breathtaking beauty are the only marks left by the agata with whom she merged.

Motivation: Unite the scattered tribes of the dune people.

Urge: To rule the South in the Yozi's name (Cecelynian)

Caste: Malefactor

Anima Banner: A dust devil of swirling green light and silver sands

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

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

Abilities: Awareness 1, *Integrity 2*, *Larceny 1*, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm (dune people dialect); Others: Flame-tongue) 1, *Lore 3 (Demons +2)*, Martial Arts 1, Melee 1, *Occult 3*, *Performance 3*, *Presence 3*, *Resistance 2*, *Socialize 2*, *Stealth 2*, *Survival 3*

Backgrounds: Artifact 1, Artifact 2, Backing 1, Cult 2, Followers 3, Influence 1, Past Life 4, Resources 2

Merits & Flaws: Sun-Seared (6-pt. Flaw)

Charms:

Excellencies: *Cecelyne (1st—x3)*

Cecelyne: Holy Land Infliction, Locust Mana Plague, Sand-Slip Trick, Sands Through Fingers Defense, Sandstrike Blast, Sorcerous Enlightenment of Cecelyne, Transcendent Desert Creature

Spells:

Emerald Circle: Death of Obsidian Wasps, Slave-Spawn Summons

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Sandstrike Blast: Speed 4, Accuracy 6, Damage 5L and 1w, Rate 1, Range 150, Tags P

Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15

Peripheral Essence: 36

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Like all Green Sun Princes, Sulumor possesses the Backing of her Yozi patron, Influence over that Yozi's spawn and a Cult that recognizes the Exalt's affiliation with the Yozi and venerates her for it. Her Artifact ratings refer to the barrier sands she carries within the hourglass at her throat and the infernal hospitality prayer strip she bears that's dedicated to the Demon Prince Orabilis. The Malefactor's Followers are made up of the dune people of her tribe. Her Past Life is that of Eternal Crimson Sunset, the very Solar who bred and enslaved the people of the dunes in the First Age.

BITTER COPAL

THE INFERNAL ARTIFICER

Quote: *Increase the vitriol solution, and make certain the temperature remains constant.*

A distant relative of the former ruling family of An-Teng, Bitter Copal grew up among the Seven-Stranded Vine, worshipping She Who Lives in Her Name. A precocious youth, Copal was sent to study from the savants in Adorned With Wisdom as a Sapphire. There, he discovered a talent for alchemy and medicine, and once he completed his education, the young man made his way to the City of the Steel Lotus to ply his trade as an apothecary.

His success in the capital caught the eye of Sesus Milas, trierarch of the *Mela's Glory*, a trireme of the Realm's Water Fleet. The Dragon-Blooded officer had the apothecary impressed as surgeon's man under the ship's surgeon, Nellens Harus. The experience was a miserable one for Bitter Copal. He was far from home, he didn't speak the language of the crew, he was looked down upon and treated barely better than a slave by most of the crew, he had to keep his religious beliefs secret lest he be summarily executed, and the physician under whom he worked was both less skilled than he and a drunkard. Only Trierarch Milas treated the Tengese savant with kindness and respect, and her duties left her with little time for or interest in helping Copal adjust. Such is the way of the Imperial Navy.

In time, it's possible Bitter Copal might have adjusted to his new life and earned the respect of the crew. However, that was not to be. Three weeks out of the City of the Steel Lotus, en route to Abalone, the *Mela's Glory* was set upon and boarded by Lintha pirates. The battle that ensued was a fierce one, and a great many lives were lost on both sides. Eventually, though, the Realm marines were able to repel the Lintha, and the few pirates who survived successfully disengaged and fled. The crew of the *Mela's Glory* was in no condition to pursue.

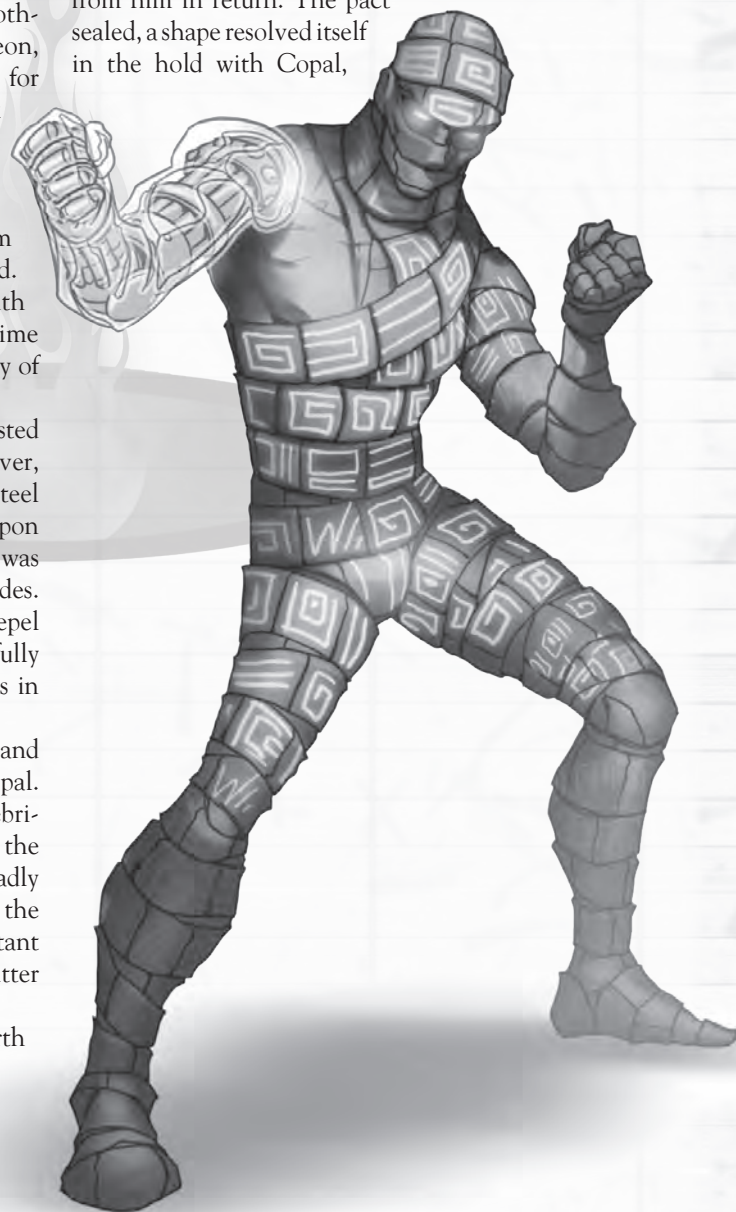
What followed was a long night of constant triage and emergency surgery for both Nellens Harus and Bitter Copal. The situation was made worse by the ship's surgeon's inebriated state. Bitter Copal was eventually forced to relieve the man of duty when his drunken ineptitude cost the badly injured trierarch his right arm. Locked in his cabin, the surgeon continued to scream curses at his young assistant until finally passing out. When he'd done all he could, Bitter Copal laid down in his bed for much needed sleep.

Copal awoke as angry marines drug him from his berth to the captain's cabin. To save his own neck, and as petty revenge, Nellens Harus blamed the loss of Trierarch Milas's arm on Bitter Copal's gross incompetence. Furious at his maiming, the trierarch swept his desk clear with his surviving arm and had the marines

lay Copal's arm across it. Milas took his daiklave in his off hand and brought it down hard, severing the young savant's right arm and cleaving the desk in twain. Through a haze of pain, Bitter Copal saw the surgeon smile.

The crippled Copal was hurled into the hold and left to survive or die alone. In shock from loss of blood and trauma, the Tengese Yozi worshiper prayed to his mistress to deliver vengeance upon those who had done this. The blood of a prince of her people had been spilled by those who had once risen up and maimed her and her brethren. All he asked for was a redressing of wrongs. To Bitter Copal's astonishment and delight, his prayers were answered.

A voice promised to deliver vengeance on the man's enemies, but it wanted something from him in return—his life. Bitter Copal agreed to give the voice whatever it wanted from him in return. The pact sealed, a shape resolved itself in the hold with Copal,



though a veil of mist obscured its features. From within the mist emerged multiple limbs ending in terrible weaponry. With these, the creature smashed through the door of the hold. Though too weak to follow, Copal heard the many bleating screams of the surviving crew as the thing went among them. The sounds of battle went on for several minutes. Then, things went quiet again, though the quiet was occasionally punctuated by yet more screams as the creature visited the wounded. Copal smiled as he recognized Harus's shriek among them.

Moments later, the thing returned. Copal knew from his upbringing it was one of the tomesu, a distant soul of She Who Lives in Her Name. It proposed to merge with him. He gave himself to it without hesitation.

A handful of days later, Bitter Copal the Defiler emerged from his chrysalis surrounded by Lintha. This bunch had followed the directions of those who had escaped the Mela's Glory earlier, proposing to finish through stealth what their brother Lintha had failed to do through force. Explaining to them what he had become (and shining as he was with the light of Hell, they were hard pressed to dispute him), he asked to be taken with them to Bluehaven. He has dwelt there since, supplying relic weaponry both to the Family and, through it, to the Seven-Stranded Vine in An-Teng.

Bitter Copal is of average height and build for a Tengese and completely hairless thanks to his merger with the tomesu. However, it's usually difficult to make out his features as he's typically wrapped in a brass-threaded topaz vapor mantle of his own design, often with only his intense brown eyes and his fourfold demon arm visible.

Motivation: Build a wonder more terrible than any devised even in the First Age.

Urges: Free An-Teng from Realm control and reinstate its rightful ruling family (Pyrian)

Caste: Defiler

Anima Banner: A burning fire of green enclosed in a transparent sphere

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

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

Abilities: *Craft (Genesis)* 2, *Craft (Vitriol)* 3, *Dodge* 2, *Integrity* 3, *Larceny* 1, *Linguistics* (Native: Seatongue; Others: Old Realm) 1, *Lore* 3, *Martial Arts* 2, *Medicine* 3, *Melee* 1, *Occult* 3 (*Art of Alchemy: Adept +2*), *Sail* 2, *Socialize* 1, *War* 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Artifact 3, Backing 2, Backing 1, Cult 1, Followers 2, Influence 1, Past Life 1, Savant 3

Charms:

Cecelyne: Anonymity Through Propriety, Demonic Primacy of Essence, Hellscrey Chakra

She Who Lives in Her Name: Counter-Conceptual Interposition, Essence-Dissecting Stare, Factual Determination Analysis, Force-Suppression Barrier, Mind-Hand Manipulation, Tool-Transcending Constructs, Unseen Force Application

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Adamant Hand: Speed 4, Accuracy 6, Damage 10L, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Hammer Hand: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 13B/2, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Pincer: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 5L, Parry DV –, Rate 2, Tags C, N, P

Telekinetic Blow: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Rate 3, Range 8, Tags N

Telekinetic Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Rate 1, Range 8, Tags C, N, P

Telekinetic Blade: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 3L, Rate 3, Range 8, Tags N, P

Soak: 9L/12B (Topaz vapor mantle, +7L/9B, Hardness: 2L/2B, mobility penalty -1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 14 **Peripheral Essence:** 24 (35)

Committed Essence: 9

Other Notes: Like all Green Sun Princes, Bitter Copal possesses the Backing of his Yozi patron, Influence over that Yozi's spawn and a Cult that recognizes the Exalt's affiliation with the Yozi and venerates him for it. In addition he possesses the Backing of the Lintha Family and Followers in the form of lab assistants. His Artifact ratings refer to his fourfold demon arm and his topaz vapor mantle. Copal sometimes has glimpses of a Past Life spent in a glimmering, domed city that sailed across the Western Ocean.



CAPTAIN GYRFALCON

THE SKY PIRATE

Quote: *Hard astern! And mind those catapults!*

The air boat pirate Captain Gyr Falcon, now infamous as the Scourge of the Haslanti skies, was once a loyal citizen and soldier of the League. Gyr Falcon was born in the fringe city of Fair Isle as Ernst Gyrkin. He had a fairly uneventful childhood, though he did tend to get himself in trouble more than most children. Ernst never shied from taking risks, being a bit of a daredevil, and he loved being the center of attention. These qualities led to all sorts of rambunctious

behavior as a child, and as he grew older, his parents had a harder time justifying his acts to Fair Isle's elders. When his baiting a bear nearly got three of his teenage cronies killed, the elders had enough. They forced the 16 year old to choose between banishment and enlistment in the Haslanti military, a place his foolhardy bravery might actually serve him well. Being no fool (despite overwhelming opinion to the contrary), Ernst chose the latter.

What followed for Ernst Gyrkin was a career equal parts illustrious and disastrous. Starting as a marine in the Ice Squadron, the young warrior soon found himself requisitioned by the Ears of the North to join one of its Bloody Hawk units as a result of his flamboyant deeds of derring-do.

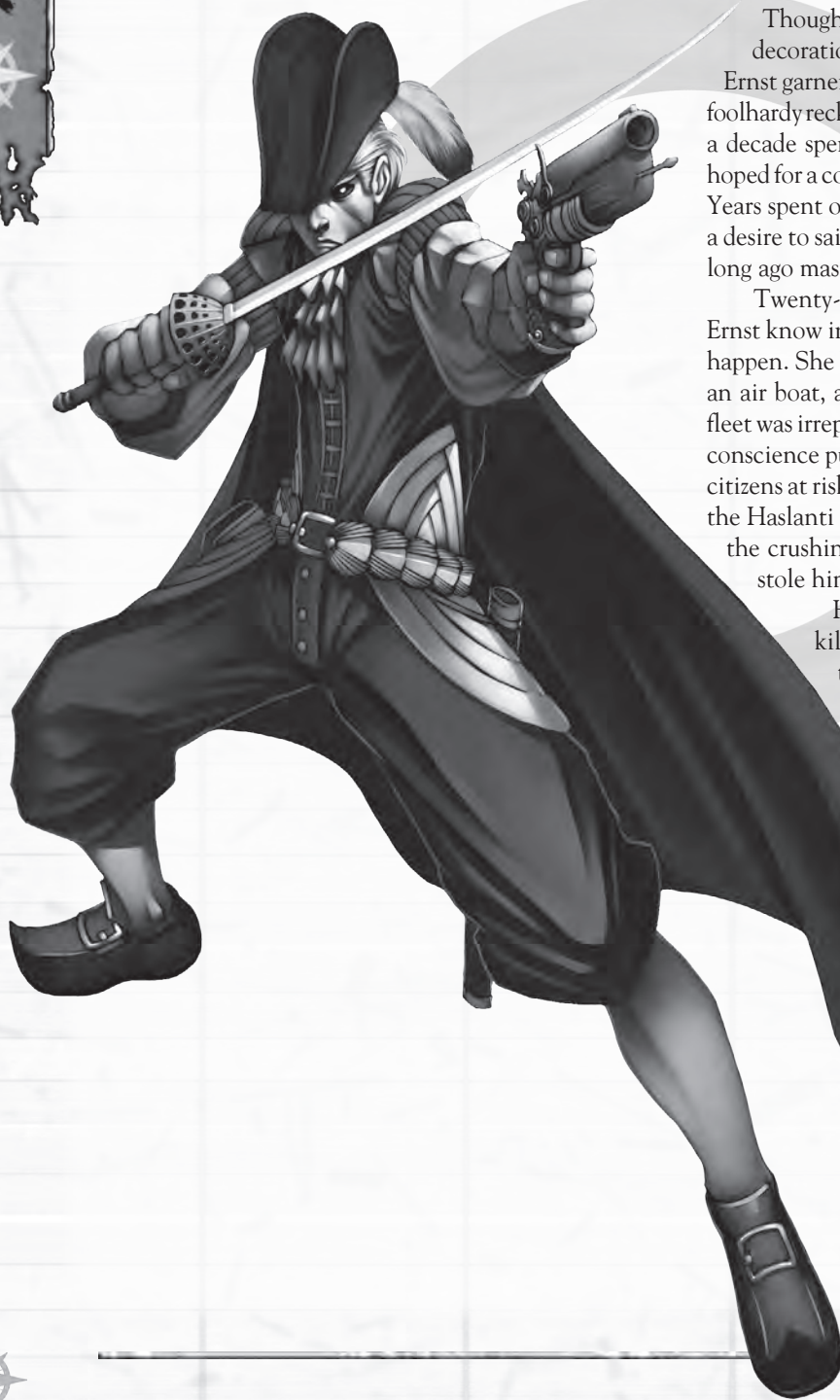
Though he received a number of commendations and decorations for his bravery, ingenuity and initiative,

Ernst garnered even more demerits and black marks for his foolhardy recklessness endangering himself and his unit. After a decade spent as an operative, the veteran Bloody Hawk hoped for a command position, preferably in the Wind Fleet. Years spent onboard air boats during missions left him with a desire to sail the skies the master of his own ship, and he'd long ago mastered the skills of an aerial sailor.

Twenty-One Kestrels, admiral of the Wind Fleet, let Ernst know in no uncertain terms that it was never going to happen. She believed he was too irresponsible to command an air boat, and the officer corps agreed. Each boat of the fleet was irreplaceable, as was its crew. She could not in good conscience put the security of the nation and the lives of its citizens at risk by letting a daredevil take the wheel of one of the Haslanti League's ultimate weapons. Ernst Gyrkin took the crushing news with stoic resolve. Then he promptly stole himself an air boat drydocked for repairs.

He'd taken a crew hostage at crossbow-point, killing two members before the sailors acquiesced to his demands and took off. Pursuit was swift and overwhelming. Soon he was facing three other Haslanti air boats and a swarm of gliders in a pitched aerial battle. Overwhelmed and with a crew just waiting for an opportunity to turn on him, Ernst thought about trying to escape in a folding glider. Instead, he dropped his crossbow and surrendered.

While Ernst was asleep in the brig of one of his pursuit ships, a gigantic glass spider the size of a man appeared in his cell with him. The spider whispered to the sleeping man, offering him all he wanted and had now lost forever, his own ship, a crew and command of the Haslanti skies. All he need do is accept the gift being offered, and swear fealty to the voice's mistress, and he would be



remade into the greatest sky captain of all time. A groggy Ernst agreed, waking to find himself wrapped tightly in a cocoon of webbing with the spider, whose transparent flesh was flowing over his own. He felt himself falling and the last thing he recalled before his consciousness faded was the sound of a mighty crash.

Five days later, it was Captain Gyrfalcon who tore free of his chrysalis grotesque amid the shattered hulk of an air boat. Though naked and cold, Gyrfalcon strode confidently from the wreckage. Above him, illuminated by the moon, floated a beautiful, baroque ship of ebony and silver. Three near-transparent anhules lowered themselves from the ship. One clothed him in clothes of demon-spider silk, another presented him with his sword and pistol, and the third bore him upward to his ship. At his arrival, the pale crew of Demon-Bloods saluted their captain. Smiling his roguish smile, Captain Gyrfalcon ordered the crew to start the engines and make for the nearest greenfield. He owed a debt that could never be repaid, but that didn't mean he wasn't obligated to try.

Captain Gyrfalcon is a handsome man, with pale skin, short fangs and hair the color of spider silk (all products of his Infernal nature). A dandy, he dresses in elegant silks woven of demon spider webs. His tendency toward braggadocio and reckless action is so great, it even serves to irritate Adorjan herself, leading her to punish the Green Sun Prince more often, but as his Haslanti superiors learned before to their chagrin, there's just no changing his nature.

Motivation: To prove his superiority over the captains of the air and sea

Urge: Destroy the Haslanti Air Fleet (Adorjani)

Caste: Scourge

Anima Banner: A silent whirl of red and green illuminates a translucent spider.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3 (Duels +1), Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 1, Larceny 2, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Others: Old Realm) 1, Lore 1, Melee 3 (Duels +1), Presence 2, Resistance 1, Sail 3, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, War 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 5, Artifact 3, Artifact 2, Backing 1, Cult 1, Familiar 1, Familiar 1, Familiar 1, Followers 2, Influence 1, Manse 4, Resources 3, Spies 1, Unwoven Co-adjudicator 2

Merits & Flaws: Greater Curse (2-pt. Flaw), Wanted (5-pt. Flaw)

Charms:

Excellencies: *Adorjan* (1st—x2)

Adorjan: Joy in Violence Approach, Self as Cyclone Stance, Unimpeded Perfection of Exertion, Who Strikes the Wind?, Wind-Born Stride

Ebon Dragon: Life-Blighting Emptiness Attack, Nemesis Self Imagined Anew, Witness to Darkness

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Exceptional Slashing Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 9, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Hell Piece: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Rate 1, Range 8, Tags F, S

Soak: (Silken armor, +5L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 12 **Peripheral Essence:** 23 (29)

Committed Essence: 6

Other Notes: Captain Gyrfalcon's Artifact ratings refer to his large transport excellent air boat, the large marmoreal cannon mounted onboard that craft and a suit of silken armor. The inverted city intaglio hearthstone of his Manse serves to power the cannon. The stone's bearer may transport himself from one side of a Malfean layer to the other. He sinks into the ground and falls for seven minutes, sliding intangibly through stone and metal and the labyrinthine catacombs inside the layer until he emerges on the far side. By spending seven motes, the bearer may bring with him a number of willing companions up to his Essence rating. The boat is crewed by three anhules Familiars as officers and 20 Demon-Blooded Followers as sailors. Like all Green Sun Princes, Gyrfalcon possesses the Backing of his Yozi patron, Influence over that Yozi's spawn and a Cult that recognizes the Exalt's affiliation with the Yozi and venerates him for it. In addition, the Scourge possesses a network of Spies in the Haslanti capital of Icehome. His Unwoven Coadjudicator, what remains of the anhules that merged with him, serves to advise the captain and curb his rash tendencies.



MANOSQUE CYAN

THE OBSTRUCTIVE NAYSAYER

Quote: *Point of order, gentlemen.*

To understand Manosque Cyan, one must look far back into Realm history. In RY 244, Manosque Viridian of House Manosque wielded the power of the Eye of Autochthon in a coup attempt against the Scarlet Empress. The Empress obliterated the pretender with the Realm Defense Grid and had his entire Great House put to the sword. No one was spared.

Orso goes the official story in the Realm history books. In truth, several scions of the family survived the initial purge, most by being in the Threshold at the time. Agents of the Empress eliminated these Threshold survivors over the decade that followed. In the end, only one Manosque child survived, an unExalted infant smuggled out of the Manosque compound in Gedir Prefecture by a maid during its invasion by the Empress's Legion of Silence. The boy was raised by the maid's family as their own, but when he came of age, the maid informed him of his secret heritage and what it meant, instilling in him a sense of entitlement and a desire for vengeance. And this cycle continued until the present, with the previous generation informing the next of its dark legacy. Despite their breeding, none of these descendants Exalted.

At the same time, the fortunes of the family into which the Manosque had been adopted continued to rise. They rose to a position as patricians in the community of Guin, owning large tracts of fertile farmland. Twenty-five years ago, this patrician family's prosperity and noble bearing led to the Kepel household of House Nellens arranging a marriage between one of its unExalted sons and a daughter of Manosque hidden within the patrician family. The product of that union was Nellens Cyan.

As with her predecessors, Cyan was informed of her secret heritage when she was old enough to understand the implications and the dangers

of that knowledge, in this case the night after her graduation from the Spiral Academy. However, her mother also explained that hers was the first generation to be born again within the Scarlet Dynasty. It would be for her to decide if regaining the family's former standing was enough or if honor demanded more. Imbued with the same sense of superiority and entitlement that had led her ancestor to rebel so long ago, Nellens—no, Manosque—Cyan vowed to see the other Great Houses brought to ruin as Manosque, Iselsi and countless others had been before. That same night, the carriage transporting Cyan and her mother back to Guin was set upon by a pack of spiny demons. Cyan's mother and their servants were killed, but she was dragged into the wilderness to the nest of firmin. There, the Ebon Dragon spoke to her through one of the firmin. He explained that he could empower the woman to make the dreams of vengeance her family had harbored for generations a reality, or the firmin could tear her apart, ending the Manosque line once and for all. Cyan chose life and vengeance and was soon wrapped in a spiked cocoon.

Cyan returned to her family five days later with a tale of bandits, murder and narrow escape. The next several years saw the young woman rise to the Lesser Chamber of the Deliberative following a campaign to rid Gedir Prefecture of bandits. Her own tragic story had served to galvanize the people of the prefecture to action, and her success led to a Cynis Senator of the Greater Chamber nominating Cyan to the Lesser Chamber. It was the only sure way House Cynis could end her investigation before the link between the bandits in Gedir Prefecture and Cynis came to light.

Since then, Senator Nellens Cyan has used her position to interfere with the Lesser Chamber's function, hastening civil war and the abandonment of the Threshold while seeming to act on behalf of the Realm people's interest. She thus enjoys tremendous popularity and wields power out of proportion to her tenure. And when sleazy tactics within the Senate don't work, she's quite capable at assassination, both literal and character.

The Fiend's own supernatural power and willingness





to do whatever is required to achieve her goals have served to eliminate or blackmail those who would be her enemies in her Chamber, and she hopes to be able to exert pull within the Greater Chamber soon through her cousin Nellens Poramo.

Cyan Manosque is an attractive young woman, with jet-black hair that would continue to the small of her back if she didn't have it waxed or shaved and black nails, both products of her firmin chrysalis. She decorates her long nails in scarlet High Realm script when operating as a scion of House Nellens in the Senate and dresses in traditional fashion for one of her station. When operating as agent provocateur and assassin, she dresses in a leather catsuit and wears a shadowlight caul that hides her identity.

Motivation: To drive the Scarlet Dynasty to tear itself apart

Urge: Corrupt the Deliberative into a toll of the Reclamation (Ophidian)

Caste: Fiend

Anima Banner: A deep purple and black nimbus with a barely visible draconic figure at its heart

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, *Bureaucracy* 3, Dodge 2, Integrity 3, Investigation 1, Larceny 2, *Linguistics (Native: Low Realm; Others: High Realm)* 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 2, Performance 3, Presence 3, Socialize 2, Stealth 3, Thrown 3

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Artifact 1, Artifact 1, Backing 2, Backing 1, Contacts 2, Cult 1, Familiar (Demonic) 1, Influence 3, Influence 1, Resources 3

Charms:

Excellencies: *Ebon Dragon* (1st—x2)

Adorjan: Broken Silence Laughter Defense, Sacred Kamilla's Inhalation

Ebon Dragon: Cracked Cell Circumvention, Loom-Snarling Deception, Shadow Spite Curse

Malfeas: Green Sun Nimbus Flare, Insignificant Embers Intuition

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Knife (melee): Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 4L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3, Tags T

Knife (thrown): Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 4L, Rate 3, Range 15

Soak: 5L/7B (Perfect buff catsuit, +4L/5B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4

Willpower: 5

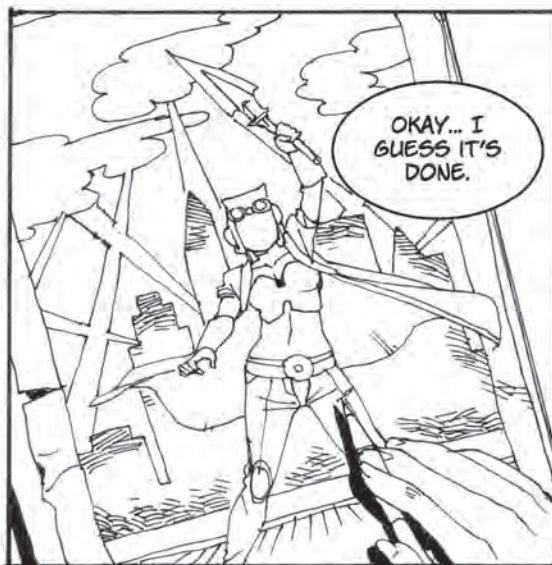
Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 11

Peripheral Essence: 28

Committed Essence: 0

Other Notes: Like all Green Sun Princes, Manosque Cyan possesses the usual Backing of her Yozi patron, Influence over that Yozi's spawn and a Cult that recognizes the Exalt's affiliation with the Yozi and venerates her for it. Arising from her role as an unExalted Dynast, Cyan has the Backing of House Nellens, Contacts in the Imperial City, Influence in the Deliberative and an Ally in the form of Senator Nellens Poramo. Her Artifact values refer to her shadowlight caul and her collapsible palanquin. Her servants and bearers are all in fact the same demon Familiar, a decanthrope named Dez.



OKAY... I
GUESS IT'S
DONE.



YOU DON'T SOUND
HAPPY. DIDN'T IT
TURN OUT OKAY?

HM? OH, NO, IT'S
FINE. FINE. IT'S
JUST...



WHAT IS IT,
KASTA?

NOTHING, I'M SORRY.
WELL, IT'S SOMETHING,
BUT IT'S UNPATRIOTIC.

IT'S OKAY.
TELL ME.



IT'S PROJECT RAZOR.
I CAN'T CONVINCE
MYSELF WE'RE DOING
THE RIGHT THING.

AND IF I DON'T
BELIEVE IT, HOW
CAN I MAKE THE
POPULAT BELIEVE
IT?

FOR ALL I KNOW, IT
COULD BE THE END OF
OUR WORLD.



IT ISN'T, IS IT? TELL
ME WE'RE NOT GOING
TO DESTROY OUR WAY
OF LIFE.



WE'RE NOT
DESTROYING
IT, DARLING.

WE'RE REDESIGNING IT
FOR THE BETTER.



CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ALCHEMICAL EXALTED

The Chosen of Autochthon were the first Exalted to be designed but the last to be built. For millennia, these Champions have safeguarded the Realm of Brass and Shadow that exists within the ailing depths of the Machine God himself. Now, however, the illness of the King of Craftsmen threatens to wipe out the Eight Nations of Autochthonia, and a solution might mean a return to Creation for these lost Exalts.

What follow are a number of famous and infamous Alchemical Exalts of differing levels of experience to use as allies or antagonists in **Exalted** series.

FAIR-SPOKEN RISHI

THE ELDER STATESMAN

Quote: *This course of action is sufficient in the short term, but it will ultimately prove detrimental. I'd like to propose an alternative.*

Once, many centuries and a great deal of Clarity ago, *Fair-Spoken Rishi* was one of the greatest up-and-coming military minds of Yugash. He served with verve and distinction in

the Diamond Fields Conflict against Claslat, won two key victories in the campaign against the Apostate *Industry of Silence*, and at the height of his career, not only captured the Gulakian town of Kemprast, but also negotiated exceedingly favorable terms for its return while concealing the fact that his supply line had been cut by the vagaries of the Great Maker's biotectonic workings.

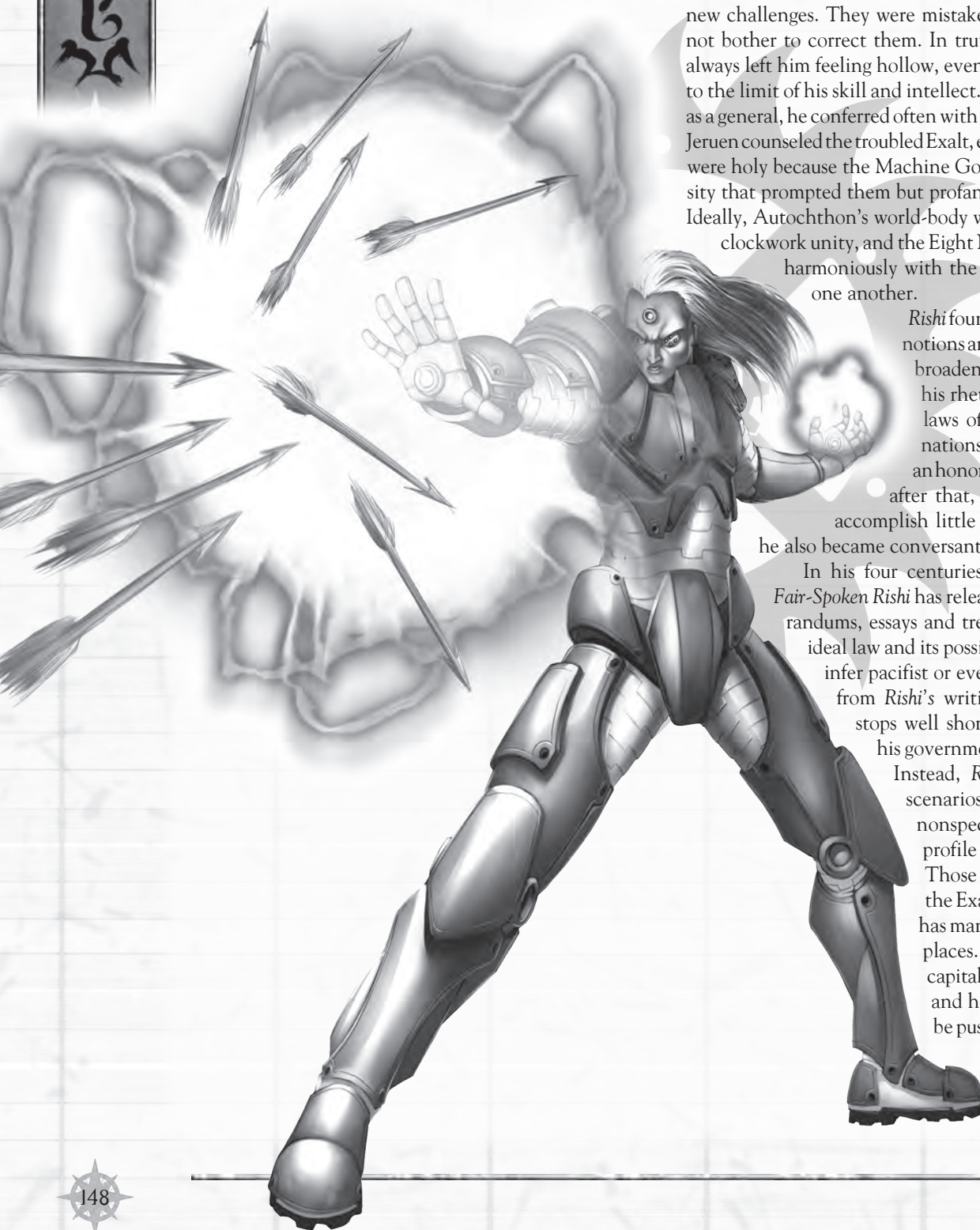
Then, shortly into his second century of service, *Rishi* retired his commission. Some believed he had simply proven his dominance on the battlefield and wished to move on to new challenges. They were mistaken, but the Archon did not bother to correct them. In truth, *Rishi's* victories had always left him feeling hollow, even those that pressed him to the limit of his skill and intellect. During his final decade as a general, he conferred often with the famed lector Jeruen. Jeruen counseled the troubled Exalt, explaining that his works were holy because the Machine God recognized the necessity that prompted them but profane in and of themselves. Ideally, Autochthon's world-body would operate in perfect clockwork unity, and the Eight Nations would integrate harmoniously with the Great Maker and with one another.

Rishi found his first peace in these notions and put aside soldiering to broaden his horizons. He honed his rhetoric while studying the laws of Yugash and the other nations. Soon, he was counted an honorary plutarch and, shortly after that, realized that he would accomplish little with his oratory unless he also became conversant in politics.

In his four centuries of service to Yugash, *Fair-Spoken Rishi* has released hundreds of memorandums, essays and treatises on the nature of ideal law and its possible enforcement. Many infer pacifist or even anti-Yugash leanings from *Rishi's* writings, though he always stops well short of actually criticizing his government or any of its policies.

Instead, *Rishi* prefers to present scenarios set in deliberate but nonspecific contrast to high-profile laws or current events. Those who speak out against the Exalt soon discover that he has many friends in unexpected places. *Rishi* spends his political capital carefully but effectively, and he will not allow himself be pushed around or criticized by young jingoists.

Of course, no Alchemical spends centuries exclusively



drafting and proposing legal reforms. *Rishi* has been called upon to install his old war Charms on behalf of Yugash from time to time, and he has always complied with a silent bow. Moreover, he has been used as an international diplomat on many occasions, and often as a wartime negotiator. *Rishi* has made a few friends and contacts in the other Autochthonian nations, and they make sure that his writings are disseminated outside of the borders of Yugash. He keeps in touch primarily through the Vision Transmitting Protocol, though when he has longer missives to deliver, he has been known to grant favors to younger Champions willing to act as couriers.

Most Yugashite Exalts of recent vintage have met *Rishi* at least once. He believes that, although Alchemicals are servants of the state, the moral example they set will ultimately chart the course and determine the fortune of Yugash. As such, he is quite willing to act as a mentor and sponsor to any younger Champion whose actions align with the Archon's beliefs. His advice, frosted with Clarity, focuses on navigating the path between ideal results and the real acts required to achieve them.

Fair-Spoken Rishi finds Project Razor both alarming and fascinating, and of late, he has thrown himself into study of ancient editions of the *Tome of the Great Maker*, attempting to learn about the people and the culture of the forgotten world to which his nation may soon return. He even considers requesting a transfer onto the project as a diplomat.

Motivation: Forge peaceful accords between the inhabitants of Autochthonia

Caste: Orichalcum

Anima Banner: An enormous spinning gear-as-sunburst, throwing off streaks of lightning in every direction.

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 4 (Legal Theory + 3), Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Lore 4, Linguistics (Native: Autochthonic; Others: Old Realm, Tribal Dialect [Custodians]) 2, Martial Arts 5 (Unarmed + 3), Occult 3, Performance 5 (Debate + 1), Presence 4 (Quiet Conviction + 1), Socialize 4, War 5 (Close Formation + 1)

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Artifact 3, Backing 3, Class 4, Contacts 5, Eidolon 2

Charm Slots: 20 Dedicated, 5 General

Charms:

Augmentations: Strength (4th [x2]), Dexterity (1st, 4th [x2], 6th [Dexterity + Craft and Dexterity + Medicine]); Charisma (1st, 4th [x3]), Manipulation (1st, 4th); Perception (1st), Intelligence (4th)

Strength: Piston-Driven Megaton Hammer, Toroidal Shockwave Catalyst (Mind-Battering Force Emitter), Unstoppable Impulse Engine

Dexterity: Accelerated Response System (Parry), Impenetrable Repulsor Field

Stamina: Aegis Integration System, Auxiliary Essence Storage Unit (x3), Strain-Resistant Chassis Modification

Charisma: Clockwork Charisma Perfection Nodes (Metaconductive Circuitry), Clockwork Soldier Pattern Projector (Veteran Faith Inculcator), Hardened Argument Patterning (see p. 160), Motivational Vocoder, Patriotism-Provoking Display (Many Is One Node), Perfected Union Patterning, Programmed Catechism Rebuttal, Tunnel-Fighting Tactical Omnibus Implant, Unconditional Imperative Programming

Manipulation: Unobtrusive Repartee Baffles

Perception: Anticipatory Simulation Processor, Optical Enhancement (Cross-Phase Scanner, Diagnostic Overlay, Flash Shutters, Light-Intensification Filters)

Intelligence: God-Machine Weaving Engine, Man-Machine Weaving Engine, Strategos-Commander Synergy Circuits (Ally-Integrating Alchemy), Thermionic Orthodoxy Array

Protocols:

Man-Machine: Iron-Will Entrenchment, Parsing the Tome of the Great Maker, Vat Surrogate Reweaving Technique, Vision-Transmitting Protocol

God-Machine: Auspicious Reformatting Mudra, Pattern Realignment Initiative

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 5B, Parry DV 8, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 8B, Parry DV 6, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 13, Damage 5B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Soak: 19L/20B (Orichalcum superheavy plate, +17L/17B, Hardness: 11L/11B, -2 mobility penalty, fatigue value 2)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 5

Personal Essence: 23 **Peripheral Essence:** 69 (77)

Committed Essence: 8

Other Notes: *Fair-Spoken Rishi's* Artifact rating refers to his suit of orichalcum superheavy plate, a memento from his soldier days that he typically dons only when he's recalled to military service or is aware of some threat he'll need to combat. *Rishi* enjoys the Backing of Yugash's plutarchs, living like one of their Class, and has Allies throughout the nation's Alchemicals. He has many Contacts among Yugash's social reformers and among their fellows in other nations familiar with the Exalt's writings.



EXCESSIVELY RIGHTEOUS BLOSSOM

THE HONORARY LECTOR

Quote: *I find your lack of faith in the Great Maker disturbing.*

A brilliant and storied Kamakite general who, in antiquity, handed Yugash one of its most crushing defeats by playing on their characteristic national pride; a lector whose sermons and personal counseling kept her congregation's morale up through one of the worst resource shortages in Jarish's history; a Populat foreman who crushed an attacking gremlin in a hydraulic press—*Excessively Righteous Blossom's* soul has passed through

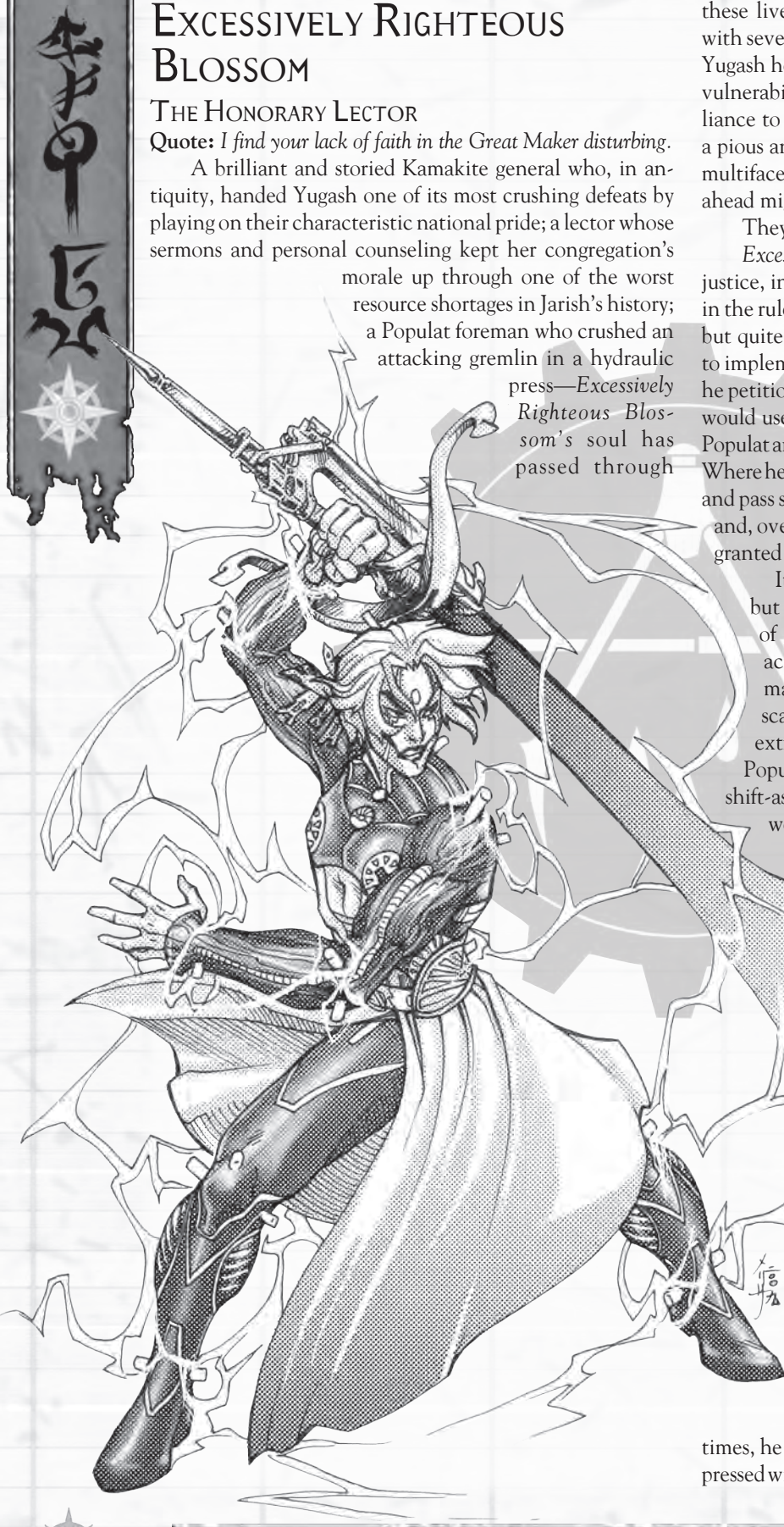
these lives and more besides. Faced with rising hostilities with several neighbors, the National Tripartite Assembly of Yugash hoped to catalyze a Champion aware of the tactical vulnerabilities of his own nation and possessed of the brilliance to exploit the weaknesses of others. They hoped for a pious and inspirational hero, an innovator, a flexible and multifaceted solution to whatever problems the dire days ahead might bring.

They got an ultra-orthodox idealist.

Excessively Righteous Blossom is a powerful believer—in justice, in the power and goodness of the Great Maker, and in the rule of law. He is utterly unbending in his convictions but quite flexible in finding whatever means are necessary to implement those ideals. Immediately after his Exaltation, he petitioned to join the adjudicators. It was his idea that he would use his Charms to walk unseen among the Lumpen, Populat and Tripartite alike, quickening the process of justice. Where he witnessed wrongdoing, he would make his judgment and pass sentence. He was proud of the efficiency of the idea and, over the misgivings of several senior adjudicators, was granted leave to do as he wished.

It was the first disappointment of *Blossom's* career but far from the last. Believing strongly in the equality of justice, he stalked all throughout Kadar. Among actual accomplishments such as uncovering black market trade networks and a sex-for-promotion scandal, he also disrupted work schedules by imposing extra work shifts and harsh privilege revocations on Populat workers for minor infractions such as crooked shift-assignment badges, unacceptable slowness in erecting work scaffolding (despite lacking the tools for the job), unacceptable slowness in bringing adequate tools to work shifts that needed them (despite having to wait for over an hour for the tools to be returned from another work site) and excessive fraternizing during work shifts (despite that all parties involved were within acceptable quota parameters). He provoked outrage by pronouncing fines against mid-ranking members of the Tripartite for the common indulgences of their station. He was soon ejected from the adjudicators and sent to bolster the defenses of the border patropolis of Ot.

Yugash and Sova went to war shortly thereafter, due to mutual resource shortages. *Blossom* quickly distinguished himself in the Elemental War as a terrifyingly effective infiltrator, saboteur and duelist. After fighting and crippling the Sovan Orichalcum Caste general *Merciless Gauntleted Fist* no less than three times, he asked to be promoted to a command position. Impressed with his effectiveness thus far, the National Tripartite



Assembly gave him a reinforced battalion of mixed green and veteran troops.

In his very first sortie against Sova, *Blossom* managed to reduce it down to the strength of a field company, and despite repeated infusions of reinforcements, that is the strength his soldiers fought at through the remainder of the war. To this day, *Blossom* blames all of his misfortune during the Elemental War on the insufficient valor and discipline of the troops he commanded. His fellow officers and the generals above him disagreed, and in the wake of the war, the Mirrorblade had most of his command rights revoked.

Of late, *Excessively Righteous Blossom* has taken up a new calling as a lector. His grasp of Autochthonian theology is enthusiastic, if not exhaustively detailed or comprehensive. He roams Ot, speaking to various congregations rather than settling down and getting to know a particular group—*Blossom* believes that he maximizes and spreads his inspiration most optimally in this manner. His fellow lectors agree; they realize that the Champion has little capacity to relate to individual parishioners and that a little bit of exposure to the Exalt goes a long way.

Blossom currently rotates through deployment shifts in the Reaches, accompanying mining and survey teams primarily under the regulator-generals Gortch and Klant. He is aware of Project Razor, Yugash's research and investigation effort aimed at devising a potential means to breach the Seal of Eight Divinities, but privately believes that it is a waste of time and industry. When presented with irrefutable evidence of Autochthon's failing health (an assertion *Blossom* contests out of principle, despite knowing in his heart that it is true), the Exalt reassures himself that the faith, dedication and heroism of himself and the people of Yugash will see the Great Maker through his darkest hours. He is unaware that he has already been assigned command of a large exploratory survey team (over the objections of General Gortch) in the event that the Seal of Eight Divinities should be breached.

Motivation: Promote right thinking and right action

Caste: Moonsilver

Anima Banner: Opposed crescents in revolution around four interlocking gears.

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

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 5, Temperance 2, Valor 4

Abilities: Archery 4 (Crossbows + 1), Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 1 (Law + 1), Dodge 3, Integrity 4, Investigation 2, Larceny 2, Lore 3, Martial Arts 2, Melee 5 (Daiklaves + 3), Performance 2, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 3, War 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Backing 3, Class 3, Command 1, Contacts 1

Charm Slots: 11 Dedicated, 7 General

Charms:

Augmentations: Strength (4th), Dexterity (2nd, 4th [x2], Transpuissant Dexterity Upgrade), Stamina (3rd); Charisma (4th), Appearance (3rd); Intelligence (6th [Intelligence + Bureaucracy]), Wits (4th)

Strength: Electrification Onslaught Dynamo (Conductive), Essence Irradiation Corona, Integrated Arsenal System
Dexterity: Accelerated Response System (Parry), Celerity Enabling Module (Threat Prioritization Unit), Dynamic Reaction Enhancement System, Hundredfold Strafing Methodology, Magnetic Joint Bearings (x2), Protosynthetic Ammunition Replicator, Transmodal Rapid Targeting System

Stamina: Exoskeletal Armor Plating, Subcutaneous Armor Plating

Charisma: Tunnel-Fighting Tactical Omnibus Implant, Patriotism-Provoking Display

Appearance: Aura-Dampening Component, Integrated Artifact Transmogrifier, Husk-Sculpting Apparatus, Optical Shroud

Perception: Aim-Calibrating Sensors (Inward Focus Refractor)

Intelligence: Hierarchical Dogma Lock, Imprinted Data Cluster

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Moonsilver Daiklave (Barisage Device): Speed 5, Accuracy 18, Damage 9L, Parry DV 9, Rate 3

Assault Crossbow (Barisage Device): Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 8L, Rate 1, Range 350, Tags 2, B, P

Soak: 7L/10B (Subcutaneous/Exoskeletal Armor Plating, +5L/7B, Hardness: 4L/5B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 17 **Peripheral Essence:** 39 (49)

Committed Essence: 10

Other Notes: *Excessively Righteous Blossom* carries his signature Artifact, the Barisage Device, with him at all times. Forged at the same time as his body, it is a daiklave with a deformative moonsilver blade and an assault crossbow mounted in its hilt. It holds seven pre-loaded, armor-piercing bolts. *Blossom* leaves his Subcutaneous Armor Plating and Exoskeletal Armor Plating Charms installed at all times, and this has already been factored into his soak. He has the Backing of the lectors and is considered an honorary one himself, living as one of their Class. He has Contacts among Yugash's elite, and this has led to his Command over a number of crack troops, despite his numerous military blunders.



STERN WHIP OF INDUSTRY

THE PEOPLE'S HERO

Quote: *Strive harder, comrades. I will show you how.*

There are heroes, and then there are national institutions. Commissioned in 4698 DA, *Stern Whip of Industry* is both. For most Sovans, the Exalt is not only a defender of the people and the state, but also a comforting presence reaching back to the crèches where they were reared. His smiling red face was painted on the walls of their nurseries and hung on the doors of their instruction centers, and his heroic exploits were the basis of their earliest instruction about the Machine God and his blessed Champions.

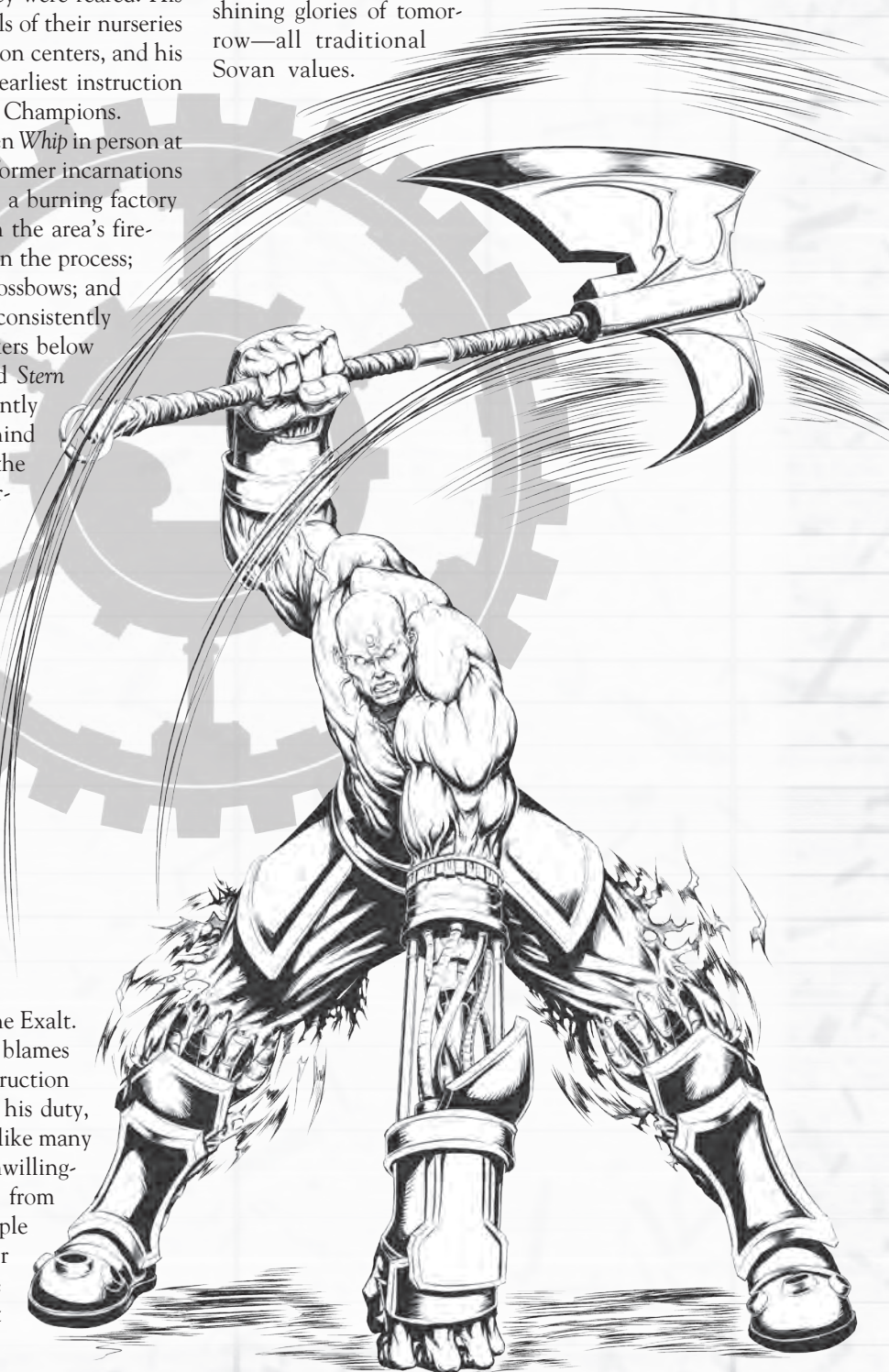
Most Sovan workers have met or seen *Whip* in person at least once; he gets around a lot. *Whip's* former incarnations include: a lever-puller who rushed into a burning factory district to release the jammed catch on the area's fire-suppression gas system and lost his life in the process; a legendarily skilled manufacturer of crossbows; and a charismatic foreman who was able to consistently surpass his quota by inspiring the workers below him. All worked with their hands, and *Stern Whip* shares in that simple joy. He frequently assigns himself to factories lagging behind their production schedule, performing the labor of a dozen men to relieve the burden on the already-frazzled workers and management. He almost never chastises; his cheerful demeanor and exhortations toward excellence are usually enough to get even the most badly mismanaged or underfunded factory back on track.

Though friendly and easygoing by nature, *Stern Whip of Industry* is mostly humorless. He believes that life should consist of hard work and the contentment drawn from knowing that a job has been done and done well. Though a skilled combatant, violence is rarely his first inclination when faced with problems. That said, he does not shy from it when it is either necessary or clearly the most efficient solution.

Current events weigh heavily on the Exalt. Unlike most Sovan Alchemicals, he blames himself rather than Yugash for the destruction of the city of Ixut—protecting Sova is his duty, after all, not that of foreign nations. Unlike many Sovans, *Whip* suspects that Yugash's unwillingness to provide material aid stemmed from shortages of their own rather than simple malfeasance. Still, he does hold rancor toward them. *Whip* is a devotee of the ideals of Autochthonia and believes that

Ixut could have been saved if the two nations had worked together toward a solution rather than fearfully squabbling over diminishing resources.

The current trend of rising xenophobia and jingoism disturbs the even-tempered Champion. His response has been to attempt to redouble his labors on behalf of the state. When mortals have asked his advice, he has counseled clear-headedness, decisive action, unity and a firm focus on resolving the problems of today to reach the shining glories of tomorrow—all traditional Sovan values.



Whip never expected, or realized, that in the current days of omnipresent fear and rage, these simple goals and methods would make him into a radical.

He's not quite sure *how* it happened, but *Stern Whip of Industry* has become a rallying-point for the traditionalist element in Sovan society, now a decided minority. He's also not sure how to escape this new phase of his life as a national icon. He simply continues to counsel the values and methods he has upheld for over a century, hoping they will guide matters to a harmonious resolution as they have so many times before. To this point, it isn't working, and the first accusations have finally begun to emerge, questioning his courage and patriotism. The new politicians, including five of the seven current members of the National Tripartite Assembly, ask why *Whip* is reluctant to fight when Sova is clearly surrounded by enemies. The traditionalists beg him to speak out against the watershed changes in Sova's national character.

Quite against his will, *Whip* has become a figure of division rather than comfort. For the first time since his Exaltation, he strives to resist public calls to heroism, fearing that, in this case, to save the state would be to betray it. As tension and anger wind Sova tighter and tighter, he can only attempt to placate all factions and wonder how things came to this point.

Motivation: Protect the people of Sova

Caste: Jade

Anima Banner: A random, blocky hardening of the outline of the anima, accompanied by the boom of pistons firing.

Attributes: Strength 5 (7), Dexterity 3, Stamina 5 (7); Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

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

Abilities: Athletics 4 (Feats of Strength + 3), Awareness 2, Craft (Fire) 4, Integrity 3, Lore 1, Martial Arts 4, Melee 4 (Axes + 2), Performance 2, Resistance 5, Sail 2, Survival 2, War 2

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Artifact 3, Class 4, Eidolon 4

Charm Slots: Dedicated 17, General 4

Charms:

Augmentations: Strength (2nd, 4th [x2]), Dexterity (5th), Stamina (2nd, 4th [x2]); Charisma (2nd, 4th); Perception (1st)

Strength: Hydraulic Musculature Reinforcement, Parabolic Leap Overcharger Device, Personal Gravity Manipulation Apparatus, Piston-Driven Megaton Hammer (Megaton Impact Driver [Strength 5, Essence 4: By paying a +3m surcharge, the Alchemical may also count his Strength twice for the purpose of determining damage in addition to the Charm's usual effects]), Toroidal Shockwave Catalyst (Holocaustic Fury Device), Unstoppable Impulse Engine

Dexterity: Limb Extension Armatures

Stamina: Alloyed Reinforcement of Flesh (Tireless Pneumatic Musculature), Body-Reweaving Matrix (Beneficence Programming), Industrial Survival Frame (Environmental Dominance, Lightning, Metal), Manifold Transhuman Implants (Huge, Thick Skin), Strain-Resistant Chassis Modification (x3), Subcutaneous Armor Plating (x4), Transitory Invulnerability Engine (Compassion Flaw of Alchemical Invulnerability)

Charisma: Patriotism-Provoking Display, Pattern Facilitation Module, Perfected Union Patterning, Programmed Catechism Rebuttal, Synergy-Promoting Upgrade, Tunnel-Fighting Tactical Omnibus Implant

Perception: Multiphase Divinity Regulator, Optical Enhancement (Cross-Phase Scanner, Flash Shutters, Thermal Vision)

Intelligence: Technomorphic Integration Engine (Instant Aegis Upgrade)

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 7B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 10B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 7B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Red Jade Grand Grimcleaver (Terminal Arc of Descent): Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 22L/4, Parry DV 4, Rate 2, Tags 2, O, P, R

Soak: 13L/19B or 28L/34B (Subcutaneous Armor Plating, +8L/12B, Hardness: 4L/8B; Thick Skin, +2L/2B, plus jade superheavy plate, +15L/15B, Hardness: 10L/10B, -2 mobility penalty, activated through the Instant Aegis Upgrade of his Technomorphic Integration Engine when a situation is incredibly dire)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 19 **Peripheral Essence:** 36 (49)

Committed Essence: 13 (22 with armor installed in his Technomorphic Integration Engine)

Other Notes: *Stern Whip of Industry's* Artifact rating refers to his red jade superheavy plate armor and his red jade grand grimcleaver set with a magnetic metrocore. *Whip* leaves his Manifold Transhuman Implants, Strain-Resistant Chassis Modification and Subcutaneous Armor Plating Charms installed at all times, and this has already been factored into his soak and attack damage. He also keeps his Technomorphic Integration Engine installed in times of war or immanent attack, with the Instant Aegis Upgrade maintaining his armor.

The Exalt has Allies throughout all levels of Sovan society and lives at the Class one might expect of a Champion of his age and renown.



LISSOME AVID ENGINEER

THE YOUNG PRODIGY

Quote: *Don't worry. I prepared for just such an eventuality.*

The heroism of *Lissome Avid Engineer*'s past incarnations were of widely varied nature and character, but all in some way focused on Autochthonia itself over its inhabitants. In one life, she crawled through perilously narrow access spaces and runoff ducts to work as a sapper; in another, she revolutionized transit in Jarish as a civic planner. Presently, she is the fastest-rising star among the architects of Yugash and the darling of Kadar's social scene.

Engineer established herself in the wake of the Elemental War, redesigning a number of buildings that were damaged

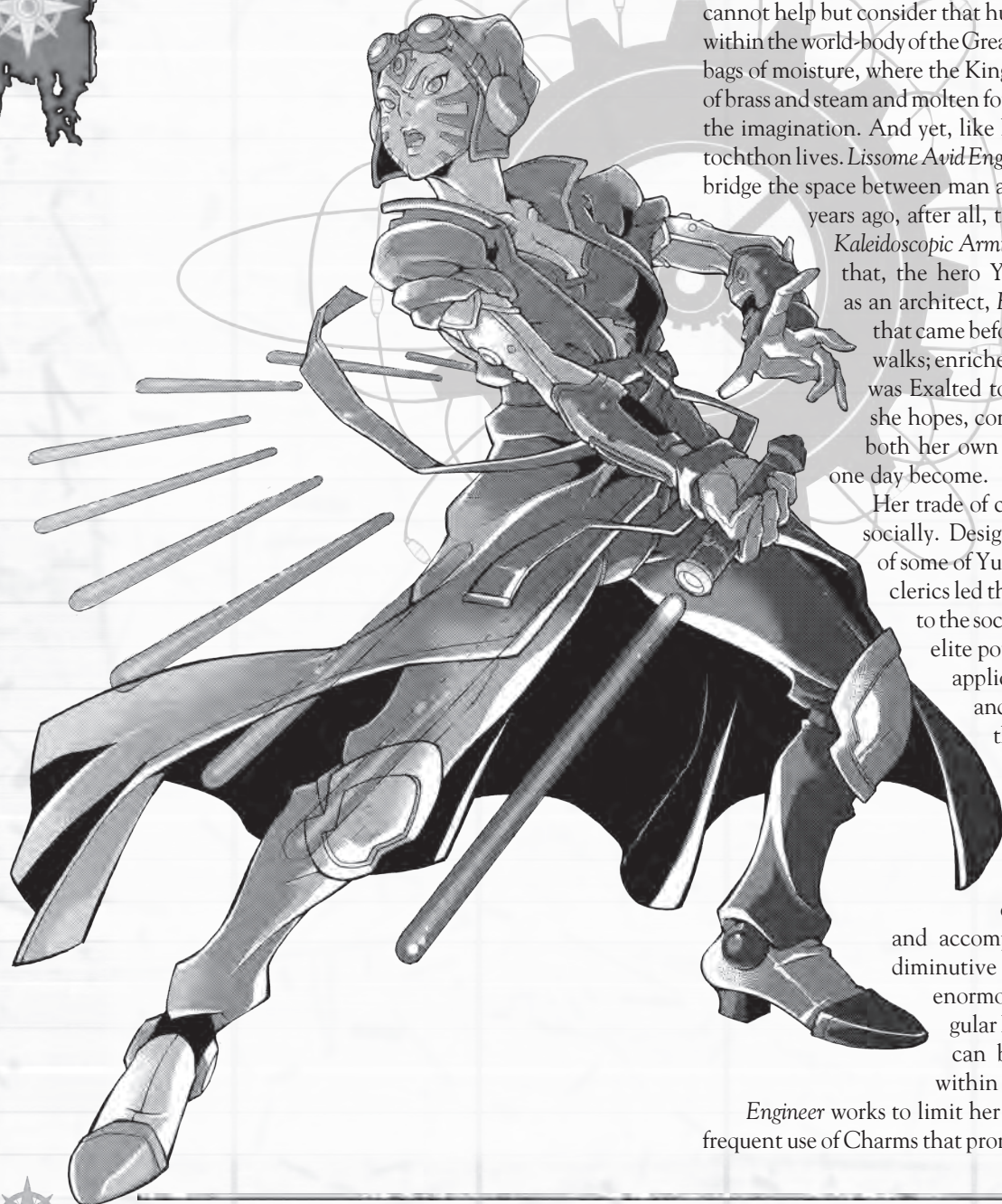
or destroyed by Sovan raids. While her early work was notable for its use of clean, abstract, minimalist lines designed to integrate harmoniously with one another and with the surrounding landscape, she has since diversified. She now attempts to make her every building into a meditation on some element of Autochthonian life even as it matches and accentuates its surroundings. She can commonly be found pacing the streets of Kadar with an Essence-reactive stylus and screen, sketching vistas and taking measurements. She wishes for more accurate Charms to help with her architectural exactitude but has been studiously requisitioning military magics of late, in recognition of her nation's troubled times and the many duties of an Exalted hero.

Engineer's interest in architecture is an outgrowth of her natural curiosity and tendency toward reflective moods. She cannot help but consider that humanity is an alien presence within the world-body of the Great Maker: small, soft, rounded bags of moisture, where the King of All Craftsmen is a work of brass and steam and molten foundries whose scope beggars the imagination. And yet, like his mortal inhabitants, Autochthon lives. *Lissome Avid Engineer* knows that the Exalted bridge the space between man and machine—thousands of

years ago, after all, the metropolis of Kadar was *Kaleidoscopic Armiger*, and in a lifetime before that, the hero Yugash. Through her works as an architect, *Engineer* glorifies the heroes that came before her and whose streets she walks; enriches the lives of the mortals she was Exalted to defend; and in some way, she hopes, comes closer to understanding both her own body and the city she will one day become.

Her trade of choice has done well for her socially. Designing the apartment blocks of some of Yugash's leading plutarchs and clerics led the Plot Weaver to be invited to the social gatherings of the nation's elite power brokers, and a judicious application of both social charm and social Charms has made her the toast of Kadar. She has since become friends with several of the nation's leading propaganda experts, which has provided her with popular visibility well out of proportion to her age and accomplishments. Posters of the diminutive Exalt leaning against her enormous pneumatic hammer, *Singular Impetus Generation Sledge*, can be found almost anywhere within the metropolis.

Engineer works to limit her Clarity. Though she makes frequent use of Charms that promote it, she fears not only its



effect on her aesthetic sense, but also that it will convince her to set aside the ongoing exploration of her own nature that drives her art. In her heart, *Engineer* believes that her works and musings today will be of great benefit in the coming centuries, but the machine favors action and definite purpose over philosophy writ in support columns and porticoes.

Unlike some Clarity-wary Exalts, *Engineer* has no qualms about modifying her body. The interplay of metal and flesh fascinates her. In it, she can read the truths of her people, her society, her world and her god in microcosm. Her current lover, a Prolific Scholar named Kasta, shares in her enthusiasm. Although she was not involved in *Lissome Avid Engineer's* construction, Kasta has since designed and built several of the Alchemical's Charms. She hopes that her works will goad the Exalt on to new revelations and architectural feats.

Yugash's current isolation gnaws at *Lissome Avid Engineer*. She would like to visit other nations and examine their architectural concepts but realizes that Autochthonia's current resource crisis makes such an expedition impractical. She has recently placed a request to be moved, along with her support staff, onto Project Razor, believing that her talents can best be applied to establishing forward bases in Creation, should Yugash make contact with that lost world of origin. That she would be able to sate her appetite for new design paradigms in the process is, of course, a wholly coincidental bonus.

Motivation: Design the greatest works of architecture ever seen

Caste: Starmetal

Anima Banner: An unfolding nest of prismatic lines that expand to describe a web-strewn cityscape.

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

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

Abilities: Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Air) 2, Craft (Earth) 5, Craft (Fire) 3, Craft (Magitech) 2, Dodge 2, Melee 2, Lore 2, Occult 2, Presence 3, Socialize 2

Backgrounds: Artifact 2, Class 3, Contacts 1, Eidolon 1, Savant 3

Charm Slots: Dedicated 4, General 4

Charms:

Augmentations: Dexterity (1st, 4th, 6th [Dexterity + Craft and Intelligence + Craft]); Manipulation (1st), Appearance (3rd); Intelligence (1st)

Dexterity: Accelerated Response System (Parry), Dynamic Reaction Enhancement System

Stamina: Auxiliary Essence Storage Unit, Chemical Fog Generator, Manifold Transhuman Implants (Chameleon, Inexhaustible, Wall Walking)

Manipulation: Pheromone Regulation Systems, Unobtrusive Repartee Baffles

Appearance: Thousandfold Courtesan Calculations

Intelligence: Imprinted Data Cluster

Wits: Omnitool Implant

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 2B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Starmetal Beamklave (Singular Impetus Generation Blade): Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 11L/4, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Soak: 8L/7B (Transformative armor, +6L/4B, Hardness: 2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 2

Personal Essence: 11 **Peripheral Essence:** (23) 31

Committed Essence: 8

Other Notes: *Lissome Avid Engineer's* Artifact rating refers to her starmetal beamklave, transformative armor and precision goggles. As a result of the Contacts she's made in Kadar's elite, she's living beyond a Class that's appropriate to a Champion of her age and experience.



DREADFUL ADJUDICATOR OF LAW

THE LAW

Quote: *Behave.*

Pilgrims and tourists who come to Gulak sometimes round a corner and find themselves face-to-face with *Dreadful Adjudicator of Law*. Most often, they recoil, making exhaustive pardons for impeding the regulator's path. Occasionally, a visitor is particularly distracted and actually collides with the Sentinel's armored chassis, and then, there are no apologies—only a silent, horrified period of waiting beneath *Adjudicator's* empty crimson oculars. The Exalt finally moves on without a word because the visitor has not exceeded the threshold beyond which clumsiness becomes a crime. But he leaves her with the certainty that she is being watched.

Adjudicator rarely speaks save to issue warnings or demand surrender, and he never repeats such demands. Appeals to mercy or leniency find no purchase with the Sentinel, who expediently enforces the letter of the law. The only emotion he has ever been known to show in public has been impatience, and that only when faced with attempts to resist arrest. Then there is a metallic clang as the arms of a crossbow unfold and lock above his wrist. He has been known to observe that it is difficult to run away with a dart transfixing one knee.

All that most citizens of and visitors to Gulak ever see of *Dreadful Adjudicator of Law* is his body armor, his impassive armored mask and the two glowing spots that are his eyes. Those who work most closely with the regulator have reported that, beneath all of the steel, *Adjudicator* possesses the face of a slender youth, with bone-white skin, short pale hair and empty crimson eyes whose light lends a false vitality to his features. He is beautiful, they say, but cold, devoid of empathy or interest in anything but the pursuit of his mission.

Adjudicator frequently goes missing for days or even weeks at a time. This has not yet been cause for concern among Gulak's National Tripartite Assembly because he always returns with a number of criminals in chains or laid out on carts and draped in plastic sheets. His invisible, undercover investigations are, if anything, even more feared than his actual presence.

Two years ago, a young clerk named Janiss joined a certain proscribed movement within Gulak. This group wishes to radically expand the scope of the nation's famous freedom of speech. It envisions a nation where the Tripartite social classes are no longer elevated above the Populat, but simply considered social equals with more specialized training. It advocates for the dissolution of the National Tripartite Assembly, to be replaced with a system of government by popular vote—or, in less extremist cells, at least the appointment to the Assembly of a Populat representative. Janiss rose quickly through the movement's ranks, fresh-faced, enthusiastic, trustworthy and productive. By rearranging shift schedules that pass through his office, he ensures that conspirators can frequently work together, the better to converse and plan.

Janiss came to the attention of the leader of the movement, a plutarch named Harad, only six weeks after joining. Within a month, they were lovers. Janiss works with increasing fervency to keep Harad hidden in a flurry of paperwork; the group has been whittled down, member by member, since shortly after he



joined. Harad has confided in him that she fears *Adjudicator* is closing in on the senior members of her organization. She is thinking about relocating to another city, leaving a dummy leader to take the fall for her. Janiss is trying to find a way to propose that they fold the entire operation and simply become law-abiding civilians—he doesn't know how much longer the two can hide from the sure justice of Autochthonia. Both can feel the clock running down, though for different reasons.

What Harad does not realize is that she is sleeping with the very regulator who has been stalking her organization for the last two years. Janiss and *Adjudicator* are one and the same. He is more than ready to take down the entire dissident movement—Janiss's files contain the names of all of its members and enough incriminating evidence to ensure re-education or exile for the lot of them. Were *Adjudicator* to conclude the case tomorrow, there would be a few raised eyebrows from his contemporaries over the unusual length of time spent undercover, but nothing more.

He won't. *Adjudicator* has a secret—he has not only fallen in love with Harad, but also with Janiss. While watching the patropolis of Thutot through his artificial eyes, he sometimes wonders if he could simply disappear into that other life. He knows this is ultimately impossible, that he was born to uphold the laws of Gulak and that he could not live with his own betrayal; and so, he wonders if can bring his life as Janiss into compliance with the law without having it all collapse around him. He knows this is unlikely and that he should simply fold the ruse—but the one thing *Dreadful Adjudicator of Law* cannot bring himself to kill is his own dream of a different, more peaceful life.

Motivation: Balance secret and public lives while upholding the laws of Gulak

Caste: Soulsteel

Anima Banner: A vented blast of thunder-filled smoke, in which twisting figures may be glimpsed that never quite resolve into a solid identity.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 4 (Crippling Attacks +1), Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 1 (Law + 3), Dodge 4, Integrity 4 (Upholding the Law + 3), Investigation 3, Larceny 3, Lore 1, Martial Arts 2, Presence 3, Resistance 2, Stealth 2

Backgrounds: Backing 4, Class 3, Contacts 3

Charm Slots: Dedicated 11, General 4

Charms:

Augmentations: *Dexterity* (1st, 4th), *Stamina* (4th); *Manipulation* (2nd); *Perception* (2nd)

Strength: Integrated Arsenal System (Refinement of Excellence, Refinement of Perfection, Soulsteel Synthesis Wave Emitter), Paramagnetic Tether Beam

Dexterity: Accelerated Response System (Dodge), Precalculated Evasion System (Conviction Flaw of Alchemical Invulnerability), Protosynthetic Ammunition Replicator, Transmodal Rapid Targeting System

Stamina: Chemical Fog Generator (Tear Gas), Exoskeletal Armor Plating (x2)

Manipulation: Conceptual Entropy Module, Rogue Cell Isolation Protocols, Transcendent Brutality Programming

Appearance: Integrated Artifact Transmogrifier, Husk-Sculpting Apparatus (Self-Sculpt, Vocal Modulator Field)

Perception: Aim-Calibrating Sensors (Target Acquisition Reticle [3xp: When in use, a set of hair-thin red geometric designs appear on the surface of the Exalt's eyes, converging at the center of his pupils. Aim-Calibrating Sensors may be activated to supplement an Aim action, causing it to accumulate three extra dice per tick rather than one. The Exalt may still only benefit from a maximum of three dice for the overall Aim.]), Deception Recognition System, Mobile Sensory Drone, Optical Enhancement (Motion-Tracking Targeting Glance, Thermal Vision), Secondary Sensory Upgrades (Tympanal Receptor Nodes)

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV –, Rate 1, Tags C, N, P

Tonfa: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 9L (each wounding hit drains 3m), Parry DV 5, Rate 3, Tags M, N

Assault Crossbow (Extreme Prejudice): Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 8L, Rate 2, Range 250, Tags N

Soak: 8L/12B (Exoskeletal Armor Plating, +6L/8B, Hardness: 4L/6B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Personal Essence: 15 **Peripheral Essence:** 31 (39)

Committed Essence: 8

Other Notes: *Dreadful Adjudicator of Law* leaves his Integrated Arsenal System and Exoskeletal Armor Plating Charms installed at all times. His Integrated Arsenal Systems upgrades are applied to his tonfa, but his primary weapon is his assault crossbow. Because he loads it with his Protosynthetic Ammunition Replicator, its attached 'clip' is never considered empty, granting it an effective Rate of 2. His Exoskeletal Armor Plating has already been factored into his soak value. The secondary weapon held in his Integrated Arsenal System is a tonfa.

Adjudicator has Contacts among all levels of Gulak society. When not on assignment, the Exalt lives at a Class level appropriate for a Champion of his standing. He enjoys the Backing of Gulak's regulators.



THOUSAND-FACETED NELUMBO

THE CORUSCANT SIFU

Quote: *Your reign of terror is at an end, Apostate.*

The Colossus *Eyes and Wings of the Multitude* served Debok Moom faithfully for over seven centuries, rooting out gremlin nests, leading the wars in the blight zones and testing out the Divine Minister's latest weapon Charm designs with zeal. A true war machine, he was born for battle and, by the end of his first century, had taught himself to feel no other pleasure than the thrill of skating the edge between life and death.

In the end, the odds ran out. *Eyes and Wings of the Multitude* was slain during a gremlin purging operation, ambushed and murdered by the Apostate *Viator of the Nullspace*. The destroyers escorting him were unable to avenge the elder Exalt's death, but they did manage to retrieve his soulgem and return it to Debok Moom.

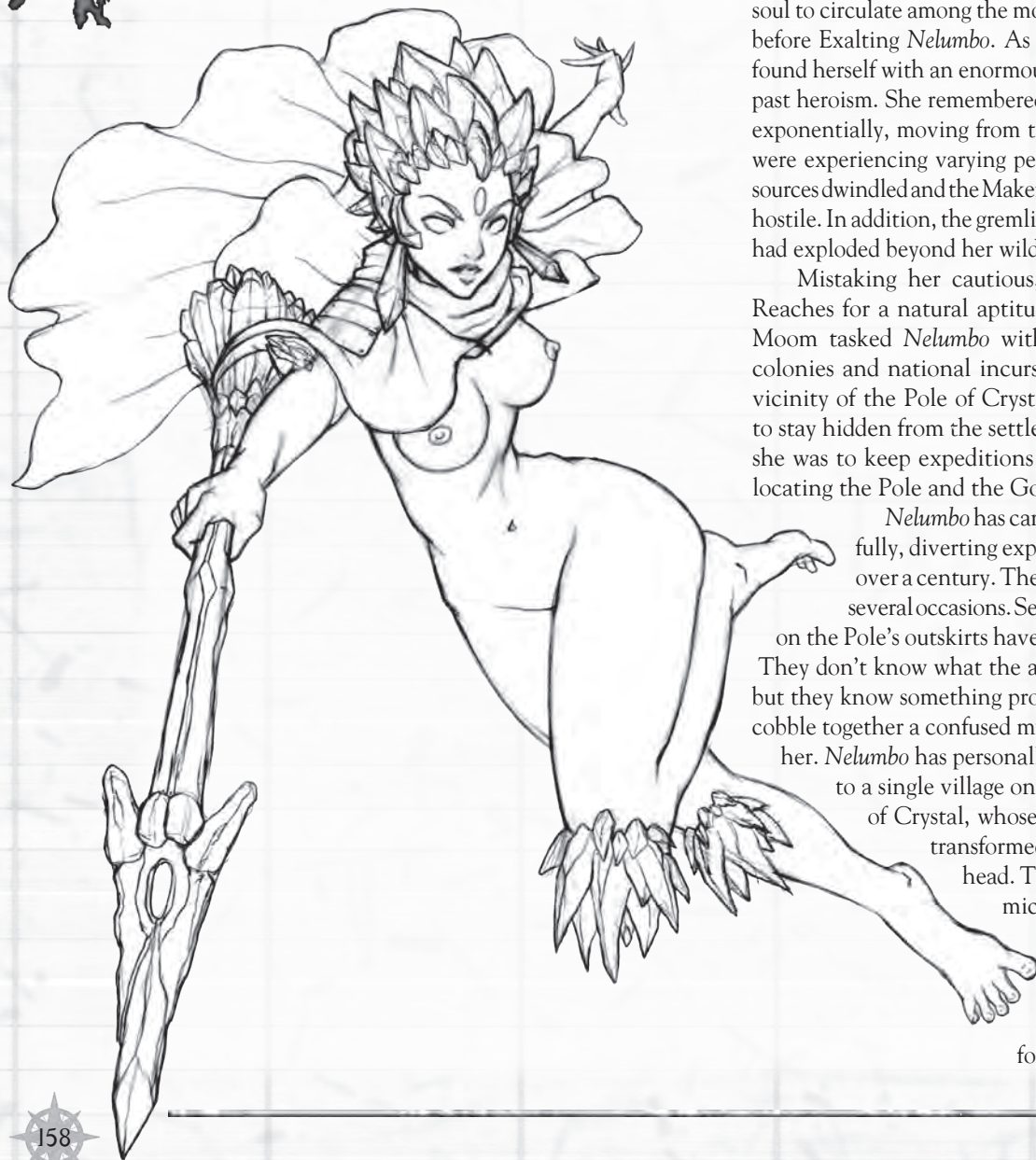
It could not be fairly said that the Divine Minister mourned the loss of his Champion, but he did endeavor to replace him with all haste. Summoning savants from the Eight Nations, he put them to work in the hidden metropolis of Arkadis. Perhaps he hoped that speedy action would capture and fan some guttering spark of the former Champion's personality. If so, he was disappointed. The Alchemical who rose from the Vats eight months later was calm where *Eyes and Wings of the Multitude* had been zealous, thoughtful where he had charged in guns blazing.

Still, the Divine Minister found reason to be satisfied with his new Exalt. She proved a quick study and an enthusiastic devotee of the martial arts. Perhaps, the Lord of War mused, *Thousand-Faceted Nelumbo* would prove an effective stiletto where her former incarnation had been a cannon.

What Debok Moom failed to understand or even notice was the great confusion of his quiet, calm-faced pupil. *Eyes and Wings of the Multitude* had been Exalted for 762 years at the time of his death, and the War-Bringer had neglected to allow his soul to circulate among the mortal populace of Autochthonia before Exalting *Nelumbo*. As a result, the young Champion found herself with an enormous gap in her memory-echoes of past heroism. She remembered the Eight Nations as growing exponentially, moving from triumph to triumph. Now, they were experiencing varying periods of national distress as resources dwindled and the Maker's processes became increasingly hostile. In addition, the gremlin population of the Far Reaches had exploded beyond her wildest imagination.

Mistaking her cautious, stunned exploration of the Reaches for a natural aptitude as a scout and spy, Debok Moom tasked *Nelumbo* with watching over the outcast colonies and national incursions into the Reaches in the vicinity of the Pole of Crystal. In general, he ordered her to stay hidden from the settlers of that region. Specifically, she was to keep expeditions from the Eight Nations from locating the Pole and the Godhead within.

Nelumbo has carried out her second order faithfully, diverting expeditions by trickery or force for over a century. The first, however, she's broken on several occasions. Several of the tunnel communities on the Pole's outskirts have seen her anima flare in battle. They don't know what the angel of the Reaches might be, but they know something protects them and have begun to cobble together a confused mythology to attempt to explain her. *Nelumbo* has personally and directly revealed herself to a single village on the very periphery of the Pole of Crystal, whose inhabitants have been subtly transformed by the radiance of the Godhead. Their skin has become blue with microscopic crystalline intrusions, much like her own, and what grows from their heads could be fairly described as either fiber-optic cable or hair. She forbids them to worship her, but



she does tell them, sometimes, of the wonders she has seen in her travels, and she maintains a small shack within the village where she keeps a few personal effects and sleeps.

As time goes on, the Operative sinks deeper and deeper into her martial arts training. Autochthonia has become vast and confusing, and *Nelumbo* increasingly finds that her life only has context or meaning when she vanishes into the core of her own Essence, either in meditation or battle. As she interweaves the battle forms of Autochthonia and the forgotten precursor-world of legend, she begins to discern a pattern emerging within the weave of her own Essence... or rather, a gap in that pattern. The Perfected Lotus Matrix, she has come to suspect, may not be perfect after all. *Nelumbo* ventures ever deeper into the Pole of Crystal, searching the memory-cathedrals of the Great Maker for an answer. She hears whispers carried from the Eight Nations of a possible return to Creation and wonders if the solution might be found there, in a land that could surely be no more alien than her own home.

Motivation: Attain true mastery of the martial arts

Caste: Adamant

Anima Banner: A dozen prismatic wings, patterned with layered gears.

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

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

Abilities: *Athletics* 3, *Awareness* 3, *Dodge* 2, *Integrity* 3, *Larceny* 3, *Linguistics* (Native: Autochthonic; Others: Old Realm) 1, *Lore* 3, *Martial Arts* 5, *Occult* 3, *Presence* 1, *Resistance* 2, *Stealth* 3, *Survival* 1

Backgrounds: *Artifact* 3, *Eidolon* 3, *Influence* 2, *Mentor* 5

Charm Slots: 14 Dedicated, 6 General

Charms:

Augmentations: *Strength* (4th), *Dexterity* (4th [x2]), *Stamina* (4th); *Charisma* (6th [Charisma + Presence]), *Manipulation* (6th [Manipulation + Performance]), *Appearance* (3rd); *Wits* (4th)

Strength: Electrification Onslaught Dynamo (Conductive, Godhead Bolt Emulator), Personal Gravity Manipulation Apparatus

Dexterity: Dynamic Reaction Enhancement System, Magnetic Joint Bearings (x2)

Stamina: Auxiliary Essence Storage Unit (x3), Subcutaneous Armor Plating

Appearance: Integrated Artifact Transmogrifier

Perception: Perfected Lotus Matrix (Lotus Filament Conduction)

Arrays:

Calibrated Combat Core: *Dexterity* (1st), Piston-Driven Megaton Hammer, Accelerated Response System, Impenetrable Repulsor Field

Supernatural Martial Arts:

Cascade Disruption, Crystal Chameleon, Hydraulic Tremor, Mantis, Plague Rat, Racing Lightning, Snake, Thousand-

Faceted Warrior, Thrashing Steam Dragon, Tiger and White Reaper Styles: All Charms

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: *Speed* 5, *Accuracy* 11, *Damage* 4B, *Parry* DV 6, *Rate* 3, *Tags* N

Kick: *Speed* 5, *Accuracy* 10, *Damage* 7B, *Parry* DV 4, *Rate* 2, *Tags* N

Clinch: *Speed* 6, *Accuracy* 10, *Damage* 4B, *Parry* DV –, *Rate* 1, *Tags* C, N, P

Crystalburst Lance (Crowned in Crimson): *Speed* 5, *Accuracy* 12, *Damage* 12L/12L, *Parry* DV 6, *Rate* 2, *Tags* 2, L, R

Burst Attack: *Speed* 6, *Accuracy* 7, *Damage* 12L, *Rate* 1, *Range* 20

Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 20 **Peripheral Essence:** 44 (52)

Committed Essence: 8

Other Notes: *Thousand-Faceted Nelumbo's* Artifact rating refers to her crystalburst lance set with a scrying apparatus and the half-cloak she wears, transformative clothing capable of reconfiguring itself into any manner of dress appropriate to her needs. Against her Mentor Debok Moom's directive, the mysterious angel of the Reaches has begun to gain Influence over some of its outcast colonies.

BOOM!, REVISITED

Nelumbo's visions of the Perfected Lotus are a mystery, intentionally left up for the Storyteller to resolve. Is hers an ancient soul dating all the way back to the Primordial War, perhaps once the bearer of a Sidereal Exaltation? And if so, might it still have some fated role to play in distant Creation? Alternately, could one of the Divine Ministers be sending her visions of a tier of martial arts unknown to any other forces in the Realm of Brass and Shadow? And if so, why? For that matter, could it really be nothing more than a symptom of her own enlightenment, straining against the limits of her artificial body?

Regardless of the answer chosen for any given series, one thing remains constant—like Ragara Myrrun, *Thousand-Faceted Nelumbo* is bound by the basic rules of the game, in particular the one that says Alchemicals cannot learn Sidereal Martial Arts. As she presently exists, the Operative's body is incapable of practicing that most refined tier of Essence mastery. Should Storytellers wish for *Nelumbo* to succeed in their games, her ascension to the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus will likely be only the smallest symptom of a far more radical transformation into something that is no longer quite an Alchemical Exalt.



NEW CHARMS

ABYSSAL

RESISTANCE

WOUND-EATING INVULNERABILITY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3;

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Mirror (see below)

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Hardened Frame

The prerequisite's conferred Hardness raises to (Essence + 5), and it may be extended to a duration of one scene by raising the cost to (6m, 1wp). Injuries prevented this way occur and instantly heal as per Wounds Mean Nothing. The Solar Mirror "Heroes Never Die" correspondingly expands Durability of Oak Meditation.

SAIL

SHAMBLING CREW ENLIGHTENMENT

Cost: —; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

Keywords: Avatar (1)

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Deck-Striding Phantom

Whenever an Abyssal with this Charm is aboard a vessel he owns, all the walking dead onboard who are obedient to the deathknight have Intelligence 2 and a Sail rating equal to the deathknight's own.

VOICELESS ADMIRALTY DREAD

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (see below)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Unhallowed Ghost Ship

While active, the Abyssal intuitively knows the location of all ships he's personally claimed with Unhallowed Ghost Ship within (Essence rating) miles and can issue reflexive telepathic orders to any or all of them, though this communication is still language dependent. All onboard the vessel hear the words in their mind as if the Abyssal were speaking from just behind them, allowing the ship to carry out orders from afar without distracting the captain from other tasks. Additionally, no relays are needed to prevent communication failure for units composed of

crewmembers listening to these orders, leaving room for additional special characters.

The Solar Mirror "Omnipresent Admiral of Light" correspondingly targets ships owned via Ship-Claiming Stance.

THROWN

SMOLDERING DEVASTATION TECHNIQUE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Crypt Bolt Attack

A deathknight with this Charm can invoke Crypt Bolt Attack without it counting as a Charm activation, and it costs only one mote if the Exalt used the Charm earlier in the scene. All unexpected attacks made with crypt bolts double their raw damage.

ALCHEMICAL

CHARISMA

HARDENED ARGUMENT PATTERNING

Cost: — [1m]; **Mins:** Charisma 5, Essence 3;

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Internal, Social

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Programmed Catechism Rebuttal

When the Alchemical pays one or more points of Willpower to resist mental influence, any attempt to impose the same end result via any further mental influence (or a closely similar result as defined by the Storyteller) suffers a -3 external penalty.

DRAGON-BLOODED

AWARENESS

ATSILUTH'S OMNISCIENCE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One scene

Prerequisites: Feeling the Dragon's Bones

This unique Charm allows Vitali Proseria to project all of her senses to observe a single target attuned to the Sea of Mind as though he is beside her. This is a scrying effect that functions over any distance.

The Chosen of the Incarnae, the Dragons, the Neverborn, the Yozis and the Great Maker all strive to chart the course of Creation. In their attempts, these Exalted heroes often come into conflict or alliance. Found within are examples of all seven types of Exalt, ranging from the ancient Sidereal Chejop Kejak to the young Dragon-Blood Cathak Meladus and all ages (and power levels) in between. Some aim to destroy the world, while others strive to save it, but regardless of motive, the movers and shakers and the up and comers alike are bound to come into contact with your characters. Whether as friend or foe is up to you to determine.

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