

## Princess: the Hopeful

Princess: the Hopeful is a collaborative effort of posters on the RPGnet forums  
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# Introduction

*You cannot live on hope alone. But without hope, life is not worth living.*  
—Harvey Milk

No matter how old we may be now, all of us were once young. The world was unexplored and exciting, full of possibility. What we lacked in experience and wisdom, we made up for in possibility and enthusiasm. We dreamed of fame, fortune, wealth, glory, respect. We wanted to be astronauts, cowboys, firemen, doctors, singers, rock stars, or all of the above at once. After all, we didn't know what was possible – and that meant ANYTHING was possible. We looked at the world through guileless eyes, felt it as fully and intensely as anyone ever could. When we came to a new idea, we embraced it zealously and whole-heartedly, convinced we'd found the secret that would change the world. When we loved, we were convinced it was the most passionate ever felt; when we hurt, we thought it was a tragedy the likes of which had never been seen. We were convinced that we had the whole thing figured out, that we could make everything perfect if we just had a chance, if the grown-ups would just listen. After all, we could do anything if we put our mind to it. We were fearless. We couldn't wait to grow up so we could grab life by the horns.

And as we mature, we realize the follies of our youth. We learn that our love and pain are not unique, that everyone in the world has gone through the same; this was comforting, but it was also disappointing. We found out that there are no more cowboys, that we didn't have the money or determination for medical school, that we couldn't pass the physical to be an astronaut or that becoming a famous musician is just a matter of luck and we'd probably have to get a job doing something boring, even worse, something LAME. We learned that growing up isn't about suddenly being able to do everything you ever wanted; it's mostly about learning how stupid you were when you were young. We learned from our mistakes and shook our heads, wondering how we could ever be dumb enough to make them in the first place. Our potential was replaced with reality. We found out that no, life wasn't going to be an open book for us. We become jaded, we figure out we're not that special, that the things we love aren't really the best things in the universe, that our fresh new ideas had been tried before a thousand times. Our fearlessness turned out to be recklessness, so we cast it aside. We weren't going to change the world, we were just going to live in it.

Yet even after learning this, we still long for the fire and passion of our youths. Yes, we know that we're not that special and yes, we know the things we believed were silly... but wouldn't it be nice if they weren't? The promises of our youth could never be fulfilled... but it still felt good to think they could, right?

They can. We didn't get wiser when we grew up, we just became more cynical. We weren't stupid back then, and our greatest mistake, our only mistake, was telling ourselves that we were. We stopped putting all of our selves into everything we did because we became too afraid of failing, of letting ourselves get hurt by the effort. So we told ourselves that trying was silly. We abandoned the dreams we had rather than see them fail. We gave in to our fears.

And now it's time to overcome them.

## *A Game Of Fighting Fear*

Princess: The Hopeful is a game about the promises of our youth fulfilled, inspired by the “maho shoujo” or “magical girl” genre of Japanese anime and manga. Princes and Princesses are those who haven’t given in to that fear of inadequacy and failure. They come from a world unlike the World of Darkness, a better world, a kinder world, a just world. They come from the world we all wished we could make before we knew it was impossible – and they seek to prove us wrong. A better world wasn’t impossible, and it still isn’t. As a Princess, power isn’t a gift to you, it’s a responsibility.

### *You can fix problems*

There’s too much we just resign ourselves to. We say, “That’s just the way it is,” and live with the pain. You don’t have to. You can do things, real things, to solve people’s problems. You don’t have to feel frustrated. You can be their white knight against the cruel world. Few people have the power to do this and the chance to see the world work the way we think it should is too tempting to pass up.

### *But some problems don't want to be fixed*

Life is a Gordian knot. There’s not always an easy way to do things, even against apparently supernatural threats. People are complicated and confused. They will often act against their best interests without thinking. Many insist on the Status Quo because they know how to live with the Status Quo, and something new makes all of their supposed wisdom worthless.

### *Because doing good can be terrifying*

An angel is another kind of monster. Those who do what they believe is right, relentlessly, unapologetic, frequently frightening those around them. It’s understandable – you have power and they don’t. No matter how kind you try and be, you’re taking the decision out of their hands. Not everybody will be thankful. Many will try to destroy you or chain you down. They might be right. They might be wrong. To act, you need the resolution to decide what is what and many will call that inhuman.

### *And sometimes the good guys can't win*

You’re powerful, but you aren’t all powerful. You can’t be every where at once. You can’t account for simple bad luck. No matter how much you want to believe otherwise, you can and will fail. People will die. People will suffer. And because you’re in the thick of it, you’re going to feel their pain worse than if you stayed at home and turned on the TV. Doing the right thing can be a trial without end.

### *But you can't walk away. Because sometimes they do*

Blissful ignorance is no longer an option. You can’t hide behind the excuse that there’s nothing you can do. And sensitive to the hearts of others, you can’t shut out their pain – or their joy. Those rare moments of beauty and happiness are what make the fight worth it. You need to protect that, because without those occasions of hope, life is not worth living. Once your eyes are open to that fact, it’s hard to shut them again.

## *Nothing will be the same*

The world will never be the same after you. You are going to change things, even if you're too small for the cosmos to notice just yet. You're a force of chaos, shaking people from the sleep they've been in. Once you start performing your little miracles, people will take notice. Living with and for others means you can't always be discreet. You're different. You're not playing by the rules anymore. You're laying down new rules and once people understand them, they'll try and exploit them, like they did with the old rules. You are a revolutionary force.

## *You'll just have to find out for yourself*

In the end, a world of darkness is a world of possibilities. Many of them are not pleasant – we've spent millennia creating societies of light expressly out of fear of them. Under the blanket of night lies an undiscovered country. It might be empty, waiting for you to build your own palaces. It might be flush with danger, patiently lying just out of sight. And it might be hiding the very treasures we've thought were impossible. The darkness, the shadows, the occult – it is like Pandora's Box. In it might lay evils we can't imagine. But slam the lid too fast and you lock away Hope forever.

## *Theme: Fighting Fear*

Princess is a game about making a difference. A Princess can defeat the monster, she can win the election and start instituting reforms, she can rescue the cute boy. However to do it she's going to have to face her fears. The monster isn't a harmless creature from a Saturday morning cartoon: Death is a real possibility, serious injuries are likely, nightmares are almost inevitable. The election isn't won with a short speech about hope, it's a dirty campaign where her good name is viscosly dragged through the mud. Sometimes the hardest part about being a hero is just ignoring how embarrassing it is to stand up for what you believe in when everyone says you're wrong. A Princess can save the day, but she's probably going to have to stare down her own nightmares to do it.

## *Mood: Exhaustion*

Sure you can solve one problem, but can you solve all of them? Can you find the energy to run for mayor, mentor the people who need it and spend all night fighting monsters? When will you sleep, and when will you have room for some desperately needed me time to think about your own problems? A Princess' magic makes her feel like every problem in the world is her personal responsibility, it's an impossible burden that will wear her mental, physical and even emotional stamina to nothing. The only way she can survive is if she can find friends to support her and allies to share the load.

## *How to use this Book*

Information on the Nobility, and their obligations are divided into several sections

Chapter One: Noblesse Oblige provides information on the Nobility: their magic, their culture, and their world.

Chapter Two: Coronation explains how to create a Princess character and describes the innate traits of Princess.

Chapter Three: The Power of Love lists the many wonderful magics and new character traits available to a Princess.

Chapter Four: Fighting Fear lists the monsters and antagonists who oppose the Hopeful and all they stand for.

## *Sources and Inspiration*

### **Maho Shoujo**

#### **Sailor Nothing**

Sailor Nothing is one of the oldest deconstructions, and also reconstructions, of the magical girl genre. Sailor Nothing sets itself apart from many of the later deconstructions by showing the horror inherent in the concept of young girls fighting monsters rather than relying on some dark secret at the heart of the magical girl powers. With the focus given to mundane evils and the importance of friendship Sailor Nothing is perhaps the quintessential inspiration for Princess. It inspired us when we wrote Princess and we hope it will inspire you as well.

#### **Mai-Otome**

Mai-Otome takes the magical girl genre into places it does not normally venture: Politics. At heart Mai-Otome is about two girls (one a literal princess) forced to grow up by the harsh realities of Realpolitik, and in the process learning that being a magical girl is so much more than looking amazing. With friendship, growing up, magical girls and Realpolitik Mai-Otome serves well as an inspiration for Princess: the Hopeful.

#### **Puella Magi Madoka Magica**

As one of the most popular Maho Shoujo to be created in recent years this list cannot be complete without a mention of Puella Magi Madoka Magica. The truth at the heart of the Puella Magi makes it harder to use Madoka for inspiration but around the edges, those Puella Magi who never learn the truth, show all the struggles and heartache you might find in a Princess.

### **Film**

#### **Brave**

A story about a rebellious princess with a difference. It shows the consequences when a princess rebels against her obligations; that alone makes it a worthwhile inspiration for Princess: the Hopeful. The themes of growing up and the importance of family only sweeten the deal.

#### **Coraline**

Coraline falls under the archetype of “girls underground” stories. This archetype provides themes for the Dreamlands and for that purpose Coraline does not disappoint. Coraline’s adventures help her to grow as a person and she returns better able to face the real world. Her antagonist also provides the quintessential inspiration for a Warden.

#### **Peter Pan**

Another girls underground story, Peter Pan (the live action film released in 2001) is a brilliant portrayal of what we fear about growing up and why we overcome those fears. It can serve as an inspiration metaphorically or more literally to show why living a utopian life in the Dreamlands isn’t always the perfect choice. Not even for Beacons who have no royal duties to call them back.

# Chapter 1: Noblesse Oblige

*I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people.  
– Mahatma Gandhi*

## *The Light and the Dark*

That's the thing about morality, it's complicated. Sages and philosophers have debated for thousands of years to answer the simplest of questions. "What is good?", "What is evil?" But is morality always so complicated? Are there not easier questions to ask? For every tough question like "Is it justified to kill one to save five?" is there not an easier question like "Is it justified to kill another for your own personal profit?"

Ask any of the Nobility and they will tell you that of course there is such a thing as objective good and evil. To the Radiant the world they inhabit makes this as clear as daylight. A Princess draws her magic from the Light. A force created by love, friendship, by effort to improve the world or just effort to help a stranger out. The Light probably isn't the absolute axis for all that is good but if it could think you could say it's making a sincere effort to reach that exalted height. For the Nobility this is enough to point at for proof that good really does exist, because what Princesses compare the Light to is the Dark.

The Dark is the Light's opposite in every way. It is a force of banal corruption; it festers where people commit acts of cruelty and inflict suffering on each other. Everything it touches is tainted with its own nature. If left unchecked it would cause an unending torrent of corruption until the Dark finally succumbed to its own nature and starved upon an empty wasteland. The scholars among the Nobility are divided upon one key question about the Dark. Its origins. Some say that it is a dreadful alien being attacking our world through humanity's cruelties for its own sustenance. Others say that we ourselves are the Dark's true origin, our sins created it and we shall forever be haunted by our crimes until such a day as we rise above them.

The contrast between Light and Dark is something every Noble is glad for. For as much as she looks to the Light, even the Nobility live somewhere between Light and Dark. Sooner or later every Princess will have to make some tough moral choices; it comes with the job. On a bad day a Princess could find herself trapped for an unconscionable time with no clear answers. Struggling to stitch together some semblance of a moral solution to an impossible problem. On those days the existence of the Light can be the only thing reminding them that good exists and it is worth fighting for.

## **The Kingdom's Fall**

When the Nobility speak of the Kingdom they refer to at least eight sovereign nations: Alhambra, Andarta, Aztallan, The Confederacy of Four Winds, Crystal Heril, Danann, Gonel and Wen-Mung. There are others, but their names, histories and even their existence are debated with little consensus. Each lived the ideals of the Light in their own way, guided by the Queen who ruled them. None were perfect but by all accounts they were fantastic places to live. Prosperous, just, kind and peaceful.

Yet for all its Light the Kingdom did not last forever. Even in a world of Light some things are universal, one is the necessity of compromise. A land of individual freedom must accept a lack of organisation as its due. Each of the Queens chose what they deemed to be good and accepted the cost. In time they forgot that this was a choice of preference and believed they alone had chosen the one true

way. In their own way each turned rigid and dogmatic; from this simple Vice the Darkness gained its first foothold in its eternal war against the Kingdom.

The Kingdoms rallied and drove the Darkness back to whatever terrible domain it came from as they had done countless times before but this time they were blinded by their dogma. Small traces of Taint were overlooked, festering as “inevitable drawbacks” of the Light’s civilisation. Rotting away in secret the Darkness began to grow within the heart of the Kingdom. Its attacks became more frequent, more destructive, and every time it was defeated the same growing rot remained unnoticed. In the end the Darkness broke over the Kingdom like a tidal wave, the armies were routed and the cities fell, still trying to understand how the Darkness’ presence was even possible.

Today little remains of the Kingdom. The domains of the five Radiant Queens live on in the Dreamlands, but the warping Gales make it hard to tell how accurate a portrayal it is. If any true records of the Kingdom exist they would be locked away deep within Alhambra’s vaults, for of the Kingdom only Alhambra has survived to this day. Protected by its Queen’s formidable magic deep within the Heart of the Darkness.

## **The Long Night and the Dream**

The Darkness cannot create, it can only corrupt. This was always its greatest weakness. Those corrupted, however, would retain their ability to create for a while. Among those who were Tainted by the Darkness during the Fall were three mighty creatures known as The Red Queen, The White Queen and The Black Queen: The avatars of violence, self loathing and despair. These creatures knew the Light intimately, they knew that even as the Darkness turned upon itself the Light would build something new and wonderful to reclaim its place.

Guided by the Darkness’ instinctive opposition to the Light the three constructed a trap deep within the Dreamlands: A mirror to reflect the Light of the world. The trap tricked the souls of the Nobility travelling towards reincarnation and drew them away from Earth. They incarnated within the Dreamlands where wonderful and elaborate illusions clouded their minds; letting them believe they lived and did their duties on Earth even while the centuries ticked away.

The Radiant call this period of history “The Long Night” and the trap that held them is simply called “The Dream”. For much of human history the Radiant hardly had any presence at all. Reincarnations have always formed the vast majority of the Nobility and with the reincarnations locked away anyone who Blossomed was most likely alone and untrained. If they were lucky a group of friends might Blossom together. They would do what they can, but standing alone there was little chance of changing the world.

Only the Twilight Queens created any form of continuity for the Nobility during the Long Night. The Lady of Alhambra kept the last survivors of the Kingdom alive. The Saraphic General inducted mortal forces to throw against the Darkness. The Queen of Mirrors searched for her True Heir. The Twilight Queens were a temptation to the Princesses who Blossomed during the Long Night, but they were a temptation because they were so vital. The only constant source of support a young Princess could turn to.

## **The War of Hope**

In July 1969 mankind first set foot on the moon. The hope released by this single event was so great that for the briefest instant the Light shone brighter on Earth than it did in the Dreamlands. In a flash every soul trapped within knew that they were not on Earth as they believed. The five Queens mustered their armies against their jailors and shattered the machinery of their prison. Their victory was swift and brutal; after millennia of imprisonment the Kingdom was once again free.

The effects were far from instantaneous. The first reincarnated Princess to once again Blossom was in 1987 and the second was not until 1994. No one is even sure if the commoners of the Kingdom reincarnate at all but no one has turned up with accurate memories of a past life in the Kingdom so far.

Today the Nobility are still small in number but they’re growing fast with multiple Blossomings a year. At this point they are a minor force in the world but have had some noticeable successes in areas where Princesses are common; Blossomings have shown a tendency towards geographical clustering. The first generation of Princesses have now reached middle age and many have gained positions of prestige and influence. In doing so they have caused a backlash from established power blocks, both mortal and

otherwise. The Twilight Queens have also experienced a renaissance; each was active through the Long Night and were perfectly placed to take advantage of the release. New and vulnerable Princesses have been eagerly snapped up by all three sides.

As the saying goes, we live in interesting times.

## *Being a Princess*

### **Blossoming**

The majority of Blossomings occur in times of great stress and change in one's life. The youngest age that it has been observed is the onset of puberty, but this is rare, and many consider this a mercy, because one so young is ill-equipped, mentally and physically, to deal with the stresses of the life of a Noble. Perhaps the Light is aware that its warriors require a certain maturity to handle the powers it grants, or perhaps one must have a clear enough conceptualisation of one's self to be able to transform. Alhambran tales claim that the girl who would become the Queen of Tears Blossomed at her birth, and the delay in Blossomings today is merely a sign of the corruption of the world; but most Radiant Nobles dismiss this as the self-aggrandisement of the followers of Tears and choose to believe that it has always been this way.

Whatever the reason, there are several broad age bands in which Blossoming commonly occurs. The first of these is from the mid-to-late teens as the individual establishes their own social identity and goes through the stresses of education. Such Princesses frequently (though, sadly, not always) have their parents as passive support but must suffer problems with their task and how it interacts with their youth and the demands that society places upon them. Not too many people are pleased with their teenage children sneaking out, and are even less pleased when they find out that the child has been going down to the area of town where the drug-dealers hang out, especially on a night when there are later reports of gang violence. At a slightly older age there are the young adults, typically at university or just entering the workplace. In some ways they are luckier, because they do not have to face the fact that they're not legally adults; on the other hand, many a Princess has lost her job or been forced to drop out of university due to the stresses and demands of her calling, and unlike younger ones, they don't have the same safety net of family, which means that the issue of rent and bills starts to come up. In recent years, though, there have started to crop up the first few cases of elder Blossoming. The causes of these Blossomings appear to be diverse indeed and can be anywhere from moving to a new place, falling in love, a messy divorce, pregnancy or becoming a parent, and onsets of mental sickness. Such older individuals frequently have other responsibilities, and try hard to try to cling onto their old life.

And as for the traits that prompt a Blossoming? The Hopeful are even less sure. The individual must not be a creature of the Darkness - but, then again, a few spontaneous Blossomings have been noted among individuals who, of their own free will, managed to cast off the taint. Individuals with the Virtue of Hope, despite the name, do not Blossom in noticeably more numbers than individuals with other Virtues; nor do the Vices seem to have an overall effect. A common theme among Nobles interviewed has been this: when faced with adversity they chose to respond in a way that reaffirmed their conscience or faced down something which would have threatened either themselves or others. Many report a feeling that they could "never forgive themselves" if they had acted any other way, as if they would be very disappointed in themselves. In almost all cases, the Blossoming can be linked back to a single "stress point", a single reaction which either immediately, or over the course of days or weeks, led to the Blossoming, although among some of the youngest of the Enlightened appear to lack such a critical event. Such a point is usually linked to their Calling; a Troubadour might inspire her friends to stand up to bullies and over the next few weeks, start to have odd dreams, or he might be beaten up while trying to rally his fellow immigrant workers against oppressive employers, and in a flare of blinding light suddenly straighten up in the garb of a knight of old.

No matter the precise trigger, though, Princesses are frequently idealistic or visionaries in some way, although that does not necessarily correlate with naivety; one can be aware of the flaws of the world and still want to improve it. In the end, all that the Hopeful have been able to detect among the circumstances which granted their powers are broad trends and patterns. Almost inevitably, there will be an exception to any rule they devise.



## Transformation

From the moment she Blossoms every Princess has the ability to Transform. With the simplest effort she pushes her dreams and aspirations outwards from her soul. They flow through her body, transforming her into the woman she always wanted to be.

The Nobility often tell each other that Princesses don't do magic; they are magical and Transformation is the proof. In her mundane identity a Princess is hardly recognisable as having any magic at all, but in her transformed identity... Ah, what a difference that is. Magic flows through her body; it is on the level of blood or bone. Her magic makes her stronger, more charismatic, or smarter.

Even her personality is different, but not by much. Part of it is the just the natural result of her magic: She is more confident because she is more capable, she makes more witty remarks because she can think of them faster. Other changes come from the Transformation itself though nothing important changes. Both of her two selves are fundamentally Her. The changes are little things, she uses different phrases and expressions to say the same concepts, her mannerisms are different. Like the changes to her physical body these changes are an expression of the person she wishes to be, drawn from her innermost hopes and made physical by her magic.

## Belief

The mind of a Princess is at heart not so different from that of any other person. Yet there are important differences, one of the most important is how a Princess relates to morality.

For a Princess morality is not just a question of knowing what is right or wrong. The burden of Sensitivity forces every Princess to confront the world's ills. Faced with ugly underbelly of humanity, all that is immoral, a Princess needs more than just an awareness of what is right and what is wrong. She needs a strength of conviction, that the world can improve, that she can help the world improve.

This is Belief and it is from Belief that a Princess' power flows.

## Sensitivity

Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. It tosses and turns in the dark of night, weighed down by all the worlds ills. All power comes with a price and for a Princess that price is Sensitivity.

Sensitivity is at heart nothing more than a supercharged form of simple empathy. We all react to other people's emotions; when someone is happy, or angry, or hurt we feel something in ourselves. Among Princesses this reaction is stronger, but it's more than that. To a Princess *emotions are magic*. When a princess basks in friendship or gratitude her magic replenishes, and when she is exposed to the worst of human emotions, to wilful cruelty, her own magic turns against her.

As a Princess' magic grows her Sensitivity can quite literally make life unbearable. Simply walking among people batters her with every cruelty, each and every one becomes her personal responsibility. If she is strong enough she can bear the weight, helping to undo the damage she feels makes it all bearable and perhaps one day she will find relief in a brigher future. And as for those who cannot bear the weight, their only choice is to run and hide. Stick to the quiet hours, find a nice walled palace or quiet village somewhere away from all the pain and cruelty.

## Shadows

Shadows are the painful product of Sensitivity. The result of a Princess not merely seeing cruelties, but them into one's own heart. A cancerous train of thought that can grow and spread its tendrils through her mind. A Princess with Shadows upon her soul not only feels sympathy for the cruelties she witnesses, but internalises them. She suffers flashbacks; at the worst moments she remembers the event that created shadows and feels her confidence fade. If she couldn't help then, why should she expect to do better now? These thoughts become self fulfilling: Because she feels lesser, her magic becomes lesser. It can too easily become the beginning of a vicious cycle: The Princess believes she cannot help, therefore her magic weakens, therefore she has trouble helping people, therefore she believes she cannot help.

It is fortunate then, that so many Princesses cultivate friendships and allies who can help them recover.

## Wisps

A Wisp is a physical measure of magic, a feeling, and emotional energy. To a Princess the three can sometimes be hard to tell apart. At heart the purpose of a Wisp is a simple one; it is the fuel she burns to power her magic. When a Princess is full of Wisps she is raring to go, and when she is out of Wisps she feels empty. There's a hollow gap in her soul, her emotions are distant and muted.

By connecting with what's important: her friends, her family, her calling, a Princess can create new Wisps deep within herself. She remembers why life matters, what she fights for, and that feeling fills the gap in her soul. Her emotions return, pure, bright and beautiful. She's ready to face the new day.

## Invocations

Every Princesses makes use of Invocations. So long as a Queen exists, her philosophies resonate through the souls of everybody who shares her ideals. Through their connection to the Light this resonance allows Princesses and Sworn to draw upon a measure of the Queen's magic. Through their shared values she feels the reassurance of knowing a trusted authority supports her actions and through her shared values she channels the magical power of the Queen. Both emotionally and magically her Invocation forges a stronger Charm.

For the Sworn the importance of an Invocation is even greater. With no Inner Light of their own the Sworn draw upon their Queen's magical power as a substitute. The magic of a Queen resonating within the Sworn who share her Philosophies is enough to, well, make the difference between a Mortal and a Sworn.

## Invoking Chams

What does it feel like for a Princess to use her Charms or draw power from her Invocation? The first thing to say is that to the Radiant magic does not feel fundamentally different to their mundane talents. A Charm that lets her take on another's appearance might feel like she's an actress getting into character. A Charm that unlocks new ways of seeing doesn't feel like she's gotten a sixth or seventh sense, but that she's started to notice things she never paid attention to before. Even blatant magical effects like learning to fly don't feel that different to, say, learning to swim.

A Charm can feel like a mental trick she performs in her own head, an attitude she applies to a problem, a new physical ability that came with practice like learning to cross your middle fingers. It could feel like anything; the only constant is that there is always some emotion behind her Charm (though truth be told there's nearly always an emotion behind anything a Princess' does), it's not always the same emotion behind the same Charm. Simply that, a Princess must Believe and Feel in her actions for the magic to flow. A Charm that will cause vines to burst forth and entwine her foes will only function if she wants to trap her foes on an emotional level. Which emotions she feels will flavour the Charm: The vines will be more vicious and visibly threatening against a foe she hates and wishes to entwine in battle than when she Invokes the charm with the excitement of a tough but enjoyable practice match.

As for the Invocations, they are a magnification of something we've all felt. Of how our Beliefs and conviction give us strength. When we fight to save someone we love our love gives us strength, and when a Princess versed in Fuoco fights to save someone she loves the Invocation focuses those same feelings into her magic making her strength all the greater.

## Learning New Charms

One of the first things a Princess learns is that she does not do magic. She is Magical. In their Transformed identity the Nobility do not experience a clear separation between their magical and mundane abilities. An observer might see a Princess jump to avoid a blade then throw a fireball, and conclude that the jump was mundane while the fireball was magical. Yet to the Princess they wouldn't feel that different. She chose to jump and her body reacted, she chose to throw fire and her body reacted. No speaking in Enochian, no need to memorise arcane principles of correspondence or chant spells in her head. The observer might even be wrong; if the Princess put all her hopes and Belief into that jump it could be a more magical action than throwing fire.

So, if magic is not a skill what does it feel like to learn a new Charm? A new magical ability already exists within the Princess as raw potential; she only has to discover it and practice it until it becomes

second nature. All of us have the potential to read a foreign language if we practice then, over time, we no longer see meaningless symbols. We look at the page and see meaning. Even if that's not actually supernatural it is amazing enough that it deserves to be called magical.

Learning a Charm is much the same. A Princess might have the ability to sense Ghosts but not to see them, so she practices interpreting her senses until she no longer feels a ghost as a picking on the back of her neck. The symbols are now meaning, she sees the Ghost as clear as you or me. Charms often don't come from a deliberate attempt to produce a specific effect either. A Princess comes across a new problem and tries to solve it, sometimes the solution she reaches is a new Charm: She cannot defeat a Darkspawn in combat so she returns to her Palace to practice her swordsmanship. As she experiments and tries new things she might realise that the deft twist of her wrist she just stumbled upon will slip under her opponents guard, or she might come upon a strike that sets her blade alight.

## The Dreamlands

Within her dreams a Princess travels beyond her mind and into the very soul of humanity. Within the Dreamlands the hopes and aspirations of mankind take life, they form vast cities. Beautiful vistas with all the incomprehensible forms of a dream. The Dreamlands are more than just a metaphor; they are a true world. The inhabitants have lives, hopes and dwell in functional societies. Many Princesses are surprised to discover something so ordinary amongst dreams and flights of fancy, but is it really so surprising that a Princess' dreams would form after how she sees the world? For the Princess who cares so much about friendship and community when she is awake, what else would she dream about?

Travelling to the Dreamlands offers many practical advantages to a Princess; she can find friends and mentors among the population including the Radiant Queens. Objects of power, often created and traded by Dreamlanders, can be formed into Bequests. However the Dreamlands is not just frolocking and sunshine; once it was used by the Darkness to construct a trap for the souls of the Kingdom. Though the trap is broken it's creaky machinery and the remnant of the prison's old wardens still seek to imprison the Enlightened in a blissful dream.

## *Culture*

The Nobility are really good at community; in the short time since the Release a sprawling culture has grown across a network of blogs, forums and social networking sites. The Hopeful community covers more than just Princesses; Beacons and Sworn are welcome and even ordinary people can often be found on the comment threads. The online Radiant community is hardly a walled garden; it spills forth onto related subjects. Princesses can often be found blogging about and arguing in forums related to politics, current affairs, activism and social justice. Many blogs or forums are considered to be both hubs of the Radiant community – for the author or prominent members are Princesses – and considered to be ordinary websites by their mundane viewers – for the Princesses are still in the closet (at least under this username).

Many Princesses eagerly flock to debates about occult theory or magical phenomena, but on this subject the Nobility often retreat to their own private communities for a Princess talking about her emotional variety of magic often causes her to clash with both mortals – who eagerly latch onto occult principles (accurate or otherwise) to make up for the fact they cannot perform magic – and actual magicians – for whom occult principles form the foundation of their power – some young and naive princesses have caught the attention of experienced magicians who simply recognised the way they talk and think about magic.

Inevitably debates between so many young, passionate ideologues – on the internet no less! – often descends into a morass of arguments often about the most pointless things, if only because it's easier to join an argument when you don't need to have read about the subject. At least most Princesses are socially competent and able to spell. People often wonder how Princesses, a group who live by the maxim "School, friends, royal duties, sleep, choose three" ever find the time to argue on the internet. In truth it's common for Princesses to vanish entirely from their online community when an actual problem comes to their town; lives have even been saved because somebody decided check up why a someone stopped posting.

Perhaps the most practical use of the Princess' online culture is when it move offline; regional meet ups are common enough and even international get togethers can be held in an easily reached location within the Dreamlands. These events help build a Princess' collection of emergency phone numbers and can lead to the formation of Nakamas. The internet is in fact one of the most common ways for a lone Princess to find herself a Nakama, often beginning with a message like "Looking for Nakama in San Francisco".

## Nakama

The word "Nakama" means a group of friends; translated into English you might say "buddies" or "gang" in the playful kids' use of the word.

Princesses use the word "Nakama" no differently than ordinary people. A Nakama is first and foremost a group of friends. They go shopping, see movies, plait each other's hair or compete in fun magic contests.

The primary purpose of a Nakama is to help Princesses destress after the pressures of the job by providing friends who understand what it means to be a princess and occasionally forcing a Princess to get a good nights sleep – no ands, ifs or buts – while another member covers her responsibilities.

For the most part it is rare for a Nakama to sit down and create elaborate plans for improving the world. Most Princesses have strong convictions on the subject and would rather have a supportive friend than long arguments with coworkers. However when Princesses are reacting to a problem: Be it the Darkness, the Twilight Queens or something mundane like an earthquake a Princess' first call to form a team or a task force is often her Nakama. They trust each other, know each other well enough to work well together, and of course they all have each other's phone numbers.

## Language

The Hopeful are for the most part a young culture and even the parts of it that regularly communicate don't have any formal body to standardise language. While there is a linguistic legacy that predates the Release, three in fact: One is in the Royal Tongue (which many Princesses find cumbersome, or just annoying) and the other is in Alhambran (which many Radiant refuse to use on principle), the third comes from the Embassy to the Dreamlands (which is specialised and relatively obscure). Consequently the Radiant use a fast changing system of slang, memes and technical terms that vary across geographical regions and even parts of the internet. The language of the Radiant is young enough that most words can easily be traced back to their origin. The following terms are usually used by Princesses in the anglosphere, having been spread across that portion of the internet. Some of the more specific terms are unique to American Princesses.

Terms in Japanese originate from Bonnie Getsuei, an American (and complete Japanophile) who forged much of the Radiant's community in San Francisco and even provided a common entry point to the online Radiant community for English speaking princesses (presumably actual Japanese Princesses also use their native tongue).

Italian words can often trace their origin to the Queen of Heart's earliest followers in the United Kingdom (The Court of Hearts had a late start in America, as the first impressions of that court often clash with America's national ideals. Today few Princesses even remember what the fuss was about.) Influenced by Andartan culture those Princesses chose to use a romance language, and since they didn't want to use French; Princesses everywhere sprinkle their magic with Italian terms.

Greek and Latin words both share origins in the Court of Diamonds; the early Lights were the first to attempt to begin classifying and studying hopeful magic and related phenomena. This project was split between those who were more influenced by their Queen and wanted to use Greek and those who were more influenced by human academia and wanted to use Latin. The argument was never settled and various words from both languages have become part of the Princess lexicon, mostly for things a Princess can go a while without encountering as everything else was named through informal, and therefore faster, channels. Exceptionally nerdy Princesses sometimes use Greek instead of the Latin terms or Latin instead of the Greek, and Latin or Greek instead of English, Italian and Japanese terms.

The Embassy to the Dreamlands, perhaps the only lasting Radiant organisation to exist through the Long Night, tended to use names taken from people both living, Dreamlander and even fictional (note that the three are rarely distinct categories). Few of these terms are still in use.

Finally English is, obviously, the de-facto language of English speaking Princesses. Anything that did not get a catchy enough name quickly enough is likely to be in English. One unusual, and uniquely American, fact about English is that many Princesses adopt a more “royal” manner of speaking in their Transformed identity, which is to say a British accent ranging from “BBC English” to “not even The Queen lays it on that thick”. Princesses who are actually from the United Kingdom usually use their natural accent, though as the British will parody anything some have been known to play up, or adopt, incomprehensible regional accents when around Americans.

## *Allies*

### **Beacons**

Some Princess’ say that in a better world everyone would be a Beacon. Some (usually the same people) say that in the Kingdom everyone was a Beacon. Pretty much all Princess’ like Beacons, but then most people do.

A Beacon is a person with a strong sense of hope, morality and idealism that radiates outwards. Their presence encourages people to make the best of themselves. The effect is subtle enough that it could be taken as nothing more than the force of personality, If the Princess’ magical sight did not show that Beacons carry a tiny spark of the Light.

Princesses usually keep an eye out for Beacons. If they seem in trouble they’ll offer help before the Beacon’s light is crushed. There is another reason to keep an eye on Beacons; they are disproportionately likely to Blossom and being ready to ease a new Princess into her role can make the world of difference.

### **Sworn**

Wouldn’t it be nice if everyone was a Princess? If nobody could commit cruelty without suffering from Sensitivity. If encroachment of the Darkness could be beaten back by the magic of billions?

If wishes were Blossomings then everyone would be a Princess already, but the Nobility know it’s no good wishing for a better world. You have to roll up your sleeves and get to work. Even if there is no way to force a Blossoming, a skilled Princess can create a Sworn.

The Sworn fill many rolls. Sometimes a Princess is impressed by a Mortal (or a Beacon) and offers them magic. This is a significant investment: Not only must the Princess invest a portion of her power to create a Sworn, but she must make Bequests to provide the Sworn with Wisps and any Charms she wishes to offer.

Other Sworn work closely with the Nobility. A team of Princesses who notice a gap in their skills could seek out a new member who has the mundane abilities. The powers of a Sworn and a few Bequests can provide the magical skills.

Some Princesses create Sworn for special tasks. Consider if you will a Princess who creates Bequests that grant intuitive insights into the working of legal codes and hands them out to a think tank drafting a complex new social justice law. If it works a simple investment could have an enormous long term payoff but such plans are risky. The Princess usually ends up running against one or more of the vested power groups within the World of Darkness.

Other Princesses just like to share their magic with people. Granting the powers of a Sworn to a beloved friend or family member can help another understand the Princess’ new life and preserve the bond between them. It is unfortunately not that uncommon for a friend or family member to be jealous and giving them some power can help smooth things over. A Princess who worries for her loved ones’ safety can do worse than giving them the power to run away at superhuman speeds, or to work the magical defences around their shared home.

In Alhambra Sworn have served as a vital and prestigious pillar of society. The kingdom of Tears possesses vaults filled with Bequests, some dating back to the Kingdom itself. As they reuse old Bequests it requires a far smaller investment to equip a new Sworn and so Alhambra depends on Sworn, Bequests and magic much as we depend on technology.

The armies of Storms also make much use of Sworn, who seem to form spontaneously from ordinary people who hold Tempestra’s fury in their hearts. These Sworn seem to be self sufficient, but lacking Bequests their powers are limited.

The rarest kind of Sworn is an deliberate attempt to redeem someone by using Sensitivity to show them the truth of their actions. This is rare not only because creating a Sworn is a significant effort, but also because no one can become a Sworn without giving full and informed consent. Still people who believe their actions to be just may well consent to Sensitivity.

## **Bequests**

A Princess' power comes from within, it comes from her hopes, her emotions and her Beliefs. This has its advantages, and its disadvantages, just as any other source of power you could care to name. A Princess who believes in the rule of law might be unable to use magic that works outside the system. A Princess who believes in careful thought and planned action might be unable to call upon magical intuition. Not everybody has a power deep within them, Beacons and Sworn do not.

When Princesses wish to circumvent some of the disadvantages of their particular style of magic they make Bequests. They go deep within their own souls or quest through the Dreamlands to find a source of magic and forge it into an item of power. With Bequests Princesses are able to trade charms, pass their powers on to the next generation, use magic in their mundane identity and even equip teams of trained Sworn with potent magics.

## *Queens*

It is not known exactly how many Queens and Kings once ruled the Kingdom, of this unknown number only eight still have the power to affect the world. Of this eight: Five are dead, two are living and one is... Transformed. Collectively the five dead Queens are known as the Radiant, for they remain loyal to the light in spirit as well as word, for centuries the Radiant Queens were trapped deep within the Dreamlands, but now their trap has fallen. From their Palaces within the Dreamlands they call out to Princesses, seeking Hopeful agents who will restore the Light upon Earth.

## **Courtless Princesses**

Princesses who follow no Queen are rare, but they do exist. They lack affinity to any elemental Charm. They have their own form of Practical Magic; while in mundane form, a courtless Princess may spend Wisps to add dice to any Attribute of Skill she has transformed dots for, up to her transformed rating, at a cost of 1 Wisp per die.

# The Queen of Clubs

**AKA:** The Matron of the Forests, The Mother

**Followers' Epithets:** Wilds, Turtles

**Kingdom:** Wen-Mung

*In any battle your greatest foe is yourself. You must ask yourself why you fight, what can you hope to gain and is it worth the risk of what you might lose? The enemy who says you cannot back down is none other than yourself; overcome it and look at the other options. You could surrender, often it costs you nothing but an apology and some pride. You could examine yourself, what did you do that lead up to this moment. Why couldn't you live here in peace? If you can learn to live in harmony with your surroundings, isn't that a better result than whatever you could win in a fight?*

*You can't fix the world by yourself, but the best place to start is within.*

The Queen of Clubs leads those Princesses who seek balance and harmony, they believe that a better world can be achieved if we just learned to live peacefully with each other, with the world around us, and most importantly: with ourselves.

## *Tales of the Kingdom*

The Queen of Clubs has no palace and wears no crown. Her court travels at a slow walking pace through the forests of Wen-Mung. Wherever they rest their tired feet the trees grow to shelter her from the elements. With nothing but bare soil for a throne The Matron of the Forests welcomes her subjects. Of all the Queens she is the most intimately connected with the eternal cycle of life, death and rebirth. She allows herself to age naturally, and in her current iteration of the cycle has grown into a slightly plump middle aged woman who radiates warmth and kindness. She wears only spare clothes gifted to her by the working women of her kingdom and rejects all finery. When she speaks her words are plain but carry the wisdom and empathy of lifetimes.

A good way to describe a conversation with the Queen of Clubs is patient; protracted works too. The Matron of the Forests sees no need to hurry. She lets the Princess speak at her own pace and get to the end of her story before she replies. When presented with a tough problem she likes to work up to it, focusing first on a minor but easily solved parts of the issue. This usually includes coaching the Princess about the right attitude to a problem before fixing the problem itself; though it must be said that the Matron of the Forests sees the first as a vital part of the second.

## *Philosophy*

The Queen of Clubs asks a question: "The world speaks to us. Have you ever stopped to listen?"

### **Through Harmony; Light**

The world is a place of conflict. Not just the obvious conflicts where nation fights nation but also the conflicts that arise from the simple act of existing. The Queen of Clubs teaches her daughters that they and everything in existence has a nature. It is from the struggle to be true to this nature within the confines life imposes that suffering arises. Through introspection and self discovery a Princess can find a way for her nature to exist in harmony with the world and free herself from suffering.

## Things Change My Dear

Harmony is not a destination, it is a way of moving with the world. Everything has a nature and change is part of that nature: Water flows, plants grow and planets dance around the stars. With great effort a Princess can maintain a harmony by opposing negative change but this is a false path. The true harmony is effortless. A state of grace where every action moves with the world and every change creates a new harmony free from discord. When the world changes the court of Clubs must move with it, and they shall become greater from the experience.

## Be The World You Wish For

To the Queen of Clubs the world is the lives and actions of every living being. From this simple truth she forms her final philosophy. Harmony cannot be won through conflict for the very act that claims to create a world free from conflict becomes part of the world. To create a better world a Princess must become a teacher and a mediator who lives a life of harmony and helps others achieve the same through her example and guidance.

## *Duties*

A Turtle's Duties are to bring things together. People certainly but that's only a small part of it: Man and nature, reason and emotion, city and countryside. The Wilds dream of a world where what were once opposing opposites are now part of a balanced whole.

Champions of Clubs help people directly. They are park rangers and wilderness guides who help people brave the dangers of the natural world so that they may see its beauty first hand. More than any other Calling it is the Champions of Clubs who earn the epithet of Turtles. In battle they favour defensive tactics and seek to gradually wear their opponents down with a minimum of harm.

Many Graces are environmentalists who seek to preserve natural world and preach the importance of living in balance with our surroundings. Other Graces are mediators without peer who work to bring conflicting parties together in a harmonious balance. The lessons of harmony are not limited to those with an external enemy. The Queen of Clubs teaches that harmony begins with inner balance and many of her Graces are teachers who help their students learn to live in harmony with themselves and the world around them.

In the Court of Clubs Menders are rarely simple healers. Under the Queen's philosophy the disease itself is often a symptom and her Menders teach their patients to live a lifestyle that avoids further sickness. The court's focus on the natural world attracts membership from vets and environmentalists who work to clean pollution. Partnerships between Menders and Graces are common, the Mender deals with the physical symptoms and the Grace teaches a way of life that removes the root cause.

Seekers delve deep into the jungle seeking new herbs, undiscovered animals or just beautiful vistas while others travel beyond the borders of earth. Delving into the lore of the Spirit wilds, the hidden half of the natural world, and try and use the lore they find to shape and heal the spirit community around them. A few Seekers blur the lines between Clubs and Diamonds as they work on renewable energy and cleaner technology.

Troubadours are inspired by nature and paint magnificent scenes of the natural world, others work with nature directly as landscapers, flower arrangers or bonsai artists. A surprising number are architects and urban planners who attempt to reintegrate nature with cities in the most literal manner.

## *Background*

Appropriately for a Court so focused on Harmony, the Wilds are often classified into two groups with little conflict or divisions between them. On the one hand you have the naturalists: Everyone from professional park rangers and conservationists to people who really love their pets. They are drawn by Clubs' belief in harmony with the natural world and often leap for joy when they learn how Legno lets them talk to animals.



On the second hand you have the spiritualists: From gurus and philosophers to pacifistic hippies and suburbanites yearning for something with more meaning than materialism. That is not to say that every spiritual Princess is drawn to the Wilds. The Court of Clubs has its own philosophies which draws students interested in learning about harmony, balance and the quest for inner peace.

When the Court of Clubs gathers it is not rare for a laboratory biologist to talk long into the night with a self taught student of Taoism, each delighting seeing the world through eyes that on the first glance are so different from their own. The Queen herself knows that the two sides are both the inevitable result of each other and smiles every time one of her sons or daughters experiences the joy of learning so for herself.

## *Character Creation*

Composure is highly desired among the Turtles to examine their own feelings while it takes considerable Resolve to always keep striving for self improvement. Wilds always put at least some effort into keeping themselves fit, meaning that Physical Attributes are at least average. Most wilds make a point of familiarizing themselves with nature, so skills such as Survival and Animal Ken are common. Athletics come in handy during hiking, swimming, climbing, and otherwise navigating around in the wilderness (or at least the state park). Wilds who wish to convince others to embrace the natural world often pick up Persuasion and Expression, while those who have a theoretical understanding of nature often possess Science. The spiritual mindset of the court lends itself well to Accademics, Wilds interested in Spirits often pick up Occult.

Socially the Court of Clubs tends to have fewer dots in Allies than Contacts. It is the way of Clubs to coexist, not control. Circle however is often staggering as the Courts focus on co-existence brings them closer to whoever is around them. It is not unknown for a Wild to count an entire community as their Circle, whether that community is an ordinary suburban neighbourhood or a commune built on principles of friendship and love seems to make little difference. The outdoor life enjoyed by many Wilds makes Physical Merits common, many are exceptionally healthy people who enjoy a Natural Immunity, an Iron Stomach often goes hand in hand with a love of foraging and a good Direction Sense is common among both wilderness explorers and hikers. Mental Merits are rarer, but a Meditative Mind and Holistic Awareness are both common in the Court of Clubs.

## **Heraldry**

In their Transformed state, Wilds tend to be more subdued than other Princesses. White, green, and blue are common colors, although occasionally red, orange and yellow make appearances for those with an autumn theme. Ivy and leaf motifs are also common, with water themes being only slightly less popular. Outfits tend toward the elegant and practical, the Wilds favour tough clothes well suited for the outdoors, but also with a sense of balance that lends grace to their appearance.

## **Echo**

A Wilds echo tends to give people feeling of serenity. People feel calm and peaceful around the Princess, as if her mere presence somehow brings the world into greater harmony.

## **Practical Magic**

The balance and inner strength of a Turtle makes it very hard to move her unless she is willing to be moved. In mundane or transformed states Wilds can spend Wisps to add bonus dice to any Resolve, Stamina or Composure roll. Normally, each Wisp spent adds 1 die to a single roll; high Belief increases the bonus.

## **Invocation: Legno**

The Queen of Clubs teaches the principles of harmony and inner strength in the form of Legno and the Turtles find it easier to master than any other. Legno encourages a Princess to work with, not against.

To find balance not overpower. To defend not attack. It also guides a Princess to seek inspiration in the natural world.

Legno applies at no cost when the target of a Princess' Charm is a living plant or wood, and when her Charm's target is a natural, non-sapient animal. It also applies without cost when a Princess intends to restore things to their natural state, to restrain the reckless and calm the fearful, to find a harmonious compromise between two positions, to defend another from harm, to conserve and cultivate over time, and to influence without drawing attention to herself.

Those who would make use of Legno must live for harmony in all things. A Princess who attempts violence against someone not involved in combat, or who helps another to do so, may not apply the Invocation until the next sunrise. Self-defense, protecting a non-combatant, and using Charms to stop a fight without violence are unexceptionable, but if a Princess gives tactical support to an ally and the ally attacks one who has not begun to fight, she loses access to Legno just as if she had struck the blow herself.

## *Quote*

You can't control the world, but you don't need to.

## *Stereotypes*

- **Diamonds:** They seek knowledge only for the sake of knowledge. They build a future with no idea where it leads. Yet we must ask ourselves: Would we have time to contemplate without their agriculture? Would we understand the life of the butterfly without their tables of numbers? Ask them to free us from necessity, our work comes after.
- **Hearts:** They are living in traditions built for the world of yesteryear. Either they can hold the world back or the world can trample them underfoot. It cannot end well.
- **Spades:** Flexible, adaptable they can fit anywhere yet they lack the permanence to ask the same respect of the world. Somehow I don't think that matters to them.
- **Swords:** If you are strong enough, you can move the world, but unless you teach the world to move itself it will always return when you remove your hands.
- **Tears:** The world changed, until you can change with it you will suffer. I would like to help you, but only you have the power to help yourself.
- **Storms:** When you learn to take every blow the Darkness throws at you, then you will learn to fight without falling to hate.
- **Mirrors:** You claim that you shall solve every problem yourself by the virtue of your crown, but your claims of strength are to hide from a weakness within. It is an appropriate paradox, in a mirror everything is back to front.
- **Vampires:** We've all heard the tales, that they are creatures of pure Darkness who run away from the Light's touch. I didn't want to believe them. Then I met one.
- **Werewolves:** I have heard the howls and seen them from afar. Beware, some beast are rabid and may bite even a caring hand.
- **Mages:** I've been watching you, I saw you drawing maps but did you notice every path you found was first found by the ants? This glade that delights you so, did you see that every moss and mushroom grows to face the centre? You can feel the Earth's power, but you cannot master it until you listen to her heart. I could teach you so much if you only had the humility to listen.

- Prometheans: I met one once. It's been the only time in my life were I was sure I had met something that couldn't belong in an harmonious world. The next time I met him, he was just a man. How could anyone overcome such a burden? I have to know.
- Changelings: You are trying to balance two natures in your heart. I would say we were alike if your other nature was not so different. Instead I offer the kiss of a Princess for luck.
- Sin-Eaters: Behind their denial of death is a clear understanding that death is a natural part of life.
- Mad-Scientists: My biology teacher grew strange fungus-men in his basement. In the end we had to... we had to... I don't want to talk about it.
- Leviathans: You look old, timeless, like something from the early days when the world hadn't learned there was more to life than sex and violence. I'm sorry, but we've come so far since then and until you do the same there's just no place for you here any more.
- Hunters: The only thing you can say they have in common, is that they define themselves by what they are in opposition to. They do good for the world, but they could do so much more if they found themselves first.
- Mortals: We live the world we want for them so it may come to be. It's not easy, but I believe they are worth it.

## *Inspiration*

Nausicaä

# The Queen of Diamonds

**AKA:** The Crystal-eyed One, Lady of Clear Water, The Philosopher Queen

**Followers' Epithets:** Crystals, Lights, Hope-Engineers

**Kingdom:** The Danann Archipelago

*Contrary to popular belief, people aren't stupid. It's just that people don't think, or they don't know how to think, or they just didn't have the right facts. If you don't think, you miss all the flaws in your plans. If you don't have all the facts, you make stupid assumptions because you didn't know any better. If you don't think and don't understand the world around you, you'll put all your efforts into a plan that simply won't work. And then things go wrong. Sometimes, they go very, very wrong.*

*That's why thinking and knowledge and education are so important. If you know why a problem happens, you're halfway to solving it. If you think clearly, you can find that solution. And if you educate people, you give them the ability to solve their own problems. By understanding the world, and teaching others to do the same, we can find a way to make it brighter.*

*So. Want to help build a better future?*

The Queen of Diamonds teaches that the Light of Hope is best accompanied by the twin lights of knowledge and reason. The Nobles who follow her believe that with those two lights acting as Hope's heralds, they can spread the light far and wide.

## Tales of the Kingdom

From her seat in The Academy the Queen of Diamonds rules the Danann Archipelago. Upon a throne of whale ivory and pearl sits The Philosopher Queen: Regal as a glacier, six foot tall and adorned in the latest sleek future-chic fashions of her court. Here she judges the petitions and arguments of her subjects. Her replies are lengthy and explain the facts, theories and reasoning behind every decision. Every word spoken by The Lady of Clear Water is precise and rehearsed, as calm as a moonlit pond.

Those who know the Queen in private see a very different person. Barely reaching five foot stands a young woman just entering her twenties, wearing casual clothes, unkempt mousy hair and a tee shirt adorned with an obscure and highly technical joke. She even wears glasses having never bothered to fix her eyesight. Far from the regal Philosopher Queen she stumbles over her words, gushing like a bubbling brook in her excitement over the latest technical and scientific discoveries. When gifted with some unseen device or research from Earth she squees, yes squees, in delight. Among her many friends and frequent one night consorts she values nothing more than someone with whom she can share her boundless passion for learning.

The Lady of Clear Water tends to assume that the sort of Princess who pledges to the Court of Diamonds is the kind of person she can introduce to her private self; she is usually right. When talking to the Queen in her public persona it is best to speak as she does, clear, precise, with a focus on the facts and an explanation of your reasoning. In private talking to the Queen of Diamonds is like sailing down a river; her excitement leads the conversation and the Princess must choose whether to follow or fight the currents to steer the conversation in more practical directions. Some Princesses become tributaries, their own excitement joining with the Queen's to become greater than either alone; it is these Princesses most likely to win the Queen's friendship and the royal favour.

Wherever the Queen travels Plato, her ever-loyal owl, is sure to follow. To her court, and even her close friends Plato is nothing more than her pet and her idea sounding board. In truth Plato is the Queen's loyal spymaster. Among the Academy's denizens the wise owl is second only in intellectual might to the Queen herself and among the strongest magical practitioners.

## *Philosophy*

The Queen of Diamonds has taken as her motto, "Think, then act."

### **Through Understanding, Triumph**

Everything has a cause; everything has a purpose; nothing that happens is inexplicable. The servants of the Philosopher Queen take the duty of finding causes, purposes and explanations, and bear it with pride. The Crystals would inquire, as a rule, for the sheer love of knowledge even if no benefit could be expected. Nonetheless there usually is some practical use to the Lights' studies. When they come across a work of the Darkness, the Hope-Engineers analyze it carefully, and reach as complete an understanding of it as they can; then they strike, cut the problem off at the root, and watch it wither away. Analysis is obligatory, since an ill-planned strategy is usually worse than none; when analysis is done, plans must be carried out quickly and thoroughly, for it's intolerable that people be left to suffer a moment longer than they must. The more widely a Crystal has studied, the more swiftly she takes hold of a new problem, to supply its correct solution.

### **Guide the River's Path**

A Princess can solve many problems with magic or the raw intellect of her perfected self, but such solutions inevitably fall when the Princess succumbs to exhaustion or death. The Philosopher Queen teaches that the best solutions are those that sustain themselves: It is not enough to cure diseases with magic, you must create vaccines and medicines to banish the disease forever. While a Crystal could personally organise an economy, it is better to design an infrastructure that makes the economy easy for anyone to organise. Whatever problem she faces, a Crystal should look at the big picture and craft an elegant solution that will last throughout the ages.

### **Light Shines Through Clear Minds**

However unusual a fact is, however much a theory encompasses, it has no power if people know nothing of it, or lack the training to understand it. So, the Hope-Engineers take the further duty of education, and of clear communication. Knowledge and reason are invariably good, lack of either a weakness, withholding of them the worst of crimes. A Crystal pushes everyone she has any influence over to learn, to think, to question, and to test everything, herself first of all; and she will not deceive those who listen to her, or tolerate lies from them. And, while she values the wisdom to be gained from time-honored customs and venerable authorities, a Light doesn't assume such wisdom is complete or final, or follow it blindly. Unless faced with urgent peril, Crystals look for the reasons behind any command given to them, and will flout them if no reasons are given; once in authority, a Hope-Engineer analyzes the traditions of her society as thoroughly as she does any other fact before her, and tests them as carefully as she does her own theories. Only thus does the light of reason truly illuminate the world ...

## *Duties*

The Lights' Duty is to use her brain. The Courtiers of Diamonds seek positions where problems can be solved with thought and intelligence alone. Sometimes it falls upon them to personally implement the solutions they conceive. Sometimes society expects them to start at the bottom and learn the ropes. Whatever situation she finds herself in, the ideal is to earn a Mandate to use her mind.

What Champions of Diamonds lack in combat power they make up for in strategic ability. As much a general as a fighter the Champions of Diamonds have the mind to plan a grand military campaign and organise the logistics of keeping her army fed and battle ready. When battle is joined her quick wits let her adapt to changing circumstances and match her foes gambit for gambit. If so many Champions of Diamonds are seen with shield and spear in hand against the Darkness, that's because so few of them have an army to lead. While her Nakama will benefit from a well thought out plan to raid a Darkened cult, a group of five can scarcely afford to leave their Champion away from the front line.

The Graces in the Diamond Court might not be the best at managing people but they are the best at managing their kingdoms. The Grace's pen closes loopholes in the tax code, defines laws in clear and understandable terms or just balances the national budget. So long as she can keep her head above the confusing tangle of special interests and the reins of policy away from those who pander to badly thought out populism she should have no trouble running a kingdom.

Seekers of Diamonds are perhaps the purest expression of Diamond's Philosophy. They truly believe that knowledge is inherently good and only application can be evil. Deep within their ivory towers the Seekers of Diamonds study everything, from atomic physics to the Twilight Invocations. The future is built on what they discover.

If a Seeker of Diamonds are scientists, then her Menders are the engineers. A Mender of Diamonds is more likely to be found in a laboratory researching new cures and vaccines than in the hospital, helping patient after patient. Rather than fixing a broken machine, she will design a new machine free of the fault that broke the first model. The Hope Engineers can be found in research and development teams, developing technological policy, contributing to open source and running crisis response centres.

The Troubadours of Diamonds tend to dedicate their talents in a very specific direction. Their duty is simple: make learning fun! Whether they write a sci-fi epics where the plot hinges on an accurate understanding of science or whether they're the cool chemistry teacher who manages to tie every topic into a practical that ends with something blowing up. When Troubadours of Diamonds are teaching, you might not even know you're being educated.

## *Background*

No matter what cultural or geographical background they come from, the court of Diamonds were always people who appreciated the importance of thinking things through. Access to education is not nearly as important as some might think, but whether she was educated in a first world university or taught in a third world slum a would be Light tends to make the most of whatever opportunities she had. The Hope-Engineers recruit heavily from the ranks of teacher's pets, library bookworms and self professed nerds. Professors and PhD students are rarer, most Princesses Blossom before graduation.

Despite their Queen's love of science and technology, it is not necessary for a Hope-Engineer to be (or aspire to be) a scientist or work in a technical field. The Court's welcomes anyone who believes in the value of thinking things through. Only around half the Court can be said to work directly in an academic or technical profession, which includes a large crop of librarians, teachers and other educators. Regardless of background, most of the Court sincerely believes in the potential for technology to create a better world.

## *Character Creation*

Intelligence and Wits are both highly prized among Crystals. Intelligence is vital for making sense of data, while Wits is valued for spotting patterns and noticing important details. Many also focus on Composure or Resolve, either to keep their heads clear and emotions under control, or to keep one's mind on the facts no matter how strong their emotions run. If a Light doesn't have Investigation, she tends to pick it up fairly quickly in their efforts to get the facts of whatever problem he's facing. Many Crystals have at least a few dots spread across Computer, Crafts, Academics, and Science. Those who seek to understand the strange things of the World of Darkness often take dots in Occult. Persuasion and Expression also are fairly common, Persuasion for convincing other to follow the plan a Light has made, and Expression for explaining and teaching. Larceny and Stealth see use in getting information that can't be obtained any other way.

Socially the Court of Diamonds favours Contacts, for the access to information it provides. Many find themselves joining scientific or engineering projects and a tight community with shared goals can easily lead to both Mandate and Allies. More than any other Court the Hope-Engineers enjoy access to mental Merits. Many have strange abilities such as an eidetic memory or common sense granted to them by their Blossoming, others have studied all their life and have abilities like Encyclopediac knowledge to prove it.

## **Heraldry**

Lights often have a scientific, technological, or futuristic feel to their Regalia. For some, their regalia calls to mind science fiction; computer readouts built into sleeves or gloves, gadgets such as scanners, energy weapons, or palmtop computers, clothes made from metal, plastic, or some strange material that defies categorization. The superhero look is fairly common among the Hope-Engineers, with colors tending towards white or the brighter shades of blue. Many Regalia shed light in some manner. Others have a Regalia that call to mind professions of learning; many Lights wear glasses as part of their Regalia, whether or not they normally need them. Some have long coats reminiscent of a lab coat, while others have vests, boots, and practical looking clothing suitable for explorers, archeologists, or others who look to learn things far from a lab. No matter the style, the Regalia of many Crystals features a distinct lack of anything that would be inconvenient or unwieldy a normal costume, despite the fact Regalia doesn't have to obey such rules.

## **Echo**

A Light's Echo is like a cold splash of water, it removes the sleepiness from the corner of your eyes and makes it easier to think.

## **Practical Magic**

The followers of the Queen of Diamonds are very, very good at using their heads. In mundane or transformed states, Crystals and Lights may spend wisps to add bonus dice to any Intelligence, Wits, or Resolve rolls. Normally, each Wisp spent adds 1 die to a single roll; high Belief increases the bonus.

## **Invocation: Acqua**

The Philosopher Queen focuses the lights of knowledge and reason into the Invocation of Acqua, and the Crystals gain mastery of that Invocation more swiftly than any other. It is linked with the virtues the Crystal-eyed holds dear, such as clarity of mind, honesty in word and deed, deep understanding, and to the emotions of curiosity and wonder. It is also tied to the classical element of water, and to liquids in general. The invoked Charms and upgrades based on Acqua relate to these things and to phenomena connected to these.

Acqua applies at no cost when the target of a Princess' Charm is water or ice, or when she has spent at least one turn studying her target during the scene and nothing significant has happened to it since. It also applies without cost when a Princess intends to teach someone, to master a body of knowledge, to prove or refute a theory, to discover things previously unknown to anyone, and to carry out a strategy she has previously formulated.

The Invocation aids only those who are open and candid in all their dealings. A Princess who deceives another person in any fashion, be it simple falsehood, sophistry, or material omission, cannot apply Acqua for the rest of the scene, unless the deception is necessary to shield an innocent from harm, or to keep a secret given her in confidence. A Princess may reserve what she knows, if it isn't relevant and no one asks her to inform them, and apply Acqua; she may not, however, cause another to believe what is untrue.

## *Quote*

Your heart can show you where you need to go, but only your head can get you there.

## *Stereotypes*

- Clubs: You've got some good points, but I have absolutely no idea what you're trying to accomplish.
- Hearts: We can learn a lot from the Kingdom, but you can't just imitate its ways blindly and expect them to work today.

- Spades: They're excellent when it comes to making you think ... but are they *never* serious?
- Swords: When you need a grand, dramatic gesture, call for them. When you need subtlety, call for someone - anyone - else.
- Tears: Look, it's obvious - if you didn't live in that dank hole, you wouldn't need to steal the world's hope. Why don't you move out?
- Storms: The ones who let their hate and anger control them, I can deal with. They ones who are still rational, I understand and that scares me like nothing else.
- Mirrors: Someone needs to deflate their egos before they get someone killed.
- Vampires: You're a problem. I solve problems.
- Werewolves: I'll stay out of your way, try and stay out of mine.
- Mages: They're dangerous - not because they have fireballs, but because their understanding of reality is fundamentally wrong.
- Prometheans: What "are" you?
- Changelings: The more I learn, the less sense they make. Thankfully, they don't seem to be an issue.
- Sin-Eaters: They know a lot about working with the dead, but they don't seem to understand how death works.
- Mad Scientists: They're dangerous - not because they have death rays, but because their understanding of reality is fundamentally wrong.
- Leviathans: Find wonders in the deeps, whoever said that can't have known what's really in the deeps.
- Hunters: They do study mysteries, I'll give them that. I wish they weren't so quick to shoot them.
- Mortals: If we can teach them to think, they will make the world perfect.

## *Inspiration*

Sailor Mercury, Washu Hakubi, Iron Man, Watanabe Eriko



# The Queen of Hearts

**AKA:** The Rose Bride, The Gentle Patroness, The Queen Regnant

**Followers' Epithets:** Flowers, Gallants, Jewels

**Kingdom:** Andarta

*I know what you think of society, you see nothing but the people at the top having dinner with politicians and hiring expensive lawyers. A big system to keep the rich rich, and the poor poor. Read a history book some day. You will see that oppression used to be the sword, not the law. That is why I believe in our society, where you can only see how far we have left to go I see how far we've come. We are on the right path, the future will be built upon the foundations of our history.*

*So, can I count on your vote?*

The Queen of Hearts bids her subjects to restore the Kingdom's spirit to the modern world. The followers of Hearts believe a better world has already been built on the back of principles of civilisation and by serving the people as judges, leaders and lawmakers the Flowers believe they can make it better yet.

## Tales of the Kingdom

The Queen of Hearts rules the city states of the Andarta Plains from her palatial estate. Within the Queen presides over her court from a throne of red granite and gold. She is everything a Queen could be. Regal, dignified, just, kind, possessed of a gentle sense of humour and easy upon the eye. Her skin is delicately adorned with ointments and perfume. She is clad in elegant and extravagant styles drawn by the royal tailors from all across the world and history to show the reach of their lieges influence. However she presents herself she is as composed as a flawless diamond, every word and action is deliberate. When she hears the request of her petitioners her court fills with the rustle of paper as an army of clerks search through scrolls and tomes for precedent of similar problems long since solved.

It is easy for a Princess of Hearts to talk with her Queen. She can learn the protocols in advance and use their predictability for reassurance. She will call the Queen by her title, and the Queen will call the Princess with her title. It helps that the Queen of Hearts can spot nervousness or awe a mile away and deftly puts the Princess at her ease. When the Princess speaks the Queen is an active listener, guiding the Princess with short questions but never taking the conversation until it is her time. In turn she expects the same courtesy from the Princess. While the formality and protocol can make it hard for a Princess to connect with the women beneath the crown; as two crowns talking for the good of their peoples it could not be more ideal.

The Queen of Hearts is a Queen wearing a mask. She is not a woman wearing the mask of a Queen, the few people who have seen her in private all agree she is a queen through and through. No, the Gentle Patroness is a Queen with a crown for every occasion. In times of peace she is a public speaker without peer and a patron of charities and the arts. In times of uncertainty she is a diplomat, a peacemaker and a rock of stability. In times of war she is a warrior-queen, the first to charge and the last to retreat.

Among her titles is The Rose Bride. How the Queen of Hearts gave her own heart to another is a tale sung by bards throughout her kingdom. In her very first life, many many incarnations before she became a Queen, she married a young Prince. Their devotion to each other was so strong that in every life that followed the two fell in love and wed anew. Not once in any of their lives has either been unfaithful to their marriage. Though a diplomat by nature he is known as the Queen's Champion. He does not defend his' wife's life, for any foe that can threaten a Queen has nothing to fear from a Noble. He defends the Queen's honour, for in the court of Hearts it is considered proper that the stronger fighter in any duel

takes a handicap. When one is as powerful as a Queen the only possible handicap is to send a Champion to fight in your place.

## *Philosophy*

At the core of the Queen of Hearts' creed is the virtue of trust, and of faithfulness to a trust. The principles of her creed express the need to inspire trust, and to keep intact what has been entrusted. Everything she teaches follows from a single principle: "A crown is a symbol of responsibility"

### **Flourish in Community**

No one can stand alone against all the Dark and survive; but people who trust each other prevail against anything evil can do. The Flowers and Gallants take it upon themselves to weave webs of trust, standing with friends and allies, obeying rulers, and guiding followers; in these webs they hope to catch the fitful gleams of Light that fall into the world and collect them into eternal beacons. They build and tend communities, write codes of law and establish customs for people who have none of their own, or have abandoned the societies they were born in. The ordered community, in which everyone has a role and no one is an exile, is the strongest possible bastion the Light can have.

### **Honour Tradition**

Tradition is a trust – a store of wisdom laid in by past generations, to guide us in the present, and be handed on to the future. More than that, Traditions are also our shared social identity. The Flowers and Gallants do their best to breathe life into the rules and customs of the societies they find themselves in, especially the one they're born to. They are reluctant to flout a convention, especially when they don't know the reasons for it. However, the Radiant are here to improve the world, not preserve it as it is, and when the Flowers see a Tradition they cannot condone they seek to replace it rather than remove it. The Gallants often use those Traditions they remember from past lives in the Kingdom when they need a substitute, but they can just as easily borrow something from the neighbouring culture (especially if they wish to bring them together) or formalise that awesome party their friends repeat every year.

### **Authority Must Be Earned**

A Princess of Hearts, by her nature and training, becomes the keeper of many people's trust; therefore she must be worthy of it, both in her own conduct and in the behavior she tolerates. More than any other Hopeful, Flowers and Gallants are expected to hold authority and wield it responsibly. When a threat to a whole society appears, Flowers are the ones who rouse its members to action, coordinate their responses, and ensure everyone does what's needed. In ordinary times, Gallants are courteous, friendly and compassionate to all, lest they give anyone pain; but they have their burden, heavier than most, and don't allow themselves to forget it. Moreover, they must not take their position for granted. If her society rejects a Flower's rule, or deposes her from it, the fault is hers not theirs; and if they proceed to disaster that she would have avoided, her failure to gain their trust is all the more grievous.

## *Duties*

A Flower's duties can be to build societies, to guard the traditions of the past, or even to stand vigilant at the border, but they always share one common theme. A Flower's duties revolve around people.

Champions of Hearts lead from the front, they specialise in inspiring and leading their troops. On the battlefield tactical acumen and a strong commanding voice are as important as a good sword arm. Off the battlefield a Gallant must know how to keep moral high and foster a spirit of brotherhood among her troops. If she is skilled at her tasks a Gallant's fighting prowess shows itself through every one of her companions.

Graces of Hearts are sometimes called Hearts of Hearts for the Queen and Calling fit together hand in glove. A Heart of Hearts builds societies, they lay down and exemplify the virtues people aspire to.

They are both diplomats and leaders. It's a huge amount of work, but you are expected to have help from your friends.

Menders of Hearts focus on human problems. They are more likely to be counselors and therapists than doctors or nurses. The tools of a Mender are a good common sense understanding of people, words of encouragement and a winning smile.

Seekers of Hearts seek to understand their societies from tip to toe. They can be historians unearthing long forgotten traditions, reporters and bloggers who speak about the lives of their fellows. Yet to the Gallants understanding is not for its own sake, it is for a purpose. They understand not only the unwritten rules of society, but the purpose of those rules and they use that understanding to purge corruption and fight abuses of the system in all their forms.

Troubadours of Hearts incorporate the themes and virtues of their society into their work. They honour the heroes of old and create monuments to the ideals people aspire to. But at heart their work is simple, through their art the Troubadours bind people together with a strong group identity.

## *Background*

Even before they Blossomed the followers of Hearts often had a lot of respect for the institutions of society. They (or at least their parents) hail from backgrounds in politics or law. Others cut their teeth with the codes and institutions of the playground or come from tight knit communities whose values fit neatly into the Court of Hearts. A lot of Princesses are attracted to the court because they wish to be one of the glamorous leaders they see among the Gallants but the Court's belief that leadership is hard work and duty means few stay. However the Court of Hearts does have a number of converts from the other Courts who felt working with Mortals and building societies provided a way to work on the big picture their own Court's had lacked.

Regardless of their Background Flowers are always ok with the idea of others depending on them. Nearly all have some prior experience in being the responsible one, even if only to a younger brother or sister. While the Court doesn't exactly reject introverts or the socially unskilled it does expect them to work hard to overcome these limitations. Even the Gallants who have prior experience in taking responsibility for another have rarely held another's life in their hands, and they better start preparing for that first time.

## *Character Creation*

Flowers and Gallants try to involve themselves in the lives of people around them, so many have above average Social Attributes. Those who actively strive to lead people emphasize Presence, while those who prefer more low-key or personal means focus on Manipulation. Empathy is a vital skill in order to notice the feelings, undercurrents, and motives of the people a Gallant wishes to help. Socialize and Persuasion are common, allowing a Flower to integrate herself into a group and sway others into doing the right thing and upholding the ideals of the Kingdom (whether they know of the Kingdom or not). Politics is also a common skill, used to improve the local political situation or simply use existing bureaucracies to their own ends. Subterfuge sees occasional use, mainly to keep important information from people who would use it selfishly or to protect the identities of a Princess's allies from those who would persecute them.

Gallants who see merit in the society and political structure of the Kingdom frequently lean Academics to better understand both the society of the Kingdom and the modern world. Many old traditions generally involve art or music of one kind or another, so Expression is fairly common even for non-Troubadours. A Flower often places Mental attributes over Physical ones in order to better understand society and guide the people around her; Champions are the exception here, who emphasize their Physical attributes in order to fulfill their roles as protectors.

Of all the Courts Flowers are the most likely to have social merits. Allies, Contacts and even Status are common. As are Circle and Mandate, for the Flowers do their best work among existing social structures.

## Heraldry

Regalia for the Nobles of Hearts strongly favors clothing in traditional styles, particularly formal dress. Elegant ball gowns and elaborate jewelry for phylacteries are very common among the Flowers, as are flowers or flower designs (roses especially) as accents, and pastels, rose-pink or -red, and shades of white. (It's not unknown for this sort of regalia to be mistaken for a wedding dress.) Many Gallants follow the complementary mode of mens' formal wear, appearing in tuxedos, or in white tie, top hat and tails. The more practically minded (usually Champions) go back farther, and model their regalia on styles more archaic but less confining; the swashbuckling Cavalier, the wuxia hero, the knight in shining armor. These turn up on both sexes. In all cases, a Flower or Gallant is dressed well, showing off the best appearance of a high and civilized age.

## Echo

A Gallant's Echo makes it easier for people to get along, it helps smooth over many of those tiny unintentional bits of rudeness that can add up to ruining your day.

## Practical Magic

Princesses who follow the Queen of Hearts are adept navigators through all manner of social hazards. In either the mundane or transformed state, Flowers and Gallants may spend Wisps to add bonus dice on any roll based on Presence, Manipulation, or Composure. Normally, each Wisp spent adds 1 die to a single roll; high Belief increases the bonus.

## Invocation: Terra

The principles of the Queen of Hearts find their magical expression in the Invocation of Terra, and her Flowers and Gallants learn it more easily than any other. It is bound up with the things the Queen values: mutual trust and peace, the responsible use of authority, sensitive compassion, and punctilious courtesies. It is also tied to earth and stone, especially when it has been refined and property constructed for human service, as proud cathedrals, elegant jewellery or solid stone walls.

Terra applies at no cost when the target of a Princess' Charm is earth or stone, including all forms of gemstones; and when her target is a non-supernatural human being who gives informed consent to the Charm. It also applies without cost when a Princess intends to resolve a conflict without violence, to make someone or something beautiful, to give requested aid without expecting any return, to coordinate the efforts of several people in a project, or to help a lawful authority in their mandated duties.

Terra requires both decorum and consideration for others. A Princess who is rude or insensitive to another person without cause, or who knowingly breaks a rule of formal etiquette, cannot apply the Invocation for the rest of the scene.

## *Quote*

We're not calling ourselves Princesses because our childhood fantasies came true. Nobility means something.

## *Stereotypes*

- Clubs: Rough and unmannerly, but their hearts are in the right place.
- Diamonds: Those towers of abstract reasoning leave me cold. You can't keep faith with real people by a theorem.
- Spades: Yes, I suppose the mayor does deserve to have something happen to him ... why are you giggling?

- Swords: Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
- Tears: We both talk about nobility and duty. The difference is you use it as a justification, I remember what it actually means.
- Storms: At least the Swords only risk themselves ...
- Mirrors: For the Light's sake, grow up and be responsible for once.
- Vampires: Not all traditions are worth preserving.
- Werewolves: Herd? Damn right I'm part of the herd. A herd billions strong who've claimed this whole earth. Now tell me, what is your little pack going to do about that?
- Mages: You talk about Atlantis a lot but you only ever talk about its magic. What were the people like? Were the citizens content, the rulers just and the judges fair?
- Prometheans: They share a culture, even when they haven't met another of their kind. There's something we're not seeing, something important.
- Changelings: They had nothing to work with but scars and they built it into a society. Respect them for that if nothing else.
- Sin-Eaters: You don't snub death by laughing in its face. You snub death by building something that will last long after you're gone.
- Mad Scientists: How did you convince him to turn himself in... An equation for the human mind? That can't be right, I don't believe it! I won't believe it!
- Leviathans: Every city you build eats itself alive, you can't even live with your own family and that's why I'm not afraid of you!
- Hunters: If you claim to serve the Light then work in the light not the shadows.
- Mortals: It's their world, they just need someone to teach them that.

## *Inspiration*

Queen Serenity, Minky Momo, Princess Celestia

# The Queen of Spades

**AKA:** The Queen of Knaves, The Queen of Thieves

**Followers' Epithets:** Knaves (affectionately derogatory), Rogues (affectionately derogatory), Scoundrels (affectionately derogatory)

**Kingdom:** The Confederacy of Four Winds

*Why does everyone think we knaves are lazy? Being a Knave is hard work, last week I had five parties, five! That was a lot of planning, and dancing all night really tires you out. Then I spent all last night watching great stand ups and making notes. I know everyone in school's name, that took weeks of work, I had to write songs to help me remember, and then there's birthdays and everyone's favourite foods and what kind of jokes they like. After all that you have to keep yourself full of energy because any time something goes wrong people expect you to be the fast thinker, and you can't do that when you're tired.*

*But it's all worthwhile when I see my friends smile.*

A lot of the world's problems aren't nearly as hard as we "know" they are. If we could just step outside the box and give ourself space to look at other ideas, space to breathe, we could accomplish so much. The Queen of Knaves leads a Confederation of Princesses who challenge common knowledge and teach people to laugh at the absurdities of the rules which define them. They do the Light's work with a quick wit, nimble hand and lateral thinking.

## Tales of the Kingdom

Drifting above the mountain-side settlements that form The Confederacy of Four Winds the Queen of Spades rules from a palace carved out of the clouds themselves. Blessed with limitless energy the Queen breezes through her palace and amusements trailing courtiers and petitioners in her wake. Her regal presence comes not from her appearance but from her character. She is youthful, yet she possesses a presence that blows from her; carrying with it a sense of confidence and power, the smell of windswept desert sand, spices and the Queen's infectious laughter. Fashion at the royal court is a turbulent affair. The Queen changes her style frequently; always trying to keep one step ahead of fashions. This has memorably led to her occasionally preceding over a court of punks and ravers while dressed in ermine robes.

In conversation with her Princesses the Queen of Knaves breezes from topic to topic; she actively resists her Princess' trying to pin her down to a single topic. It's a game to her and unlike the citizens a Princess is expected to be skilled enough to play. Asking the Queen to stay focused (or worse: Get annoyed) is the fastest way to lose the game. If a Princess keeps her wits about her she may discover the Queen has answered all her questions (though not always in the order the questions were asked; and the answers may be hidden in riddles or metaphor). The Queen favours Princesses who play well, any Knave who can adopt her Queen's breezy style of casual conversation and trick the Queen of Knaves into answering a hidden question scores highly indeed.

Her enemies say that the Queen of Knaves was a rebel before her coronation and remains a rebel at heart. Her supporters and citizens ask who better to lead a nation of tricksters, scoundrels and merchants than the Queen of Thieves herself? However the weight of truth travels with these accusations. The Queen is nostalgic for her days as a rebel and frequently leaves her throne unattended to travel her kingdom as a commoner, playing pranks and jokes before departing with the winds. She's infamously responsible for about half the graffiti in her kingdom. Her supporters again retort that what she lacks as an administrator, she makes up for by being the laughing heart of her people.

## *Philosophy*

The Queen of Spades shows that you can solve any problem with an open mind and a smile.

### **Find the Center of the Problem**

The Queen of Spades delights in unorthodox solutions. She has reached infamy for immediately suggesting one sentence solutions to complicated problems and insisting her followers prove it won't work or else carry it out. Many of these suggestions are obviously absurd but it doesn't matter, their purpose is not to solve the problem. By playing the devils advocate with a bad idea she forces her followers to question "obvious" assumptions and ingrained dogma and so learn the first of her Philosophies: To look beyond the obvious and the assumed, to question what the real problem is, and to act only when she has found it. If the best answers are obvious after they've been found, then they are already obvious to she who just looks in the right way.

### **Light as the summer breeze**

A wise man once said "You're only in trouble if you get caught". As the ruler of a Confederacy of good natured scoundrels, quick witted street rats and merchants the Queen of Knaves teaches how to avoid getting caught. The Rogues are taught that a subtle action is better than an obvious one. That it's best to talk your way out of trouble if you can. They are taught to act quickly and decisively, making snap decisions on the fly then vanish before the consequences catch up to them. Finally the Princesses of Spades are taught how to run very fast.

### **Laughter is she Best Medicine**

You can't change the past, but you can choose how you react to it. Who would prefer to cry than to laugh? To the Queen of Spades laughter really is the best medicine, and a positive attitude is just the thing to get a Princess who's feeling down out the door and fixing her problems.

## *Duties*

Champions of Spades often rely on speed and agility in favour of raw power, if they have a weakness it's a tendency to rely on their ability to avoid a blow and consequently Knaves can't take a hit as well as some other Courts. When fighting alongside other Princesses many specialise in harassing their foes support while their allies fight the main battle. Outside of combat Champions of Spades are peerless scouts and messengers, before the spread of modern communication systems they served as a vital backbone in communication, trade and governance. Their powers of speed and flight made the knaves vital despite their carefree attitude.

Graces of Spades are not the teachers, mentors or diplomats you'd find in the other Courts. They don't want to change the way you think, a Grace of spades just wants to turn that frown upside down! The life of every party and the first onto the dance floor; everyone has a great time if there's a Grace of Spades around. Graces of Spades are often called upon by their counterparts in the other Courts, especially when they're working with large groups of mortals. It is easier to keep people's attention when they're enjoying being here but it's a double edged sword for the Knaves bring a party atmosphere that can be counterproductive when the Princess is working on serious matters.

Menders of Spades have an unusual focus, but a vital one. They heal the ills people inflict upon themselves. Closer to a teacher than a psychiatrist the Menders seek out those who've internalised harmful views of themselves; whether it's a cruel parent's insults or a demeaning cultural stereotype. They subtly and deftly they force their patents to confront their opinion again and again until they realise at last that it was no more solid than a dark cloud before the sun and vanishes in a puff of wind.

Seekers of Spades are taught to think laterally and to keep there eyes open. Often the answers to the toughest problems is just lying out in the open, just waiting to be seen by someone open minded

enough to accept it. In a Nakama a Seeker of Spades is the one to come up with the plan, directing the group to unorthodox but effective solutions, they do their best work with small focused goals.

Whatever medium she uses, a Troubadour of Spades is the mistress of two arts: How to make people laugh and how to make people think. Some are out there day after day in the worst, most deprived areas showing people how to laugh despite it all. Others are renowned for art that looks at old ideas in new ways and finds fresh answers to questions that were long thought solved. The very best combine thought with laughter as peerless satirists who can have you laughing riotously at your ideological foes until you realise the jokes been on you.

## *Background*

The free spirit of the Knaves is usually evident even before they Blossom. The Court of Spades draws its members from various countercultural groups (or as close as it can get given the young age of the average Blossoming), quite a few members were even outright criminals who Blossomed through a heroic effort to turn their life around. Even when they aren't actually members of countercultural groups would-be spades often have some of the attitude. They are the self proclaimed jokers, slackers and class clowns who fight with authority, usually for the fun of it.

Joining the Court of Clubs encourages these traits, but also softens them in its own way. Declaring war upon "The Man" is less of an issue when you can just fly away, and when you can live on magic instead of a nine to five job. Knaves are more likely to make fun of what they see as wrong in society than they are to take up arms, and when they do decide to make a change their approach is often subtle, finessed and sometimes incomprehensible to others. It is usually delivered with a smile.

## *Character Creation*

As befitting a Court built in individualism and independence Knaves can be incredibly varied. Most have high scores in at least two Finesse attributes: Wits to live life outside the normal systems, Manipulation to get away with it. Dexterity isn't always favoured but if it is needed it tend to be high. Skills often emphasise the free spirited lifestyle: Survival to live on your own wits, Streetwise to make a fast buck without getting tied down to a nine to five job. Many knaves mix Persuasion and Subterfuge to talk their way out of trouble. For Merits many Rogue's dashing charm and witty nature leads to a high Circle, which compensates for how her philosophy is at odds with the responsibilities of a Mandate. Knaves often have very broad Contacts, especially Graces for she who throws great parties shall never want for friends. Physically Fleet of Foot and Fast Reflexes come naturally to a practitioner of Aria.

## **Heraldry**

The Heraldry of Spades is the light blues of wind, the greys of the clouds and the oranges and browns of falling autumn leaves. The Knaves tend to be very individualistic in their choice of Regalia but light breezy outfits mixed with countercultural symbols are common. So are subtle visual puns for the observant viewer.

## **Echo**

A knave's Echo tickles like a soft breeze, it's easier to laugh and easier to let go of what hurts you when a Princess of Spades is around.

## **Practical Magic**

A Princess of Spades should be as light and nimble as the wind. In either the mundane or transformed state, Knaves may spend Wisps to add bonus dice on any roll based on Wits, Dexterity or Manipulation. Normally, each Wisp spent adds 1 die to a single roll; high Belief increases the bonus.



## Invocation: Aria

The Invocation of Spades is Aria, the enviable lightness of being. It is the principle of detachment, the paradoxical unity of speed with forethought, and the laughter in the wind. Aria is taught by the Queen of Spades and her followers learn it easiest of all.

Aria applies at no cost when a Princess is blown by strong winds, moves at running speed or faster, or is at risk of falling from a height; and when the target of her Charm is the air, or other gases. It also applies without cost when a Princess intends to catch someone by surprise, to make someone laugh, to cast doubts, to expose pretensions and humiliate arrogance, and to subvert formal rules of an organisation or society.

Aria will not support any assertion of authority over another person. A Princess is free to advise, to persuade, to appeal to friendship, and even to deceive (within the limits of Belief) while using Aria, but if she issues a command she cannot apply the Invocation for the rest of the scene.

## *Quote*

Lighten up! This will be fine, and if not we'll just run for it.

## *Stereotypes*

- Clubs: Good-natured sort, by and large - except when they're not. The little groan from a "Let's go clubbing" joke never gets old.
- Diamonds: I probably shouldn't take quite so much pleasure in pointing out when they're wrong. It's a rare enough thing that it's a treat, though.
- Hearts: The bigger you make your castles the more places there are for me to hide in. You're far too easy a target my dear.
- Swords: Halt dogooder! This is one of those bridges where you have to answer my riddles to pass.
- Tears: You might have kept part of the Kingdom alive, but you haven't made it worth living.
- Storms: They are so predictable, traps, ambushes, they just charge straight in.
- Mirrors: Those special powers, did you know they stop working if... oops! Too late!
- Vampires: They seem to be at the heart of any rotten power structure. I wonder; do they corrupt things, or are they just drawn to such things like flies to meat?
- Werewolves: Discretion is often the better part of valour when a pissed-off eight foot monster is on the prowl. But sometimes you just have to get between them and their victims to draw them off.
- Mages: Look at the puppet-masters, making society dance on strings to their tunes. Never let them catch you with scissors.
- Prometheans: Well it's like... where to begin... I don't usually have to explain what a joke is.
- Changelings: Ticksters and lawyers to a man. Don't try to beat them at their game of words and promises unless you're sure you're very good, or they'll ensnare you.
- Sin-Eaters: Partying in the face of death; you've got style! Hey, I've never tried rum before. Want to share a bottle?
- Mad Scientists: Oh, don't mind us. We're just watching but um, can we like, be the beautiful lab assistants and shout "It's Alive!" or something?
- Leviathans: Um, right, yeah, living in the sky is starting to look like a good idea.

- Hunters: Why are you so serious, ok I know why you're so serious, but you'd cope better if you laughed once in a while anyway.
- Mortals: Come on everyone, smile! Fill my heart with sunshine!

## *Inspiration*

Psiren (Fullmetal Alchemist), Saint Tail, Jack Sparrow, Ikuto Tsukiyomi, Pinkey Pie, Aladdin.

# The Queen of Swords

**AKA:** The Brightly Burning One, The Faithful Marshal, The Queen Errant

**Followers' Epithets:** Adventurers, Heroes, Martyrs

**Kingdom:** Aztallan

*Fire, fire gets a bit of a bad name these days, but fire is really life. Almost every living thing on the planet owes its life to the sun, and we owe everything that makes life worth living to the fire inside us. Life is meaningless if we don't feel anything from it: Laughter, hope, wonder, even sadness. Without them what's the point?*

*I guess, what I'm trying to say is. I love you, won't you come on an adventure with me? We'll see the world, try new things and maybe get into a few scrapes on the way. Even if we get burnt, pain is part of life and I wouldn't miss it for the world.*

Just as their magic lets them master the fire without, those who follow the Queen of Swords are consumed by the fire within. They are blazing heroic figures, driven by their passions. They will follow their hearts wherever it leads, even to their own deaths. The Court of Swords are called Martyrs too.

## Tales of the Kingdom

In the jungles of Aztallan the Queen of Swords dwells in her capital built upon an artificial plateau atop a mighty pyramid. Here The Faithful Marshal rules from an obsidian throne and burns through the royal itinerary in bored and clipped, but supremely competent tones. She is a powerful looking woman, beneath her skin lies well-defined wiry muscles, her eyes positively smoulder with power. Outside the excitement of a crisis The Queen Errant makes little attempt to pretend she wouldn't rather be digging up new insects in the jungle; usually she appears before her court in rugged outdoor wear. The Queen of Swords is skilled at managing her image, she just usually doesn't care; but when it is required (and she always knows when it's required) she'll appear before her court dressed in anything from formal robes to full military uniform. Her household servants quickly follow suit, decorating the palace and statues of past heroes to match. Visiting Princesses are expected to dress and act with appropriate formalities until things return to normal.

The Faithful Marshal treats her Princesses with the same unpolished honesty she treats her court. Though she is never actually rude she won't hide her emotions if she feels the Princess' petition to be uninteresting or something that the Princess should have been able to solve on her own. If the Queen comes to befriend a Princess it colours her public interactions just as much as her private interactions. The Queen of Swords has the unique ability to simultaneously be running her kingdom and relaxing with her friends (or even canoodling on the throne).

Whenever the opportunity presents itself The Queen Errant leaves her throne and wanders her kingdom. Righting wrongs, doing odd jobs and exploring the jungles which she claims dominion over. She sleeps rough, or in whichever subject's house is close at hand. While her people are never quite comfortable with their Queen asking for a job, how does one give orders to his own Queen, they have at least had plenty of time to get used to her habits. When she can't get out the palace she enjoys study, gymnastics or spending time with one of her many consorts. It is said that long time residents of Aztallan can tell when the Queen falls in love anew from cities away by watching the wheels of government slowing down. Famously she will not kiss a man or woman unless she is deeply in love.

## *Philosophy*

The Queen of Swords only ever gave one order. “Whatever you do, do it out of love”.

### **In the End, Only People Matter**

The Queen of Swords is not one for abstract morality and long Socratic debates about what is good and what is evil. Nor is she fond of formal systems of morality, duty or obligation, referring to them as either training wheels or a crutch. To the Queen of Swords morality can be reduced to a simple idea that everyone with Light in their hearts knows intuitively: If it hurts people then it is wrong. So don't do that. Furthermore The Queen believes that if one does not hold this truth in their heart then no amount of rules or regulations can make them good, but if a person is at heart good forcing them into an inappropriate social construct can crush their light. And so she teaches her followers to do what's right regardless of the rules, and she trusts them to know what's right.

### **Specialisation is for Insects**

A Princess of Swords should be able to: Compose a sonnet, survive a shipwreck, design an aircraft, recite the epic poems, win her true love's heart, set a bone, clean a building, cook dinner, give orders, take orders, fight like a gentleman in the arena, fight dirty in the streets. The Philosophy is a lot more complicated than just saying you should be able to do everything, rather it consists of two related ideas. The first and simpler is simply to always be broadening your horizons, try new things, learn new skills. The second, like all The Brightly Burning One's Philosophies is about people. While she has nothing against relying on another, Queen of Swords teaches that dependence must always be a matter of convenience not necessity. True dependency is a chain, it allows others to force you away from being true to yourself. That path leads away from the light.

### **Love Like a Flame**

The Brightly Burning One teaches her followers that their passions should blaze forth from them. They should feel with every fiber of their being: hope, joy, lust, sadness, fear, friendship, and especially love. Like a flame, their passions should light the way and bring warmth to the Princess and those around her, but she must be aware that like a flame if unattended her love will consume all before dying. The Princess should always know when it is time to let go lest she consumes herself. Yet when her very heart is at stake, her passions should burn everything in her path, even herself – like a flame.

## *Duties*

The followers of Swords are defined not so much by common duties but by a common approach to duties. They seek positions where they are free to follow their own methods and their own moral compasses rather than toe the line. Many see their duties as much about growing themselves as a person as it is about helping others and so seek to always find a new approach or a tougher challenge to stretch their limits.

Champions tend to find jobs outside of the normal social structures. They're more likely to be a private detective than a policewoman. More likely to specialise in deep sea rescue than be a fire fighter. They boast the most full time Darkspawn hunters of any Court. Champions of Swords are often trained to work independently, having the intelligence to plan, the strength to fight and the charisma to turn whoever is around them into an ally.

Graces often mentor on an individual level, seeking the maladjusted or the outcasts and helping them find where they can belong even if it's just a space within themselves. While often less versed in diplomacy than the other Courts Graces of Swords have some of the best connections to a variety of different cultures on a personal level thanks to the courts wanderlust and tendency to go adventuring. In more than a few cases they have turned someone's life around simply by encouraging them to move to a

culture to which they are better suited. Graces who focus on larger scale projects are often exceptional at inspiring the public, but often they lack the skills to direct the passion and energy they provoke.

Menders are more likely to volunteer in a small African village than a major, regulated, hospital, those who work with machines often do the same working in oil rigs or digging wells, or they specialise in obscure but still important technology where their unique skills let them demand to work their way. In both cases they are likely to become experts at doing more with fewer resources.

Seekers often specialise in fields that blend academic learning with either demanding physical or social requirements. Archaeology in war torn parts of the world, private detectives knowledgeable in both forensic science and the seedy underworld, botanical trips through the Amazon rainforest or they are successors to the great and dangerous explorations of the past delving deep into the Underworld or the Shadow. More social exploits can include living with remote tribes for years or finding other cultures closer to home, no few Seekers of Swords have spent time living with dangerous criminals or supernatural predators simply to learn of their lives.

Troubadours of Swords are like a change on the wind. They breeze into town smelling of foreign and exotic ideas – if you travel enough you can be foreign and exotic everywhere. Their art challenges norms but rarely opposes them (though some do take a delight in finding and shaking up repressed societies). She isn't saying the status quo is bad, only that it isn't the only way. Most take the effort to leave behind at least a few people who'll continue in the styles she teaches.

## *Background*

Many members of Swords were adventurers before they Blossomed, they may not have faced terrible danger or performed heroic deeds but from backpacking across Europe to teaching English in China they showed the Court's spirit of adventure and self reliance. Others tapped into a confidence they never had before their Blossoming, when you gain magical powers and a new body that's stronger and smarter than your old one confidence is a natural result. Regardless of when they discovered it, Heroes are comfortable living on their own abilities and often eager for new experiences or just to push themselves further.

Just as the Swords are the most adventurous of the Radiant, they are also the most passionate of the Radiant. Even before Blossoming they thought with their emotions, or really wished they had the confidence to do so. The court is overflowing with incurable romantics and people who are confident enough to follow their hearts into adventure, danger and whirlwind romances. While the Heroes are hardly stupid, they put little emphasis on personal safety when the alternative is an adventure.

## *Character Creation*

For Attributes Swords favour Intelligence, Strength and Presence equally and most are skilled at combining them in unusual ways to solve unusual problems. Heroes often have one or two dots in a wide variety of Skills to be self sufficient and because of their unusual, transient lifestyles. Survival is common among members who take the title of adventurer literally, as is Streetwise to find one's way around cities from London to Hong Kong. Many Heroes know how to fight, and Persuasion is often favoured for finding allies or peaceful solutions.

For Merits the Martys often favour physical merits, social and even mental merits are harder to cultivate with an independent lifestyle. The Retainer Merit is surprisingly common, often representing a Sworn travelling companion. The philosophy of Swords makes it easy to form attachments. However it also teaches that one cannot live forever in another shadow so Princesses of Swords see this time as almost an apprenticeship where they teach and broaden their companion's horizons with a grand adventure before parting ways.

## **Heraldry**

The court of Swords tends to favour blazing Regalia. Reds, golds and whites are common. While it would not be accurate to call them flamboyant the Heroes wear their hearts on their sleeves. Their Regalia often contains iconography that boasts of virtues they uphold and heroic deeds in their past.

## Echo

A Hero's Echo inflames both passion and self confidence in those around her. She seems to light the path with her presence and blazing charisma.

## Practical Magic

A Princess of Swords should be a well rounded individual. Able to pen a theorem, command the dance floor and throw a hefty right hook. Whether in your Transformed or normal state, you may spend Wisps to add to dice pools involving your Power attributes – Strength, Intelligence, and Presence. Normally, each Wisp spent adds 1 die to a single roll; high Belief increases the bonus.

## Invocation: Fuoco

Fuoco applies at no cost when the target of a Princess' Charm is a flame, on fire, or hot enough to burn; and when the target is someone or something the Princess loves. It also applies without cost when a Princess intends to aid a person she loves, to strike at enemies with her full force, to take great risks for great gains, to inspire others to heroic endeavors, and at the culmination of a major campaign.

The Invocation abandons Princesses who abandon their beloved. A Princess who betrays or otherwise injures a person she loves or has loved cannot apply Fuoco until the one she has hurt forgives her for the injury, or until a full lunar month has passed.

Several Fuoco Charms create flames out of the love one person feels for another. The nature of the love determines the color of these flames, and the love's strength fuels their heat. Consult this table when a Princess uses these Charms:

Nature	Color	Strength	Intensity
Love for an "idea" of a person not intimately known	Translucent	Acquaintance	1st degree (+0)
Patience, loyalty, respect	Dark red/orange	Good friends	2nd degree (+1)
Contentment, pride, deep concern	Blue	Lover, close family	3rd degree (+2)
Dedication, purpose, joy	White	Total devotion	White hot (+3)
Obsession	Shifting, unnatural		
"As you wish"	Rainbow		

## Quote

I have no regrets, I'm doing this because I love you.

## Stereotypes

- Clubs: I think after spending so much time trying to be part of everyone else, they've forgotten who they are.
- Diamonds: Good at writing a theory, but unable to take it out of the ivory tower and into the real world.
- Hearts: Sometimes traditions and etiquette are just a crutch. If you really know who you are and what mattered to you then you wouldn't need them. Not like they do.
- Spades: Great for a laugh, I just wish they cared more deeply
- Tears: There's no love in what they do, it's nothing but fear.
- Storms: Find something to love, then fight for it. If you do it the other way around you'll end like these girls.
- Mirrors: You're not supposed to only love yourself.

- Vampires: I think the reason fire hurts them so much is that it reminds them what they've lost. They really are dead, on the inside.
- Werewolves: If I was sure they wouldn't rage and splatter my intestines everywhere, I'd be their closest friend.
- Mages: I don't care how long your theory is, it's still wrong. If anything is real it's what's in your heart, not magic.
- Prometheans: See! I told you, it all comes down to the same thing. Fire and Humanity.
- Changelings: You loved something so much it let you defeat gods and escape hell. You can't give up now!
- Sin-Eaters: Keeping the flame alive in the face of death; I'd respect that, if I thought it meant anything to them.
- Mad Scientists: I think they are missing something. I think that they became what they are to try and find it, and they're still looking.
- Leviathans: Everyone changes other people just by being near them. If we're all like beautiful stars orbiting each other then these are black holes drawing in and giving nothing back. Pure perfect evil.
- Hunters: HEY! Why the hell are you shooting at me!? I'm on your side, here!
- Mortals: I'm going to take you on an adventure and break you out of that shell. Just you watch me.

## *Inspiration*

Sailor Uranus, Nanoha Takamachi, Captain Marvel, Indiana Jones, Sayaka Miki, Aquaman (from the Batman the Brave and the Bold TV series)

# Chapter 2: Coronations

*Therefore I am sure that this, my Coronation, is not the symbol of a power and a splendor that are gone but a declaration of our hopes for the future, and for the years I may, by God's Grace and Mercy, be given to reign and serve you as your Queen*  
—Queen Elizabeth II

This chapter covers the process of creating a character.

## *Creating a Princess*

Begin by designing the Princess as a mortal, according to the World of Darkness core book: allocate Attributes and Skills, calculate the derived traits, and choose a Virtue and Vice. Then add the Hopeful template.

### **The Royal Template**

#### **Step One: Add a Calling**

The first step in creating a Princess is to choose her Calling. A Calling is the fundamental way the individual Princess brings hope to the world, her Calling also gives the Princess a free dot in one of two Transformed Attributes. There are five Callings available to choose from:

- Champion: Defenders of the weak and helpless. (Strength or Resolve)
- Grace: Elegant and noble, the voices and diplomats of the Reborn. (Presence or Composure)
- Mender: Those who take wounded flesh and wounded hearts and make them whole. (Intelligence or Stamina)
- Seeker: Hunters of truth, banishers of lies, revealers of the hidden. (Intelligence or Wits)
- Troubadour: Artists and exemplars who inspire greatness in others. (Presence or Dexterity)

#### **Step two: Add a Queen**

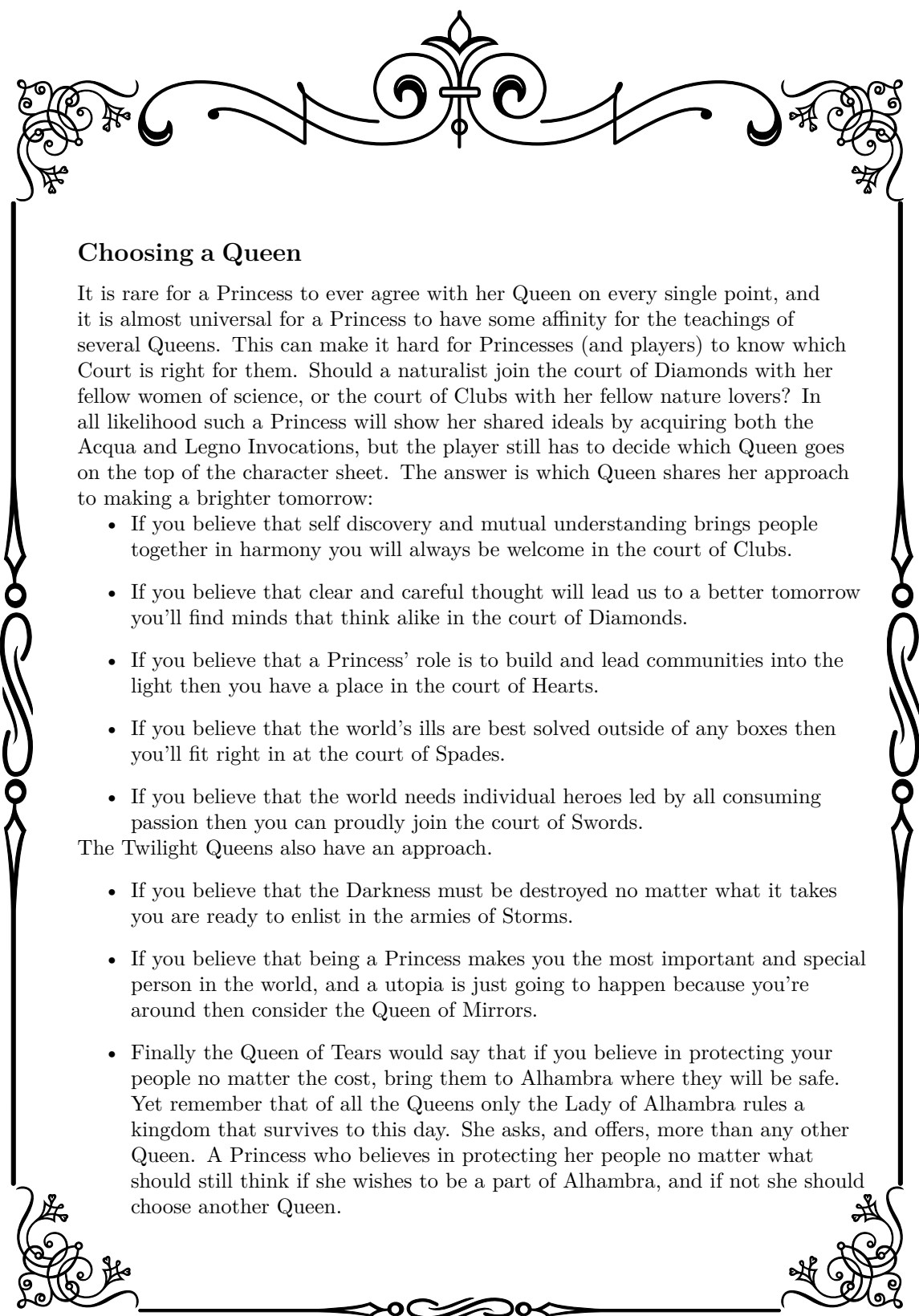
Once the five Radiant Queens governed their Kingdoms in the name of the light, now they are dead but their minds and souls live on in the Dreamlands. From beyond the veil of sleep the Queens mentor the Radiant, a Princess can accept a position in a Queen's court, a bond of both personal loyalty but also mystical affinity that enhances a Princess' magic.

There are five Radiant queens that a player can follow, in addition there are three Twilight Queens who are not usually available to player characters.

- Clubs: The Queen of Wilds leads the coven of Princesses who seek to live in harmony with the world.



- Diamonds: The Queen of Lights leads the conclave of progressive-minded Princesses who believe in constantly adapting and refining the Kingdom's techniques.
- Hearts: The Queen among Queens leads the court of Princesses who focus on communities, and their place within society, first and foremost.
- Spades: The Queen of Knaves leads a confederacy of winking scoundrels and good-hearted rogues who believe the best application of the rules is to break them.
- Swords: The Queen of the Lost leads the company of Princesses who believe that inner strength and passion should always light the way.



## Choosing a Queen

It is rare for a Princess to ever agree with her Queen on every single point, and it is almost universal for a Princess to have some affinity for the teachings of several Queens. This can make it hard for Princesses (and players) to know which Court is right for them. Should a naturalist join the court of Diamonds with her fellow women of science, or the court of Clubs with her fellow nature lovers? In all likelihood such a Princess will show her shared ideals by acquiring both the Acqua and Legno Invocations, but the player still has to decide which Queen goes on the top of the character sheet. The answer is which Queen shares her approach to making a brighter tomorrow:

- If you believe that self discovery and mutual understanding brings people together in harmony you will always be welcome in the court of Clubs.
- If you believe that clear and careful thought will lead us to a better tomorrow you'll find minds that think alike in the court of Diamonds.
- If you believe that a Princess' role is to build and lead communities into the light then you have a place in the court of Hearts.
- If you believe that the world's ills are best solved outside of any boxes then you'll fit right in at the court of Spades.
- If you believe that the world needs individual heroes led by all consuming passion then you can proudly join the court of Swords.

The Twilight Queens also have an approach.

- If you believe that the Darkness must be destroyed no matter what it takes you are ready to enlist in the armies of Storms.
- If you believe that being a Princess makes you the most important and special person in the world, and a utopia is just going to happen because you're around then consider the Queen of Mirrors.
- Finally the Queen of Tears would say that if you believe in protecting your people no matter the cost, bring them to Alhambra where they will be safe. Yet remember that of all the Queens only the Lady of Alhambra rules a kingdom that survives to this day. She asks, and offers, more than any other Queen. A Princess who believes in protecting her people no matter what should still think if she wishes to be a part of Alhambra, and if not she should choose another Queen.

## Step three: Add Invocations

All Princesses draw magic from their Beliefs and hopes, but when a Princess becomes a Queen her beliefs and philosophies echo across the souls of humanity. Any Princess can feel that echo within her own soul

and she can draw on it to enhance her own magic. Each Princess starts with three dots in Invocations, one of which must be placed into her Queen's own Invocation. Courtless Princesses have a free choice of Invocations, but they may not place all three of their dots in the same Invocation.

### Step four: Add Charms

Every Princess knows Charms, special talents and magical spells that she knows how to use. A Princess starts with five dots in Charms, at least 2 dots must be for Charms in the 3 families the character's Calling has affinity for; the others may come from any family. To take a 2-dot Charm, you must also take a different 1-dot Charm of the same family. You may take upgrades for any Charm you know; each upgrade costs 1 of your starting Charm dots. If you take an invoked Charm or upgrade, you must have the prerequisite dots in the Invocation.

Should the player wish she may also trade at most one Charm dot for 1 transformed Attribute dot, or 2 transformed Skill dots.

### Step Five: Add Inner Light

A Princess' magic shines out of her soul to illuminate the world. The raw power of her hopes and feelings is represented by her Inner Light. A Starting Princess has one dot in Inner Light, but she may spend three Merit dots to increase it to two, or six Merit dots to increase it to three.

### Step Six: Add Wisps

Wisps are the fuel for a Princess, a measure of both raw magic and emotional energy. A Princess begins with half her starting Wisp pool, as measured by Inner Light, plus the higher of her Circle and Mandate.

### Step Seven: Add Belief

Belief is the Morality trait for Princesses. It measures not just how moral she is in word and deed, but also her confidence that those morals and principles can survive in the World of Darkness.

A Princess begins with one dot of Belief for every dot of Morality she possessed when she Blossomed. When creating a new character this means she will start with seven dots of Belief. Unlike other supernatural beings in the World of Darkness a follower of the Radiant Queens cannot trade dots in Belief for experience points (however followers of the Twilight Queens can).

## Character Advancement

Mundane Attribute	5 x new mundane dots
Mundane Skill	3 x new mundane dots
Transformed Attribute	5 x new transformed dots
Transformed Skill	3 x new transformed dots
Transformed to Mundane	Cost of mundane dot - cost paid for transformed dot
Affinity Charm	4 x dots
Affinity Upgrade	4
Other Charm	6 x dots
Other Upgrade	6
Favored Invocation	2 x new dots
Other Invocation	3 x new dots
Merit	2 x new dots
Inner Light	8 x new dots
Belief	3 x new dots
Willpower	8 (bought back after sacrifice)
Nation	3/point

## Traits

Becoming a Princess does not just grant you magical abilities, it is a fundamental change to your state of being. Many Princesses use the phrase “Magical Girl ” to emphasise this point. A Princess is not a girl who uses magic, she is magical. Magic is as much a part of her as blood or emotions is a part of any human. As a Princess learns in wisdom and experience she learns to use her nature to its fullest extent, but also must face its unique drawbacks.

### New Advantage: Inner Light

When a Princess’ power first blossoms, it is barely the tiniest of sparks deep within a princess’ soul. However, as time passes and the ancient spirit within her awakens, her power begins to shine like a roaring fire, strong enough to support great magics and bright enough to become an invisible presence in the material world.

As Inner Light increases, it not only gives a character more magical ammunition to throw around, but also represents her magic bleeding into her mental and physical self. Characters with high Inner Light can have physical prowess beyond the limits of mere humanity. Finally, high Inner Light makes a character more vulnerable to Sensitivity and Hauntings.

Inner Light	Ability Max	Wisps / Turn	Charm Max	Sensitivity
1	5 / 5	10 / 1	3	1 die
2	5 / 5	11 / 2	4	1 die
3	5 / 6	12 / 3	5	2 dice
4	5 / 6	13 / 4	6	2 dice
5	5 / 7	14 / 5	7	3 dice
6	6 / 7	15 / 6	8	3 dice
7	7 / 8	20 / 7	9	4 dice
8	8 / 8	30 / 8	10	4 dice
9	9 / 9	50 / 10	11	5 dice
10	10 / 10	100 / 15	12	5 dice

**Ability Max:** The highest a regular attribute or skill may be raised using XP. The number before the slash is the maximum level of any attribute or skill in normal form, the number after the slash is the maximum including bonus dots from Transformation.

**Wisps / Turn:** The maximum number of Wisps a character may have available in their pool and the maximum number they may spend in a single turn.

**Charm Max:** The highest level at which a Charm may be purchased. Basic Charms do not go beyond 5 dots, but a Charm’s effective rating can be increased through upgrades. Inner Light caps the effective rating.

**Sensitivity:** The number of dice rolled when a princess’s Sensitivity to suffering is invoked.

### New Disadvantage: Sensitivity

A Princess is, by nature, sensitive to the suffering of others. When she sees someone in pain she cannot help but feel it herself; when she witnesses cruel or callous acts that cause suffering in others, the light within her dims and flickers. The sympathetic pain echoes in her mind afterward as a Haunting; she may continue to see the face of the victim or relive the moment over and over. Food tastes like dust, her favorite music is nothing but a cacophony, and headaches won’t leave her. Worse, the most severe Hauntings leave behind a lasting injury to her magic, represented as the Shadows trait.

The acts a Princess is sensitive to are called Taintings. A Tainting is a Morality or Belief sin rated at seven or less which causes emotional pain to a sapient being. Both the act and the victim must be in the

Princess' presence, and to qualify the villain must be being who has a Virtue and Vice – the conduct of animals and spirits may cause pain, but they don't trigger Sensitivity. The degree to which a Princess is sensitive is determined by her Inner Light, increasing in size as the Inner Light grows stronger. When a Princess witnesses (or causes) a Tainting and fails to stop or mitigate it, she rolls a dice pool of half her Inner Light (rounded up); she adds 1 die if the tainter is an intimate of hers, adds 2 dice if she herself is the tainter, and adds 2 dice when the Tainting is a sin against Morality 2 or 1.

Any successes on this roll mean the Princess experiences a Haunting; if there are more successes than the Princess's rating in Shadows, she also gains one dot in Shadows. (A starting character has 0 Shadows.) The type of a Haunting is determined by the number of successes rolled and the severity of the Haunting is determined by the dots in Shadows she possesses. When a Haunting occurs on a roll that also caused the character to gain a dot of Shadows, use the new, higher rating to determine its severity. The duration of a Haunting is normally one scene, but if a Princess' Belief falls too low Hauntings last longer.

Successes	Haunting Type	Effects
1	Acceptance	The Princess accepts the suffering she witnesses, reflecting it in her own body. She takes bashing damage equal to her dots in Shadows. This damage can be prevented by Wisp expenditure even if the Princess is not transformed.
2	Depression	Witnessing such suffering and injustice saps the Princess's will and throws her into doubt. She rolls her dots in Shadows, and loses 1 Willpower point for each success, or a flat 1 Willpower if she rolls no successes. For the duration of the Haunting, she may not spend Willpower to add dice to her pools – adding to her Defense or Resistance is still allowed, as is activating Charms.
3	Bargaining	Perhaps if the Princess offers herself as a victim, others will suffer less? She rolls her Shadows; while the Haunting lasts, her Defense and Resistance to supernatural powers are reduced by the number of successes, or by -1 if she rolls no successes.
4	Anger	The horrible injustices wrought in this world drive the Princess into a rage, burning to punish those who harm the innocent. While the Haunting lasts, she attacks the one responsible for the sin that triggered it, or searches for him obsessively if he isn't present; she must succeed on a Resolve + Composure - Shadows roll to do anything else. Moreover, she doesn't trouble to protect herself; she rolls her Shadows, and reduces her Defense by the number of successes, or by -1 if she rolls none. (Unlike Bargaining, her resistance to supernatural powers is not affected.) If the Princess caused the Tainting herself, she is driven to self-hatred, which immediately disguises itself as an unshakable belief that her victim hates her and means her harm. She must succeed on a Resolve + Composure - Shadows roll to deal with the sufferer on any terms but hostility while the Haunting lasts. She rolls her Shadows and reduces her Defense as above.
5+	Denial	It's not right. It's not possible. It shouldn't be possible. Innocent people aren't being hurt; the Princess refuses to see anything that contradicts this. While the Haunting lasts, the Princess cannot endure the sight of the tainter or his victim, and will do anything in her power to escape them. If she must deal with them, all rolls she makes related to either take a penalty equal to her Shadows. If the Princess caused the Tainting herself, her rejection covers her sin and all its immediate results. She leaves her victim immediately if possible, and is penalized if she can't do so, as above; in addition, once away from the victim she forgets what she did, and will forget everything that happens during the Haunting after it is over. Only supernatural powers can make her remember those events, and the activation rolls for such powers are penalized by her Shadows.

Dots in Shadows impair a Princess' access to her powers in two ways. First, they are subtracted from her transformation roll, which becomes Belief + Inner Light - Shadows. Shadows also impair a Princess' ability to recover Wisps: all the dice pools she rolls for that purpose subtract 1 die for each dot in Shadows she possesses.

During the scene in which a Princess gains a dot of Shadows, if she manages to make the victim of the Tainting whole, or punish the one responsible for it, she may remove the dot again. After the scene ends, the dot "sticks" and can't be lost so easily. If a Princess with Shadows fulfills her Virtue, she may remove 1 dot of Shadows in addition to regaining Willpower. Finally, a Princess may spend XP to remove a dot of Shadows; the cost equals her current Shadows rating.

## New Advantage: Wisps

A "Wisp" is a mote of virtue and determination, an itty-bitty ember of the Human Spirit, that Princesses use to fuel many of their abilities. The maximum amount of Wisps you can store, as well as the number you can spend in one turn, is determined by your Inner Light.

### Spending Wisps

- Charm Activation: While Transformed, a Princess may spend Wisps to activate most Charms; the cost of which is particular to each charm.
- Practical Magic: Whether or not she is Transformed, a Princess may spend Wisps to add bonus dice to mundane rolls based on certain Attributes, as determined by the Queen she follows.
- Holy Shield: While Transformed, a Princess may spend Wisps to negate damage as she receives it. Each Wisp spent negates one Bashing or Lethal damage, or converts one Aggravated damage into Bashing damage. The attack could be turned aside from a vital spot at the last second, grazing her instead of striking home, or could be visibly stopped by a shower of sparks and light.
- Quickened Transformation: A Princess may spend a Wisp to transform reflexively without rolling.

### Regaining Wisps

- Call of Duty: A Princess normally regains Wisps by going out and making the world a better place in a way that fits with her Calling. A Mender could work as a nurse or in a soup kitchen, a Troubador might perform in public or display her art, a Grace could mentor a youth, et cetera. At the end of every scene where the Princess successfully performs a task appropriate to her Calling the Storyteller may call for a roll with the same dicepool as the task (if there is more than one, use your best judgement) and grant one Wisp per success.

In addition during downtime a player can say that her character spends her time fulfilling her Calling duties, in-between school, family or other commitments. By sacrificing a non-trivial amount of time and energy on an appropriate task, the Princess may make an appropriate roll for that task: Intelligence + Medicine for a nurse, Presence + Expression for a performer, Strength + Crafts to build homes for the poor, and so on. A failure on this roll indicates she has failed at this task, otherwise she regains one Wisp per Success. As a rule of thumb, assume that a Princess makes one roll per hour. If the Princess upholds her duty in a way that honors her Queen's philosophy, either in play or during downtime, she gains 1 additional Wisp from the task, provided she scored at least one success.

(Some Princesses have social positions that make fulfilling Calling duties easy; the Mandate merit represents this.) for a nurse, Presence + Expression for a performer, Strength + Crafts to build homes for the poor, and so on. A failure on this roll indicates she has failed at this task, otherwise she regains one Wisp per Success. As a rule of thumb, assume that a Princess makes one roll per hour. (Some Princesses have social positions that make fulfilling Calling duties easy; the Mandate merit represents this.) failed at this task, otherwise she regains one Wisp per Success. As a rule of thumb, assume that a Princess makes one roll per hour. (Some Princesses have social positions that make fulfilling Sacred Oaths easy; the Mandate merit represents this.)

- Inner Strength: When the chips are down and the situation is dire, a Princess can call upon her own inner reserves of determination and draw out power she didn't know she had. As an instant action, she spends a Willpower point and rolls Belief; if the roll succeeds she regains Inner Light Wisps plus one Wisp per success. This ability can only be used when the Princess is in immediate danger, such as in combat, and is not meant to be an everyday means of regaining power – a good rule of thumb is, if it doesn't matter that this action is Instant and thus takes up a character's action for the turn, it's probably not dangerous enough to work.
- Circle of Light: Princesses with mundane families and friends often find that spending time with them, sharing their troubles or happiness, refreshes them for the supernatural fight. The Circle Merit represents these relationships; see that Merit for a full explanation.

## Modified Advantage: Belief (Morality)

Dots	Compromise	Degeneration
10	Selfish thoughts. Keeping secrets from friends or family for selfish reasons. Spending three days without Transforming.	5 dice
9	Minor selfish acts. Using supernatural compulsions. Violating the Third Oath of one's Calling.	5 dice
8	Injury to another, whether accidental or otherwise. Spending two weeks without Transforming. Neglecting friends or family.	4 Dice
7	Petty theft (enough to inconvenience the owner.) Violating the Second Oath of one's Calling. Harming an innocent. Ignoring a mortal's loss of hope.	4 Dice
6	Distancing oneself from friends or family. Grand theft (major loss of property.) Inflicting major hardship on another (lost employment, broken families.)	3 Dice
5	Intentional mass property damage. Abandoning friends or family. Violating the First Oath of one's Calling.	3 Dice
4	Unplanned or reckless killing (manslaughter). Permitting the theft of Light from the world. Betraying one's friends or family.	3 Dice
3	Deliberate killing (murder). Dealing with a supernatural force anathema to humanity and the Light (the Dark, the Abyss, the Maeljin, etc) to trade information or anything that does not involve direct aid.	2 Dice
2	Callous crime (torture, serial murder). Acting in a way which prevents a Blossoming.	2 Dice
1	Utter perversion, heinous acts. Helping a supernatural force anathema to humanity and the Light against the Light or human beings.	2 Dice

Being a Princess is not something that just happens at random, a fortunate circumstance that gives you neat-o magic powers to do whatever you want with. You are here on Earth with a purpose: to make the world a better place and bring the Light of Hope to everyone suffering. The existence of the Kingdom proves to you that it can be done, and a Princess's conviction is one of her greatest assets. She works to save the world, because she believes, she knows, the world can be saved. She sides with good over evil because she believes that good will always triumph in the end. She fights because she believes she can win. If her beliefs begin to slip, as doubt creeps into her mind over her cause or ability, the Inner Light within her is beset by the darkness of the world.

Belief tracks the strength of a Princess's convictions, her belief in herself and her cause. Characters with high Belief are confident, assured, able to draw on their power more readily due to the strength of their certainty. They inspire confidence in everyone around them. Characters with low Belief are wracked with doubt and despair, losing their confidence that the world can be saved and that they have the ability to do it, thinking larger and larger compromises must be necessary if there is any hope to win at all. At first, this is only a minor loss, and characters may believe it healthy to learn of their own limitations and view the world more realistically. As Belief continues to drop, though, all hope begins to abandon the character, her powers seem further away, across a widening gulf of gnawing doubt, and she may begin to project an aura of uncertainty and depression on those around her.

Though Princesses have many of the same values as normal society, they are not totally congruent: Belief represents a Princess's belief in her own skill and worth, the righteousness of her cause, and the possibility of attaining her ultimate goals – not necessarily her belief in the validity of the current conventional set of Western laws and mores. While most people think that theft is wrong, for example, many Princesses and certainly all Knaves see no problem with stealing something if its owner came to it by unjust means or his ownership causes others to suffer.

Starting characters begin with a Belief of 7, representing idealism and confidence without being totally blinded by rose-colored glasses. Whenever a Princess commits a compromise at or below her current Belief level, she risks compromising her Belief in order to accommodate this new behavior (i.e., makes a degeneration roll, as described in the *World of Darkness Rulebook*). If the roll succeeds, the Princess feels guilt over her actions and recognizes them as wrong, a mistake she shouldn't make again. If the roll fails, the Princess may still feel guilt over her actions... but she thinks that they are necessary, and she's hopeless if unwilling to do them.



As a Princess loses Belief, she begins to think along the lines of “Our ideals alone are not enough. We’ve got to compromise on some things if we want to get the big prize. We need to set our sights lower. What we’re doing is wrong, but it has to be done because our determination and ideals aren’t enough anymore.” She thinks “I can do this... but I have to hurt the people I’m trying to help.” She degenerates further, and now tells herself “I can do this... but I have to kill some people.”

### Bad Example

A Princess is also held responsible for the deeds of her followers. If another person, acting under her direction or with good reason to think she wishes it, fails a degeneration check, the Princess implicitly sins against Belief, at a level 1 step higher than her agent did, and must check for degeneration if that’s equal to or less than her Belief. This only applies to when the agent commits a sin against Belief (and thus by extension Morality). There is no degeneration check when the agent commits a Sin that only applies to their unique moral trait. The Storyteller should keep in mind that the list of Belief Compromises and Morality Sins are not comprehensive, and even if the actual sin is only listed on a supernatural being’s unique moral trait it may well be a sin against regular Morality as well. Rather than letting games devolve into moral debates a quick majority vote (with the Storyteller acting as tiebreaker) should be sufficient when there is any ambiguity.

### Effects of Belief

The state of a Princess’ soul shines outwards onto those she holds in affection, an ability referred to as her Echo. Hopeful with a high Belief inspire confidence, and sharpen the voice of conscience; at Belief 8 or more, a Princess grants mortals (anyone using the default Morality trait) who are in regular contact with her a +1 bonus to all Resolve-based rolls when they are trying to remain true to their principles or morals. Contrariwise, Hopeful with a dwindling Belief sow doubts and deaden consciences among her acquaintances; a Princess with a Belief of 3 or less inflicts a -1 penalty to all Resolve-based rolls made by mortals in regular or prolonged contact with her. It takes several hours of peaceful interaction, for good or bad, before a mortal begins to be affected by a Princess’ Echo.

As Belief rises, the Hopeful’s inherent magic glows more brightly and grows more potent. At Belief 8, the first Wisp spent on Practical Magic has double the normal effect (for the Radiant Queens, it adds 2 dice to an eligible roll instead of 1.) At Belief 9, the first 2 Wisps double their effect; and at Belief 10, the first Wisp has triple the normal effect, and the second has double.

As Belief falls, the lash of Sensitivity leaves its mark for longer and longer periods, as if to replace the Hopeful’s fading conscience. The duration of a Haunting (other than Acceptance – the wounds from that last as long as any other damage) increases as Belief falls below 5.

Belief	Haunting Duration
5+	One scene
4	Two hours
3	Twelve hours
2	One day
1	Two days

### The Enlightened at Belief Zero

When she Blossoms the Princess feels a strength of optimism never known to those who have not touched the light. Nothing seems impossible. With hard work, dedication and conviction every problem can be solved. No one needs to suffer any more. Only the most sheltered Princess can keep such attitudes for long, belief and optimism must give way to reality. She will learn that the real problems can’t be solved in an afternoon, that scars take more than a impassioned speech to heal and she will learn that she herself is limited. She does not have the time or energy to fix every single problem.

Most Princesses remain here for most of their life. They have compromised their impossible idealism in the name of practicality, yet retain a strength of conviction few can match. Some fall much further. If darkness is the absence of light, the absence of a Princess’ Light is very Dark indeed.

When a Princess hits Belief 0, the anchorstone of her self is shattered. Her soul, blackened by so many Compromises, begins to gutter, as her Inner Light starts to go out, she decreases her Inner Light

to 0 dots, nothing more than a few fading embers. Her Phylactery shatters, suddenly age-rotted, and she forcefully de-Transforms, back to her normal identity. Without a Phylactery, she cannot Transform. Barred from the Dreamlands the Queens can offer no comfort. Even the Twilight Queens are disgusted by a Noble who falls this far, for Tears sees her as a threat to Alhambra, Storms as just another Dark creature waiting to happen, and Mirrors as a failed True Queen to be forgotten.

Many would say that this is enough of a curse; that, stripped of rank and privilege, she is left to wander the Earth. It may be. But that is not what happens. She is not merely a fallen Princess but a fallen human, little more than a shuffling husk that drifts through life; something barely recognisable as something which once championed the cause of the Light. Stripped of all drive she may just lie still until she starves, unable to see the point of eating. If she is pushed she will go about her life, she is too empty inside to say no, to say I hurt too much to do this. She is a hollow shell of a woman. Lacking the strength to fight for what she believes in, always folding at the least pressure, unable to even cry for help.

When a Princess becomes Belief 0, the final act that broke her Beliefs triggers a Denial Haunting. She forgets what destroyed her Belief and far more than that; she forgets the people who were hurt by it, she forgets her own complicity or failure to prevent the act, she even forgets what it means to be a Princess. For as long as this Haunting lasts; which at Belief 0 is Permanent, she cannot access any of her powers from the Princess template. There are further effects than just a Haunting. Devoid of Belief the fallen Princess' Inner Light begins to sputter and dim. Every week she loses a Dot of Willpower and does not recover Willpower from sleep. Her weakened state also makes her vulnerable to any possessing entity, attempts to Possess the Princess benefit from +2.

It is in this state, this borrowed time that any salvation must come, because if she can raise her Belief back up to 1 before she loses all her dots of Willpower, she can cut free of the Shadows blotting out her soul, she will die peacefully in her sleep the next night. But no Princess can reignite her Belief alone, between the Haunting and her own lack of drive the Princess is prevented from confronting the problem. Her friends must force her to remember. This is not without risks, remembering is painful for a fallen Princess. At the end of every Scene where she faces her issue, if she still has Belief 0, roll Resolve + Composure. On a failure she loses another dot of Willpower. Bonuses may be given to the roll if her friends made a good attempt to patch her together, and penalties may be applied if her enemies are forcing her to face such painful memories for their own nefarious purposes.

If her friends wish to help her they must do so before she loses her last dot of Willpower, for when her Willpower reaches zero she will simply lie down and stop moving. Nothing but the most powerful magics can save a once-Princess from this state. Trapped within, her soul struggles in one last attempt to break free. Roll Resolve + Composure – Shadows. On a Successful roll the soul manages to escape, although will likely be suffering extreme amnesia of any past lives, for it is the least sliver. It will take hard work, and probably several lives to fully recover. On a Failure the soul is trapped, helpless. She becomes the prize in a great battle between Light and Dark: The last fading remains of her Inner Light, so close to the Darkness, cannot help but attract the attentions of the Darkness itself. In turn its attempt to gain such a prize draws the attention of Princesses due to watchful scouts or prophetic Dreams.

The desires of the Dark tie into the final, and most terrible option available to a fallen Princess: Acceptance. At any moment where she is temporarily free of her Haunting the Belief 0 Enlightened may choose, as an Instant action, to Transform despite her lack of a Phylactery. The Princess turns towards the Dark to fill the empty void where she once held her Light. She focuses on everything that hurt her, everything that went wrong in her life and focuses on the grief and bitterness they invoke, for in her deranged state even that is better than nothingness. The mad will of a Princess in this state is a terrible thing to behold. She laughs with pure grief, she cries tears of crystal clear despair. Her feelings echo around her, calling pure Taint up from the Dark World and shaping it into twisted reflections of her own life. She even calls the Taint into her own body, fuelling her final Transformation into a being drawn from the depths of her own nightmares.

There are many reasons to do this; a desperate need to escape a helpless body, a need for power for something that they cannot do in a mortal state, a desire to get back at the world, a refusal to accept that they are losing their mind, the belief that they deserve no better in their self-disgust, the fact that their "friends" have tied them up and look like they're trying to shoot them in the head...

And a Transformation in this manner should not be possible. In a sense, it is impossible, for no Princess could do it, never take this Last Transformation, and don the mantle of the Dethroned. But those who do so are no longer among the Enlightened, they are no longer even human. They shed their

mortal forms, as Darkness rushes into the void within them which the Light once filled, and are both twisted and empowered by this blasphemous process. They wear blackened crowns on monstrous heads; they are the Dethroned.

## *Callings*

A character's Calling is the heart of her quest to bring light to the world. It determines which Oaths are part of her Belief, what Duties she performs to regain Wisps, which Attributes are increased when she Transforms and to which three of the ten Charm families she has affinity, allowing her to purchase Charms from these families at the reduced cost.

# Champion

Champions epitomize the ancient concept of a hero – those who accomplish. In the Kingdom, they were the defenders and the conquerors, the dragon slayers and the chain smashers. Their counterparts in the Reborn world value strength for altruistic reasons. They serve the weak. Moreover, they enjoy physical accomplishment for its own sake – Champions frequently sprout from athletes, those with a penchant for construction or day labor, and even brawlers. Anyone who loves to push their body to the limit or appreciates the simple need for a sturdy pair of hands makes for a grand Champion.

Given their emphasis on physique, some tend to mistake Champions as simple-minded or naturally violent. Rather, they just look for direct solutions. To them, a problem is something that needs to be done. If they can't find a physical solution, something they can flat out do, then Champions will break the situation down until they can. They cut the Gordian knot, instead of puzzling over it. If there is a weakness that stems from this tendency, it's that Champions tend to be blind to someone's more sublime pain or motivations, but it also makes them refreshingly straight-forward and realistic.

## *Dreams*

Champions dream of victories on a grand level – armies defeated single-handedly, mountains knocked down, rivers wrestled from their paths, buildings held up for days at end. Their exploits are the stuff of Gilgamesh, Hercules, and Samson. But when they dream of the Cataclysm, they see weapons snatched from their hands, their own bodies turning sickly and weak, and dark throngs they overpower and humiliate them.

## *Magic*

Champions have affinity to the Bless, Fight and Perfect Charm families.

Starting Champions get one transformed Attribute dot in either Strength or Resolve.

## *Duties*

Champions regain magic whenever they perform a task for somebody who physically incapable or overwhelmed and don't have the time and/or resources they need. This can mean doing chores for an elderly neighbor, working for a charity or volunteer effort, protecting a classmate from a bully, or otherwise making a sacrifice of your time and effort for someone else's benefit.

## *Oaths*

### **First Oath:**

I must never abandon those who need my protection. Even if someone isn't staring down a horrible creature of Darkness right now, the chance remains that they could in the future. If someone needs to be watched over, they need to be watched over, and I can't ignore that need.

### **Second Oath:**

I shall swear my loyalty to a cause. Might is never the ends, only the means. My cause shall determine when violence is acceptable, and for what reasons a sword may be drawn. I may change my cause but I must always have one, and once sworn I must uphold the values and laws enshrined by my cause.

### **Third Oath:**

I should never back down from a challenge. I am a Champion – I succeed where others may fail, I triumph against overwhelming odds. Unless some greater cause demands my attention, I should never back down from hardship or accept defeat; if I can't win at something, I should train until I can.

## *Quote*

Be strong for the weak.

## *Stereotypes*

- Graces: You want the truth? Ask a Grace. You might not like what you hear, but you probably need to hear it.
- Menders: Fine, you tend the wounded. I'll go get you some patients.
- Seekers: By the time you get done talking about how to kill the bad thing, I will have already killed it.
- Troubadors: Why are you just standing there singing? Hit something!
- Vampires: We have a word for these where I come from – "targets."
- Werewolves: Nice doggy... we're on the same side, remember?
- Mages: Don't make me come over there.
- Prometheans: I feel sorry for you, really, but you have to move on now.
- Changelings: Yes, your life sucks. Now what are you going to do about it?
- Sin-Eaters: If you narrowly escape death, but then make yourself a slave to a dead thing, you haven't really escaped death at all, have you?
- Mad Scientists: So, could you show me how to use that thing?
- Leviathans: Keep hitting it, try everything! Something's got to work!
- Hunters: You guys are crazy! How can I help?
- Mortals: My job would be a lot easier if these guys would step up, but some of them just can't. That's why I'm here.

## *Inspiration*

The Sailor Senshi, Nagisa Misumi, Buffy Summers, Sailor Nothing and the Magic Warrior archetype in general.

# Grace

If the Cataclysm taught the world anything, it was how to lie. Mortals now wrap themselves in an armor of denial and half-truths to save themselves from humiliation and risk, to appease the majority and avoid the uncomfortable thoughts that keep them up at night. People can't save the world if they can't even save themselves and they can't save themselves if they don't even know how they are.

Graces are the maidens of revelation. In ages past, they were philosophers, priestess, and aesthetics who probed the in-most secrets of existence. They walked between the Astral Courts and prophetized fearlessly in humble villages and grand halls alike. Even in the Kingdom they were greeted with an combination of trepidation and discomfort – but none would deny their powerful words. Now they continue their duty, although muted, in the modern world. Graces force those around them to look inside and confront what they find there. They are not malicious and they are not cruel – they know there can be pain, but they only want to show everybody what they can already see: the golden light that could shine in all of humanity.

Graces are people people. They like to know people, they like to hear about people, they like to be around people, and they like when people are people. Nothing pains them so much as someone denying their own humanity. Others would describe them as “intrusive” or “presumptuous” – always nosing into other people's business and offering advice when none is solicited. A Grace might be written off as naive or idealistic, for all her proselytizing about honesty. They due tend to be outspoken and emotional. They never restrain themselves from speaking what's on their mind or in their heart – and might be no strangers to embarrassment because of it.

## *Dreams*

Graces dream of fantastic journeys across the world, witnessing moments of beauty and love unique to civilizations they've never even dreamed of. They walk in the shadows of Divine Idols and sit at the feet of Holy Teachers whose mysterious but weighty words seem to hold all the solutions to their problems, if they could just decipher them. But as the wind turns cold and the stars fall from the sky, the people turn into silent shadows who drift about in a monochrome haze and everywhere she travels is the same unending dusk.

## *Magic*

Graces have affinity for the Bless, Connect and Govern Charm families.

Starting Graces get one transformed Attribute dot in either Presence or Composure.

## *Duties*

Graces recover their magic whenever they convince someone to open up and act on their virtuous impulses, instead of suppressing them out of fear or shame. This covers situations such as convincing an addict to seek out help, easing the anger between antagonistic relatives, getting a classmate to study for her own sake instead of cheating, or even just helping someone act on their crush.

## *Oaths*

### **First Oath:**

Stand besides your wards. A Grace may not simply tell the uncomfortable truth and then run away while others bear the brunt of the fall out. She must stand besides those she would aid through-out the pain she might cause and do all she can to lead them out of it. Even if they reject the Grace out of anger, she cannot abandon them until she knows they have found their peace.

### **Second Oath:**

Two wrongs do not make a right. Subterfuge is unacceptable when showing others their hypocrisy. People cannot be tricked into doing the right thing or seeing what's in-front of them. The path counts as much as the destination.

### **Third Oath:**

Tell no lies. A Grace must be open in all things, in all aspects of her life. She must be an open book for others to read. Although she does not have to go out of her way to bare all her secrets to the world, if pressed, she must admit the whole truth and tell her questioners what they want to know.

## *Quote*

Be the light for the world.

## *Stereotypes*

- Champions: What will you fight for? Me perhaps?
- Menders: You can only do so much by treating the symptoms.
- Seekers: Look as much as you want, I have no skeletons in my closet.
- Troubadors: I'll lead them, you shall inspire them.
- Vampires: Explain to me again how your civilisation is anything of the sort.
- Werewolves: I might never know loyalty like you, but your pack has five. In a week I could make fifty friends.
- Mages: Their magic isolates them from their fellow man. Nothing good can come of it.
- Prometheans: You want me to teach you how to be human? Well you've come to the right person.
- Changelings: If you're not careful a faerie can turn your words on you.
- Sin-Eaters: This mythology was stolen from dragonlance, and it sounds like you wrote this code of honour while you were drunk! Is there nothing of substance to your society?
- Mad Scientists: So if I get the institute to apologise for laughing at your research will you destroy the killbots? No? Do you even know what you want?!
- Leviathans: A society is its citizens not its leader. If you don't believe me just look at those monsters.
- Hunters: Defending yourself is admirable, but fighting outside society can lead to dark places.
- Mortals: Stop calling it cheesy when it's true. The power really is inside you if you just believe in yourselves.

# *Inspiration*

Hinamori Amu



# Mender

All of the Reborn feel the pain of others, but Menders are those who can't bear to live with it. Their first impulse is always to treat pain, either physical or spiritual. These were the great sages and physicians of the Kingdom, who studied the science of the human conditions on levels undreamt by modern science. A good Mender is always looking around to see how she can make those around her better. The Fallen World is like a ravenous beast, they say, and it mangles us all, all the time. Without care, none of us will ever be strong enough to break out of the mire that swallows us whole. Nobody should be made to lie crippled as their dreams run on ahead of them.

Menders are typically described as either motherly or child-like – always blindly over-protective or naively concerned with the problems right before without seeing the big picture. They are natural caretakers. They easily take responsibility for those around them and are quick to worry. Often, they will display great maturity, although they are also frequently overcome by feelings of failure or helplessness in a crisis. Some are even pacifists, although an equal number wish they had the power themselves to punish those who would harm innocents. Their uniting characteristics are a deep respect for life and horror in the face of suffering. The latter may sometimes be a weakness, but the best turn it into an iron resolve.

## *Dreams*

Menders' dreams are messianic in tone. They see themselves healing the sick and the lame with a touch or consoling those who cry and comforting those who mourn. In the Cathedrals and Temples of the Kingdom, they nurse even the most far gone patients back from the edge. As the skies darken, though, all around them rot in their living graves and beg for death in a resounding chorus deafens the would-be healers' very thoughts.

## *Magic*

Menders have affinity for the Perfect, Restore and Shape Charm families.

Starting Menders get one transformed Attribute dot in either Intelligence or Stamina.

## *Duties*

Menders regain magic whenever they provide consolation, comfort, and aid. They can volunteer their time as medical facilities or to provide home care, work as part of emergency hotlines, be a shoulder for someone beset by loss and grief, or do any other number of things to relieve the pain of others.

## *Oaths*

### **First Oath:**

I will help all who request it. No matter what, I am here to heal. If anyone requests my aid, I will help them, no matter how I feel about them or what they have done in the past. Now, I don't have to be stupid about it – if a dangerous creature seeks my aid, I can take precautions to protect myself and my

friends even as I administer that aid, and I don't always necessarily need to give aid in the particular manner requested. But I am here because people are hurting, and to allow that pain to continue is to betray my Calling.

### **Second Oath:**

I must always honour the privacy of those who I help, the trust placed in a doctor is sacred and must be protected. Even when I treat a simple cold I must not tell anyone without permission, people must feel that they can come to me with even their most private problems.

### **Third Oath:**

I should not suffer any pain to continue. If I see anyone suffering, even if they don't ask for my help, even if they don't WANT my help, even if I don't want to help, I should do SOMETHING to mitigate that suffering.

## *Quote*

Save those who cannot save themselves.

## *Stereotypes*

- Champions: Bring the wounded back here, I'll be ready.
- Graces: Stop making speeches about the stars and look at how people live in the gutter.
- Seekers: Seeing the truth isn't enough, you've got to do something about it.
- Troubadors: Just keep their spirits up for me.
- Vampires: Incurable.
- Werewolves: You could do so much good if you'd just let me try and duplicate your cellar regeneration.
- Mages: Give me one good reason you're not curing somebody's cancer right now, just one good reason.
- Prometheans: Bringing the dead back to life... growing replacement souls... it's possible? I need to know more.
- Changelings: Why do those feathers make me think of scars?
- Sin-Eaters: I know you had one miraculous recovery, but as your doctor I must recommend you cut back on the drink, and the drugs, and the unprotected sex.
- Mad Scientists: Do you want to talk about it? Of course I'm not calling you mad!
- Leviathans: I can't decide if they need healing or cutting out.
- Hunters: If you want, I'm willing to listen to why your'e so hurt.
- Mortals: No this isn't going to sting, I'm better than that.

## *Inspiration*

Shamal

# Seeker

The desire to know is universal human trait, embedded in the heart and soul and genetic code of every man and woman on the planet. What isn't common is the will to keep chasing after those answers when things start getting dangerous. That's what sets the Seekers apart. In their previous lives, Seekers were the detectives, scientists, and scholars of the Kingdom. Their dreams of the Kingdom are filled with colleges where the secrets of the universe are revealed and cities where no lie is uttered and not even the smallest misunderstanding is present to obscure the truth. When they dream of the Cataclysm, they see grand libraries and academies burned to the ground, and lies entwined with lies in a web of deception so deep that even the most fundamental truths are uncertain.

Seekers are a varied bunch. Many Seekers act like detectives or journalists, ferreting out crime and deception from the communities under their protection. Others resemble the scientist-heroes or adventurer-archaeologists of the pulp era, braving danger and using the secrets they discover to fight evil and better the world. Some Seekers act as stoic guardians of Things Man was Not Meant to Know, keeping forbidden knowledge out of unworthy hands. A few are tricksters, walking paradoxes who use deception to befuddle their enemies and unearth hidden things. But no matter how they approach their duty, all Seekers share the common goal of unearthing hidden secrets and more importantly, using those secrets to make the world a better place.

Seeker often prioritize mental attributes to aid them in their search for the truth. Resolve is prized by all Seekers to keep searching after the truth despite hardship or weariness. Wits, Larceny, and Investigation are prioritized by Seekers who favor classic detective work, along with Manipulation, Empathy, and Persuasion to tease the truth out of reluctant witnesses or suspects. Those who were scientists or scholars before Blossoming often possess high Intelligence. Subterfuge comes in handy when a Seeker needs to investigate things without creating suspicion.

## *Dreams*

Seekers dream of secrets and discovery. They walk within libraries beyond imagination and delve deep into forgotten temples to uncover the lore of the past. With the knowledge they uncover the people build magnificent edifices and intricate devices that amaze and bring joy to people's lives. Then, a Seeker's dreams turn inwards, the secrets she uncovers speak only of her own failings and the failings of that she holds dear. She desperately searches libraries for answers that do not exist while the darkness creeps ever closer.

## *Magic*

Seekers have affinity for the Appear, Govern and Learn Charm families.

Starting Seekers get one transformed Attribute dot in either Intelligence or Wits.

## *Duties*

A Seeker regains Wisps whenever she uncovers new facts or information, and whenever she teaches another something that they do not know. A Seeker could be a scientist or explorer uncovering secrets no man has ever known. She could be a detective or journalist uncovering that which unscrupulous individuals try hard to keep hidden. She could be a teacher passing what she knows to the next

generation. Many Seekers do a little of A and a little of B. A reporter uncovers a political scandal, then she publishes it. A Professor does exciting scientific research, then writes a paper and gives lectures on it.

## *Oaths*

### **First Oath:**

I will never allow someone to be harmed by or through ignorance. If I don't find the information people need to keep themselves safe and whole, I am not doing my job.

### **Second Oath:**

I must never lie for personal gain. Even if I acknowledge that blabbing about the supernatural would be a bad idea to people who aren't ready, I have an obligation to the Truth and I shouldn't misuse it just to help myself.

### **Third Oath:**

I should never accept an incomplete understanding of anything in my life. It's not enough to know THAT something is true, but WHY. Well, I should at least be paying attention when the mechanic explains why my car broke down.

## *Quote*

Remember for those who forgot.

## *Stereotypes*

- Champions: I understand how you feel, but punching people isn't the solution.
- Graces: If only they asked any questions that actually mattered...
- Menders: I admire your dedication, but you're treating the symptoms, not the disease.
- Troubadors: Stop prattling on about art and actually do something.
- Vampires: Friggin' lying bastards hurting people and lying all over the friggin' place. I hate them.
- Werewolves: Great sources of lore if you convince them not to bite your head off.
- Mages: A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. Nothing that secretive can be any good.
- Prometheans: Don't blame them for what they are. Who's the bigger monster, the creature or Dr. Frankenstein?
- Changelings: They're full of valuable insights. It's gaining their trust that's the chore.
- Sin-Eaters: They probably have useful information to share. If only we could get them to talk about anything but doom and gloom.
- Mad Scientists: You'd be surprised how much they know, if they ever bothered to remember there's a difference between what they know is real, what they think might be real and what they think is cool.
- Leviathans: There are some things even I don't want to know.

- Hunters: They're great in a fight, but half the time they keep shooting up what I'm looking for!
- Mortals: People have been lying to you your whole lives. I'm gonna put an end to that, just you wait and see.

## *Inspiration*

Yuki Nagato, Sakura Kinomoto, Ms. Frizzle, Yuuno Serya

# *Troubadour*

Soul is not a silent, static egg that we must shelter from the outside world until the time comes for it to hatch. Troubadours know the truth – the soul is a living, breathing maelstrom and unless we open up and let it out, it can smother to death within us. And the Troubadours have the keys to let it out.

Each Troubadour is a master of some artifice – singing, dancing, painting, sculpting, baking, cracking jokes, or even just folding paper cranes. In their past lives, they were the queens of bards, storytellers and chanters, masters of divine instruments who imparted the wisdom of the ages in grand halls and shady grooves. Now their mission now is to set us free from ourselves. Art, the Troubadours teach, gives shape to things that people can't or won't express themselves. Every song or painting or performance lets the silent and unassuming realize and crystallize the beautiful internal forces they otherwise overlook. The people of the Fallen World suffer through with souls buried under the rubble of the Kingdom. The Troubadours are archaeologists of Joy.

Most people would describe Troubadours as people with their heads in the clouds. If they aren't visualizing a statue or planning a new routine or reviewing the forms of a plot, then a Troubadour is admiring the natural art of the world around her – the patterns woven out of everyday life and the people who populate it. Troubadours are vibrant, expression personalities, not shy about baring their souls. Their chosen art tends to consume their life and they want to involve as many people as they can in it. Unfortunately, they are artists first and foremost – they easily get lost in a world of symbols and frequently can't understand people's impatience with their "frivolous" hobbies.

## *Dreams*

Troubadours dream of their own artist ambitions displayed on an epic scale – murals that span cities, songs that resonate to the heavens, whole countries dancing. In these dreams, they are the puppet-masters that make the whole world come to life with their energy and enthusiasm. The Cataclysm descends and they find themselves singers in the land of the deaf, painters in the land of the blind, clowns under the flag of melancholy, wandering a cold world as they starve in rags.

## *Magic*

Troubadours have affinity for the Appear, Inspire and Shape Charm families.

Starting Troubadours get one transformed Attribute dot in either Presence or Dexterity.

## *Duties*

Troubadours draw magic from the release of others' souls. Their duty encompasses providing art that inspires or consoles those who otherwise draw into themselves, encouraging and teaching those looking for a way to express themselves, and energizing those around them with their own vibrant talents.

## *Oaths*

### **First Oath:**

I will use my talents to awaken, not tranquilize. My art must always carry the sting of truth and the spark of life. It must never be used to make people afraid of their own identities or trick them into silence.

### **Second Oath:**

My art will ever be for my audience. I must not become so wrapped up in my own ego that I forget the people around me. Without the mortals who need it, my art is merely a selfish exercise in solipsism.

### **Third Oath:**

I will devote myself to art. The Art is my life. There can be no time for anything else, no other ambitions. I will wholly and totally be an artist.

## *Quote*

Be inspired by the silent.

## *Stereotypes*

- Champions: When you can use it to aim public opinion at a threat to the community, a song is a sharper weapon than a sword.
- Graces: We both tell the truth, I just express it more creatively.
- Menders: Tell me how I can help.
- Seekers: Do you remember your teacher's lecture on the states and their capitals? No? Do you remember that song from Animaniacs? Yeah, it's like that.
- Vampires: You dress yourselves up and act so elegant, but you're really just wearing funeral makeup.
- Werewolves: Such strong emotions, hold still. I need to get this on canvas.
- Mages: I don't understand, if you experienced a reivation like that how can you not be shouting it from the rooftops.
- Prometheans: To literally touch god through your creations...
- Changelings: They're very secretive, but you can see their pain in their art if you know how to look.
- Sin-Eaters: Such a dynamic and energetic people, pity there's no substance behind it all.
- Mad Scientists: I know how it feels to be inspired, but there's really no excuse for what you did.
- Leviathans: That's just horrible, and maybe just a little bit beautiful. Wait! What am I saying?!
- Hunters: You fight monsters? Without any special powers to help you out? And you win? [bites lip] Do you want my number?
- Mortals: I've got something to show you, I think you'll quite like it.

## *Inspiration*

Fancy Lala, Lucia Nanami, Haruhara Haruko, the EBA



# Chapter 3: The Power of Love

*I never renounce my feelings. True Love can not be taken away by anyone.  
—Sailor Moon*

A Princess is still human, and she is able to use all of humanity's varied and dangerous talents to her own advantage. A Princess is also magical, and she is capable of focusing her hopes and beliefs into all sorts of unique and potent advantages.

In this chapter we present all the unique abilities possessed by the Enlightened, from the magical Charms they wield to new Merits.

## *Transformation*

The most essential expression of a Princess' power is the ability to transform. She calls on the magic she's gathered to herself and assumes the form of her "perfected self", an idealized version of herself unfettered by this world of sorrows. Although she can only maintain this immense power for a limited time, a transformed Princess is a force to be reckoned with.

The first time a Princess transforms is called her Blossoming. This is an unconscious act, usually in response to some great need or danger. After her Blossoming, a princess' Phylactery will manifest. This is the physical representation of the power sealed away inside of her, and may take the form of any small simple object. She must have her Phylactery with her later to transform. When a Princess wishes to transform, she has two options: she may either spend a Wisp or make a transformation roll. If she spends a Wisp, she transforms automatically, as a reflexive action. The transformation roll is Belief + Inner Light - Shadows.

*Dramatic Failure:* The Princess' Phylactery disincorporates. She must spend a Wisp and a Willpower point to resummon it, which takes a full round and requires her absolute concentration. *Failure:* The Princess fails to transform and spends the full round. *Success:* The Princess transforms as an instant action. *Exceptional Success:* The Princess transforms as a reflexive action.

A Princess can return to her ordinary self at any time as a reflexive action. She must de-transform if she spends her last Wisp, or when she falls asleep. Also, transformation grows harder to sustain as time passes. When a Princess reaches the end of a scene transformed, or after half an hour spent transformed, she rolls Belief + Inner Light:

*Dramatic Failure:* The Princess returns to her mundane self and her Phylactery disincorporates. She must spend a Wisp and a Willpower point to resummon it, which takes a full round and requires her absolute concentration. *Failure:* The Princess must spend a Wisp to remain transformed in the next scene, or the next half-hour, and future rolls to remain transformed take a -2 cumulative penalty until she ends a scene in her mundane self. *Success:* The Princess remains transformed at no cost.

*Exceptional Success:* The Princess remains transformed, and need not make this check at the end of the next scene, or for a full hour.

While transformed, a Princess has full access to all of her Charms and abilities, and also gains the benefits below.

## Transformed Abilities

Next to each Attribute and Skill on a Princess's character sheet, in addition to the five blank dots normally present, there are another set of dots in parentheses. These dots represent additional skill or attribute dots the Princess has while Transformed. Each Princess gains a dot to one of her Attributes while Transformed based on her Calling, and may purchase additional Transformed Attributes and Skills by spending Experience Points. Buying a new dot of a Transformed Attribute costs 5 experience points for the first dot plus 5 experience points for each dot of that Transformed Attribute you already have; buying a new dot of a Transformed Skill costs 3 experience points for the first dot plus 3 experience points for each dot of that Transformed Skill you already have. Whatever the value of your non-Transformed ability is has no effect on the cost of raising the corresponding Transformed ability; they are tracked separately for the purpose of XP costs.

While Transformed, your Transformed Attributes and Skills are actually added to your normal Attributes and Skills; this can change Advantages such as Speed, Willpower, Initiative and Health, so record these values for both your mundane and Transformed forms. If you take damage in Health boxes derived from transformed Stamina, you may spend Wisps to heal that damage when you return to mundane form as per the rules for Holy Shield - if you don't do so, the damage wraps around, as per usual for temporary Health. Willpower points derived from transformed Resolve and Composure can be spent only while you are transformed; however, if you have spent them, you can regain them at any time. If you have spent both mundane and transformed Willpower, you regain the mundane Willpower first. If you sacrifice a Willpower dot, you lose a transformed Willpower dot first.

Your total Transformed ability may not exceed the maximum rating for Transformed abilities as determined by your Inner Light, and you cannot have more dots in Transformed abilities than you have Belief + Inner Light; Transformed Skills only count as half a dot when counting against this limit.

## Dual Identity

One aspect of the Hopeful's transformation is subtle but amazingly convenient: the mundane and transformed selves appear to be different people, and those who have seen one of the Princess' forms generally fail to recognize her in the other form. A simple perception roll never reveals a Hopeful's identity; to discover it requires active scrutiny, akin to seeing through a normal disguise.

Whenever an observer has evidence that the two forms of a Princess are connected, he may roll his Wits + Subterfuge, contested by the Princess' Wits + Subterfuge, as an instant action; the observer takes a penalty that depends on his Intimate connection to the Princess (see the Intimacy modifier to Charms; Sensory doesn't apply), while the Princess takes a penalty equal to her Sensitivity. If the observer gets more successes, he identifies the Princess correctly. If the observer gets a dramatic failure, he dismisses the evidence, and on any future attempts to discover the Princess' identity he takes a cumulative -1 penalty; if the Princess does, her behavior is so suspicious that the observer gets a cumulative +1 on future attempts to identify her, even if he fails on this attempt. (If both get dramatic failures, they cancel each other.)

This protection does not apply to research rolls designed to gather evidence, or to direct observation of a transformation. If someone sees a Princess change, he will know who she is thereafter without any roll. If a Princess's mundane and transformed selves are seen close together, or she reveals knowledge in one form that she learned in the other, that counts as evidence and justifies an identification attempt; and the ST should give an observer bonuses if he has found multiple pieces of evidence through research.

Supernatural powers that enhance perception are confused by a Princess' transformation. An entity cannot even begin to discover her identity by using such a power before he realizes that she can transform. Once the Princess' nature is known, the supernatural observer may roll either Wits + Subterfuge as above, or his usual roll for examination, to deduce her identity; both rolls take the penalty for Intimacy, and the Princess contests both. Supernatural Intimacy to one of the Princess' forms does not connect to her in the other form, even for those who know her secret; even the Hopeful's own Charms, when modified

by Intimacy, respect another Princess' privacy. If a power is currently targeting a Princess through a Intimate connection, transforming ends the power's effect on her.

## *Modified Merits*

### **Mentor (•-•••••)**

The Mentor Merit detailed in the World of Darkness Rulebook focuses on relations within mortal or supernatural society. While both of those can be of great help to a Princess, a further option is available to a lucky few Princesses: Personal mentorship from their Queen. Even though a Queen cannot leave the Dreamlands, she still has such a wealth of power and experience that she would be far beyond a five dot Mentor. However the Queens have many obligations that demand their time besides tutoring a Princess. Therefore when applied to a Queen the Mentor Merit represents not her skill, but how much of her attention she will bestow upon the character.

As a General rule you may assume you get at least one session with your Queen per week for every dot you have in Mentor. A session can be just a few moments before the throne, but at high dots it can be significantly longer.

When portraying the Queens the Storyteller should always remember that they have had no contact with earth for millennia and are consequently out of touch. Therefore no matter how many dots a Princess has in Mentor and no matter how important it is; the Queen of Hearts cannot teach her followers how to navigate the Chinese political system. She simply does not have that knowledge. She can teach the Princess Skills or direct her to appropriate Charms, but it would be up to the Princess to translate that into an appropriate plan of action for the modern day.

A Princess must follow a Queen before she can place dots in Mentor in a Queen. Neither Storms nor Mirrors will serve as Mentors. A follower of The Queen of Tears cannot place more than three dots of Mentor into her Queen. The Queen of Tear's kingdom is under siege and conforms to the normal rules of time, she just does not have enough time to spare.

Zero dots: As a Princess you are always welcome to attend court, but unless you have important business your Queen will focus her attentions on those who do. When the players have an emergency they can usually get a chance to explain and some advice. The amount of time received depends on how serious the emergency is, and whether the Princess should be able to handle it or needs significant help. Remember that both of these are opinions and two Queens might see the same situation differently. The Queen of Swords considers loosing a boyfriend as roughly equivalent to a small crisis. Even her own followers often think that's taking things too far.

With one dot a Princess can usually get the occasional snatch of time whenever there is a lull in court proceedings. Enough time to talk about recent events or ask questions and get a brief bit of advice.

At three dots the Queen often has your name in the royal itinerary for time with you alone, or perhaps group sessions with your Nakama. You have the opportunity to talk at length about your progress in the war of hope and receive private tutoring. You also know what your queen is like when she has an opportunity to take off her crown, so to speak. Generally speaking a Princess with three dots of Mentor has something special about her that caught her Queen's eye. Something the Queen is especially keen to nurture. She may be the only Onceborn in the Court or run the largest Nation among the Queen's followers. Perhaps she was someone the Queen respected in a past life or maybe the Princess works full time as one of the Queen's agents upon Earth and must report in often (This can be especially helpful for beginner players as it both justifies clear goals for the character and advice from the Storyteller).

At five dots the Princess is spending at least an hour or so with the Queen most nights, and if they don't show up the Queen may even get worried and send one of her other followers to check on the Princess. This level of attention is exceptionally rare and Characters who have five dots are either vital to the Queen's agenda or have an exceptionally strong personal connection. Perhaps the Queen believes the Princess might become a Queen herself and has dedicated herself to making sure it happens. The Princess may be the first Ambassador to a concept the Queen cares for greatly. Alternatively the Queen and Princess might have an immense personal bond of friendship, or maybe the character is the Queen's consort (though this is usually only an option for followers of Swords).

## *New Merits*

The Hopeful may buy Merits with Attribute or Skill prerequisites that they only meet when transformed. If they do so, they only gain the benefit of the Merit in question while in their transformed identity. You may convert transformed dots to mundane dots unlocks Merits with prerequisites in the mundane identity if the character's new mundane traits are high enough to support the Merit.

Below are new Merits related to the Princesses. Unless otherwise noted, all these Merits are reserved to the Hopeful.

### **Bequest (••+)**

Your character possesses an object, within which has been bound a Charm. This might have come from within your own soul, to be granted to another or used to boost your own powers, or might have been obtained on a quest to the Dreamlands. Some senior members of the Nobility (such that there are) make a habit of gifting trusted friends with them for, despite the cost, they can give a Princess access to powers that she might not otherwise be able to reach.

Every Bequest, like the Princesses, has two appearances: a mundane one from the vessel, and a glorious one from the Charm. And, like the Princesses, a Bequest's power can be used only when the Bequest is transformed. Transforming a Bequest is somewhat more difficult than transforming yourself; you can spend a Willpower point to do it reflexively (not a Wisp) or make a transformation roll of your Inner Light (not Belief + Inner Light.) A Bequest, once transformed, remains so for 1 scene. You need not be transformed to transform or use a Bequest, and you do not have to transform a Bequest yourself to use it.

Many permanent Charms grant bonuses to tasks falling within a Skill specialty; when one of these Charms is Bequeathed, the tasks it assists are fixed as the Bequest is made, and the character making it must have any specialty she puts into the Bequest. Anyone using the transformed Bequest as a tool gains the Charm's benefit within the specialty (or specialties) encoded in the Bequest, not on any specialty of his own. He does not get the +1 specialty bonus on actions the Bequest enhances, unless he has a relevant specialty himself.

Any of the Hopeful, whether transformed or not, may recognize a Bequest as such; she rolls her Inner Light the first time she touches it in a scene. Bequests also show up on an Unseen Sense for the Light.

Bequests based on permanent Charms apply their Charm's effect to the person holding them as long as they are transformed. Bequests based on activated Charms require the person holding them to pay the Charm's cost, and then release the Charm's effect. If a Bequest is based on an upgraded Charm, every upgrade included in the Charm applies every time the Bequest is used, and you must pay the upgrades' cost in full – a Bequest, unlike a Charm, is not flexible. If you have an Invocation that's compatible with the Bequest's Charm, you may apply it when using the Bequest, with the same effect as it would have on the Charm.

Some Bequests simply cannot be used by anyone without an Inner Light of their own (that is, Princesses and Queens); This includes Bequests that contain the Charms: Bequeath, Accept Fealty or Long May She Reign. Bequests containing an Avatar Charm cannot be used by anyone who does not have four dots in the related Invocation.

Many Bequests carry a pool of Wisps within themselves, which their holders can spend to activate them (but not for any other purpose.) The capacity of the pool is 10 Wisps. To add Wisps to the pool, the Bequest's owner has to carry out a duty while the Bequest is on her person, roughly equivalent to a duty of a Calling (and using the rules for them); the specific duty, and the dice pool the owner rolls, are fixed at the Bequest's making.

A Bequest's base Merit dot cost is equal to one dot, plus the level of the Charm (so, for example, Charge, a Govern 2 Charm, adds two dots to the cost of the item), plus one dot per upgrade, plus one dot if the Bequest has a Wisp pool. For more details on Bequest creation, see the rules for the Bequeath charm.

### **Circle (•-•••••)**

The human mind was not designed for large numbers. When the suffering of millions feels incomprehensible, you can turn to the small every day problems and triumphs of friends and family to

remind yourself what you are fighting for. The Circle Merit represents healthy relationships between a Princess and her family, close friends, or mentors, who are ordinary mortals (not supernatural in any way.) The more dots a Princess has, the more or the stronger these relationships are; describe the people your character is intimate with when you buy dots in Circle.

A Princess with this Merit who spends an hour in the company of her circle may roll Inner Light + Empathy + Circle, and regains 1 Wisp for each success. Unlike Sacred Oaths, however, a Princess cannot gain more Wisps by this method than her dots in Circle each day. Successes above that limit are discarded. Dots in Shadows impose a penalty on the Circle roll just as for Sacred Oath rolls. In addition, while it is possible to gain Wisps just by conversing with a friend over the telephone, a Princess takes a penalty of -2 when attempting it.

If a Princess gets a dramatic failure on a Circle roll, she loses 1 dot in the Merit; she recovers dots lost this way at a rate of 1 week per dot. Finally, an estrangement between a Princess and one of her intimates means permanent loss of all Circle dots tied to that person.

### **Entwined Destiny (••••)**

Prerequisite: Hopeful or not supernatural. Gaining another supernatural template does not break the bond from this Merit, but the benefit and drawback from it cease to apply. (Note that supernaturals of other types can be the subject of an Entwined Destiny.)

You were bound to another before you were born, and both events and your inmost will urge you towards a specific role in his life. When you take this Merit, choose the nature of your relationship with its subject – true love, rivalry, protection, loyalty, and enmity are all possible, and if none of these fit you may define your own, with the ST's approval. You may also choose the subject's name and general nature, or leave that up to the ST to decide. Once a scene, whenever you succeed in a significant task that plays into your destined role, you regain 1 point of Willpower.

Entwined Destiny cannot directly influence a person's choices, but when you have this merit Fate will attempt to nudge you in certain ways. For example if you have an Entwined Destiny of love Fate cannot make you feel love. Instead Fate can and will create coincidences where you and your destined bump into each other in circumstances appropriate for heart to heart talks. If the destiny is natural it can also be assumed that your destined true love are compatible people, your destined ward will need a protector, or similar..

Drawback: In any scene when you have an opportunity to fulfill your destined role in dramatic action, and deliberately forgo it, you take a -2 penalty on all your actions until the scene ends. For example, if your destined rival challenges you, you must accept; if you discover your destined enemy's plot, you must oppose it; if your destined ward is in peril, you must rescue him.

### **Mandate (•-•••••)**

Every Calling has its Sacred Oaths, the means by which a Princess feels is her duty to help the world. The Mandate Merit represents not an emotional connection to one's Calling, but a practical ability to fulfil it. Any Grace could take it upon herself to help the local bully apologise and make amends, but when all is measured it's the Grace who works as a professional diplomat and mends broken relations between entire nations who's making the bigger difference.

When a Princess buys the Mandate Merit, the player states how their character is in an advantaged position to make a difference. Whenever the Princess uses her advantage to help with her Sacred Oaths, she adds her Mandate dots to the Attribute + Skill roll. For example, a Champion with a job on the police force can roll Wits + Investigation + Mandate; a Mender nurse would roll Intelligence + Medicine + Mandate; a Seeker publishing a blog rolls Wits + Expression + Mandate. More dots in Mandate represent broader influence and better reputation.

The Mandate merit only applies when the Princess attempts to regain Wisps during downtime.

### **Nation (special)**

You are one of the founders of a Nation; some of the people you have influenced for the better are joined with you in a common cause ... a bond that's more than natural, for it is sanctified by oath and commemorated by a monument in the Dreamlands.

Special: Characters don't buy Nation as a standard Merit; instead they buy points in the Nation's traits with their experience, at a rate of 3 xp for 1 Nation point. A nakama of Hopeful can create a Nation together, each one contributing points towards its traits; and Hopeful without a Nation can join an existing one and contribute points to it at the given rate.

## Onceborn ( • • )

Available at character creation only.

You are one of the rare people who Blossomed, and became one of the Hopeful, without any memory of a past life as a Princess; your soul was never trapped in the Dreamlands, and the bitter memory of the Fall is not yours. This unshadowed innocence grants an unusual level of moral clarity. Your Belief begins at 8, not 7.

Special: If the Storyteller allows PCs to trade dots in starting Belief for experience points, a Onceborn character may not do so! Keeping to a high moral standard, despite the many temptations the World of Darkness offers, is the reason your character Blossomed without a boost from a past life.

## Palace ( • - • • • • • , special)

A Princess's home is her castle. And this phrase can apply in many ways, depending on her personal tastes. It may be a literal stronghold; a place armoured against the horrors which dwell in the world, where she can relax for once. It may be a place of beauty, in which she can entertain guests without a fear for their safety. It may even just be her one safe place, where she can let down her guard properly, without fear for what may happen. No matter what, it is a place which is indelibly hers, even if the legal system might disagree.

Palaces are not created equal. The abandoned warehouse downtown, where she and her nakama train, may be spacious and out of the way, but is insecure, relying more on obscurity than anything which might heed a determined assailant. A family house may be able to be made more secure, but the few rooms she can devote to Hopeful business will invariably be cramped. The Merit is therefore composed of multiple sub-Merits; each dot purchased is assigned to one of the sub-Merits below.

Special: It's not uncommon for Princesses to end up living together; it makes things easier than having to keep things secret from relatives and friends not in the know, and makes it more difficult for dumb Darklings to follow one home to prey on the weak. A tight-knit group can build a shared Palace, with each member contributing Merit dots towards its sub-Merits. The normal limits for each component remain. If a contributor to a shared Palace abandons it, the dots they contributed are removed, and the contributing character gets back all but one of them for her own use – the lost dot represents bad blood, the costs of extracting resources tied up in the shared home, and so forth.

## Palace Size (up to • • • • • )

0 dots - A Palace with no dots in Size is just large enough for one owner, and maybe a camp bed.

1 dot - A small apartment or a cabin in the woods; 1-2 rooms

2 dots - A large apartment or small remote house; 3-4 rooms

3 dots - A converted church, warehouse or large house; 5-8 rooms

4 dots - A mansion, extensive network of forgotten tunnels, or cavern under the earth; 9-15 rooms

5 dots - A vast palatial estate or complex underground village; countless rooms

## Palace Security (up to • • • • • )

Each dot assigned to Palace Security gives a -1 penalty to any attempt to gain entry to the Palace by anyone other than the contributors, or those they have given permission to enter. This can be represented by secure locks, the deliberate sculpting of the ground to cover the entry down to the underground rooms, or any suitable method determined by the Storyteller. In addition, the familiarity which setting up such defences implies allows the contributors to react faster should anyone break in; each dot grants a +1 to Initiative while inside.

## Palace Veiling (up to •••)

Something odd happens to some Palaces, when its mistress deliberately associates her domicile with her mundane self and avoids associating it with her Transformed self. The effects of her Dual Identity seeps into her home, preventing others from connecting it to her Transformed Identity. Each dot assigned to Palace Veiling provides a -1 penalty to any attempt to find the location of the Palace when searching for the home of it's mistresses' Transformed Identity. Searching for her Mundane Identity's home has no penalty.

Dots in Palace Veiling also apply a -1 per dot penalty to any attempts to notice anything out of the ordinary about the Palace. In addition, this also serves to protect those inside from hostile scrying; any attempt to scry the location is penalised too. This does not stack with any other Merits that penalize scrying – apply the larger penalty if a character with such a Merit enters a veiled Palace.

## Palace Amenities (•-•••••, special)

Prerequisite: a Palace, with Size dots equal to or greater than the level of the Merit

Over time, some Hopeful turn space in their Palaces to a use other than the residential, collecting memorabilia of their struggles, records and papers, tools of a trade, or other, stranger things. With this Merit, your Palace becomes one such. Like the Palace Merit, Palace Amenities is composed of multiple sub-Merits; each dot purchased is assigned to a sub-Merit.

Special: A group with a shared Palace may buy Amenities for it, on the same terms as the Palace Merit. A contributor who abandons a shared Palace takes back any Amenities dots she contributed as well as her contribution to the Palace itself.

## Craftyard (•-•••••)

Many Princesses are tinkerers and testers. A Craftyard is a fairly comprehensive set of tools and raw materials and parts designed to aid in the application of a certain practice. Each dot in this sub-Merit equates to one specialisation. It should be roughly as broad as a Craft specialty, although "Medicine" is explicitly permitted as an exception, representing a place set up for medical procedures. When practising such an action in the Palace, with access to the Craftyard (for example, trying to shape the garden when you have a Craftyard (Garden)) you gain a +3 bonus. Only a character who has contributed to the merit may benefit from it.

## Gallery (•-•••••)

Humans are social creatures and Princesses even more so. A Gallery is a set up designed to help with anything from dinner parties to theatre shows. Each dot in this sub-Merit is equivalent to one Speciality in Expression, Persuasion or Socialise. When performing any action which fits under a Gallery speciality the Princess gets a +3 bonus (for example, hosting a dinner party when you have Gallery (Dinner Parties) you would get +3 to Socialise.) Only a character who has contributed to the merit may benefit from it

## Library (•-•••••)

You possess a large number of books and other media, within which are contained a wealth of information and knowledge (both mundane and occult). Whether it's in the form of a meticulously organised array of textbooks on modern sciences, a clutter of arcane tomes which, nonetheless, you know your own way around, or even a massive bank of servers and computers in which the data you've found have been stored, you can get access to knowledge which other sources might not have.

Each dot in this sub-Merit equates to a field of study, similar in breadth to an Academics, Science or Occult specialty. With Library 2, for example, the dots might be assigned to Alhambran History and Local Legends, for example. Topics can cover things which no normal mortal would know, although Storytellers should note that the Enlightened do not have an as developed history or as broad a knowledge of the denizens of the World of Darkness as some of the other inhabitants of the shadows and, so frequently their sources will be unreliable or vague (or stolen from Alhambran Outposts, and so somewhat biased). Libraries are not infallible, after all, and do not always provide a definitive answer to a question, as different authors may have different views. As a general rule of thumb, a specialisation in a mundane topic is likely to be both more comprehensive and more accurate than an occult one.

Gaining knowledge from a library is a research roll, as featured in pp. 55-56 of the World of Darkness Core Book, except a character who has contributed dots to this Merit only spends 10 minutes per roll when researching, rather than the default 30 (they know what's in it, and a filing system is, after all, what distinguishes a library from a pile of books).

## Royal Tongue (•)

Prerequisite: Sworn or Hopeful. It might be possible for other supernatural creatures to find a way to mimic its effects, but that would require the active use of powers (such as the Mind Arcanum or a Majesty Devotion), and so they cannot learn the Merit.

You know how to produce the Royal Tongue. You can use it to enhance your Charms.

As languages go the Royal Tongue is unique, it is quite possibly the densest language there is. Meaning is conveyed not just by words but also tone and the placement of stresses, two different words could be completely identical except for where it's grammatically acceptable to use them. A monosyllabic prefix or suffix can completely change a word within it's conceptual space; the Royal Tongue has over a thousand words for friend, (and just as many for: lover or sister or brother) each defines the exact details of the relationship and not only do they all come from the same root word, they all sound like that root word.

The hardest thing to do with the Royal Tongue is speak a straight sentence. Between the grammatical rules and the enormous amount of information in every word a simple sentence like "thank you for helping" would, if translated into English, look like two paragraphs of flowery purple prose about the inherent virtue of teamwork. When asked how such a language came about the Queen of Hearts implies that it was deliberate, the Queen of Spades bursts into laughter and the Queen of Diamonds (who's fluent in, and prefers, most Earthly languages) gives a put upon sigh.

Mortals can hear the the Royal Tongue but they cannot understand it. Many Princesses swear blind that the Royal Tongue uses magic as well as sound waves as a carrier to pack even more information into each word. The cost of this is that only Princesses, Sworn and Beacons can understand the Royal Tongue. Beacons can't even speak it. To anyone else it sounds like someone singing in an unknown melodic language. The Royal Tongue can't be recorded either, a Princess who hears a recording of the Royal Tongue catches at best the occasional word, it sounds as though someone has removed 40% of the syllables and all the grammar. This is considerably more confusing than it would be in a normal language.

The most useful aspect of the Royal Tongue is to enhance a Princess' Charms (Though some Troubadours insist it's use in lyrics and poetry is more useful... Deep purple prose is an acquired taste). If you spend a turn speaking the Royal Tongue, declaring that you will use a Charm on a target, and forcing the qualia, the experience and feeling of what you are about to do, into the musical speech, your activation roll for the power gains the 9-again quality.

Use of the Royal Tongue is a supernatural ability, and triggers the sense of individuals with Unseen Senses (Princesses).

## Shikigami (••••)

In the years since the Release, when the Nobility Blossom often enough that a small high school may easily have a nakama of three or four attending at once, it's a common thing for the first Princess of a future nakama to meet an unusual creature in the days before they Blossom – commonly an animal that's clearly tame but not obviously owned, and is more intelligent than other beasts of its kind. The animal will bring or follow the Princess-to-be to a private place and introduce both itself and the new world she is soon to enter. In the loose network of the Hopeful community these magical teachers and companions are named Shikigami. Once a Shikigami has arrived and befriended his first Noble, he usually becomes something between a boon companion and a mentor to her, and to several other Hopeful in the area who Blossom at about the same time; experienced Hopeful, indeed, have come to expect that, where a new Shikigami appears, multiple Blossomings will soon follow.

Most shikigami come from the radiant court, in the dreamlands they were men and woman of renown. Knights to the kingdom's royalty, on the decree of their Queen they set of to the waking world, taking bodies of animals to become guides for the young nobility. Other Shikigami were made that way by magic – a Princess in her full power journeyed to the Dreamlands, made a friend there, and used a



Charm to bring that friend into her waking life. Once they arrive in waking life these dreamlanders anchor themselves to the animal or doll which they thenceforth animate, and vow themselves to one or several Hopeful.

All Shikigami possess to some degree an oracular gift that grants flashes of insight relevant to their companions' problems; the ones who followed visions of their nakama are strongest in that gift. They can transform to a more potent shape and learn Practical Magic; and while they're usually smaller and weaker than their companions they have a lifetime of experience, a fair number have learned Charms. Though the Hopeful reach greater heights in their magic as they gain in years and experience, a Shikigami with a decade or two under its pelt is nothing for a Darkspawn to sneeze at. But the most significant ability of the Shikigami is a subtle thing: merely by existing, he creates a strong mystical link among all of his nakama, through which a Noble's magic can travel.

You design the Shikigami's starting traits. A Shikigami is started out as a normal animal, with at least 1 dot in each Attribute plus extra dots allocated 5/4/3 and Skill dots allocated 9/6/3. Its Willpower, Initiative and Speed are calculated as for a normal animal of its type. A Shikigami also has a pool of Wisps, which is capped at 10, and one transformed dot in an Attribute. Finally, a Shikigami gets 1 dot in Circle, 1 dot in White Rabbits, every dot of Languages known in it's Circle (including the Royal Tongue), and 6 free Merit dots. They may spend their dots on Circle, White Rabbits and appropriate Physical or Mental Merits, including Striking Looks for when cuteness becomes a weapon. All Shikigami can move about, and grasp and carry objects, even if their vessels could not. Shikigami based on flying creatures keep their vessel's flight. After character creation a Shikigami gains experience and may spend it like any other character.

A Shikigami's Circle, the Princesses it has chosen to mentor and nurture, is a special thing. In addition to restoring Wisps a Shikigami can function as a magical relay, binding it's Circle together. In effect every person who is part of the Circle has an Intimacy link equivalent to love with the Shikigami, and every other person in the Circle. (This web of sympathy makes the Shikigami and his Circle a Dedicated social group.) Any magic used to break this link removes the person affected from the Shikigami's Circle.

Usually Shikigami are small enough that their Princesses can carry them around without much trouble, but there are a few 'magical steeds' among them, and rather more who have small mundane forms but transform into giant fighting beasts when their Princess is in danger. A Shikigami's mundane form may be any Size from 1 to 3 for free when first created; each dot of Size above 3 in that form costs 1 Merit dot, and it cannot be increased later with experience. By default the Shikigami's transformed shape has the same Size as its mundane shape; additional point of Transformed Size costs 1 Merit Dot. Unlike mundane Size, a Shikigami can spend it's experience to increase it's Transformed Size, price this as though Transformed Size is a Merit. Under no circumstances can a Shikigami's Size exceed 8 in either form.

Though they are not Nobility, Shikigami are typically loyal to a Queen and can spend its Wisps on Practical Magic. Shikigami seek out Princesses of the same court, as they would benefit most from a partnership, though when a Nakama follow different Queens a Shikigami will just make the best of it. Shikigami can also learn Charms, though it's maximum rating in Charms is capped by the highest Inner Light in it's Circle: When the highest is Inner Light 1 it may buy only one dot Charms. Every two points of Inner Light increase the limit by one. At character creation a Charm costs 1 + the Charm's dot's in Merit dots. Afterwards a Shikigami can buy Charms like normal with it's own experience points.

**Special:** Multiple Princesses can contribute to the cost of a Shikigami, or contribute Merit dots for Charms or points of Size. Every Princess who invests into a Shikigami is considered part of it's circle and may benefit from the magical relay.

### Striking Transformation ( • • or • • • • )

Your perfected self has a physical beauty that your mundane state lacks. While you are transformed, and only then, you have the benefits of Striking Looks (2 if you take 2 dots, 4 if you buy 4.) You may take both Striking Looks and Striking Transformation – but if you do so neither can go above two dots; this means you gain a +1 bonus in the mundane state on eligible rolls, and +2 on the same rolls when transformed.

At the end of a story, you may convert dots of Striking Transformation into Striking Looks, if you can justify it. As always the price is the cost of the mundane dots - the cost of the Transformed dots.

### **Veiling (•- •••)**

Some Hopeful's perfected selves differ so much from their mundane selves that they are excessively difficult to identify, even beyond the norm. A Princess with Veiling is one such; whenever an observer tries to connect her two identities, she adds her dots in the Merit to her dice pool in the contest. Also, supernatural attempts to discover her status as a Princess while she is not transformed suffer a penalty equal to her dots in the Merit.

### **White Rabbits (•- •••••)**

Your Character has an especially strong connection to the Dreamlands; when she sleeps she is called to witness prophecies and portents applicable to her life and her goals. To consult the White Rabbits, the Princess must go to sleep for long enough to reach REM sleep. The Princess may not look for White Rabbits more often than once per session. The Princess rolls Wits + Empathy - Shadows; if she has not found a Crawlspace entrance near her current resting place the roll is at -2.

*Dramatic Failure:* The Princess is called to the Dreamlands by a March Hare, or perhaps even a Black Rabbit, that she mistakes for a Prophecy Rabbit. *Failure:* No Rabbits appear that night. *Success:* The Princess is called to the Dreamlands by a Prophecy Rabbit and witnesses a prophecy concerning a question or topic chosen by the player. The Princess will receive at least one clue per dot of White Rabbits, though the clue may be hidden behind signs or portents. *Exceptional Success:* In addition to the regular benefits the Princess also gains a pool of Dream Dice equal to her dots in White Rabbits which lasts for the remainder of the Session. At any point during the Session the player can declare that the Princess knows the what to do because of her prophecy and add any number of Dream Dice to the roll. Dream Dice, once added to a pool, are spent and used up. Naturally this may only be done if the Princess' action is related to her prophecy.

The Storyteller is free to introduce White Rabbits without players using this Merit. Even a Princess without any dots in White Rabbits can experience the occasional prophecy if it's important enough. See the Dreamlands appendix for more details on the White Rabbits.

## *Mortal Merits*

### **Beacon (•)**

Prerequisite: Not supernatural, Morality 7+. Available at character creation only.

Beacons are those possessed of a strong Inner Light. They have a strong sense of hope, idealism, or optimism, a solid sense of morality or ethics, and a concern for the well-being of others. Because of their optimism and Inner Light, Beacons find it easier to hold onto their ideals; they gain a +1 bonus on degeneration rolls to avoid morality loss. Beacons also have an Echo. Their optimism and hope shines on those around them, giving them a +1 bonus to resolve rolls when they attempt to uphold their morals or principles.

Beacons can recognize and transform Bequests, with an effective Inner Light of 1. As they have no Wisps, they cannot use a Bequest, unless its power requires no Wisps, or it has its own pool.

Drawbacks: Like the Hopeful, Beacons are vulnerable to Sensitivity, with an effective Inner Light of 1. The Inner Light of the Beacon is fragile and easily crushed. If a Beacon ever loses her optimism or idealism, or if her Morality drops below 7, she loses the Beacon merit.

If Beacons have dots in Shadows, they can travel to the Dreamlands, though lacking Wisps, they must spend 1 Willpower point to open a Crawlspace entrance; and lacking regalia, they are exposed to the Gales as long as they remain there. For rolls involving the Dreamlands, a Beacon has an effective Inner Light of 0 - they roll Empathy + Shadows to find a Crawlspace entrance, and Intelligence + Empathy

to locate memories in Crawlspace. Any progress made toward spontaneous discovery of the Dreamlands is lost if the Beacon loses his last remaining dot in Shadows before finding the entrance.

If a Beacon becomes a Sworn or a Princess, remove the Beacon merit; his Inner Light has developed into a stronger state where it is not so easily crushed.

## Sworn (••••)

Prerequisite: Not supernatural

The Sworn are mortals who know of the Princesses' mission, and have taken an oath to one of the Queens, promising to fulfil it. Their loyalty connects them to the Light, and allows them to draw on it for a modicum of power. Like Princesses Sworn have an Echo, though like Princesses their Echo can become a burden at low Morality. In addition Sworn can recognize, transform and use Bequests, with an effective Inner Light of 1. They may learn the Invocation favoured by the Queen they're sworn to, though at the out-of-affinity rate, and apply it when they use Bequests. They gain a pool of Wisps, holding a number of Wisps equal to their Resolve + Presence. They may spend these Wisps on Bequests or Practical Magic, exactly as the Princesses following the Queen they're sworn to do, treating Morality as Belief.

Sworn do not, however, gain Wisps as the Hopeful do – to fill their pool, they rely on the Hopeful's gifts. Any Princess of the same court can give Wisps to a Sworn from her own pool in a ritual confirmation of the oath, up to her Wisp/turn limit; that ritual requires a minute to perform, and the full concentration of both parties. The Charge Charm will also give Wisps to the Sworn, and an Accepted Charge Bequest can transfer Wisps to its user. (Such Bequests are highly prized among followers of Tears and Storms, who lacked Hopeful allies until recently, but have ways to gather Wisps without them.)

Drawback: The Sworn are vulnerable to Sensitivity, with an effective Inner Light of 1.

If Sworn gain dots in Shadows, they can travel to the Dreamlands, using the same rules as Beacons. The Accept Fealty Charm allows the purchase of this Merit.

## *New Flaws*

### Adult Supervision

Your character is expected to follow rules set by an older authority figure, who probably does not realise she is a Princess and would most likely be horrified to learn about dangerous activities such as fighting Darkspawn. As the supervisor is unlikely to have magic of their own they probably could do little to prevent the Princess from doing as she wishes, but breaking the rules risks revealing her Transformed identity or her relationship with her parents.

The strictness of the rules placed upon a Princess depends on her age, cultural norms and the individual personality of her supervisor. An exceptionally young Princess may be unable to leave the house alone, but a slightly older Noble may be given a free reign providing she is back by dinner and remains reachable by phone. If the supervisor finds out the Princess' secret and is convinced to help consider buying a dot in Mentor or Retainer. It is not wise for a young princess to underestimate the value of life experience, or access to a car and a legally recognised adult identity. If the adult agrees that supervision is not necessary, remove this Flaw.

### Embarrassing Phylactery

Some Hopeful have a Phylactery which has an uplifting, even moral meaning to them personally but if presented in public causes nothing but trouble. This may be because the Princess is from an oppressed minority group and her Phylactery is a symbol of her people. It could be because her Phylactery has a different meaning to different cultures or because her Phylactery isn't appropriate for her age, social standing or gender. She gains one XP per story when misconceptions about her Phylactery or the attempt to conceal it causes her a significant hardship.

## Slow Transformation

For whatever reason the Princess takes time to Transform, roughly about five minutes. Her Phylactery might be a small bag that somehow containing her entire regalia, which she must change into as with any other clothes. She may simply hover and sparkle for five minutes before the transformation is complete. Whatever the reason you gain one XP per story whenever your slower Transformation causes you a significant hardship.

## Two Hearts, One Soul

There is nothing the Light cherishes more than a true bond between people, but sometimes the Light itself Blossoms through such a bond. In rare cases two Princesses are connected at the most fundamental level. They Blossom side by side and they share a bond closer than sisters, closer than lovers. A Princess with this Flaw needs another Princess to Transform. She and her partner must invoke their Transformations together while standing within a few feet of each other. She has no problem using other abilities, such as Practical Magic and Charms, without her partner; only Transformations need the partner's presence. The Princess gains an experience point in any session when she is separated from her partner and needs to transform. (In every known example of a Princess with this Flaw, the partner has it as well, and the pair transform together.)

## *New Derangements*

### Body Dysmorphia (Mild)

For whatever reason the Princess does not feel comfortable in her mundane identity. Social causes are common, usually in the teenage years. Other Princesses are transgender or otherwise born in the wrong body. A few developed Body Dysmorphia from feelings of inadequacy without her Transformed Attributes and Skills. To these Princesses Transformation is an escape, her perfected self is naturally free from whatever flaws she feels in her mundane body. The price of this freedom is how her mundane form feels even worse by comparison.

The Princess has some form of trigger. It could be hearing an insult about her appearance, being obliged to act in a gender appropriate manner or failing a roll with a Skill she has Transformed dots in. When the trigger is pressed she rolls Resolve + Composure. On a Failure she immediately seeks to excuse herself to a safe place to Transform and remains Transformed for the remainder of the scene. If she cannot she loses a point of Willpower.

Princesses with Body Dysmorphia often have trouble keeping their two identities apart. Many try to transfer their friendships and obligations to their Transformed self. They are also known to take risks such as enjoying any alone time in their Transformed identity.

### Dissociation (Severe; Extreme)

The Princess' amenity to one of her forms is so strong she refuses to see it as herself. Or she acknowledges it but feels shocking levels of loathing and disgust. Usually Princesses identify themselves with their Transformed identity, but the trauma she sees "on the job" can become easier to bear if she cuts her ties to her perfected self.

While suffering from Dissociation a Princess attempts to remain in her favoured form for every hour of every day. While in the wrong form she suffers -2 to all actions and if she is forced to remain in the wrong body for more than a few moments she loses a point of Willpower, at most one per scene. She has to be conscious for this to occur, so falling asleep while Transformed will not cause a problem if she Transforms as soon as she wakes up.

Princesses who reject their Transformed self frequently try to retire as Princesses. Most who reject their mundane self have made at least some attempt to join the Court of Mirrors, just to get her Practical Magic. Some have gone to great lengths and elaborate schemes to attract the Queen's attention, even if they don't care for the Queen and have no desire to follow her teachings.

## Self Doubt (Mild)

A Princess' magic is drawn from within, it is her emotions and ideals made manifest. Consequently when a Princess feels unable to find a solution without compromising the very Belief that powers her magic, this is sure to make her doubt her own abilities. Such questioning is only natural, but should her doubts become chronic than her self doubt, as magical as any other emotion, can turn her own magic against her. Stripping her of the strength she doesn't believe she has.

Under normal circumstances there is no issue, it is easy to believe in your own abilities to magic up dinner. But whenever the Princess enters a highly stressful situation she will need to psyche herself up before she can use any of her magic, including Practical Magic, Charms, Invocations, and Transformation (she may return to her mundane identity, and bypass the block in her magic by spending a Wisp to Transform or by using Mirror's Practical Magic). She is not forced to end current effects, merely prevented from creating new ones.

The most common way for a Princess to psyche herself up is by making a loud speech about her ideals, and how they apply to the current situation. This requires a Resolve + Expression roll, with a target of 8 – Belief successes and one roll per turn. Once the Princess has succeeded on the roll, she is free from Self Doubt for the remainder of the scene. The density of the Royal Tongue makes it faster to build up one's confidence in that language, the roll gains 9-again.

## Shattered Confidence (Severe, Extreme)

The Princess' lack of confidence in herself is so severe that she simply cannot use her magic. She retains the full Princess Template, including her vulnerability to Sensitivity, but she may not use any of her abilities at all (even the Court of Mirrors are limited to their mundane identities) until she regains her self esteem.

## *Blessed Places*

HERE MEN FROM THE PLANET EARTH FIRST SET FOOT UPON THE MOON JULY  
1969, A.D. WE CAME IN PEACE FOR ALL MANKIND

The classroom of an inspirational teacher. A humble yet gifted artist's studio. The best, hardest working hospital in town and the underfunded free clinic opening against the odds in the most deprived area. A truly welcoming and tolerant church. The laboratory tirelessly working on the latest disease to evolve and the library that preserves wisdom of ages gone by. These are the Blessed places, they stand on a legacy of the very best of humanity.

Anyone touched by the Light - any Beacon, Sworn or Noble - feels her heart lift when she arrives in a Blessed area, though she may not realize why. The Storyteller makes a Perception check, rolling Wits + Composure + Sensitivity - Shadows; if it succeeds the character notices the Light-touched quality of the place she enters.

## Creating a Blessed Place

Blessed places are formed when attempts to improve the world are performed with true passion and great skill. This can be as general as making something beautiful simply for the sake of beauty or as specific as helping one single person. A single but extraordinary act can create a Blessed place all by itself while others are formed by gradual accumulation.

Blessed places have two attributes, their Size and the Beauty of their Blessings. The Size of a Blessed place is measured on the same scale as Palace Size. The Beauty of a Blessed place measures how powerful and numerous its effects are; each dot in Beauty supports one Blessing. Larger Blessed places are also more resilient; a Blessed place has a Hold track with a number of boxes equal to their Size +1. Most methods to damage the Beauty of a Blessed place marks Hold boxes. When the rightmost box is marked reduce the Beauty by one, remove one Blessing and clear the Hold track. Blessed places recover from damage if left alone; clear 1 Hold box on each day that no Hold box is marked.

When creating a Blessed place the Storyteller should first imagine the person or people responsible. An artist motivated by his love of art? A scientist dedicated to discovery? A good Samaritan? See where

their actions fall on this rough guide to how much Beauty may be created. A dot of Beauty costs 1 point; a dot of Size costs points equal to the new value of Size (1 point to raise Size from 0 to 1, 2 points to raise from 1 to 2, and so on.)

Action	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20+
Selfless and genuine attempt to help others.	0*	0	0	0	0
... that inspires witnesses.	1	0*	0	0	0
... that directly improves a small town or village, or a small institution.	2	1	0*	0	0
... that directly improves a city, or a large institution.	3	2	1	0*	0
... that directly improves a country.	4	3	2	1	0*
... that directly improves the entire world.	5	4	3	2	1

0\* means that a single act at that level gives no points, but repeating it many times can build up to a point eventually.

Actions that involve significant personal sacrifice count as one step downward in this table.

A Blessing can produce any one of the following list of effects. A Blessed place can grant most Blessings any number of times, within the limit of its Beauty.

- Attribute: Dice pools that include one Attribute have a +1 bonus.
- Skills: Rolls of two Skills take a +1 penalty; or, rolls of one Skill have a +2 bonus. An Attribute + Attribute dice pool, such as Perception, may be treated as one Skill.
- Specialities: Three types of tasks, each of the scope of a speciality, take a +1 penalty. These can be stacked, with one type taking +2 or +3.
- Pacifism: Characters with evil general intentions are find themselves unable to commit evil, reduce their combat dicepools by -1.
- Resistance: Characters with good general intentions are protected to supernatural powers. Increase either Resolve or Composure by (not both - pick one) when the Attribute is used to resist a power.
- Health: The Blessing aids recovery and bolsters the will to recover. Halve all healing times; this does not stack with supernatural powers that increase the rate of healing unless they are an innate ability for a supernatural creature. A Blessed place cannot have more than one of this Blessing.
- Willpower: The blessing bolsters the will to act. Characters acting with general noble intentions gain a free point of Willpower when entering the blessed place. This Willpower is spent first and vanishes upon leaving the Blessed Place. Blessed Places can only grant Willpower once per day to any person.
- Moral Fibre: Degeneration checks within the area take a +2 bonus if they were caused by the pursuit of a noble cause. A Blessed place cannot have more than one of this Blessing.
- Blessed Virtue: The blessing reinforces human nobility. Each time you take this Blessing chose one Virtue. Anyone within the Blessed place may fulfil that Virtue in addition to their own, but only if fulfilling the Virtue comes from a genuine goodness of heart: A Doctor who will not rest while his patients need help can fulfil Blessed Fortitude, but a thief who will not rest until he has acquired the golden idol cannot. As always you may only regain Willpower through Virtue once per Chapter. A Blessed place cannot have more than one Blessing of this type for each Virtue.

## Sanctification

Mortals staying in a Blessed Place find good deeds easier and more rewarding. Over time this may lead to them learning to be a better person. Every time a mortal sleeps within a Blessed Place roll Beauty.

Dramatic Failure: The Mortal somehow disrupts the blessing. Mark off one of the Blessed place's Hold boxes.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: Note one point of Light on the character's sheet up to a maximum of the total dots in Inspirational, Nurturing and Welcoming Blessing. When the mortal next buys Morality they get a discount equal to Light to a minimum of 1 exp. After buying Morality remove all dots of Light.

Exceptional Success: Add two dots of Light.

Beacons, Sworn and Princesses are effected in a slightly different manner.

Dramatic Failure: The Hopeful loses connection to the Blessing. For the next day they do not benefit from any Blessings.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: If the Hopful has any dots in Shadows she may immediately spend exp to remove dots with a discount equal to successes. It costs a minimum of 1 exp per dot.

Exceptional Success: Extra successes are their own reward.

## Dreamguard

Deep within the Dreamlands servants of the Darkness built a trap, a shining lure to lead Light away from the world but within a Blessed place that lure doesn't seem quite as tempting. The nightly roll for a Character with Shadows to be lured into the Dreamlands and the lure for a Nation with many Privileges are penalised by the Blessed Place's Beauty.

## Protecting Blessed Places

Every Blessed place is a treasure, any Nakama with knowledge of one is sure to do their best to protect it. So what do they need to protect it from?

### Taintings

Tainting and Blessed places cancel each other out weakening or even destroying the Beauty of a Blessed Place forever. When a Tainting is committed within Blessed Places roll Beauty - the amount of Taint created (as per the rules for Tainted Places) on a failure the Beauty decreases by the amount of Taint created; if there is any excess taint it forms a Tainted Place.

### Symbolic Opposition

Every Blessed Place has cause, something beautiful people did that has left it's mark on the area. Actions which directly oppose this cause can cause the beauty to decay.

*Example: Harriet is a true artist who's only motivation is to make the world a better place by creating things of beauty. Her dedication turns her studio into a small Blessed Place. If her studio passed on to another artist who saw art merely as a way to get money and prestige – going against everything Harriet believed in – then this could degrade and ultimately destroy the Beauty of her studio.*

As a general rule assume that every successful roll, or successful extended action, which is directly opposed to the origin of the Beauty marks of one Hold box, but turnabout is fair play: every successful action which reinforces the ideals of the Blessed Place can clear one hold box providing it was specifically marked by Symbolic Opposition.

### Physical Destruction

The power of a Blessed Place is held in the physical form: It is in the ancient stonework of a university who's scholars have added to mankind as a whole. It is in the trees of a forest where generations have found peace and strength. Destroying such things can damage a Blessed Place. Every time the physical form of a Blessed Place undergoes massive changes; enough that it is no longer recognisable as the same place, roll Beauty. The number of Successes is the new Beauty rating.

## Charms

The basic magics of the Hopeful are called Charms. Use of a Charm is, as a rule, an obviously magical event, as obvious as transformation, unless the Princess specifically tries to cloak herself. Generally the Light's force overflows into some visible manifestation – a flash of light, a snatch of music, the appearance of a solid object – that leaps from the Princess to her target.

The Charms are divided into 10 trees. Each Calling has an affinity to 3 of them, learning the Charms within them more easily.

Each Charm has an Action attribute, giving the type of action using it is:

- **Instant:** Activating the Charm is an instant action, taking a turn. The dice pool to roll for the action is noted.
- **Reflexive:** Similar to Instant, except that (like a dodge in combat) you can declare the activation before your turn in the initiative order, in response to another person's action.
- **Full turn:** Activating the Charm is an instant action, but it also requires forgoing Defense in the turn you activate it.
- **Reflexive:** Activating the Charm is a reflexive action; it doesn't interfere with your normal action. A dice pool to roll is noted.
- **Permanent:** The Charm enhances another ability. No action is required to activate it – if the proper conditions obtain, it just works.
- **(one of the above) and resisted:** The Charm has a target, and you must subtract one of his traits from the dice pool.
- **(one of the above) and contested:** The Charm has a target, who reflexively rolls an opposed dice pool; you must roll more successes than he does for the Charm to take effect.

Other than the permanent Charms, each Charm has a duration, ending when the stated time runs out; and a cost, usually in Wisps. Powerful Charms call for Willpower points; many Charms favored by the Queen of Storms inflict damage on their user, which resists magical healing; and using some Charms favored by the Queen of Tears transgresses against Belief.

### Learning Charms

Each Charm has a rating in dots, which sets the price and difficulty of learning its basic effect. While Charms need not be learned in any fixed sequence, the more advanced Charms can't be learned without practice with simpler powers. To learn a Charm at its basic level, a Princess must have a sufficient number of dots in other Charms in the same tree (counting each Upgrade as an additional dot), as defined in this table.

Charm Rating	Dots Required
1	0
2	1
3	3
4	6
5	10

*Example: Before she can learn a Govern Charm rated at three dots, a Princess would have to know: Three one dot Govern Charms, a one dot and a two dot Govern Charm, two one dot Govern Charms one of which has an Upgrade, or a single Govern charm which has two Upgrades.*

A few Charms have another Charm as a prerequisite; to learn these Charms, a Princess must have learned the prerequisite Charm, as well as meeting the total dots required for its basic effect. Upgrades can also have prerequisites, of other upgrades to the same Charm. Finally, your Inner Light limits the



dots you can put in a Charm; a Princess cannot learn a Charm with a basic rating higher than Inner Light + 2, or upgrade a Charm with an effective rating equal to that.

Many upgrades change the cost or duration of their Charm, or add a modifier to the activation roll. Therefore, you are not required to apply any upgrade when using a Charm – the basic effect is always available, at the original cost.

## Invocations

Invocations are archetypal forces from which the Hopeful learn to draw power. A Princess may buy up to 5 dots in an Invocation. Normally, when she activates a Charm, the Princess spends 1 Wisp on top of the Charm's usual cost to apply one of the Invocations she knows - this adds her dots in the Invocation to the dice pool for activating the Charm. Charms that don't require a roll to activate gain power from Invocations in other ways; for example, several permanent Charms allow a Princess to apply an Invocation to some mundane Skill rolls. It is never possible to apply two Invocations to a single dice pool, or to stack Invocations in any other way.

Each Queen favors one Invocation, and the Hopeful sworn to her find that Invocation easier to learn than any other. Due to this intimate tie to the Queens, the Invocations are described under the Queen who favors them. An Invocation can be applied for free (without paying the extra Wisp) under certain conditions, generally when her actions are consonant with the principles of the Queen favoring that Invocation. There is also, for each Invocation, a prohibition that a Princess should not break; if she does, she loses the right to apply that Invocation for a period of time, she may still use Charms that depend upon that Invocation as a prerequisite.

A fair number of Charms require dots in an Invocation to purchase; these are called invoked Charms, and are not compatible with any Invocation but their prerequisite. When using such a Charm, a Princess can apply the prerequisite Invocation to gain its bonus (if conditions permit) or she can make the activation roll without any bonus, but she may not apply any other Invocation's bonus. If a Charm does not require an Invocation to purchase it, any Invocation can be applied to it; these are called general Charms. There are a few general Charms with upgrades that require Invocation dots – applying such an upgrade converts the Charm to an invoked one – and some invoked Charms with upgrades that require more Invocation dots than the basic Charm does. Upgrades that require different Invocations are not compatible; you may not apply both of them to the same activation of a Charm.



### Choosing Your Invocations

The choice of Invocations is an important one, an Invocation shapes and empowers a Princess' magic. The easiest trap for a player to fall into is jump to thinking which Charms she wants. Invocations are not a neatly packaged source of power for any Princess' who likes the look of a certain Charm. Rather, an Invocation is the ideals and Beliefs of a Queen given form, resonating in the souls of mankind through the inherent magical nature of a Queen.

When choosing Invocations a player should think about what views and beliefs a Princess shares with a Queen. The more a Princess has in common with a Queen, the more she upholds a Queen's ideals, the brighter the Invocation shines within her. With practice (represented by spending experience) she can draw on that Invocation to enhance her magic. The Queen's philosophies can provide a yardstick. A Princess who only follows one of the Queen's philosophies is unlikely to advance beyond one or two dots in an Invocation. Agreeing with two philosophies can reach three or perhaps even four dots. A Princess who broadly agrees with and lives up to all three philosophies can with time master an invocation. (For Lacrima, a Princess is considered to uphold the philosophies if she applies similar ideals to her own friends, family or Nation instead of Alhambra.)

And what of the Twilight Invocations? Not every philosophical ideal of the Twilight Queen's is pure evil to be rejected by any right minded Princess. Protecting those you love or opposing the Outer Dark in all its forms are ideas commonly found among the Radiant. So what stops a Princess waking up one morning and realising she now has a Dot of Lacrima? The answer is choice. A Princess who believes in protecting those she loves can feel a connection to Lacrima deep within herself and knows she can draw power from it, but she can choose not to. The connection to an Invocation does not shape her beliefs, it is shaped by her beliefs. An Invocation she chooses not to use, or vows to stop using, cannot turn her to the dark side.

### Charm Modifiers

Some Charms can be used on distant targets, or on multiple targets, by taking penalties to their activation roll. If a Charm's dice pool is modified by Intimacy, the strength of the emotional connection between the Princess and her target affects the power of the Charm. Consult this table for the penalty to the activation roll:

A Princess does not have to use her own emotional connection. By touching another person she may use their Intimacy instead of her own. This increases the Intimacy modifier by one step (add the intermediary's Composure as an additional penalty if they are unwilling). A Princess can also use the connection between a person and a treasured object, this increases the penalty by two.

Penalty	Strength of Connection
0	Sensory: You can see the target directly.
-2	Love: The target is a longtime friend, a member of your family, a romantic lover or a prized possession.
-4	Friendship: You know the target well; or the target is something you own and care about.
-6	Compassion: You know the target slightly; or the target is an a typical item you own.
-8	Acquaintance: You have met the target briefly; or the target is an item you have held.
-10	Few feelings: You have a verbal description of the target, but nothing more.

If a Charm's dice pool is modified by Commonalty, it can affect all the members of a social group at once. Commonality does not increase the range of a Charm and cannot be combined with Intimacy, so all the affected people will have to be present. If such a Charm is resisted, the member of the group with the best resistance trait resists for the whole group; for a contested Charm, each member rolls to contest individually. The difficulty of extending the Charm over a social group depends on the commitment the members have towards each other, or towards the common goal for which the group exists. Consult this table for the appropriate penalty:

Penalty	Strength of Connection
0	Individual: one person, the default.
-3	Dedicated: everyone in the group affected is mutually friends, or the group's goal takes up the majority of its members' time and thought; an established nakama, a family.
-6	Concerned: everyone in the group knows eachother, or all the members make significant sacrifices for the common goal; a new nakama, the long term employees of a small business.
-9	Interested: everyone in the group is mutually acquainted or better, or the members share an interest in the group's goal; a social club, employees of a large corporation.
-12	Casual: some members of the group have only encountered each other; the group is merely a lot of people gathered in one place, with no common interest.

## Regalia

Some permanent Charms add items to the Princess' transformed self, or give her the ability to add an item. These extra pieces form the Princess' Regalia. When a Charm states that an item is part of the Regalia, it can appear on her person, ready for use, when the Princess transforms, if she wishes it to.

She can switch any number of Regalia pieces into or out of solid existence with a transformation action; the dice pool for this action is the same as the one for full transformation. However, if she returns to mundane form she must dismiss all her Regalia as well. Naturally, pieces of Regalia help a Princess with her goals only when they are in existence - any bonuses they confer are lost if she sends them away.

If a piece of Regalia is destroyed, the Princess can recreate it while transformed; as with a dissolved phylactery, she must spend a Wisp and a Willpower point to recreate a piece of Regalia, which takes a full round and requires her absolute concentration.

## Appear

The Appear Charms change your appearance, and produce other illusions. Seekers and Troubadours have affinity for them.

### Life of the Party (Appear •)

Action: Permanent

An ornate hat, crown, tiara, hair accessories or some other headdress becomes part of the Princess' Regalia, giving her an air of pleasant elegance. She gets the 9-again quality on mundane Socialize rolls within one of her specialties (fixed when she takes the Charm) and she may apply an Invocation to those rolls.

### **Upgrade: Gregarious Stacks, up to 2**

The Princess is at home in any social situation. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for rolls covered by any of the added specialties.

### **Upgrade: Carousing (Aria • •)**

The Princess can get drunk, or high on drugs, and never show it - she keeps her poise and self-control. She gets the 9-again quality on her Stamina + Resolve roll to resist a drug's effects (see p. 176 of the core book) and may apply Aria to those rolls. Moreover, if she spends a Wisp, her opponent in a carousing contest (see p. 85 of the core book) adds her Aria to the number of successes he needs to win the contested roll. The Charm does not help the Princess resist a toxin that does damage.

### **Upgrade: Gossiping (Terra • •)**

When asking for information from her connections, the Princess nearly always finds what she seeks. She gets the 9-again quality on all rolls to get information from her Contacts (see p. 114 of the core book) if she questions them while transformed, and may apply Terra to those rolls. (Using this ability on a Contact who knows only the Princess' mundane identity is best done over the telephone ...)

### **Light the Way (Appear •)**

Action: Instant

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: Inner Light or Invocation hours

The Princess can, at any time, create a soft light that banishes the thickest natural darkness. The light source can take any source the princess wishes, from a torch or a glowing halo to a simple ambient glow, it illuminates the Princess' path and leaves her hands free. She can bring the light up or douse it reflexively, and set it to shine at any intensity short of full sunlight.

### **Upgrade: Dazzling (Fuoco •)**

The Princess can make her light flash brightly enough to dazzle and blind an opponent. As an instant action, she spends a Wisp and rolls Dexterity + Athletics - the target's Defense. For each success rolled the target suffers a -1 penalty on all tasks that require sight, up to a maximum of -5; this penalty lasts for turns equal to the Princess' Fuoco.

### **Twenty Faces (Appear •)**

Action: Instant, Wits + Subterfuge

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Sometimes, the full glory of the light must be veiled, so that a Princess may walk unnoticed.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess cannot use Twenty Faces for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The Princess' appearance and raiment are unchanged.

Success: The Princess wraps herself in an illusion that conceals her Regalia; she seems to be dressed in appropriate "civilian" clothes for the area. The illusion does not alter her features - anyone who has seen her transformed self will recognize her if they meet her - but her status as a Noble is hidden. Any use of Charms dismisses the illusion. Supernatural powers that pierce illusions must beat the Princess' successes to see her true appearance.

Exceptional Success: The illusion blurs the Princess' features. People who have met her transformed before don't recognize her, unless they make a special effort to identify her (succeeding on a Wits + Investigation roll.)

#### **Upgrade: Disguised**

The Princess is able to choose her imaginary clothing's appearance, dress her hair, and add cosmetics to taste. An outfit chosen to support a disguise adds a +1 equipment bonus for each activation success; such changes can extend to anything a mundane makeup artist could accomplish - hair and skin can be dyed, hair lengthened or shortened, figures padded, and so on. Clothing chosen to support other Social tasks in which proper clothing helps grants a flat +1 bonus.

#### **Upgrade: Masked**

Requires Disguised

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess changes her features dramatically. She may alter all aspects of her appearance - ethnicity, height, build, even sex - within the limits of her Size trait. (A Princess with the Giant Merit will always be a very tall man or woman, no matter how this Charm is used; a child Princess cannot look like a full-grown adult, and an adult cannot pass herself off as a child.) All attempts to identify her fail automatically. If she chooses her appearance to support a disguise, the Princess gets the equipment bonus from Disguised, and witnesses take a penalty of half her Inner Light (rounding up) to pierce the disguise.

The Princess can even attempt to take on the appearance of a specific person, applying the Intimacy modifier for her connection to the person she wishes to impersonate. The Princess and her target must still have the same Size.

#### **Upgrade: Durable**

Use of Charms does not destroy the illusion permanently. Instead, it flickers, revealing the Princess' true appearance for a moment; observers will notice this if they succeed on a reflexive Wits + Composure roll, penalized by her activation successes.

### **Unseen Traveller (Appear •)**

Action: Permanent

A Princess usually wants to be seen, to be noticed, to be the one that holds the lantern of Light that is the beacon to guide others. But sometimes, being seen is exactly what you don't need, as the Darkness flees from the Light it becomes harder to determine its plan and intent. The Princess gets the 9-again quality on mundane Stealth rolls within one of her specialties (chosen when she takes the Charm) and may apply an Invocation to such rolls.

#### **Upgrade: Chameleon**

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess' cloak shifts its appearance to best conceal her wherever she is. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Stealth rolls covered by any of the added specialties.

#### **Upgrade: Elusive (Aria ••)**

In her cloak, the Princess is difficult to notice. When she shadows someone, or is being shadowed (see p. 76 of the core book) her opponent in the contest takes a penalty on his roll equal to her Aria.

#### **Upgrade: Quiet (Lacrima ••)**

The Princess' movements are almost silent. When she attempts a surprise attack, her target's roll to avoid surprise takes a penalty equal to her Lacrima, and all attempts to locate her by listening take the same penalty. Moreover, she may spend a Wisp to make herself and anything (or anyone) she touches totally silent for a number of turns equal to her Lacrima; she can walk over ground littered with twigs

and leaves or open a squeaky door without being heard. Things the Princess touches remain silent only while she is touching them, so she can still make noise indirectly. For example, if she bumps into a table with a vase on it, her impact makes no noise but the table's scrape against the floor might, and if the vase falls over it will make noise.

### **Mantle of Authority (Appear •, Terra •)**

Action: Instant, Presence + Politics

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The power given a Princess from the Light appears, for a while, to be a more worldly sort of power.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess may not use the Charm for 1 week.

Failure: The Princess' apparent status does not change.

Success: The Princess' transformed identity gains 1 dot of Status in a mundane organization she knows of. This dot stacks with any Status Merit she has in her transformed identity with that organization, but not with Status in her mundane identity, and it vanishes when the Charm ends.

Exceptional Success: The Princess' transformed identity gains 2 dots of Status in the mundane organization.

A Princess may not use the Charm if she is already under its effects.

#### **Upgrade: True**

If the Princess has Status in her mundane identity, she may claim all the privileges of that Status in her transformed identity by activating the Charm, instead of gaining a temporary Status.

### **Phantom (Appear ••)**

Action: Instant, Wits + Expression

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 turn

The Princess creates an image lasting for only a few seconds. The Size of the image is limited to 3 + her successes, but within that limit she can show any image she is capable of imagining. Once she has created an image of any Size, she can maintain it unaltered by casting Phantom in subsequent turns, and needs only 1 success; to change the image, however, she must cast Phantom and get enough successes to recreate its Size. Moreover, the image exists only as light – anything touching it passes through, unimpeded.

Alternatively, the Princess may create a sound lasting for a few seconds. The sound appears to come from a source no farther than 20 \* her successes in yards from her. It must be a sound that could be made by a single source; for example, one human voice, one musical instrument, one object hitting another. Within those limits, however, the sound can be of any complexity the Princess conceives of.

Upgrade: Lasting

Cost: +1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

An image the Princess creates remains still for the duration, unless she concentrates on altering it, which is an instant Wits + Expression action. Its Size remains within the limit established by the initial activation roll.

A sound the Princess creates is repeated once each turn, coming from the same apparent location, unless she concentrates on altering it; she cannot shift its source farther than the limit set by her initial successes.

#### **Upgrade: Dancing**

Requires: Lasting

The Princess may create an image that moves without her conscious attention. The image's actions follow a program set when she uses the Charm, but if she can see it she can spend an instant Wits + Expression action concentrating to alter the program.

The Princess may choose a sound lasting as long as she likes, and of any complexity, when she first uses the Charm, and she may also set it to shift its apparent position within the initial radius. Moreover, as long as she can hear the sound, she may alter its program with an instant Wits + Expression action.

**Upgrade: Speaking**

The Princess creates both an image and a sound coming from the image. If she applies Lasting, she may alter both image and sound with a single Wits + Expression action; if she applies Dancing, she may change the program for both image and sound with a single Wits + Expression action.

**Upgrade: Polyphonic (Aria •)**

The Princess may create several additional sounds at once, up to her Aria. Each sound can come from a different position. If she applies Speaking, she cannot create more than one image, but none of the sounds have to come from the image's position.

**Upgrade: Oaken (Legno •)**

The image becomes substantial. As long as it lasts, it can be touched and even handled as if it were real. It cannot withstand violence, however – it is an object with Durability and Structure of 0, and any force applied to it shatters it into a puff of leaves or petals. The Princess may create multiple substantial images; the total of their Sizes must not exceed 3 + her successes.

**Upgrade: Perpetual (Legno ••)**

Requires: Lasting

Cost: +2 Wisps

Duration: Legno hours

The image endures for quite a long time.

**Dim (Appear ••)**

Action: Instant and contested, Manipulation + Stealth vs. Wits + Composure + supernatural advantage

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess becomes very difficult to notice or remember. An onlooker might see her, but he ignores her the same way he might ignore any completely inconsequential thing that he expects to be present. When someone first perceives the Princess, or when she does something that draws someone's attention (casting a Charm invariably does so) he must beat her successes on his perception roll to notice her presence or recall it afterward. Anyone the Princess speaks to, touches or otherwise interacts with is immune to the Charm as long as they keep her in view; but if they look away, they must win the contest again to find her.

**Upgrade: Traceless**

The concealment extends to recording devices – video cameras show only a human-sized distortion in the air where the Princess is, and microphones record meaningless noises (like the adults' voices in "Peanuts") instead of her voice, unless she deliberately speaks into them.

**Upgrade: Veiled**

Using another Charm does not automatically attract attention to the Princess, though again the direct effects of the Charm are not concealed.

### **Speaking Eyes (Appear • • , Acqua • )**

Action: Instant, Wits + Persuasion

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The movements of the Princess' body are saturated by meaning. On a successful activation roll, she can convey the most complicated of thoughts with a turn of the head, a twist of the hand, or a facial expression, as quickly as with normal speech; others will understand her intent even if they share no languages with her, as long as they can see her. The Charm does not help the Princess understand other people, and it is not selective - everyone who sees her knows what she means, when she chooses to communicate in a gesture.

#### **Upgrade: Intimate (Acqua • • )**

The language of the Princess' movements becomes private. When she activates the Charm, she chooses one person for each success rolled, up to her Acqua. Until the Charm ends, she can convey her thoughts to those people without words if they can see her, as with the basic Charm, but nobody else looking at her will understand her meaning. Indeed, unless onlookers examine her carefully (succeeding on an Intelligence + Investigation roll) they won't realize that she is "saying" anything at all.

### **Masquerade (Appear • • , Aria • )**

Action: Instant and resisted, Manipulation + Empathy - target's Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Instead of changing herself, the Princess changes how another perceives her. If she succeeds, the target cannot see through any disguise that she assumes or role that she enacts; in all contests of Wits + Subterfuge for this purpose between them, the target automatically gets a dramatic failure. The Princess cannot use Masquerade to impersonate a specific person the target knows or has met - she is limited to a generic role. Masquerade ends if the Princess uses any other Charm.

#### **Upgrade: Familiar**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess can try to impersonate someone her target knows. The target does not automatically fail this contest, but the Princess takes no penalty from the target's familiarity with the person she imitates, and she adds her successes on the activation roll as a bonus to her side of the contest.

#### **Upgrade: Social (Aria • • )**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use Masquerade on a social group, applying the Commonalty modifier. The member with the highest Composure resists for the whole group.

#### **Upgrade: Veiled**

The Princess may use other Charms without ending Masquerade, and the target will not notice their manifestations - he perceives the direct effects of the Charms, but will not trace them back to her.

### **Hallowed Hearth (Appear • • • )**

Action: Extended, Composure + Empathy (one minute of quiet contemplation and recollection/roll, the threshold is Palace Size (or equivalent) squared.)

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: One day (special)

A Noble's home is their castle, even if it isn't formally a palace. Drawing upon the sanctity of her own memories, she wraps the senses of intruders in confusion, serving to protect and serve this place This Charm requires a representation of the Princess' Phylactery to be hidden somewhere in the building.



This can be as slight as a sketch of it done in felt tip on paper and taped to the underside of a table, or as intricate as a carefully woven tapestry with its image part of the decorations. There can be multiple such representations. However, if all such representations are destroyed or removed from the affected area, the Charm automatically ends.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess chokes on psychic bile as her memories drift towards the worst things she has seen. She gains 1 Shadow, and suffers a -2 penalty to all actions until the sun next rises.

**Failure:** No successes are gained.

**Success:** The space is wrapped in an invisible haze of restful positive emotions that serves to dull anyone who would come here meaning ill. All Larceny rolls within this space with hostile intent towards the inhabitants (such as theft, or picking locks), or attempt to gain access without the consent of people inside, suffers a -3 penalty. Any intruder who enters the building with hostile intent halves their Defence and their Initiative, rounding down. The psychic illusion clouds their judgement, too; any Wits-based rolls do not benefit from 10-Again.

At a story level, intruders get the feeling that this is a boring, mundane place. People who try to break in or spy in from the outside will likely get bored quickly, and give up because there is nothing of value here, because they can't find what they're looking for or even (especially if they suffer a Dramatic Failure) become convinced that they must have got the wrong address and occupants.

The Charm lasts a day. However if it is cast upon Sanctified ground then the Charm will last until the ground is no longer Sanctified.

**Exceptional Success:** A lot of successes are gained. If 5 over the target number are obtained, the Charm lasts a week before it has to be renewed.

#### **Upgrade: Misfortunate**

To those who wish ill, a place of good memories can only drive them further into self-inflicted misery. In the penalty to Wits is increased so that 1s remove Successes. Should this reduce a roll to less than 0 successes, an appropriate Dramatic Failure occurs.

### **Summon Backup Dancers (Appear . . .)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Expression

Cost 3 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

Sometimes a Princess just needs to wow a crowd. With this Charm a Princess can summon her own support team with a maximum of Inner Light members.

Before casting Summon Backup Dancers the Princess must declare what kind of action they're going to support. The Princess could declare singing in which case they'd be able to perform dance routines or backup vocals. The Princess could declare painting and summon a model to paint.

Backup dancers are solid but only when it relates to their assigned task, an actor would be able to interact with props, and wear costumes, but would not be able to fetch a cup of coffee. A cunning Princess might still be able to use them for other roles, she might ask her trope to dance around waving their arms in front of her enemies face while she hides, or to attack foes who don't realise the backup dancers cannot hurt them. (Assume a 1 die pool on any social actions, mental and physical tasks fail automatically). If attacked a single point of Damage, even Bashing, causes a Backup dancer to vanish into a puff of ephemera appropriate to the Princess.

A Princess can only have one instance of Summon Backup Dancers active at a time.

**Dramatic Failure:** You summon Inner Light performers but have no control over them. They immediately run riot, while not actually harmful they can be very very annoying and are certainly inappropriate to the Princesses wishes. Think clowns not shock artists.

**Failure:** No Dancers appear.

**Successes:** The Princess summons up to Inner Light backup dancers. Their assistance allows her to add Inner Light to any mundane rolls in a chosen Crafts or Expression Speciality (The Princess does

not need to have that Speciality herself). If the Charm was Invoked the Princess add her Invocation instead of Inner Light.

Exceptional Success: As per Success but with an additional +1.

### **Know My Pain (Goccia Astrale • • •)**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Crafts

Cost: 2+ Wisps

Duration: 1 variable

“I can’t be in two places at once!” is an all-too-common complaint from just about anyone; the Hopeful especially find it necessary to be two people at once, when mundane obligations interfere with fighting a supernatural incursion. With this Charm a Princess can partly resolve such dilemmas, by making a facsimile of her mundane self that moves and speaks, and can pass as herself if not examined too closely.

To use the Charm, the Princess must have a mass of material that she can shape barehanded, or else a quantity of fluid, of roughly Size 2. Infusing this material with Wisps, she transforms it into an Astral Droplet: an exact physical copy of herself just before her last transformation, wearing identical clothing. The Droplet has the same mundane Attributes and Skills as its creator, and access to all her memories as of the time of its creation. However, it lacks energy and imagination; it does not get 10-again on any dice pool, or any other quality that allows rerolling dice, cannot spend Willpower, and has neither Virtue nor Vice. The Droplet is also fragile - a single point of damage of any type is enough to dissolve it into the stuff it was made of and glimmers of light. Finally, the Droplet has none of the Princess’ Light-derived powers, even Practical Magic.

The Droplet’s basic duration is 30 minutes for each activation success. The Princess may choose to extend the duration by spending more Wisps than the minimum of 2 - each extra Wisp doubles the time before the Droplet disintegrates, cumulatively. She cannot, however, spend more Wisps for this purpose than half her Inner Light, rounded up. She may choose the total number of Wisps spent after the activation roll, though she must spend at least 2. She may end the Charm prematurely by touching the Droplet and concentrating for a turn. A Princess cannot create a second Droplet before the first Droplet dissolves - the Charm just fails if she tries.

By default the Droplet is an automaton which follows any instruction given to it which does not pose a threat of physical harm, and otherwise stays wherever it is put; it takes no action on its own. If the material used to make it resonates with an Invocation the Princess may apply that Invocation to the Charm (Aria uses thick mist or smoke, or a strong breeze, for a Droplet; Lacrima can use total darkness or dark shadow.) Droplets so formed have some initiative and the rudiments of a personality; in the absence of clear instructions they follow the tenets of the applied Invocation, to the extent allowed by the knowledge and abilities the Princess possesses.

#### **Upgrade: Integrated**

It’s often useful to know what your double has been doing during your absence. If the Princess dissolves her Droplet prematurely by touching it and concentrating, she can recall to memory a description of the actions the Droplet took and the events it saw and heard. A roll to recall any detail of the account is at -2 in addition to any other penalties.

#### **Upgrade: Lifelike (Specchio • • •)**

A Lightbringer can use that indescribable quality that makes her reflection “her reflection” instead of a simple image and use it to place mind and will into the Droplets they make. To apply Lifelike the Princess needs a reflecting surface large enough to hold an image of her upper body; she takes the hands of her image and pulls it out of the surface. The resulting Droplet is flipped left-to-right, and with the opposite dominant hand. The real difference though, is that the Droplet gains a nearly-human initiative and will; it has the Belief dots, Virtue and Vice of its creator, gets 10-again on its dice pools, can benefit from other qualities that permit rerolls, and may spend and regain Willpower (though it begins with none.) The first time the Princess creates this Droplet, its personality exactly matches her own (including any derangements) and aside from the physical inversion they can’t be told apart.

**Drawback:** By creating a Lifelike Droplet a Princess is depending on an independent being. The Droplet’s personality does not vanish when its body dissolves; it returns to being her reflection, until

she makes another Lifelike Droplet. At that moment it returns and inhabits the new-made body. Every time the Princess invokes Lifelike there is a chance that Specchio's madness will infect her Droplet. Each time it inhabits a new body the Droplet rolls Resolve + Composure, with a penalty of -1 for each derangement she currently has, and an additional penalty of -2 if the Princess has failed to resist a derangement since the last time she slept. If she fails, the Droplet's falls to Specchio's arrogance; she is convinced of her excellence and her right to rule, and resents the Princess taking her rightful limeight. The Droplet will do what it can to avoid returning to behind the mirror. It can lengthen the Charm's duration by spending its own Willpower; it may spend 1 point each day for this, which adds 24 hours of continued embodiment. (The Droplet cannot do this if the Resolve + Composure check succeeds.) Just what the Droplet does is up to the Storyteller, but it should not try anything that involves a degeneration check.

If the Princess applies Integrated and Lifelike, all her memories since the Droplet's first creation become available to it on the same terms as its are available to her after she dissolves it. Other than that, neither personality can remember what the other has done.

### **Know My Pain (Appear • • • , Tempesta • • )**

Action: Full turn and resisted, Resolve + Intimidation - target's Composure

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

There are those who would tell you that pain is bad, and to be avoided at all costs. They are weak. Pain is a tool, just like any other. It is not only useful, but even necessary, to use it against those who would try to stop you.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess gives pain only to herself. For the rest of the scene she suffers a -1 penalty to all her actions.

Failure: The target ignores the Princess' pain.

Success: The target suffers phantom bashing damage, equal to the number of boxes with damage of any type on the Princess' Health track or his unmarked Health boxes, whichever is less. The target suffers wound penalties from this damage if it goes into the last three boxes, and must check their Stamina to remain conscious if it fills the last box, as normal. However, the damage is not real; it vanishes when the Charm ends as if it were healed, and if the target takes real bashing damage when the track is full, that damage replaces the phantom damage instead of wrapping into lethal damage. Phantom damage also has no effect if the target has no empty Health Boxes to fill. The phantom damage can also be healed magically, or mitigated as it's inflicted by targets who have that ability.

Exceptional Success: The phantom damage from the Charm is lethal. The target does not bleed out if the phantom damage incapacitates him, and real lethal damage replaces it instead of wrapping into aggravated damage.

#### **Upgrade: Intimate**

A part of the injury the Princess suffers from her target returns to him. Whenever a target of the Charm damages the Princess further, she may spend a Wisp reflexively to inflict 1 damage on that target, of the same type as what he inflicted. Unlike the initial damage, this is fully real, and remains after the Charm ends.

#### **Upgrade: Shared (Tempesta • • • )**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use Know My Pain on a social group, applying the Commonalty modifier; every member of the group takes phantom damage. The member with the highest Composure resists for the whole group.

### **Drawn From Within The Mirror (Appear • • • , Specchio • • )**

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Crafts

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 Scene

The Princess can reshape mirrors and reflective surfaces into tools for her use.

**Dramatic Failure:** The princess begins to reshape the mirror, but a misplaced gesture makes it shatter, lacerating her hands. She takes one level of lethal damage, and a -1 to all rolls involving her hands for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The reflective surface will not flow into shape, even if it twists and warps subtly.

**Success:** The princess touches a reflective surface, and the surface of the mirror flows like liquid metal into her grasp, forming an object with Size less than or equal to the size of the reflective surface. The object, apparently made of light and reflections and quicksilver, provides a number of bonus dice equal to the successes rolled to any skill which it could aid. The Storyteller is to use their discretion for this; while a beautiful dress can be used with many social skills, a knife is pretty much limited to Weaponry, and possibly Intimidate, rolls. The equipment bonus is capped at +5.

The tool is fragile and brittle - it has 0 Durability and just 1 Structure. If it takes damage, it is destroyed. It must be a single item with no moving or electronic parts, with the exception of clothing, which may provide an entire set of clothing. The item lasts for a scene, and at the end of it, it falls into dust. Since it is made of the reflective surface of the mirror or metal, the item is defaced, and must be repaired or repolished before it will reflect again.

**Exceptional Success:** The tool is crafted with such skill that it is more resilient to damage, and has 3 Structure rather than 1.

Suggested modifiers:

- -2 : Surface of water, reflection is weak and inconstant
- -1 : Tin foil
- 0: Modern mirror
- +2 : Reflection is especially clear, mirror is highly valued (Resources 3+) or of great sentimental value to someone.

### **Face of Lover's Alarm (Appear . . . , Specchio . . . )**

Action: Reflexive, Wits + Empathy

Cost: 1 Wisp

One would not threaten a loved one, would they? And as the Queen of Mirrors teaches, the True Heir will be beloved by all. This Charm is activated in response to an attack, and the Enlightened's face and appearance blurs into a loved one of the attacker. Successes on the roll cancel successes on the attack, on a one-to-one basis; if all the successes are cancelled, the Noble also regains a single Willpower point, from the affirmation of her righteousness.

Such a delicate flower cannot be seen to fight back against the actions of a monster; a character may not apply their Defence against this attack, for to fight back would break the illusion. In addition, the Charm relies on the empathy and the goodness of the target, and so the number of successes which can be removed cannot exceed the Morality (or supernatural equivalent) of the attacker. Against a target with no Morality, such as a Darkspawn or an animal, the Charm fails to activate. Upgrade: Known

Clinging onto the glamour of the veiled features, the Princess can grasp the memory. She knows whose appearance she took on, and the nature of the emotional connection to the attacker. If she cancels out all the successes on the attack, she also unconsciously impersonates their mannerisms for the rest of the scene, imposing a -1 penalty on all further attacks for the rest of the scene, which explicitly stacks with multiple uses.

### **Upgrade: Doomed (Specchio . . . .)**

Cost: +1 Willpower

Does the mirror reflect the truth, or does it show things how they should be? If the individual whom the Noble mimics is present, and within the attack range of the form of weapon used to attack her, the damage cancelled is transferred to them. In the case of a melee weapon, the target might swing wide

and hit their friend; for a ranged weapon, it can be more improbable, as ricochets, arcing electrical conduits, and exploding fire extinguishers all conspire to hurt their ally. Armour cancels transferred damage on a one-for-one basis, but Defence does not apply against it.

### **Cloaks of Mist (Appear . . . . , Acqua . . . .)**

Requires: Dim

Action: Instant and contested, Manipulation + Stealth vs. Wits + Composure + supernatural advantage

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess summons a dew that falls on targets whose total Size does not exceed 5 times her successes. For the duration, the targets fade from the notice and memory of all save the Princess and each other; each benefits from the effects of Dim.

#### **Upgrade: Traceless**

The targets are concealed from recording devices as well.

#### **Upgrade: Veiled**

The targets may activate Charms (or other obviously supernatural powers) without automatically attracting the attention of observers.

### **Imaginary Friend (Appear . . . . , Aria . . . .)**

Action: Instant and contested, Manipulation + Subterfuge vs. Wits + Subterfuge + supernatural advantage

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess creates the illusion of a man or woman, especially crafted for a single person. She chooses a role for the illusion; if she gains any successes, the target perceives a person who behaves appropriately for that role in the present situation, according to the target's beliefs. However, if she doesn't beat the target's successes, he realizes that this person is an illusion within moments. If she does get more successes, the target will treat the imaginary person as fully real, and respond to it as to a person of the role you chose. No one else – including the Princess – will see or hear the illusion; she has no control over its behavior.

### **Garden of Bright Images (Appear . . . . , Fuoco . . . .)**

Requires: Phantom

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Expression

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess decorates her surroundings with a beautiful glamour. Within a radius of up to 25x her successes in yards, the appearance of every nonliving thing is transformed to match a theme the Princess chooses. (For instance, "formal ballroom", "open bazaar", "African jungle" and "undersea grotto" are all valid themes.) Permanent fixtures are always changed; she can choose whether to change people's possessions, but cannot affect some possessions and not others. As long as the Charm lasts, the changed objects look, sound, feel and even smell like what they appear to be; observers may make Perception rolls to spot something wrong with the illusion, but they take a penalty equal to the Princess' successes.

### **Bless**

The Bless Charm enhances people, pushing their abilities to a peak and bringing their actions to perfection. Champions and Graces have affinity for it.

Several Bless Charms add dots to Attributes. Unless otherwise noted, dots from these Charms don't contribute to Charm activation rolls, or any roll to activate a supernatural power.

## Consecrate (Bless •)

Action: Extended, Presence + Occult (10 minutes/roll, threshold = 2 \* area's Palace Size)

Cost: Wisps equal to area's Palace Size

Duration: special

The Princess blesses the ground she stands on, and dedicates it temporarily to her Queen and the Light. By using this Charm a Princess makes an area or a building Sanctified ground until the Charm ends. The Princess needs to cleanse and purify every part of the area she wishes to sanctify; this can be as simple as giving it a thorough spring cleaning, or it can be an elaborate rite for casting out evil spirits, depending on the Princess' cultural background. However, if she applies an Invocation, the method of purification invokes the relevant Queen and must use symbols appropriate for her.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess ruins the area's blessing - all her accumulated successes are lost, and if the area was Sanctified it immediately ceases to be so. No one can use Consecrate there for a full month.

Failure: The Princess makes no progress, but may continue her efforts.

Success: The Princess progresses in her work. When she reaches the threshold, the area becomes Sanctified and remains so for 1 day. The Princess may continue working to extend the Charm's duration:

2 \* area's Palace Size = 1 day

4 \* area's Palace Size = 1 week

6 \* area's Palace Size = 1 month

8 \* area's Palace Size = 1 year

10 \* area's Palace Size = indefinite

Exceptional Success: The Princess makes great progress.

If an area is already Sanctified, Consecrate will not take effect until the Princess reaches enough successes to exceed the remaining duration of the previous Consecration. (For instance, if an area will be Sanctified for five days, the Princess must reach enough successes for a week's duration, after which the area will be Sanctified for a week.) If any part of an area is Tainted, the Charm automatically fails. Consecrate ends if the area suffers major alterations or damage, or someone manages to bring Taint into it.

It is far easier for the Hopeful to Consecrate an area when it has special significance for her or her allies. The activation roll is modified by the Princess' connection to the area: The area is a Palace to which the Princess has contributed Merit dots (+3); The Princess, or the Nation she belongs to, owns the property (+2); Exceptionally strong memories of love and safety, such as a childhood home or childhood holiday home (+5); Strong memories of love and safety, such as a long time friend's home (+3); The property owner has not given the Princess permission to bless the area (-2); The Princess has never been in the area before (-3).

### Upgrade: Purifying

The Princess may Sanctify on top of Taint. The Taint will always overcome this Charm given enough time, but it can allow the Princess some vital breathing space. Invoke Consecrate like normal, when the Princess accumulates a number of Successes equal to the Taint's Severity then:

- The Taints' Curses go dormant.
- The Taint will not attempt to Corrupt nor will it cause Hauntings for characters with sensitivity.
- The Taint no longer provides access to and from the Dark World

However once per day reduce the Princesses Successes by the Taint's Severity. When her Successes are reduced to zero or when the duration expires, as measured by her unmodified Successes, the ground is no longer Sanctified and the normal effects of Taint return. The Princess may invoke Consecrate again to add additional Successes, but this only delays the inevitable.

### Upgrade: Sanctuary

Several charms have special benefits when cast upon Sanctified ground. When Consecrate is invoked with Sanctuary another benefit is added: Charms that benefit from the Sanctified ground are immune to being dispelled for as long as the ground is Sanctified.

It is important to note that Consecrate itself can be dispelled and this upgrade offers no protection against that.

### **Small Providence (Bless •)**

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Streetwise

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 day

The Princess (or one she helps) finds, and obtains, that one thing she was looking for, at a surprisingly low price. The target of the Charm adds 1 dot to his effective Resources merit the next time he makes a purchase, if he does so before the Charm ends. On an exceptional success, the target adds 2 dots to his effective Resources.

### **Sea-Foam's Touch (Bless •, Acqua •)**

Action: Instant, Wits + Academics

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Truth is an ocean, from which the Princess draws a few drops. Each activation success gives the target 2 bonus dice, which he can apply to rolls based on a Mental Skill. Each die applies to only 1 action, but the target may apply any number of dice to a roll. Any dice unused when the Charm ends are lost.

#### **Upgrade: Splashing**

The target may apply his bonus dice to rolls based on a Mental Attribute.

### **Steady Resolve (Bless •, Legno •)**

Action: Instant, Resolve + Persuasion

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

With a reassuring word, the Princess hardens another's resolve. Whenever the target's Resolve is subtracted from a roll (as with a magical effect resisted by Resolve) the same roll takes an additional penalty equal to her activation successes. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it.

#### **Upgrade: Calm**

The Princess' reassurance also helps her ally remain calm. Apply the penalty to rolls the target resists with Composure.

### **Bejewelled Visage (Bless •, Terra •)**

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Empathy

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

An odor of trust enfolds the one the Princess blesses, smoothing his path in society. Each activation success gives the target 2 bonus dice, which he can apply to rolls based on a Social Skill. Each die applies to only 1 action, but the target may apply any number of dice to a roll. Any dice unused when the Charm ends are lost.

#### **Upgrade: Profuse**

The target may apply his bonus dice to rolls based on a Social Attribute.

### **Count No Cost (Bless • , Tempesta • )**

Action: Instant, Stamina + Athletics  
Cost: 1 Wisp, 1 resistant bashing damage  
Duration: 1 Scene

The Princess gives to another a small part of her health and strength. Success on this Charm creates a pool of floating dice for the target character, where each activation success gives 2 dice in the pool. These dice can be spent to benefit any roll used to achieve victory in combat; when they are spent, they are removed from the pool. The each bonus die only benefits a single roll, even if the character is performing an extended action, but the target may spend any number of dice on a roll. Any dice unused when the Charm ends are lost.

#### **Upgrade: Spendthrift**

The target may apply his bonus dice to rolls based on a Physical Attribute, as well as ones based on a physical Skill.

### **I'm the Best! (Bless • , Specchio • )**

Action: Reflexive and Contested, Presence + Wits vs Composure + supernatural advantage  
Cost: 1 Wisp  
Duration: 1 extended action

Others might say that they are the masters of their fields. But, simply, the Enlightened of the Queen of Mirrors know this to be false. They can't be better. This Charm can be used to enhance any contested extended action against an opponent who has a higher dice pool than they do. Each success removes one dice from the target's pool, and adds one dice to the Noble's pool. The number of dice transferred is capped by the Specchio rating of the Noble; such glorious victory comes from one's own strength, after all. This may not reduce the target's pool to less than zero. This Charm only applies to a single roll; it must be re-invoked to apply to other rolls in the extended action.

#### **Upgrade: Truly**

Stacks, up to 3

On actions where this Charm is used, once the dice transfer has been applied, the Noble may then add +1 to their own pool, as if it were coming from a Speciality in "Defeating (opponent's name)".

#### **Upgrade: Triumphantly (Specchio 4)**

The limitation that the target must have a higher initial dice pool than the Noble is now waived. In addition, if the foe is reduced to a dice pool of zero, the Noble may reflexively spend a Willpower point to force a Dramatic Failure.

### **Intuitive Flash (Bless • • )**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Academics  
Cost: 1 Wisp  
Duration: 1 scene

The Princess grants knowledge and ability to someone within sight. For each success, the target gains one temporary specialty in a Skill of the Princess' choice. If the Charm is used on anyone currently benefitting by it, the activation with the most successes takes precedence. Upgrade: Focused

The Princess may focus the Charm on a single specialty. On rolls within that specialty, the target adds the activation successes to his dice pool, not +1. The Charm can grant only one specialty of this type.



### **Touch of Fortune (Bless • •)**

Action: Reflexive, Wits + Occult

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: Duration: 1 scene

The Princess grants a blessing of good fortune to a person she can see. The next rolls made by the target, up to a number equal to the activation successes, gain the 9-again quality. A Princess may cast Touch of Fortune at the same moment another person acts to bless that roll. If there are blessings unused when the scene ends, they are lost. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it.

#### **Upgrade: Well-timed**

The target's good fortune comes when most needed. Before the target makes a roll, he declares whether the Charm will affect it. The number of rolls affected does not change.

#### **Upgrade: Strong**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess grants a stronger blessing; the rolls affected by the Charm gain the 8-again quality.

#### **Upgrade: Perfected**

Requires Strong

Cost: +3 Wisps

The blessed actions become deceptively easy; instead of gaining 9-again the rolls affected by the Charm gain the rote quality. Strong and Perfected cannot both be applied to the same activation.

### **Touch of Grief (Bless • •, Lacrima •)**

Action: Reflexive and resisted, Wits + Intimidation - target's Resolve

Cost: 1 Wisp, Belief 6 sin

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess' gaze brushes another with cold despair. The next rolls made by the target, up to a number equal to the activation successes, do not reroll 10s. If the Princess gets a dramatic failure, her own rolls do not reroll 10s for turns equal to her Lacrima. A Princess may cast Touch of Grief at the same moment another person acts to curse that roll. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it.

### **Stop, Children, What's That Sound (Bless • • •, Aria • •)**

Action: Instant and resisted, Wits + Composure - target's Resolve

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

There's something happening here; what it is ain't exactly clear ...

By speaking a single word, the Princess sends another person into a state of extraordinary alertness. When the target makes a Perception roll, or a roll to avoid surprise, he adds a +2 bonus to the roll. The target can benefit from the Charm once for each success rolled.

Upgrade: Collective

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group that can see or hear her, using the Commonalty modifier. The member with the highest Resolve resists for the group.

### **Oaken Fortitude (Bless •••, Legno •)**

Action: Instant, Strength + Medicine

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess' presence fortifies, allowing the one she blesses to endure and throw off wounds. Add 1 box to the target's Health track for each activation success. When the Charm ends, any wounds taken in the added boxes simply disappear, without upgrading any other wound boxes. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it.

### **Drawn by the Moon (Bless ••••, Acqua ••)**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Science

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

As the tide rises to follow the moon, the mind rises to follow the light. The Princess adds the activation successes, up to her Acqua, to one of the target's Mental Attributes. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it, and it cannot add to an Attribute that has already been magically enhanced.

Upgrade: Grand (Acqua •••)

The Princess may add dots to all of the target's Mental Attributes. She distributes her successes across the Attributes; she still cannot add more than her Acqua to any one Attribute.

### **Wind-Borne Grace (Bless ••••, Aria ••)**

Action: Instant, Presence + Expression

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The wind grants both speed and subtlety. The Princess adds the activation successes, up to her Aria, to one of the target's Finesse Attributes. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it, and it cannot add to an Attribute that has already been magically enhanced.

Upgrade: Grand (Aria •••)

The Princess may add dots to all of the target's Finesse Attributes. She distributes her successes across the Attributes; she still cannot add more than her Aria to any one Attribute.

### **Stoke the Furnace (Bless ••••, Fuoco ••)**

Action: Instant, Strength + Persuasion

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess brings fuel for another's body, mind or character. The Princess adds the activation successes, up to her Fuoco, to one of the target's Power Attributes. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it, and it cannot add to an Attribute that has already been magically enhanced.

Upgrade: Grand (Fuoco •••)

The Princess may add dots to all of the target's Power Attributes. She distributes her successes across the Attributes; she still cannot add more than her Fuoco to any one Attribute.

### **Forest Sanctuary (Bless . . . . , Legno . . )**

Action: Instant, Stamina + Survival

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

A tall tree shelters those beneath its branches. The Princess adds the activation successes, up to her Legno, to one of the target's Resistance Attributes. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it, and it cannot add to an Attribute that has already been magically enhanced.

**Upgrade: Grand (Legno . . . .)**

The Princess may add dots to all of the target's Resistance Attributes. She distributes her successes across the Attributes; she still cannot add more than her Legno to any one Attribute.

### **Crown Jewels (Bless . . . . , Terra . . )**

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Persuasion

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

Courtesy is the most beautiful jewelry. The Princess adds the activation successes, up to her Terra, to one of the target's Social Attributes. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it, and it cannot add to an Attribute that has already been magically enhanced.

**Upgrade: Grand (Terra . . . .)**

The Princess may add dots to all of the target's Social Attributes. She distributes her successes across the Attributes; she still cannot add more than her Terra to any one Attribute.

**Tendrils of Nothing (Bless . . . . , Lacrima . . . .)**

Action: Instant and resisted, Presence + Intimidation - target's Composure

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower, Belief 4 sin

Duration: 1 scene

The void can seep into every mind. Give in, it says. Do not resist. Give up, and let your sorrows drown you.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess lets the void only into your own mind. She suffers from the Melancholia derangement until the next full moon.

**Failure:** The power does not activate.

**Success:** The stillness of the void settles into the heart and mind of a foe. The target loses 1 dot from one of his Resistance Attributes for each success. The Charm cannot reduce any Attribute to less than 1, but it may reduce two or all three of Stamina, Resolve and Composure with 1 use. Recalculate all stats derived from the reduced Attributes. If the last box on the target's Health track fills with aggravated damage, the Charm ends. When the Charm does end, the target's Attributes return to their normal values; all restored Health boxes are empty.

**Exceptional Success:** Such a show of force terrifies the foe, showing them the foolishness of standing up to the Princess. In addition to the other effects, he suffers from the Depression derangement until the next time he sees the sun.

### **Avenger's Might (Bless . . . . , Tempesta . . )**

Action: Instant, Resolve + Brawl

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 resistant lethal damage

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess binds fury into someone's flesh. She adds the activation successes, up to her Tempesta, to all the target's rolls which will do Damage. The Charm may not be used on anyone currently affected by it.

### **Peaceable Kingdom (Bless •••••, Legno •••••)**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Animal Ken

Cost: 3 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 scene

The Queen of Clubs' avatar is guardian and teacher of the beasts. The Princess undergoes a second transformation on activating the Charm, assuming traits that suggest a large and powerful animal – typically a lion, though bear-like and eagle-like miens are known, and there are rumors of one Hopeful who evokes a dragon. The change always suggests a king or queen of beasts, and the peril and majesty of the natural world; any mortal seeing the Princess is somewhat shaken, and she gains +1 on all Intimidation rolls against them until the Charm ends.

However, the main effect of the Charm is on beasts who see it. Any natural animal that can perceive the Princess when she activates the Charm has its Intelligence raised by 1 dot, becoming sapient. Further, the animals affected gain instant fluency in her native language, and the Charm grants them the ability to speak it comprehensibly if they have any ability to vocalize at all. The Princess may use Social Skills on the animals as she would with mortals, and gains a bonus on such rolls equal to her activation successes. When the Charm ends, the animals return to their former non-sapient state. If the Princess use the Charm twice on the same animal, it remembers everything that happened during the first use.

Until the Charm ends, the Princess may not apply any Invocation except Legno to other Charms.

### **Sheltered by Her Hand (Bless •••••, Lacrima •••••)**

Action: Instant, Resolve + Empathy, modified by Commonalty

Cost: 1 Wisp, 1 Willpower, Belief 4 compromise

Duration: 1 scene

To preserve her city and her subjects is the first principle of the Queen of Tears, and those who incarnate her are able to guard their allies from all harm. A Princess uses this Charm to protect citizens of Alhambra (no other Commonality group may be used; Lacrima may not be magically linked to Alhambra, but the avatar of Alhambra's Lady certainly is).

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess fails utterly to protect her allies, and is crushed. She suffers the effects of a bout of Melancholia, as if she had failed to resist that derangement, for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** The Princess cannot protect her allies. The Charm fails.

**Success:** The Princess undergoes a second transformation that drains all the color from her body and Regalia. All members of the target group who can see this transformation feel a breath of cold pass over them, penetrating through all clothing for a moment. Until the Charm ends, the transformation expands and substantially modifies the Princess' Holy Shield. The Shield activates automatically whenever anyone affected by the Charm suffers an injury, spending as many Wisps as necessary to prevent all the damage; while the Charm is active the Shield is not limited by the Princess' maximum Wisps per turn. She must pay the cost of the Shield in full when it activates. However, the Princess may draw Wisps for her Shield out of her surroundings, draining hope from the land to preserve her people. For each Wisp the Princess drains from her surroundings to power her Shield, the Storyteller rolls 1 die; the area gains 1 point of Taint, focused where the Princess stands, for each success on this roll. While the transformation lasts the Princess is in enough danger to use Inner Strength, and trade her Willpower for Wisps.

**Exceptional Success:** The Princess touches the determination that has sustained the Queen of Tears in her mission. She gains +2 on Inner Strength rolls until the Charm ends.

The Queen of Tears perpetually mourns for the lost Kingdom, and the sacrifices that must be made to sustain its remnant; her avatar bears the burden of her grief, and may be crushed by it. At the end of each turn in which the Princess' Holy Shield activated, the Princess must roll Resolve + Composure to resist the Queen's grief.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Queen's grief overbears the Princess; the Charm ends immediately, and the Princess collapses. She is immobilized, incapable even of self-defense, until the scene ends. Furthermore, she gains the Melancholia Derangement for one day, if she already has Depression from this Charm then her Melancholia lasts for as long as her Depression would have.

**Failure:** The Princess' will falters. Future rolls to resist the Queen's grief take a -1 cumulative penalty. In addition the Princess gains the Depression Derangement one day, caluminate with additional failures. If she already has Depression there is no further penalty, but keep track of the duration in case of a Dramatic Failure.

**Success:** The Princess withstands the Queen's grief. Future rolls to resist it don't change.

**Exceptional Success:** The Princess recovers lost ground; reduce the duration of Depression by one day.

Until the Charm ends, the Princess may not apply any Invocation but Lacrima.

## Connect

Connect Charms trace and use the connections between people, or make and break such connections. Only Graces have affinity for them.

### Fair Welcome (Connect •)

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Socialize

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 day or 1 week

The Princess can strike up a conversation with nearly anyone she meets, and learn many things from an hour of polite talk. On using this Charm, a Princess adds 1 dot to her Contacts, naming a group with members she can easily find for the new dot. With an ordinary success, she can gather information from that group for 1 day, following the normal rules for information from Contacts. With an exceptional success, she can gather information from the group for 1 week.

### Illuminatus (Connect •)

Action: Permanent

When the Princess transforms, the secrets of the wealthy and powerful in her community cannot be hidden from her. She gets the 9-again quality on mundane Politics rolls within one of her specialties (fixed when she takes this Charm) and may apply an Invocation to those rolls.

### Upgrade: Connected

Stacks, up to 2

Other communities' inward lives become known to the Princess. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Politics rolls covered by any of the added specialties.

### Upgrade: Influential (Terra ••)

Organizations shift their policies when the Princess drops a word in the right ear. She may spend 1 Wisp to reduce the number of successes she needs to convince a social group to move a Policy dot by her Terra. If this lowers the threshold to 0 successes, the Princess does not roll; the group changes its Policy after a scene or hour of conversation. If the group she is influencing is covered by an enhanced specialty, her extended action to persuade it also gains the 9-again quality, even if she isn't using her Politics Skill.

## Laying Down The Line (Connect •)

Action: Instant, Resolve + Occult

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: Special

A Noble is a creature of divides; between Light and Dark, Transformed and mundane, Hope and despair. Drawing a line on the ground, she separates one area from another, and so becomes aware of anyone that crosses that line. Before this Charm can be used, the Noble must first make some kind of line or divide to empower, such as a chalk line drawn on tarmac, a rope thrown down, or even putting up a picket fence around a house. This is a mundane activity, unrelated to the actual use of the Charm, and these divides can be linear, or enclose an area. It can also empower pre-existing divides, such as a doorway, or a river. These divides must either measure no more than (Inner Light x 20) yards in any direction, or be upon Sanctified ground.

This Charm has a special Duration. By default, it lasts one scene. If used on a single natural divide, such as a doorway or across a bridge, the duration is increased to one day. If used on Sanctified ground the Charm lasts until the area is no longer Sanctified.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess's clumsy magic temporarily manages to scramble her memories. The sense of loss and sadness saps her inner strength giving a -1 penalty to all Belief rolls until the memories return when she next sleeps.

**Failure:** The Charm fails to activate, with a slightly pathetic spluttering noise.

**Success:** The divide is empowered in one of two ways. It can either be tied to a specific individual, or to anyone who crosses the divide. If tied to a specific individual, whenever they cross it, the Princess automatically knows that they did, and receives knowledge of them as if she had rolled the activation successes on a Wits + Composure roll to examine them. If it is a general divide, then she only receives information of the level of "white human male" on whosoever crosses it. Destruction of the divide, whether by erasing the chalk marking or collapsing the bridge ends the Charm, and the end of the Charm is conveyed to the Princess.

**Exceptional Success:** The magic flows easily, the divide feeling natural, and so the Princess is refunded the Wisp cost for the Charm.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Naturally secure building (+ Palace Security). Exceptionally strong memories of love and safety, such as a childhood home or childhood holiday home (+5). Strong memories of love and safety, such as a long time friend's home (+3). The character does not have position of the owner of the land to do this (-2).

### **Upgrade: Radiant**

Empowered with the Light, such a barrier can easily be adapted to keep out the Darkness. The Charm has a particularly strong repellent effect against Creatures of the Darkness. To pass this line, they must roll more successes on an Power + Resistance (or Strength + Stamina) Instant action than the activation successes, and they take one point of bashing damage per roll.

### **Upgrade: Illuminated**

Cost: +1 Wisp

Reaching out, the Princess sketches the bounded area in her mind, painting the delineation in liquid light. She is not required to make a mundane divide, and so may encompass any area up to the limit as part of the activation Instant action, and the line may not be removed by the destruction of the mundane component. However, the line is, to Transformed Princesses, Creatures of the Darkness, and any other being that can see magic, a glowing line, thus telling them that there is something supernatural going on.

### **Upgrade: Unnatural**

Instead of creating a general warning when anyone crosses the Threshold, the Princess may instead create a warning for anyone Tainted by the dark, or anyone Supernatural with a minimum threshold of a Minor Template such as Sworn.

### **Upgrade: Specific**

Requires Unnatural

The Princess can now limit Unnatural's Warning to a specific type of supernatural being. Such as "Vampires" or "Princesses". Because of the innate ties between Princesses and Charms this Upgrade can get a better reading on a Princess, she may set it to be triggered by a specific Calling, Queen or Embassy. This is most commonly used by Storms and Tears to look for each other, but other uses are hardly unknown.

#### **Upgrade: Spiritual (Legno • •)**

Requires: Radiant

The divide repels Spirits, including possessing Spirits. The Spirit must roll more successes on an Power + Resistance (or Strength + Stamina) Instant action than the activation successes to pass the divide, and takes one point of bashing damage per roll. The number of successes is halved, rounding down, for the Uratha and other such natural flesh-Spirit hybrids; the physical components of such beings serves to weaken the magic. If only 1 success was rolled, they do not notice this barrier. Notably, however, the number of successes is not halved for possessing Spirits, because the Spirit-mind is dominant in such beings.

Thresholds are powerful, but you can always pass one if you are invited in. The Princess may list individual exemptions, like "my loyal guard Spirit Mother With Cubs" or she may allow general exemptions like "Hope Spirits". If the Princess includes Commonality in the roll she may even invite social groups. Alternatively she may invite everyone except a disliked foe.

#### **Upgrade: Sanctified (Lacrima • •)**

Requires: Radiant

As "Spiritual", except the obstruction applies to Ghosts and other Underworld denizens rather than Spirits. Including Goalenu. Successes needed are halved for Sin-Eaters and the Kindred; in the case of the former, it is because they are rather more alive than most dead things, and for the latter, they are not truly Underworld beings, though they are dead.

### **Open Heart (Connect •)**

Action: Permanent

When the Princess transforms, she radiates kindness and trustworthiness; those she meets take her as a natural confidant. She may apply an Invocation to mundane Empathy rolls.

#### **Upgrade: Curious**

The Princess draws secrets out of people, not by terrifying them but with a pleasant manner and an air of sympathy. She may use Empathy to interrogate people (see p. 81 of the core book) instead of Intimidation. All other rules for that task are the same; only the required Skill changes.

#### **Upgrade: Distant (Acqua • •)**

The Princess' knowledge of people allows her to predict their actions while they are absent. She may use Empathy to extrapolate what someone known to her is doing or has done while out of her sight, as an instant action. She takes an Intimacy penalty on this roll, and may apply Acqua to it. The Storyteller gives the Princess' player one clue to her target's behavior for each success.

#### **Upgrade: Startling (Aria • •)**

The Princess easily sees when people are on the edge of violence. She may use Empathy to read the emotions of all the people around her as an instant action, and may apply Aria to the roll; if she succeeds, and anyone present starts a fight, she adds her successes to her Initiative. The Princess can't do this after a fight starts - she needs a few moments of calm to look for signs.

#### **Upgrade: Deep (Terra • •)**

The Princess can read people's desires, hopes and fears as easily as most people can read faces. When she uses Empathy to understand a person, she may apply Terra and spend a Wisp to turn her successes on the roll into bonus dice for all Persuasion attempts on that person for the rest of the scene.

The Naked City (Connect •, Aria 1)  
Action: Permanent

When the Princess transforms, she easily evades the nets and snares laid by the authorities, and those who live outside the law know her for a friend. She gets the 9-again quality on mundane Streetwise rolls within one of her specialties (chosen when she takes the Charm) and may apply Aria to such rolls.

**Upgrade: Connected**

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess' knowledge of her city's underside grows broader. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Streetwise rolls covered by any of the added specialties.

**Upgrade: Bargaining (Aria ••)**

If the Princess needs something that can't be bought openly, a touch of magic leads her to the right dealer. When working a black market (see p. 86 of the core book) she may spend 1 Wisp to reduce the number of successes needed to find what she wants by her Aria. If this lowers the threshold to or below 0 successes, the Princess locates a dealer after just an hour's search.

**Upgrade: Listening (Aria ••)**

There are eight million stories in the naked city, and the Princess can hear them all. When listening to rumors in a city (using Streetwise to find information) she may spend 1 Wisp to reduce the number of successes she needs to learn what she wants to know by her Aria. If this lowers the threshold to or below 0 successes, the Princess hears exactly the right rumor in a single interval.

**Mercury's Blessing (Connect •, Acqua •)**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Expression

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

With a touch of the hand and a look in the eye, the Princess may converse with anyone in the world. She touches someone to activate the Charm. With an ordinary success, she acquires a basic understanding of the target's native language until the Charm ends. With an exceptional success, she becomes fully fluent in the target's language, as if she had the Language Merit for it. Mercury's Blessing may be used more than once in a scene, but only to acquire more languages; the Charm does not improve fluency with languages a Princess already knows.

**Upgrade: Lasting**

Cost: +1 Wisp

Duration: 1 day

The Princess' magical fluency persists for a full day from the moment she gained it.

**Upgrade: Overflowing (Acqua ••)**

If a person speaks more than one language, the Princess can learn them all. For each success rolled, up to her Acqua, the Princess gains a basic understanding of one language her target knows and she does not. If she doesn't speak the target's native language, she must learn that one. If she gets an exceptional success, she become as fluent in all the languages she learns as the target is.

**Cherish (Connect ••)**

Action: Instant and resisted, Wits + Occult - target's Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: Inner Light days

A person she's met, a place she's been – these fix themselves in a Princess' heart. The Princess uses this Charm on a target within sight, to grant herself temporary Intimacy to it.



**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess cannot use any Charm through an Intimate connection to the target until she sees it again.

**Failure:** The Charm has no effect.

**Success:** The next time the Princess uses a Charm on the target through an Intimate connection, the Intimacy modifier is reduced by 2 for each success, to a minimum of 0 (equivalent to Sensory.) Using the Charm breaks the connection.

**Exceptional Success:** The connection lasts for several Charms, though it frays each time the Princess uses it. The first Charm she uses has an Intimacy modifier of 0, the second has one of -2, the third -4, and so forth until she returns to the original level of Intimacy.

Note that the Intimacy made by Reminder works both ways; if the target has a power that exploits Intimacy, he can send that power through the connection the Princess made, reducing his modifier and fraying or breaking the link.

### **Beast Speaker (Connect • • , Legno • )**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Animal Ken

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Beast Speaker allows a Princess to speak to any animal, and understand its replies.

**Dramatic Failure:** The targeted animal, and any other animal of the same species, turns hostile and will attack the Princess if it can until the Charm ends.

**Failure:** The animal does not understand the Princess, and behaves as it normally would.

**Success:** The animal, and any other animal of the same species, understands what the Princess says to it, and will answer questions to the best of its ability, until the Charm ends. She may try to persuade it to act on her behalf.

**Exceptional Success:** The animals are well-disposed towards the Princess – they will volunteer information and are easily persuaded to help her out. She adds +2 to all rolls to question or influence them.

### **You're Only in Trouble if you Get Caught (Connect • • , Aria • • • )**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Composure

Cost: 1 Willpower

Duration: permanent

Sometimes, one must learn to lose, to give up, and, to put it bluntly, to run away. By using magic taught by the Queen of Thieves a Knave may escape from her past, and those who would use it to track her down with magic.

Each success on the activation roll reduces your Intimacy to a chosen subject by one degree per success. If this reduces the connection below Few Feelings, it breaks altogether.

The effects are permanent, but the connection can be reformed if the Princess does not avoid contact with whoever she has left behind.

#### **Upgrade: Partners in Crime (Aria • • • • )**

Cost: + 1 Wisp

You can use the Charm on another person you can speak to. The target must give their consent for such a thing to occur.

#### **Upgrade: Band of Thieves (Aria • • • • • )**

Requires: Partners in Crime

Cost: + 2 Wisps

You can use the Charm on a social group you can speak to, applying the Commonalty modifier. Only those members who consent to the change are affected.

### **Whispers from Afar (Connect • • •)**

Action: Instant, Wits + Socialize, modified by Intimacy

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

What need is there of speech between you and those you love? A Princess uses this Charm to communicate with another person; if he is not present, the Intimacy modifier applies. If the target has Wisps, he can share the activation cost; both the Princess and the target spend 1 Wisp, and the target does so reflexively.

**Dramatic Failure:** For the duration, the Princess imagines the voice of her target is speaking to her; what it says is what she generally expects him to say, but it chooses the most distracting moments to speak. She takes a -2 penalty on all Wits-based rolls.

**Failure:** The Charm has no effect.

**Success:** The Princess can speak directly to the mind of her target, without using her voice, and the target can reply the same way. The Charm conveys only sounds that the Princess and the target could actually speak; so, for example, if one thinks in a language the other doesn't know, he hears the words but cannot understand them. On the other hand, anything said is heard as clearly as if the two of them stood together in a quiet room. The first time someone is the target of this Charm, he must roll Resolve + Composure to learn how to speak through the link (and, possibly, to persuade himself that he isn't imagining the voice in his head.)

**Exceptional Success:** In addition, by concentrating the Princess and the target can share a memory. The one who has the memory makes a memory roll (see p. 44 of the nWoD core book) to recall it; whatever she recalls passes over the link, and the other makes a memory roll to retain the information. This takes an instant action from both characters.

#### **Upgrade: Party**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess adds the Commonality modifier to create a channel of voiceless speech among several people. She can speak to any or all of the targets' minds, and they can speak to her and each other in the same way.

#### **Upgrade: Borrowing (Aria • •)**

The Charm's link between minds carries sensations. Anyone in the link can make a Perception roll at a -2 penalty to borrow the senses of another person in the link for a brief moment, seeing what the other sees and hearing what she hears in that moment.

### **Ivory Gate (Connect • • •)**

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Socialize

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 night

The Princess binds her mind to another; when they next fall asleep they will share their dreams. The Charm grants both the gift of lucid dreaming for the night and clear memories the morning after. To open an Ivory Gate a Princess needs permission from the target, and the pair must sleep close enough to touch.

A lesser known use of this Charm is that it interacts with Crawlspace. Normally the only way into another person's Crawlspace is to travel through the Dreamlands, but while two people are connected by an Invocation of Ivory Gate they may see the entrance to each others Crawlspace. Only the owner of the Crawlspace may unlock it, but they may lead others. Every traveller must pay 1 Wisp or one Willpower.

The other, even more obscure, use of Ivory Gates is to invoke it on oneself. This seems to be a waste of good Wisps, but while she is within her own Crawlspace and under the effects of a self-applied

Invocation of this Charm, she will be able to navigate from her Crawlspace into a regular dream (and yes, she can bring others too but they don't benefit from lucidity or clear memories unless Ivory Gate is invoked upon them). An expensive but effective cure for insomnia.

**Upgrade: Distant**

Modify the roll by Intimacy

The Princess can enter a dream from any distance. She still requires permission, but a simple phonecall or arangeing in advance is sufficient.

**Upgrade: Dream of Me (Specchio • • )**

The Princess no longer needs permission to enter another's dreams, and can even open an Ivory Gate without giving the gift of lucid dreaming to the other party. This Upgrade can also be used to invade somebody's dream from the Dreamlands and even allow a full invasion of another person's dreamscape (see Amanojaku in Chapter four for more details on how to access a person's dream from the Dreamlands, and how to invade a dreamscape), doing so requires that the Princess navigates through the Crawlspace into the target's dream. They may not detour or use the Crawlspace in any way except as a path into the Dreams, this Charm simply doesn't have the power.

**Up in Smoke (Connect • • • , Aria • • • )**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Larceny, modified by Intimacy

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

The Princess summons and banishes objects in puffs of colored smoke. She can move an object of Size up to her successes between her current location and a place she knows of; the Intimacy modifier applies to the other place, not to the object, so she can't summon an object that's been moved since she last saw it. Also, to send an object somewhere the Princess has to be carrying it, and when she takes an object it ends up in her hands; the Charm can't be used on anything the Princess can't lift.

**Upgrade: Shuffled**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess can take an object from one distant place and send it to another with one activation. Apply the worse of the Intimacy modifiers for the two locations.

**Upgrade: Treasured (Aria • • • • )**

The Princess can summon an object to herself, no matter where it has been moved; apply the Intimacy modifier for the object itself. She still cannot send objects to another place without a connection to the place.

**Hymn to Orpheus (Connect • • • , Legno • • )**

Action: Instant and resisted, Presence + Expression - targets' Composure

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: concentration

In the myths, the songs of Orpheus were so beautiful that all the natural world came to hear them. The Princess can, in a small way, emulate him. When she has a natural animal within sight, she sings or plays music pleasing to it, and all the animals of the same species who hear the song gather together to listen. The Charm ensures that the music can be heard anywhere within 100 times her successes in yards; natural acoustics may carry the song further, at the Storyteller's discretion. (Note that while only animals of the same kind as the target are certain to come, anyone and anything with ears can follow the music if they like.) Once they arrive, the summoned animals will stand or lie near the Princess, quietly listening, as long as she performs; when she stops, the Charm ends and the beasts revert to their normal behavior in the following turn.

### **Upgrade: Calling (Legno • • •)**

The Princess may perform for an animal that is not within sight, provided she knows it well. Apply the Intimacy modifier to the chosen target; animals of that species will come to hear her.

### **Ferryman's Shroud (Connect • • •, Lacrima •)**

Action: Instant, Composure + Athletics

Cost: 2 Wisps, Belief 7 sin

Duration: instant

The Queen of Tears has deemed that all Princesses are entitled to the freedom of her city. To use this Charm, the Princess must be in complete darkness; light bright enough to see by, from any source, makes the Charm fail. When she activates it, the darkness she stands in thickens to an utter negation of light for an instant; then the ground vanishes and she falls, splashing into the black salt lake of Alhambra. The Charm is generally considerate enough to drop her near a shore, where she can reach dry land in a single turn. It doesn't, however, have to leave her in a specific place within the city; with a single success she may have to walk an hour or two to reach the district she wanted, and an exceptional success brings her straight to the nearest shore. The Charm will not take anyone back from Alhambra – the Queen of Tears does not wish anyone to leave her who has not proven their fidelity to the true Kingdom.

As an incidental benefit, those who learn this Charm can light lamps in Alhambra as its citizens do.

### **Upgrade: Driven**

Cost: +1 Wisp/every 5 points of Size above 5

The Princess can drive a vehicle into Alhambra, carrying along all its contents. She takes a penalty on the activation roll of -2 for 5 points of the vehicle's Size exceeding 5; that is, a Size 10 vehicle takes a -2 penalty, a Size 15 vehicle takes -4, and so on. As with the basic effect, the vehicle must be in darkness to travel, and will arrive over water; most Hopeful using this Charm travel in boats.

If she rolls a dramatic failure, the Princess cannot use the Charm for one full day.

### **Upgrade: Returning (Lacrima • • •)**

The Princess may use the Charm to travel from Alhambra to a place she knows well; apply the Intimacy modifier for the destination. As with the basic Charm, the upgrade only works in complete darkness (and in Alhambra that carries risk; see the rules in that section.) On the other hand, activating the Charm to leave Alhambra is not a sin against Belief at any level.

The followers of Tears only teach this Charm to people who have proven their loyalty to Alhambra, but nothing other than the Lacrima requisite and the risk of retaliation prevents anyone from learning the Charm.

### **Mirror Walk (Connect • • • •, Specchio • •)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Athletics, modified by Intimacy

Cost: 3 Wisps

Duration: Instant

A simple trick but a very useful one. The Princess targets two mirrors before stepping into one and out the other. Both mirrors must be large enough for her to fit through. Intimacy is measured to the mirror she will step out of.

The Charm cannot cross between realms. This may not be used to gain either egress or entrance to Alhambra, nor may it be used to exit or leave the hisil of the shapeshifters, the twisted thorn-world of the fae-folk, or any other such hidden place. However, should a Princess find herself in any of these alternate worlds, it may be used for transit within them if such a thing is possible within the alien dimension.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess enters the mirror, but gets lost. She rolls Wits + Composure each turn after using the Charm; when she succeeds, she emerges from the mirror she left.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The Princess transports herself to the target mirror.

Exceptional Success: When the Princess emerges, she may immediately move up to her Speed, even if she had to move to reach the mirror she left.

**Upgrade: Leading**

Cost: +1 Wisp per additional person

With this Upgrade the Princess can now lead others through Mirrors. Each extra person or 5 Size points of equipment beyond what she can carry costs an additional Wisp.

**Charms of Entwined Destiny (Connect . . . . , Invocation . . . .)**

Action: Extended, Manipulation + Empathy (30 minutes/roll, threshold = Princess' Willpower), modified by Intimacy

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 month

In a lengthy ceremony, invoking all she knows of him, the Princess weaves the thread of her fate into another's, becoming an exemplar in his life of one of the Queens. Each Queen teaches a different version of this Charm, with her favored Invocation as a prerequisite; these versions must be learned as separate Charms.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess cannot use the Charm on the target for 1 month, and suffers a -2 penalty to all Social rolls involving him during that period.

Failure: The Princess makes no progress. If she does not reach the threshold, she cannot use the Charm on the target again for 1 week.

Success: The Princess makes progress. When she reaches the threshold, she gains the Entwined Destiny Merit with the target until the Charm ends, with all the benefits and drawbacks of that Merit.

Exceptional Success: The Princess makes great progress tying her destiny to the target's.

The five versions of the Charm each confer a different form of Entwined Destiny:

- Better Living Through Education (Acqua) - Mentor. The Princess gains Willpower when she has taught the target something important, and takes penalties if she passes up an opportunity to educate.
- Manic Pixie Dust (Aria) - Gadfly. The Princess gains Willpower when she exposes the target to unusual situations (for him) or alters the pattern of his life in a benign fashion, and takes penalties if she ignores a chance to do so. Doing the target permanent or serious harm does not fall under the Destiny.
- Red String of Fate (Fouco) - Lover. The Princess gains Willpower when she has furthered the target's love for her, and takes penalties if she misses a chance to do so. The love in question need not be erotic or marital, but it must involve mutual affection and trust.
- Under Ursa's Star (Legno) - Guardian. The Princess gains Willpower when she rescues the target from harm, and takes penalties if he is harmed when she is present.
- Great Expectations (Terra) - Sponsor. The Princess gains Willpower when her target's social standing improves, and takes penalties if she lets a chance to help him rise go by.

**Upgrade: Proxy (Invocation . . . . .)**

The Princess can weave the thread of another person's life. The threshold for doing so is the Willpower of the person being given an Entwined Destiny, and the Intimacy modifier is either the Princess' connection to that person, or to the Destiny's subject, whichever is worse. If the person being given a Destiny is not willing to accept the role the Charm gives him, the Princess suffers the effects of a dramatic failure towards him.

**Upgrade: Mutual (Fouco . . . . .)** Requires Red String of Fate

Cost: +1 Willpower

When the Princess casts Red String of Fate both herself and her beloved gain an Entwined Destiny of lovers to each other. The two destinies are the natural compliment such as motherly love to daughterly love, or romantic love to romantic love. If the target does not give informed consent the Princess suffers a Dramatic Failure.

**Upgrade: Taut**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The thread that ties the Princess to her target pulls them together. The Princess and her target are linked by a powerful Intimate connection equivalent to Love, regardless of the connection they had before. When the Charm ends their Intimacy returns to its natural level.

**The Old Allegiance (Connect . . . . , Lacrima . . . .)**

Action: Extended, Presence + Intimidation (30 minutes/roll, threshold = target's Willpower), modified by Sympathy

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 month

It is right and proper, the Last Empress teaches, for the Nobility to reward those who serve the Light, and punish those who refuse to serve. In a lengthy ceremony, invoking all she knows of him, the Princess weaves the thread of another person's fate, calling him to assist her in her labors.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess cannot use the Charm on the target for 1 month, and suffers a -2 penalty to all Social rolls involving him during that period.

Failure: The Princess makes no progress. If she does not reach the threshold, she cannot use the Charm on the target again for 1 week.

Success: The Princess makes progress. When she reaches the threshold, the target's fate makes him a loyal servant of the Princess' Nation, if she has one, until the Charm ends. The target gains Willpower when his actions serve the Nation's Motivations, and suffers penalties when he flouts them, or ignores them to serve another goal. Most Ravens use this Charm to instill loyalty to Alhambra, but a Princess belonging to another Nation may use instead choose to bind the target to their own Nation. If the Princess is not a member of any Nation, the magic of Lacrima defaults to Alhambra.

Exceptional Success: The Princess makes great progress weaving the target's destiny.

Unlike the Radiant Queens' Charms of Entwined Destiny, it is perfectly possible to use The Old Allegiance on an unwilling target. It is however a Belief 4 compromise to do so. Further degeneration checks may be called for if the Princess takes advantage of people she has woven a destiny for. As a general rule, it doesn't count as consent if they're only saying it as a result of an artificial destiny.

**Upgrade: Collective (Lacrima . . . .)**

Cost: +1 Willpower

The Princess may bind all of a social group to her goals at once. When she reaches the threshold, all the members of the target group who see her are affected. The Charm is modified by Commonalty of the target group, instead of by Sympathy.

**Ultimate Fidelity (Connect . . . . , Tempesta . . . .)**

Action: Extended, Resolve + Composure (1 minute/roll, threshold = 11 - Belief)

Cost: 1 Willpower dot

Duration: indefinite

The original Sworn Guard and the One-Who-Became-Storms swore this oath when they stood before the gates of the last city of the Kingdom, alone against the hordes of the Darkness. And they retain it. The Alhambrans know nothing of it; why would those treacherous curs know anything about loyalty or

devotion? This was an oath of the Army of the Kingdom, not the soft weaklings who betrayed it from within.

When using the Charm, the Princess declares a Cause. This may be anything that can be described in a sentence or so, consisting of an end-goal that is important to her. For example, "Kill the six-fingered man who killed my father" is a valid target, while "Buy some milk from the shops" is almost certainly not. The Princess repeats these words over and over again, drumming them until they become all-consuming. The Charm is complete when the scars blossom across her chest, spelling out the Cause for all who would see. Whenever the Princess advances the Cause; finding a list of men with six fingers, finding which one he is, finding where he lives, watching his routines, breaking into his house, she gains one Willpower. At most one Willpower per scene.

In addition, the Princess cannot be dissuaded; she doubles her appropriate Resistance Attribute against any attempts, whether mundane or supernatural, to prevent her from fulfilling the Cause. This covers things like torture, which would double Stamina, just as much as Composure might be used against magical mind-control or mundane persuasions. However, the Cause consumes those who have willingly sworn it. When faced with a choice between advancing or fulfilling the Cause, or taking another action, the Princess rolls Resolve + Composure. If she succeeds, she may perform the other action; otherwise she must continue with the Cause, and ignore the other situation, even if it would seem to be more important to an objective observer.

Once the Cause has been accomplished, the Princess regains the Willpower dot lost when swearing to it. If it becomes impossible to attain the Cause for any reason (say, the six-fingered man dies before they can get their revenge), not only does she not regain the Willpower dot, she must roll Resolve + Composure, with each success inflicting one point of resistant aggravated damage, as her soul seeks redemption in coruscating flames that erupt from her mouth and burn at the tongue that swore an oath it could not uphold.

Upgrade: Proxy (Tempesta 4)

Cost: 2 Wisps from you, 1 Willpower dot from the target

The Princess may use the Charm to seal another person to a Cause they willingly swore to. The target is affected as if he had cast it himself.

### **Standing on a Pedestal (Connect . . . . , Specchio . . . .)**

Action: Extended, Presence + Persuasion (30 minutes/roll, threshold = target's Willpower), modified by Intimacy

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 month

In a lengthy ceremony, invoking all she knows of him, the Princess weaves the thread of another person's fate into hers, giving him opportunities to prove himself worthy of her.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess cannot use the Charm on the target for 1 month, and suffers a -2 penalty to all Social rolls involving him during that period.

Failure: The Princess makes no progress. If she does not reach the threshold, she cannot use the Charm on the target again for 1 week.

Success: The Princess makes progress. When she reaches the threshold, the target gains the Entwined Destiny Merit with her until the Charm ends, with all the benefits and drawbacks of that Merit.

Exceptional Success: The Princess makes great progress tying her destiny to the target's.

The target's Entwined Destiny makes him a seeker for the Princess' approval; she can choose what kind of favor he is destined to seek. He may be a romantic suitor, and fulfil the destiny when he earns a sign of her affections. He may seek her social favor, and fulfil the destiny when she compliments him on his apparel, or invites him to a party. He may even seek her intellectual favor, and fulfil the destiny when she publicly approves of an idea he had. The general rule is that the target gains Willpower when the Princess chooses to bestow a sign of her approval upon him, and suffers penalties when he refuses an opportunity to seek the Princess' favor. He does not suffer penalties when he makes a genuine attempt to win her favour, regardless of how the Princess reacts.

Unlike the Radiant Queens' Charms of Entwined Destiny, it is perfectly possible to use Standing on a Pedestal on an unwilling target. It is however a Belief 4 compromise to do so (it is not a compromise to use it against targets who give informed consent). Further degeneration checks may be called for if the Princess takes advantage of people she has woven a destiny for. As a general rule, it doesn't count as consent if they're only saying it as a result of an artificial destiny.

**Upgrade: Collective (Specchio ••••)**

Cost: +1 Willpower

The Princess may bind many favor-seekers to herself at once, if they are all present. The Charm is modified by Commonalty of the target group, which must include the Princess, instead of by Intimacy.

**Upgrade: Taut**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The thread that ties the Princess to her target pulls them together. The Princess and her target are linked by a powerful Intimate connection equivalent to Love, regardless of the connection they had before. When the Charm ends their Intimacy returns to its natural level.

If the Princess applies Collective and Taut, she becomes a member of the target group for the purposes of Commonalty Charms, instead of improving her Intimacy with any of them.

**All the World's a Stage (Connect •••••, Aria ••••)**

Action: Extended (1 turn/roll), Manipulation + Expression

Cost: 1 Wisp + 1 Wisp/roll, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 scene

In a scintillating gust, the Princess' body dissolves, flaking away into the air with a soft chuckle. Blue and white streamers track the motion of her wind-body, weaving in and out in the breeze with a soft radiance which glows brighter the faster she moves. If she is still, she's almost invisible, only noticeable by the chill feel of the air and the breeze that stirs the area. If all the world's a stage, then no one should notice the theatre's manager, right?

While in this state, the following abilities and changes to the Princess' status apply:

- She is in the state of Twilight, and may not be harmed by anything which cannot reach into this realm.
- Likewise, she cannot interact with the mortal world, except by using a Charm or a power that normally allows touching things in Twilight; and cannot apply any Invocation but Aria.
- While stationary, she is almost completely invisible (-5 to Perception rolls to notice her). When she moves, others may make an unmodified Perception roll to notice her, and if she runs, they add her Inner Light to that roll; but she cannot be identified.

However, these benefits are secondary to the main purpose of the Charm. The Queen of Spades' avatar is truly a power of connections and narrative, as befits the tales she tells of the world. Before rolling, the Princess declares a story which is to happen in the scene. It may be as complicated as she likes, although no specific names may be used; descriptions must be couched in narrative conceits, rather than specific descriptors. "Red-haired maiden" is fine; "Sally" is not.

The Charm takes effect the turn after the Princess makes her last roll. Until it ends, every character within sensory range of the Princess has a bonus equal to her successes, minus their Resolve + any supernatural advantage, on any action they take which would advance the story she chose, and an equal penalty on any action opposed to that story; however, the bonus and penalty never exceed her Aria. A character whose Resolve + supernatural advantage equals or exceeds her successes is not affected, as the force of their own self-determination rejects the tale that the Princess would tell upon fate. The Princess is not herself affected by the fate-bending story power, whatever her Resolve and Inner Light are; the stage manager isn't part of the play, after all, even if she makes it all happen.



## Fight

The Fight Charms enhance a Princess' ability to fight. Only Champions have affinity for them.

### Empty Hands (Fight •)

Action: Permanent

Many of the Hopeful have weapons in their Regalia, but some prefer to master control over the ability to inflict harm. She may apply an Invocation to rolls to start grappling, to her maneuvers within a grapple, and to rolls to touch an opponent without hurting him.

Upgrade: Crushing

While grappling, the Princess delivers immense force in her grasp. She may do either lethal or bashing damage to her opponent, once she has a hold on him.

Upgrade: Grasping

Stacks, up to 3

Whenever the Princess may apply an Invocation because of the Charm, she always adds a +1 equipment bonus for each time she takes this upgrade.

Upgrade: Stunning (Acqua ••)

The Princess knows how to put opponents out of action quickly. When she applies Acqua to a grappling roll, and does damage to her opponent, she rolls dice equal to the damage done. If she gets any successes, her opponent must roll his Stamina; if he fails this roll, he is knocked out for turns equal to the damage done.

Upgrade: Disarming (Aria ••)

While grappling, the Princess can maneuver objects on her person or her opponent's with startling speed. When she applies Aria, she draws and attacks with a weapon on her person with a single roll; if her opponent holds a weapon, she may take it from him and attack with a single roll, or take it and throw it away, or pocket it.

Upgrade: Blistering (Fuoco ••)

During a grapple, the Princess' skin and clothes grow hot to the touch. In each turn that she applies Fuoco, her opponent automatically takes 1 bashing damage, in addition to any results of maneuvers that turn.

Upgrade: Entrancing (Legno ••)

The Princess' opponents, if once they touch her, find it strangely hard to do anything that would really injure her. During a grapple, in any turn the Princess applies Legno, any roll her opponent makes that would damage her, either barehanded or with a weapon, is penalized by her Legno.

Upgrade: Unbroken (Terra ••)

The Princess stands unmoved, and her hold is almost impossible to escape. During a grapple, in any turn that she applies Terra, any roll her opponent makes to break the grapple or to render her prone is penalized by her Terra.

Upgrade: Draining (Lacrima ••)

The Princess' mein unsettles anyone who comes too close. During a grapple, in any turn that she applies Lacrima, her opponent must roll Resolve + Composure. If he fails, he cannot do anything that turn but try to break the grapple, unless he spends 1 Willpower.

### Kensai (Fight •)

Action: Permanent

A melee weapon becomes part of the Princess' Regalia, that she can use with supernatural skill. Attacking with the weapon is a Strength + Weaponry or Strength + Brawl instant action, the dicepool is fixed

when purchasing the Charm. The target's Defense applies as normal. The weapon's basic Damage is 2 lethal or 3 bashing, and the Princess may apply an Invocation to an attack to increase its Damage. The weapon's Durability is 2, and its Structure is 4; its Size can be any value from 1 to 4, for its Size doesn't affect its Structure, and the Princess may wield it no matter what her Strength is without penalty. The weapon's traits are set when the Princess learns Kensai.

**Upgrade: Damaging**

Stacks, up to 3

Each time the Princess takes this upgrade, she adds 1 to her weapon's basic Damage.

**Upgrade: Subduing**

The Princess's weapon can cut a foe or merely bruise him, as she wishes. Each time she attacks, she chooses which type of damage the blow inflicts, lethal or bashing. Downgrading a lethal weapon to bashing adds 1 to its Damage; upgrading a bashing weapon to lethal subtracts 1 from its Damage.

**Upgrade: Durable**

The Princess' weapon becomes nearly impossible to break. Add her Inner Light to the weapon's Durability.

**Upgrade: Precise (Acqua • •)**

The Princess places her strokes with marvelous accuracy. If she applies Acqua, she may ignore up to her Acqua in penalties from aiming at a specified target (see pp. 165-166 in the nWoD core book) on top of the Invocation bonus.

**Upgrade: Sharp (Aria • •)**

Like the wind, the Princess' weapon slips through gaps in her target's protections. If she applies Aria to an attack, the weapon gains Armor Piercing 2.

**Upgrade: Burning (Fuoco • •)**

The Princess' weapon erupts into flame. If she applies Fuoco to an attack, it gains the 9-again quality.

**Upgrade: Clinging (Legno • •)**

The Princess' weapon wraps around her opponent's flesh, as tree roots burrow into the earth. She can grapple with the Weaponry skill, rather than Brawl, and may apply Legno when doing so. If she has taken Damaging, she adds the bonus from that to all her grapple maneuvers, but she never adds Kensai's base Damage. (This upgrade is usually used for whips and vine weapons.)

**Upgrade: Draining (Lacrima • •)**

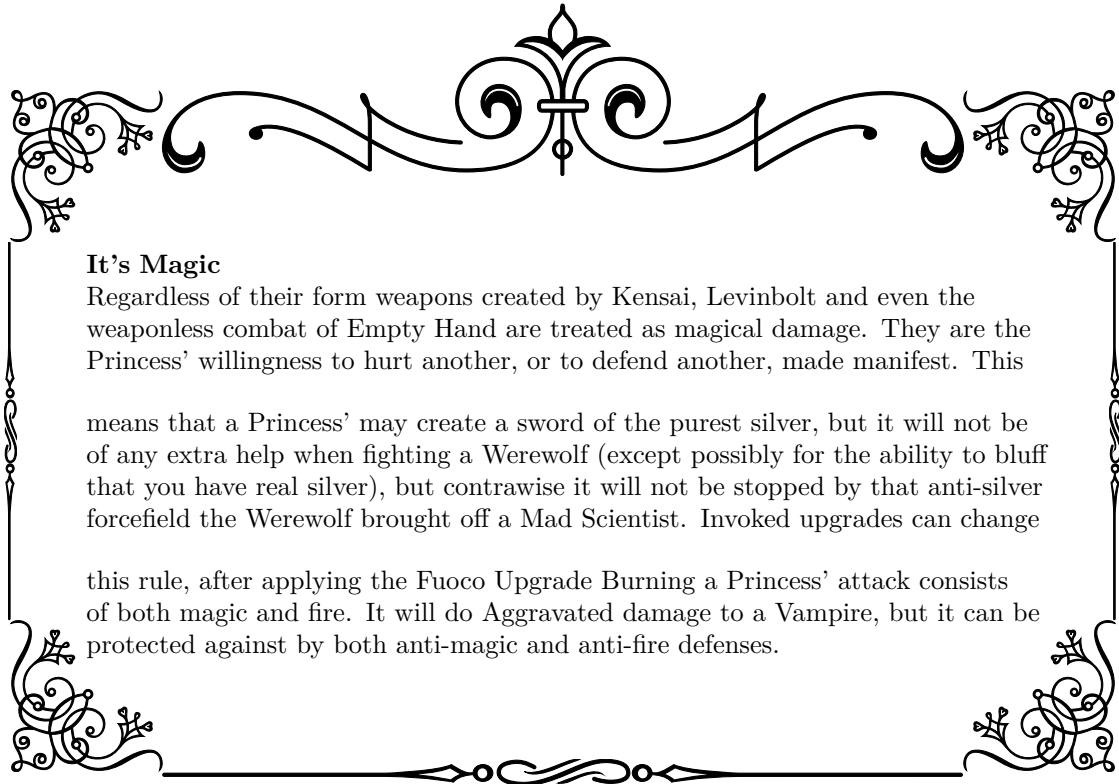
The Princess' weapon draws shadows to itself, unsettling anyone with the bad luck to touch it. If she applies Lacrima to an attack, and the target takes damage from the attack, he must roll Resolve + Composure, and loses 1 point of Willpower if he fails. Using this upgrade is a Belief 6 sin.

**Upgrade: Berserk (Tempesta • •)**

The Princess' weapon's blows come so furiously that they catch their targets by surprise. If she makes an all-out attack with the weapon and applies Tempesta to the attack, she doesn't get the normal +2 bonus; instead the target loses his Defense against the attack.

**Upgrade: Seraphic Fury (Tempesta • • • •)**

The Princess channels fire and fury through her veins and into her blow. Her weapon seeks the heart and severs arteries. If she applies Tempesta to an attack, and accepts 1 point of resistant lethal damage, the attack does aggravated damage.



**Levinbolt (Fight •)**

Action: Permanent

A ranged weapon becomes part of the Princess' Regalia, that she can use with supernatural skill. It can appear as nearly anything; wizards' staffs, futuristic pistols, and daggers that fly back to the hand are all known examples. Attacking with the weapon is a Dexterity + Firearms instant action, governed by the usual rules for firearms (see pp. 159-164 in the core book.) The weapon's Damage is 0 bashing, and the Princess may apply an Invocation to an attack to increase its Damage. The weapon's range is (10/20/40) \* Inner Light in yards. It has a clip of 3 shots (enough for a short burst of autofire) and is unloaded when summoned. If the Princess spends a Wisp as she summons the weapon, it appears fully loaded; at any time as an instant action, she may spend 1 Wisp to reload it, conjuring shots directly into the clip. The weapon's Durability is 2, and its Structure is 4; its Size can be any value from 1 to 4, for its Size doesn't affect its Structure, and the Princess may wield it no matter what her Strength is. The weapon's traits are set when a Princess takes Levinbolt.

If the Princess loses her weapon, she can call it back to her hands with a transformation action; if it's damaged or destroyed, she can recreate it as if it were a dissolved phylactery.

**Upgrade: Damaging**

Stacks, up to 3

Each time a character takes this upgrade, add 1 to the weapon's basic Damage.

**Upgrade: Multiple**

Stacks, up to 2 times

The first time a character takes this upgrade, the weapon's clip grows to 10 shots, allowing a medium burst of autofire. On the second purchase, the clip grows to 30 shots, allowing a long burst. No matter how large the clip, 1 Wisp is enough to reload the weapon completely.

**Upgrade: Long**

The weapon's range doubles, to (20/40/80) \* Inner Light in yards.

**Upgrade: Piercing**

The weapon's shot pierces the foe instead of battering him; it does lethal damage, not bashing.

**Upgrade: Boiling (Acqua • •)**

In addition to taking damage from the weapon's shot, a target is pushed away. If the Princess applies Acqua to an attack, for each success, the target moves half the Princess' Speed away from her, unless pushed into an obstacle. Targets that hit an obstacle are crushed against it, and take extra bashing damage. Roll 1 die for each success, less 1 for each step of Speed/2 the target moved before impact (rounding up); the target takes 1 bashing damage for each success on this roll.

**Upgrade: Freezing (Aria • •)**

The weapon's shot guides itself around obstacles and penetrates protective clothing. If the Princess applies Aria to an attack, she reduces total penalties from Armor and concealment by up to her Aria. The attack is no longer swift, however; the target may apply his Defense against it.

**Upgrade: Burning (Fuoco • •)**

If the Princess applies Fuoco to an attack, and her target takes damage from it, she may spend 1 Wisp reflexively to set the target on fire. The fire is mundane, being only supernatural in its origin, and is Torch-Sized, burning with the Intensity of a candle flame; thus it does 1 damage per turn. (See p. 180 of the World of Darkness Core for more details on fire.)

**Upgrade: Soothing (Legno • •)**

If the Princess applies Legno to an attack, and a target takes damage from it, a dose of an opiate enters his bloodstream, and he must roll his Stamina + Resolve - the Princess' Legno. If he fails, he suffers the effects of a dose of morphine (see page 177 in the nWoD core book for details.)

**Upgrade: Quaking (Terra • •)**

If the Princess applies Terra to an attack, the earth bucks under the target's feet as the weapon's shot strikes him. In addition to taking damage, the target must succeed on a reflexive roll of Dexterity + Athletics, penalized by -1 per success, or be knocked down.

**Upgrade: Draining (Lacrima • •)**

The weapon's shot assaults the will of the target if it strikes home. If the Princess applies Lacrima to an attack, and the target takes damage, he also loses 1 point of Willpower. Using this upgrade is a Belief 5 compromise.

**Upgrade: Irradiating (Tempesta • •)**

The Princess may increase the Damage of the weapon's shot by inflicting resistant damage on herself. 1 level of bashing damage gives a +1 bonus, and 1 level of lethal damage gives a +3 bonus. The Princess chooses whether to take bashing or lethal damage for each attack.

**Upgrade: Seraphic Fury (Tempesta • • • •)**

The Princess channels fire and fury through her veins and into her blow. Acid burns through flesh and bone alike while bullets seek the eye with unerring accuracy. The Princess takes 1 resistant lethal damage, and the attack does aggravated damage if it hits.

**Upgrade: Trickshot (Specchio • •)**

The Princess's weapon fires a bolt of pure light in an impossible shot. She might aim over her shoulder with a mirror, ricochet the bolt several times to her target or shoot a target 100 foot away from the hip. She ignores up to her Specchio in penalties for long range, called shots, concealment and other similar modifiers.

**Courteous Parry (Fight •, Terra •)**

Action: Permanent

A smile and pleasant voice disarms a Princess' attackers, or a calculated remark at the right moment throws them off-balance. When the Princess takes a Dodge action, she may add her Manipulation to her Defense instead of doubling it, if the attackers have a roughly human mindset. Unfortunately, social acumen doesn't do anything to inhuman foes; against an animal, a spirit and similar beings the Princess' Defense remains at its base value, even when she dodges.

### **Upgrade: Instinctive**

Using social talent to evade injury becomes almost a reflex. When the Princess transforms, she may choose to set her Defense equal to her Manipulation against attackers with a basically human mind, and add her normal Defense value when dodging. The drawback, as before, is that against inhuman attackers she has no Defense without dodging. She may return to normal Defense with a transformation action.

### **Oak Shield (Fight •, Legno ••)**

Action: Permanent

A defensive armament becomes part of the Wilds' Regalia - perhaps a large shield, or her weapon acquires a sword breaker. This gives her +1 to Defence, counted after all other modifiers unless she has sacrificed her defence for that turn. In addition when making a Dodge Action she may opt to add her dots in Legno to her Defence in place of Doubling her regular defence.

### **You Might Hurt Yourself (Fight ••)**

Requires: Kensai

Action: Reflexive and contested, Dexterity + Weaponry vs. Strength + Weaponry

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

When an armed foe attacks the Princess in close combat, she strikes at his weapon. If she wins the contest, the opponent is disarmed, and his weapon goes flying Strength yards in a random direction. The Princess still takes damage from the attack, if it overcomes her Defense. She must be unarmed to use the Charm.

### **Upgrade: Confiscating (Acqua •••)**

In a fluid movement, the Princess pulls her enemy's weapon into her grasp. When she disarms someone, she keeps hold of the weapon instead of knocking it away; she may use it on her next action.

### **Whirlwind Stance (Fight ••, Aria •)**

Action: Reflexive, Dexterity + Wits

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 turn

Moving like the wind, the Princess intercepts every blow struck near her. Every time someone makes a close combat attack on a target within her Inner Light in yards, she may activate the Charm. Each success removes 1 success on the attacker's roll, to a minimum of 0. The Charm applies to attacks on the Princess, but she forgoes her Defense while the Charm is active. Upgrade: Grand

The Princess also intercepts ranged attacks on targets within the protected radius, at a penalty of -5.

### **Safety in Stillness (Fight ••, Legno •)**

Action: Instant, Composure + Brawl

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess stands unperturbed by the assaults of many foes. After activating the Charm, her Defense is not reduced until she has taken (1 + her successes) attacks in a turn.

### **Spite Strike (Fight • • , Tempesta • )**

Action: Reflexive, Dexterity + Intimidation

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: Reflexive

None may strike a Fury without reprisal. The Princess is attacked, she may forgo her Defence and activate Spite Strike. If she takes damage from the attack, she may retaliate against her attacker by rolling her normal dicepool + the amount of damage received, the type of damage done is the type of damage the Princess receives. The Princess must actually take damage – if she mitigates any of it by spending Wisps, or if the attacker fails to inflict any damage, the Charm fails.

### **Befriending (Fight • • , Specchio • • )**

Action: Reflexive, no roll is required

Cost: None

The Queen of Mirrors wants everyone to get along, in service to the True Queen. Isn't that nice? Sadly, violence is sometimes necessary, but violence should always serve a higher cause, and bind people together. If a character is knocked out by the Princess this Charm can be used to create an intimate connection to the target, equivalent to a bond of Love. This enhanced connection lasts until all the damage inflicted is healed.

### **One Woman Warband (Fight • • , Specchio • • • )**

Action: Reflexive, unrolled

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 turn

What's more impressive than flamboyantly taking down an opponent without a scratch? Flamboyantly taking down ten opponents. When this Charm is activated the Noble makes a Dodge action giving her a Defence equal to the lower of her usual Defence while Dodging and twice her Specchio. However, every subsequent attack after the first increases her Defence by one rather than decreasing her Defence. She may add two Defence with Willpower as normal.

#### **Upgrade: Countered**

At the end of the turn the Princess may make one counter attack with a dicepool equal to the number of people who attacked her this turn.

### **Refutation in Arms (Fight • • • , Acqua • • )**

Requires: Kensai

Action: Instant and resisted, Wits + Weaponry - target's Defense

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The attacks of a fighter fall into patterns, and the Princess can read those patterns. When she wields her Kensai weapon and faces another in close combat, she may activate this Charm.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess misreads her foe. For the rest of the scene, all her attacks on this opponent take a -1 penalty, and she cannot use Refutation in Arms again.

**Failure:** The Princess learns nothing from her foe's movements.

**Success:** All the Princess' attacks on this opponent gain a +1 bonus until the Charm ends.

**Exceptional Success:** All the Princess' attacks on this opponent gain a +2 bonus until the Charm ends.

A Princess can gain a bonus from this Charm against only one target at a time; if she uses it again before the scene ends, the first use of the Charm ends immediately.

### **Flash Step (Fight . . . , Aria . . . )**

Action: Reflexive, Wits + Athletics

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

The Princess dodges her foe's attack so swiftly that, by the time it lands, she's somewhere else. She may activate Flash Step when a foe attacks her in close combat; if she succeeds, she moves up to her Speed times her activation successes in yards. She loses her Defense against the attack, but each activation success subtracts one success from the attacker's roll.

### **Tangling Vine (Fight . . . , Legno . . )**

Requires: Kensai

Action: Instant and resisted, Strength + Brawl - target's Defense

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: concentration

A net of brambles grows in the Noble's hands, and she throws it at a target at a range of (10/20/40) \* Inner Light yards. If she succeeds, she entangles the target in the net, and the brambles grapple him. The Princess may spend her action in the next and subsequent rounds maintaining the grapple, rolling Strength + Brawl - the target's Strength. If the target breaks the hold, or the Princess takes any action other than maintaining the hold, the Charm ends.

#### **Upgrade: Thorny**

The net grows sharp thorns; it may inflict lethal damage in the grapple.

#### **Upgrade: Wide**

Stacks, up to 3 times

Cost: +0-2 Wisps

The net is broad enough to ensnare more than one person. Use the autofire rules. The first purchase gives the net the bonus of a short burst. The second purchase adds 1 Wisp to the cost, and allows the equivalent of a medium burst. The third purchase adds 2 Wisps to the cost, and allows the equivalent of a long burst.

### **Salted Wounds (Fight . . . , Lacrima . . . )**

Requires: Kensai

Action: Instant and resisted, Strength + Medicine - target's Stamina

Cost: 2 Wisps, Belief 6 sin

Duration: 1 scene

After the Raven wounds an enemy with her Kensai weapon, she may increase the pain from all his injuries. If she succeeds, her target takes a -1 wound penalty when his fourth-to-last health box fills with damage, and the penalties for further damage increase by 1, to a maximum of -4. Salted Wounds does not work on anyone already under its effect.

### **Towering Inferno (Fight . . . . . , Fuoco . . . . . )**

Requires: Levinbolt

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Intimidation

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: instant

The Princess conjures a ball that explodes in a gout of consuming fire. The ball is an aerodynamic object of Size 1, and is thrown normally for such objects; when it hits, it explodes with a blast area equal to the Princess' Inner Light and a Damage equal to her successes. The explosive is also an incendiary –

anything damaged by it ignites, and while the direct explosive damage is bashing, damage from fires set by it is lethal. All such fires are mundane, though the explosive is not. The Princess may hold the ball up to her Fuoco in turns, after which it explodes wherever it is.

### **Strength of Ten (Fight •••••, Terra •••)**

Action: Instant, Presence + Expression

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 turn

Blows delivered by the Princess' friends become steps in a great dance, and her strike against a foe is its culmination. The Charm may be activated only during combat. For each activation success, add the successes rolled for a mundane action by one character on the Noble's side of the fight as a bonus to her dice pool in the next turn, provided that her action that turn is a mundane attack. If the Princess does anything other than attack a foe as her next action, she gains no benefit from the Charm. She must choose whether an eligible action is part of the attack before the player for that character rolls. If a character rolls a dramatic failure on an action that's part of the attack, the Princess takes a -4 penalty to her dice pool.

### **The Finest Hour, the Last Hour (Fight •••••, Tempesta •••••)**

Action: Instant, Resolve + Composure

Cost: 3 Wisps, 1 Willpower, 1 Resistant Aggravated Damage

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess draws upon the dedication and resolve the Seraphic General displayed during the fall, and recreates her own lesser version of that courage.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess is overcome with a feeling of utter futility and defeatism. She loses all Willpower and must flee all combat for the scene. She is considered to have broken Tempesta's ban.

Failure: The Princess cannot focus.

Success: The Princess enters a combat trance, a tranquil fury or even a screaming hysteria. In this state she is one of the most powerful and terrible combatants known to the Radiant. Any damage she causes is Aggravated (even if she doesn't want it to be). The Princess also gains the resilience of mind and body shown by the Seraphic General in her last stand: She gains temporary Health boxes equal to her Resolve + Inner Light and every time the Princess kills someone she considers to be a follower of the Dark, she regains all her Willpower. Followers of the dark include: Darkened, Darkspawn and all related creatures, Princesses and Sworn of Tears, Alhambran citizens, and anyone the Princess has a good reason to believe to be any of the above.

Exceptional Success: The Princess develops such as strong aura of violence and power that mortals (including Darkened and Darkspawn, but not stronger creatures of the Darkness) whose Willpower is lower than her Inner Light must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll or flee in terror.

Drawback: Once this Charm is active the Princess must fight to the death - she simply cannot conceive of not fighting for as long as one foe remains standing.

## **Govern**

The Govern Charms control supernatural powers and those who possess them. Graces and Seekers have affinity for them.

### **Living Image (Govern •)**

Requires: 2 dots in Crafts or Expression, and a specialty in creating art

Action: Extended, Inner Light + Intelligence (30 minutes/roll, threshold = 3x rating of Charm affected)

Cost: special



Duration: indefinite

Certain artists among the Hopeful have found a method to infuse the Light into their art, and make it bring forth magic. This Charm allows a Princess to use another Charm that she knows through a work of art she has made with her own hands, even when she is not present. The crafting of this artwork is integral to the use of Living Image - the art means, is about, the Charm to be cast through it, so a wholly or partly finished work on another subject cannot carry the intended Charm.

To make the magical artwork, the Princess pays the full cost of the Charm she means to cast through it, and chooses the precise effects and upgrades she desires. The Princess then creates the art, using the normal rules for that, except that she uses Living Image's dice pool instead of the standard one. The artwork is ready for use when the Princess reaches the threshold number of successes. Once the artwork is prepared, the Princess may activate the Charm it expresses at will, whenever she is transformed, by paying its cost in full again, and making the normal activation roll. (Charms that don't require activation are not compatible with Living Image.) The Charm activates as if cast by the artwork, with the exact effects specified then. If the Princess applies an Invocation to Living Image, she may apply only that Invocation to activate the artwork's Charm.

As the artwork has no awareness of its surroundings, and gives the Princess none, the target of its Charm is randomly chosen, if it's not fixed in the artwork's making:

- A Charm that affects the Princess activating it, instead affects the artwork.
- When the artwork's Charm requires touching a target, its target becomes someone touching the artwork, chosen randomly if there's more than one.
- When the artwork's Charm affects a target within sight or a specified distance, its target is the person nearest to the artwork.
- When the artwork's Charm affects an area, its target is the artwork's immediate neighborhood.
- When the artwork's Charm is modified by Intimacy, the target is fixed as part of making the artwork, and all activations take the modifier that applied at that time.
- When the artwork's Charm is modified by Commonalty, the social group to be affected is fixed as part of making the artwork, all activations take the modifier for that group, and each activation affects all members of that group who see the artwork when its Charm activates.

If no target is in range of the artwork when the Princess activates it, the cost of activation is lost without result.

Living Image ends only when the magical artwork is damaged (losing at least 1 point of Structure) or the Princess wishes it; it does not end when the Princess returns to mundane form. A Princess may use an artwork created with Living Image as often as she wishes, until Living Image itself ends. However, she cannot have more than one activation of Living Image up at one time, and after Living Image ends the artwork can't be reused. Finally, until Living Image ends the artwork gives an Intimate connection to the Princess who made it, with a strength equal to Love. This applies whenever she's transformed, and triggers an Unseen Sense for phenomena related to the Light.

### **Upgrade: Gallery**

Stacks, up to 4

The Princess can now sustain magic in more than one artwork. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds one to the number of Living Image activations she may have up at once.

### **Upgrade: Aware**

Cost: +1 Willpower

The Princess can create magical artworks that are aware of being observed, and can hold a small portion of her power. By applying this upgrade, the Princess makes an artwork that stores a Charm activation. All the rules for the basic Living Image Charm still apply, except that if no target is in range of the artwork when the Princess activates it, the Charm activation is suspended until a target does appear; only then does it take effect. The Princess may return to mundane form after storing an

activation in her artwork; when a target appears, it will take effect even if she isn't then transformed. The artwork can store only one activation at a time - if the Princess tries to activate the artwork's Charm while a previous activation is waiting, she loses the cost of activation without result.

#### **Upgrade: Duplicated**

Requires Aware

Copies of the Princess' magical works may now carry a small portion of the original's enchantment. If Living Image was cast with Aware, the Princess may enchant a copy of the artwork to hold a single activation of the artwork's Charm, as an extended action with the same dice pool and threshold as she used when making the original, though each roll takes only 1 minute instead of 30. This does not count as a new activation of Living Image. The copy's Charm activates at the first moment a suitable target appears, as if the copy were the original artwork. The Princess may thus enchant a number of copies up to her Inner Light for each artwork.

Moreover, the Princess need not touch, or even see, a copy to enchant it. If the copy is not within the Princess' sight, her roll to enchant it is modified by her Intimacy to it.

### **Reflected Light (Govern •)**

Action: Permanent

The Princess gains the benefits of the Unseen Sense merit for any use of a supernatural ability within 10 x Inner Light yards. The simple presence of a being with magical powers does not register to her new sense, but she will notice any power such beings use.

The Princess may roll Wits + Occult reflexively on sensing a power in use, and may apply an Invocation to this roll. If it springs from the Light, success identifies it correctly. For powers not of the Light, though, success only identifies the type of being who used it, and only as similar to powers she has sensed before. (For example, all uses of vampire Disciplines detect as "vampire powers", and a Princess can tell they aren't the powers Darklings get; but the sense won't tell her she faces a vampire, unless she has sensed a vampire's powers before and identified the vampire as such.) If the character using the power resists supernatural detection, the Princess' Wits + Occult roll takes any penalty the rules for that character impose; if he can contest supernatural detection, she must beat his successes on her Wits + Occult roll to notice his use of power.

#### **Upgrade: Sensitive**

Double the range of the Princess' Unseen Sense, to 20 x Inner Light yards.

#### **Upgrade: Light-attuned (Tempesta •)**

The Princess recognizes individual powers springing directly from the Light; when she rolls to identify a Charm, she learns the exact Charm along with any Upgrades and which Invocation, if any, was applied.

#### **Upgrade: Dark-attuned (Tempesta •)**

The Princess recognizes individual powers springing directly from the Darkness; when she rolls to identify an Umbra or Caligo, she learns the specific power, not just "power from the Darkness". If the Storyteller rules that other supernatural entities draw powers from the Darkness; the Princess can identify any such powers.

### **Study Inheritance (Govern •)**

Action: Extended, Inner Light + Intelligence (5 minutes/roll, threshold = Bequest's Merit rating)

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

The mysteries of the Kingdom's relics can be unveiled. The Princess uses this Charm on a transformed Bequest; when she reaches the threshold, she discovers what Charm the Bequest is based on, the cost of activating it, whether it carries a pool of Wisps, and the duty one must carry out to refill the pool.

### **Charge (Govern • •)**

Action: Instant, Stamina + Empathy

Cost: none

Duration: instant

By touching someone (or something) with a pool of Wisps, the Princess transfers some of her own Wisps to the other pool. She gives 1 Wisp for each success, up to her normal Wisps/turn limit. She cannot give more Wisps than the target can hold.

#### **Upgrade: Accepted**

The Princess may take Wisps from others, if they are willing to give them. If the target consents, the Princess takes 1 Wisp for each success, up to her normal Wisps/turn limit. She may tap a Bequest with a pool of Wisps, if it is transformed.

#### **Upgrade: Distant**

The Princess can send Wisps to any person she can see; she need not touch them. With Accepted, she can take Wisps from those she can see as well. Bequests can't be affected from a distance – she still must touch them to use Charge on them.

#### **Upgrade: Anonymous**

Requires Distant

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on people who are not present, applying the Intimacy modifier.

#### **Upgrade: Stolen (Lacrima • •)**

Requires Accepted

Cost: Belief 4 sin

The Princess can take Wisps from the unconsenting. Subtract the target's Resolve from the activation roll. Moreover, unless she applies Distant or Anonymous, the Princess must already have a hand on her target; if she needs an instant action to touch him, the Charm does not work.

#### **Upgrade: In Memoriam (Lacrima • •)**

The Princess can convert between Wisps and Ghostly Essence at a 2:1 ratio, in either direction, she may also use Charge and all it's Upgrades on a Ghost. Princesses cannot store Essence - she must give converted Wisps to a ghost, and transform any Essence recieved into Wisps.

### **Gold Abhors Ebon (Govern • •)**

Action: Extended, Presence + Occult

The force of the Princess' will can cast out possessing or haunting entities – such as ghosts, spirits or demons – or cleanse the land of Taint . She may attempt an abjuration or exorcism (see the World of Darkness core book, pp. 213-214) using her magic instead of mortal methods, and on targets beside Ghosts. If the target forces her to lose Willpower, she instead loses Wisps on a 1-to-1 basis.

In addition, the following dice bonuses and penalties apply, based on the entity:

- +3: The entity was never human, and is anathema to reality (Some creatures of the Darkness)
- +2: You know the entity's real name.
- +1: The entity was never human, but is not anathema to reality; or was human, but thinks nothing like a human (Darkened, Some creatures of the Darkness, some Amonajaku)
- +1: The Princess is cleansing a Tainted Place
- 0: The entity was once human, and still thinks in somewhat human ways (some Amonajaku)
- -2: The entity is human, and thinks like a human (Princesses)

### **Upgrade: Brilliant**

During an abjuration or exorcism, the Princess may spend 1 Wisp to add her Inner Light as a bonus to 1 roll.

### **Upgrade: Friendly (Legno •)**

The Princess may use abjuration to befriend the entities subject to it, instead of banishing them. Failure and dramatic failure have the same effect as a normal abjuration. On a success, the entity takes a penalty of the Princess' Legno on any attempt to harm her or anyone under her declared protection, and she adds her Legno to any attempt to persuade the entity or understand it, until the following day. On an exceptional success, the entity cannot harm her or her friends at all until the following day, and she doubles the bonus on interactions with it.

### **Upgrade: Caustic (Tempesta •)**

During an abjuration or exorcism, the Princess may take resistant damage to add bonuses. 1 bashing damage gives +1 to one roll; 1 lethal damage gives +3 to 1 roll, or +1 to all rolls of an exorcism.

## **Light Over All (Govern ••)**

Action: Instant and contested, Presence + Intimidation vs. Resolve + supernatural advantage

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Invoking the Light's authority, the Princess drives off a being of the Darkness. This Charm is used on a character with the Darkened template. If the Princess wins the contest, he becomes irrationally afraid of her for the duration; treat this as the Phobia derangement.

Upgrade: Searing

Cost: +1 Wisp

If the Princess wins the contest, the target is profoundly shaken; her presence induces the Hysteria derangement.

### **Upgrade: Ruling**

Inhuman monsters must acknowledge the Princess' authority. She may use the Charm on non-human supernatural beings, such as ghosts and spirits.

### **Upgrade: Majestic**

Requires Ruling

Cost: +1 Willpower

All those with power bow to the Light. The Princess may use the Charm on humans with supernatural powers that aren't derived from the Light. This includes anyone with a major or minor template, and anyone with powers they would lose if they gained a template, except for Beacons, Sworn and Hopeful.

### **Upgrade: Fearsome (Lacrima ••)**

Cost: + Belief 6 sin

The Queen of Tears claims the right to rule all the world, mortals, Nobles and supernaturals alike. The Princess may use the Charm on humans without supernatural powers, and on Beacons, Sworn and other Princesses.

## **Seed of Light (Govern ••)**

Action: Extended, Dexterity + Expression ((20 - Willpower) minutes/roll, threshold = 3 \* seeds made)

Cost: 1 Willpower, 1+ Wisps (special)

The Light exists within the world, within the hearts of all men. However, with will and effort, the Hopeful may calcify Wisps into gem-sized, imperishable Seeds, proof against the ravages of chance. Each Wisp spent on the Charm forms a separate Seed. The Princess does not have to decide how many Seeds to calcify beforehand; after spending the Willpower, she starts to concentrate on her pool of Wisps. Each

three successes accumulated allows the Princess to transform one Wisp into a Seed, and she may roll a number of times equal to her dice pool, or until she runs out of Wisps. Extra successes are wasted

The shape of a Seed is a profound expression of its creator's soul, and is heavily influenced by the Invocation (if any) applied in its making. (Applying Legno, for instance, often creates Seeds in the form of living, unchanging flowers - roses, in particular.) Any character examining a Seed, if they make a Wits + Occult roll, can recognize a Seed as coming from the same hand as one they've seen before.

To recover the Wisp from a Seed, a character must bring it into contact with their phylactery, and spend a minute in concentration. No actions may be performed while doing this, and the character is at -3 to all Wits-based rolls, so deep is their focus. The Seed glows, and becomes incohesive, melting into their soul, and adding the Wisp to their pool. If the character's Wisp pool is full, the Seed vaporizes and releases the Wisp into the air, where it dissipates.

As tiny fragments of solidified Light, Seeds are incredibly alluring to creatures of the Darkness. Any character with the Darkened template can consume Seeds to regain Willpower, gaining one point of Willpower per Seed eaten. The Darkened can smell out Seeds kept in quantity - they gain a cumulative +1 bonus to all Perception rolls to notice a person carrying Seeds for each Seed above the carrier's Composure, and tend to aim first at opponents carrying the most Seeds. Moreover, any location where large numbers of Seeds are stored will tend, by seemingly random chance, to attract more Darkspawn to it, drawn by their hunger. For this reason, Alhambran outposts, where they store their misbegotten gains, tend to either be very heavily protected, or to try to move them back to their rain-soaked city as fast as possible. And for the same reason, servants of the Queen of Storms have been known to use captured Seeds as Darkspawn bait.

#### **Upgrade: Bereaved (Lacrima • • •)**

The production of Seeds by Alhambrans occurs on an almost industrial scale... or, at least, so they would wish. Nevertheless, in their raids on the Rebellious Provinces, they have learned secrets of their construction. Reduce the time per roll to (10-Willpower) minutes; if this reduces the time needed to 0, the character may roll once per turn.

As a side effect of applying this Upgrade, the character may remove the unique traces of their identity from the Seeds they make. Instead, the Seed forms as one of the seals of the Kingdom, the crown of the Queen of Tears prominent on it. The production of such a Seed is frequently used as a test of identity by an Alhambran outpost sent a new Noble, and documents and packages sent between groups are sealed with wax imprinted with this mark. This leaves unmistakable magical traces, which a character with Lacrima 1 or higher, or the ability to see auras, can detect with a Wits + Occult roll, making forging the seal harder.

#### **Upgrade: Militant (Tempesta 2 or Fuoco • • •)**

One cannot simply wait for the Light to diffuse into one's soul! All of existence is a war against the Darkness, and no soldier of the Seraphic General should be caught without her arms! When creating the Seed, the Noble may choose to make it release its energy quickly. If Tempesta was applied, the Wisp can be recovered from the Seed as a reflexive action, at a cost of 1 resistant lethal damage, with no more than skin contact with the Seed. There is no limit to how many Seeds can be tapped in this way per round, beyond the limits of one's well-being.

The followers of the Queen of Swords are less rash, but no less aware of the dangers of the world. By applying Fuoco, they create Seeds that release their Wisp as an instant action, and inflict 1 resistant bashing damage when released. A Princess can learn either the Fuoco or the Tempesta version of this upgrade, but not both.

#### **Light's Riposte (Govern • • , Fuoco •)**

Action: Reflexive and resisted, Wits + Occult - target's Stamina

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

Those who cast hostile magics at the Princess shall suffer for their temerity. When she is the target of a supernatural effect that she recognizes as such, she may activate the Charm. For each success rolled, the magic's user takes 1 bashing damage.

### **Upgrade: Lethal (Fuoco • •)**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess' rebuke grows harsher; for each success rolled, the target takes 1 lethal damage.

### **Animal Companion (Govern • • •)**

Action: Extended, Inner Light + Presence (10 minutes/roll, threshold = 3x Dreamlander's Inner Light)

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: indefinite

To escape the Dreamlands for good, one must either be reborn, or bind oneself to one of the Hopeful as a Shikigami; but some Princesses are able to grant Dreamlanders temporary leave from their beautiful prison. A Princess with this Charm travels to the Dreamlands and brings a willing Dreamlander back to the threshold of waking, where it can be activated - a task quite similar to binding one's Shikigami, though the Charm does not require a vessel (or allow for one).

Dramatic Failure: The Princess wakes without bringing the Dreamlander with her; she cannot use the Charm on him again.

Failure: The Princess makes no progress. If she stops rolling before reaching the threshold number, she wakes without bringing the Dreamlander with her.

Success: The Princess makes progress. When she reaches the threshold number, she wakes, and brings the Dreamlander with her in an immaterial state. The Dreamlander remains in this state until the Princess next sleeps; at that point he returns to the Dreamlands, unless he spends a Wisp to extend his stay for another day.

Exceptional Success: The Princess makes great progress. The Dreamlander's stay in the waking world is prolonged; he need not spend Wisps to remain for the Princess' Presence in days.

When summoned to waking life by this Charm, Dreamlanders' powers are somewhat limited. They exist in Twilight, invisible and inaudible to everyone except their summoner, other beings in Twilight, and people who can see thoughts or emotions; and none of their Charms (if they have any) will work, unless they affect the mind or emotions. They do, however, gain a peculiar ability to "possess" things, animals or people in the waking world. To use it a Dreamlander spends 1 Wisp as an instant action, and rolls Presence + Wits - the target's Resolve (if it has any).

Dramatic Failure: The Dreamlander fails, and can never try to influence the target again.

Failure: The Dreamlander cannot influence the target during the current scene.

Success: The Dreamlander links himself to the target until the end of the current scene. When the target is an object, the Dreamlander can animate it, moving its internal mechanisms (though not the object as a whole); he rolls the Attribute and Skill appropriate for the object's use to animate it. When an animal or person is the target, the Dreamlander can't control their actions, but he can make suggestions which work as subconscious influences; these should be resolved as contested Animal Ken or Persuasion rolls. The Dreamlander can also guide the target's actions, using the teamwork rules.

However, every suggestion the Dreamlander makes is detectable as a supernatural influence on the target's mind, to any being with an ability to notice such things; and the ability does not work at all on anyone who can perceive the Dreamlander directly.

Exceptional Success: The Dreamlander links himself to the target until the Princess who summoned him next sleeps.

A Dreamlander cannot link himself to more than half Inner Light targets at a time; round up.

Upgrade: Vesseled

Cost: +1 Willpower

The Princess can bind Dreamlanders into material vessels, turning them into temporary Shikigami. The modifiers to bind Shikigami for a vessel's Size and shape apply to the Charm's activation roll.

The Dreamlander does not get the ability to possess things; cannot leave it's body without returning to the Dreamlands.

The Princess may also turn a Dreamlander into a permanent Shikigami, either for another Princess or for a Nation. For this to work the Princess to be bound, or a Princess belonging to the Nation, must travel with her to the Dreamlands and back with the Dreamlander to the threshold of waking. (Naturally, if a Princess wishes to bind a Shikigami for her own Nation, she may take both of the roles.)

### **Bequeath (Govern . . .)**

Requires: Study Inheritance

Action: Extended, Inner Light + Crafts (10 minutes/roll, threshold = 3x Bequest's Merit rating)

Cost: 1 Wisp/roll, 1 Willpower dot

Duration: permanent

The Princess binds the form of a Charm into a physical vessel, creating a new Bequest. Acquiring a Charm's form is a quest through her Crawlspace (for a Charm the Princess knows) or the Dreamlands (for one she doesn't). When she has found the form in the Dreamlands, and has a suitable vessel with her sleeping body, she carries the form into her Crawlspace, and standing at the threshold between wakefulness and dreams begins casting Bequeath.

Bequeath cannot be used by Sworn or Beacons even if it itself is crafted into a Bequest. The production of new tools for the Radiant is limited by the Willpower of it's Nobility.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess wakes without transforming the vessel. She can never make the target Charm into a Bequest.

Failure: The Princess makes no progress.

Success: The Princess makes progress. If she reaches the threshold, the Charm merges with and transforms the vessel, becoming a new Bequest.

Exceptional Success: The Princess makes great progress.

Suggested modifiers: vessel resembles the Charm's form (+1 to +3), vessel significantly unlike the Charm's form (-1 to -3)

#### **Upgrade: Charged**

The new Bequest carries a pool of 10 Wisps, which is initially empty. The Princess must define a duty the Bequest's owner can fulfill to fill its pool. Note that this adds a dot to the Bequest's Merit rating, raising the threshold.

#### **Upgrade: Empowered (Specchio . . .)**

When creating a Bequest a Chosen can embed a gem created by Enduring Beauty as a source of power. If she does so the Bequest has an equipment bonus to its activation roll equal to the Resources value of the gem she used. She may trade two points of the equipment bonus to allow the Bequest to generate 1 Wisp per day into it's own pool. The Charm Study Inheritance will reveal the details of a Bequest's Empowerment but anyone with experience of Bequests will have little trouble figuring it out.

By pressing an Empowered Bequest to the forehead of the gem's original owner, the owner's beauty may be restored; doing this destroys the Bequest beyond repair.

The question that haunts many Nobles is whether using such tools is an endorsement of their creation. Knowingly using an Empowered Bequest, unless the Princess has reason to believe the Gem at its heart was created consensually, is a Belief 7 compromise.

### **Ofuda (Govern . . .)**

Action: 10 minutes of full concentration, Presence + Crafts

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess imbues an object with the power to repel a type of supernatural beings. She chooses the type of being repelled when casting Ofuda. As long as the ward lasts, any being of that type must roll Resolve + Composure - the activation successes to come nearer than 2x her Inner Light in yards to the imbued object, and any being of that type who is that close when she uses the Charm must make the same roll or leave the area by the most direct route. Any being failing this roll who is trapped within the ward takes a penalty of the activation successes on all his actions. If the imbued object is destroyed or moved more than ten feet, the Charm ends.

If there is already an Ofuda in place the Princess may cast additional invocations of this Charm into the same object; if she does so the Successes on the original invocation apply for every protection.

**Upgrade: Exemption**

The Princess may allow a number of trusted individuals, up to her Inner Light, to bypass her protections. Alternately, by adding Commonalty to the roll she may allow a social group to enter unbarred. The Princess may change who is permitted and who is not after the Ofuda is created by casting Ofuda again while touching the Imbued Item. This will not change the strength of the defences.

**Upgrade: Sanctuary**

The Princess may intertwine an Ofuda with Sanctified ground. This both extends its range to cover the entire area, as measured by Palace Size (or equivalent) and extends the duration until the ground is no longer Sanctified or until the imbued object is destroyed.

An Ofuda invoked with Sanctuary must be built into the physical structure of the Sanctified ground it protects, even if only by nailing it to the wall. If it is removed from the Sanctified ground the Charm ends.

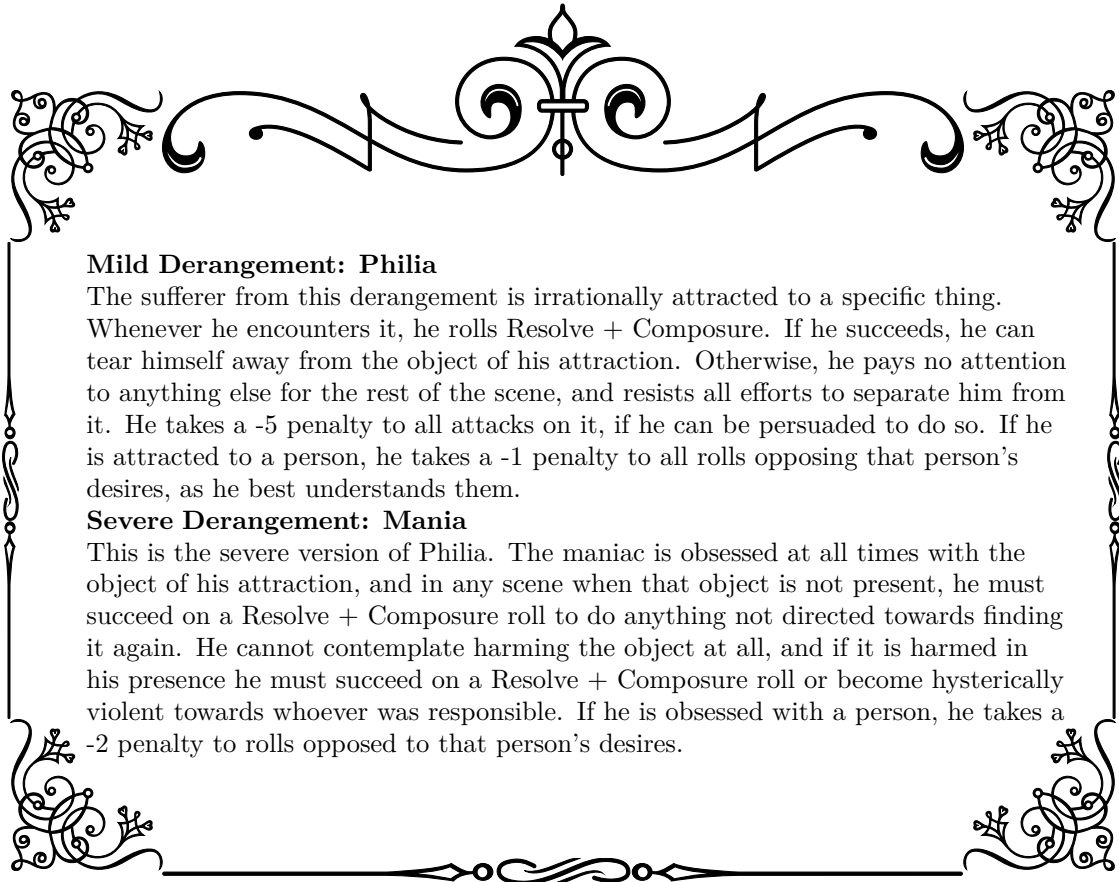
**Upgrade: Lasting (Legno 2+)**

Stacks, up to 4; Cost: +1-4 Wisps; Duration: 1/2/4/8 x Inner Light hours

The Ofuda wards the area for a long time. The first purchase of this upgrade extends the Charm's duration to the Princess' Inner Light in hours, if she spends 1 more Wisp. Each subsequent purchase allows spending 1 more Wisp to double the duration. The Princess may purchase the upgrade up to her Legno - 1 times.



## Spirit's Friend (Govern . . . , Legno . . )



Requires: Light over All

Action: Instant and contested, Manipulation + Persuasion vs. Resolve + supernatural advantage

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Spirits and ghosts are dangerous, but they need not be hostile. The Princess uses this Charm on a non-human supernatural being, that is not anathema to reality. If she wins the contest, the target is irrationally attracted to her for the duration; treat this as the Philia derangement (see sidebar.)

### **Upgrade: Passionate**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The obsession dominates the target's mind while it lasts; treat this as the Mania derangement.

### **Upgrade: Majestic**

Cost: +1 Willpower

Everyone with power is fascinated by the Light within the Princess. She may use the Charm on humans with supernatural powers that aren't derived from the Light. This includes anyone with a major or minor template, and anyone with powers they would lose if they gained a template, except for Beacons, Sworn and Hopeful, and the Darkened.

## Capitulation (Govern . . . , Lacrima . . )

Requires: Charge

Action: Instant and resisted, Resolve + Politics - target's Resolve

Cost: Belief 4 sin

Duration: instant

All humanity ultimately owes allegiance to the Kingdom-which-is-Alhambra. Though they may not follow their oaths, it is still possible to extract the taxes rightfully owed. The Princess can take Willpower points from a human target, converting them into Wisps for herself. For each success rolled, the target loses 1 Willpower point, and the Princess gains 1 Wisp, up to her normal Wisps/turn limit. The Charm requires that the Princess have a hand already on the target; if she needs an instant action to touch him, the Charm fails.

As an alternative, by engaging someone socially for an extended time, the Princess may assess the tax more efficiently and cause less distress. After at least fifteen minutes of uninterrupted conversation, during which she touches her target at least once, she makes the activation roll. If she succeeds, the target loses a single point of Willpower, and the Princess gains 1 Wisp for each success, up to a maximum of her Lacrima.

#### **Upgrade: Anonymous**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on people without touching them, applying the Intimacy modifier. If the target cannot speak to her, she may only use the fast version of the Charm on him.

#### **Upgrade: Property (Lacrima • • •)**

The Princess may take Wisps from a place. She subtracts the total Taint of her current location, instead of a Resolve Attribute, from the activation roll. For each Wisp she takes, the Storyteller rolls 1 die. If any successes come up, the Princess suffers an immediate Haunting with +2 to her Sensitivity roll, and for each success the local area gains 1 dot of Taint, with the place she stands as the focus of the Tainted area. If she applies Anonymous, the Princess may take Wisps from a distant place through an Intimate connection; she still suffers the Haunting, though.

The slow version of the Charm requires fifteen minutes of meticulous studying of the area the Princess intends to tax, and the maximum Wisps gained from it is her Lacrima. The Storyteller rolls 1 die for each Wisp as before, but the area gains just 1 dot of Taint if the roll succeeds, not 1 Taint for each success. The Princess may apply Anonymous to target areas through an Intimate connection, without any restriction.

#### **Upgrade: with Penalties (Lacrima • • • •)**

Cost: Belief 3 sin

The Princess may continue to drain Wisps from someone with 0 Willpower points left. If she succeeds, the target loses a Willpower dot, and she gains Wisps equal to his new Willpower score. Willpower dots lost to the Charm return at a rate of 1 per lunar month, if Capitation is not used on the target during that time. A person reduced to 0 Willpower dots is wholly passive, incapable of the simplest action; if not force-fed, he dies of thirst or starvation. Permitting someone to die this way is murder, under both Belief and Alhambra's legal code, and requires a degeneration check.

#### **Purgation (Govern • • •, Tempesta • • • •)**

Action: Extended, Resolve + Occult (5 minutes/roll, threshold: Severity of the closest Taint Focus)

Cost: 1 resistant Lethal damage, 2 Wisps

Duration: permanent

The Princess invokes the power of the Queen of Storms to scour away the Darkness with blood. To use Purgation, the character cuts herself and drips blood from the cut onto a Tainted area. As she continues to invoke Purgation the blood writhes and boils, channelling the endless fury of the Queen of Storms. When she reaches the Threshold the nearest Focus immediately catches alight with green fire. This destroys all the Curses associated with that focus.

The green fire that is created by this Charm is mostly mundane. It spreads or dies like an ordinary fire, it does however burn in both the Tainted Place and the Dark World beneath it. The fire created by Purgation has the heat of a Bunsen burner, but against creatures of the Dark or the physical structure of the Tainted place it has the heat of a chemical fire. The initial Size of the flame based on the Size

of the focus. It only lasts one turn unless something other than the focus catches alight. If the fire does spread, and it reaches the border of the Tainted place, any flames that cross the border will be completely mundane orange fire.

If the Princess is interrupted she must begin the Charm from scratch; her spilt blood bubbles and boils, evaporating in seconds.

### **Safety in Mortality (Govern • • •)**

Action: Full turn, Resolve + Intimidation

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene, special

A Princess is as much a being of mortality as she is of the Light. Just as the Transformation allows her to switch between these worlds she may push these changes outwards, creating a safe space through which magic cannot enter. The Charm is used on an enclosed space, such as a building or a fenced park - if the Princess needs to protect an area that isn't enclosed, she must mark its border somehow, by (for instance) drawing a chalk line or throwing down a rope. The area must not extend more than (Inner Light x 20) yards in any direction.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess makes herself vulnerable to others' magic. Any supernatural power that is normally resisted, when used on her, gets a +1 bonus on its activation roll for 1 day.

Failure: The area gains no protection.

Success: Whenever anyone outside the protected area attempts to use a supernatural power that would affect the area or someone inside it, he takes a penalty on the activation roll equal to the Charm's activation successes.

Exceptional Success: The Charm's protection lasts for a full day.

If the enclosed space is Sanctified ground, the Charm lasts until the area is no longer Sanctified.

### **Upgrade: All or Nothing**

When someone attempts to use magic that enters the enclosure they must score more successes than the Noble got when invoking Safety in Mortality. If they do their powers is unaffected, otherwise it is nullified entirely.

### **Resting Place (Govern • • • , Lacrima • • •)**

Action: Full turn, Presence + Occult

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: Inner Light in days

With access to both a ghost and any object a Raven can bind a new anchor for the ghost. This is temporary and only with great and constant effort can a Princess keep a loved one on this plane, more commonly it is used by the Followers of Tears to position their ghostly retainers where they can be of greatest service to the Last Empress.

It should be noted that while ghosts can normally teleport to an anchor, the defences around Alhambra prevent them from crossing the boundary of the fortress city.

Dramatic Failure: The Ghost feels uncomfortable around both the Princess and the desired anchor for the rest of the day. Failure: Nothing happens. Success: The ghost is bound to the anchor for a number of days equal to the Princess' Inner Light. Exceptional Success: In addition to the usual results, the ghost gains a bonus to manifesting in the presence of the anchor equal to the Princess' Lacrima.

### Catch a Falling Star (Govern ••••)

Duration of Suspension				
Successes	At will	Improbable	Infrequent	Common
1	10 minutes	30 minutes	1 hour	1 day
2	30 minutes	1 hour	1 day	2 days
3	1 hour	1 day	2 days	4 days
4	1 day	2 days	4 days	6 days
5	2 days	4 days	6 days	8 days
Each success beyond 5 adds 2 more days to the duration.				

Action: Instant, Inner Light + Wits

Cost: 1 Wisp

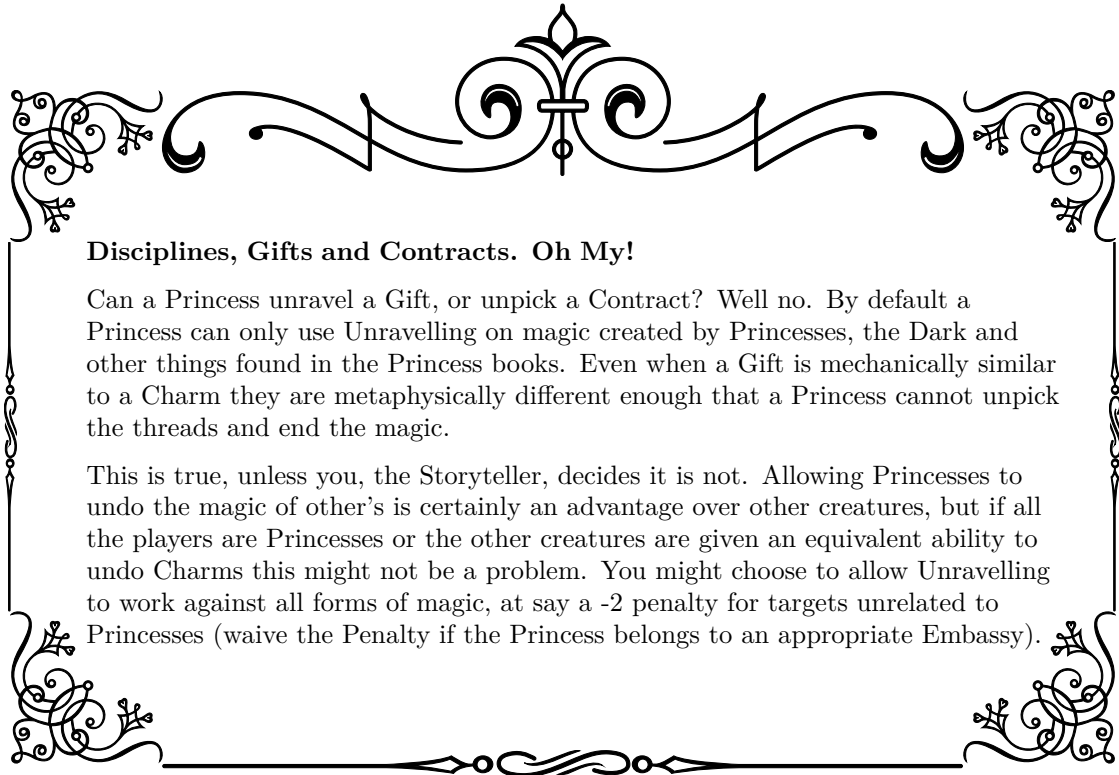
Duration: varies

The Princess delays a Charm's effects. She must touch the intended target, then use another Charm on him; the second Charm does not take effect immediately, remaining suspended for a time depending on her successes. She may choose to release the delayed Charm, allowing it to take effect, as an instant action at any time; if she doesn't release it when this Charm expires, the delayed Charm dissipates without effect. Alternately, instead of releasing the delayed Charm herself, the Princess may set a condition that, if met, releases it automatically, to lengthen the time that Charm remains suspended; the more likely the condition is to occur, the longer the suspension lasts.

The Princess must tell the target what will happen when the suspended Charm takes effect, and if she sets a condition, she must tell the target what it is; but she can be as cryptic ("When all eyes turn toward you, you'll find the strength to carry on") or as direct ("Hey, jackass! Try stealing someone's purse again, and you're going to get set on fire!") as she wishes. She can keep up to her Inner Light in Charms suspended at once – once she reaches that limit, she must release a Charm before she may use this Charm again.

### Unweaving (Govern ••••)

Action: Instant or Extended, Dexterity + Occult (5 minutes/roll, Threshold = Special )



Cost 2 Wisps

To unravel magical defences, to unpick a curse upon a beloved little sister, to tear apart a hostile Charm flying at you. There are many reasons why a Princess might need to unweave the Charms and magic of another. This Charm allows her to do so. The Princess may choose to Invoke this Charm as an Instant or as an Extended action depending on the difficulty of the task ahead. To unweave the target Magic she must accumulate a number of Successes equal to the Successes rolled to cast the magic. For powers that have no roll the Storyteller should substitute in a suitable alternative. Unrolled Charms have a target equal to the higher of the caster's Inner Light and any applied Invocation.

Unweaving can only be used against "magic power" abilities with a duration that lasts longer than a Turn. Innate abilities such as Transformation or Hauntings, are unaffected.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess gets her magic into a horrible tangle, and is at -2 to perform Unweaving for the rest of the scene. **Failure:** The Princess makes no progress.

**Success:** Progress is made, when enough Successes are reached the target magic fall apart.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to making great Progress, the Princess also learns some detail about the magic's origin, or why this thing was enchanted.

**Suggested Modifiers:** The target magic is cast on a human (including Sworn and Princesses) (+2); The target magic is cast on something other than a living being (-2); the target magic is a Charm (+1), the target magic is a Charm and the Princess knows a Charm from the same family (+2), the target magic is a Charm and the Princess knows it (+3); the Princess applies an emotionally appropriate Invocation, such as Feugo to unpick magic that turns love to loathing or Acqua to remove a curse of ignorance (+2), the Princess applies an emotionally inappropriate Invocation (-2), the Princess applies an elementally appropriate Invocation, such as Acqua to extinguish a magical fire (+2), the Princess applies an elementally inappropriate Invocation (-2).

**Accept Fealty (Govern . . . . , Invocation . . . .)**

Action: Extended, Presence + Persuasion (10 minutes/roll, threshold = target's Willpower)

Cost: 1 Wisp/roll, 1 Willpower dot.

Duration: permanent

With this ceremony, the Princess swears a mortal into the service of the Queen she follows. When she reaches the threshold, the target becomes one of the Sworn (and must buy the Sworn Merit.) The target must understand what he is doing, and do it voluntarily; on an unknowing or unwilling target, the Charm fails. Each Queen has a different version of this Charm, and a Princess can learn and use only the one for her own Queen.

### **I am Become Light (Govern . . . . ., Fuoco . . . . .)**

Action: Instant, Resolve + Intimidation

Cost: 3 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 scene

A Blazing crimson light shines forth from the Princess' heart, glowing through her body and Regalia. She may walk among things not of the light, and know that they are the ones at the disadvantage.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess' phylactery shatters, and she reverts to mundane form. The normal procedures for obtaining a new phylactery must be followed.

Failure: White light scintillates from the Princess' clothes, but there is no further effect.

Success: The Princess goes through a second transformation, her normal Regalia replaced with ones of even greater purity and a golden light shines out from her heart. The shift releases a burst of the Light that burns away magics alien to it; all supernatural powers not of the Light with fewer successes than the Princess' roll within a radius of Inner Light + successes yards immediately end, if the successes for their activation were less than her successes. Powers that did not require activation remain intact. Further, for the duration, the area within a radius of Inner Light + successes yards of her person is bathed in true sunlight. In this area all rolls to activate powers not of the light take a penalty equal to the Princesses' activation successes and all creatures of the Dark must roll Resolve + Composure or flee. If they can reach a Tainted Place within a scene they must flee to the Dark World.

Exceptional Success: The extra successes are their own reward.

## **Inspire**

The Inspire Charm lifts people's hearts, sparks their passions, and exhorts them to action. Only Troubadours have affinity for it.

### **Beginner's Luck (Inspire •)**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Dexterity

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing badly. When the Princess assists in an instant teamwork action, she may activate this Charm instead of rolling the relevant dice pool. Each success on the activation roll becomes a bonus die for the primary actor. The Princess can also use Beginner's Luck for 1 roll in an extended teamwork action. Any bonuses or penalties on the relevant dice pool also apply to the activation roll, and a dramatic failure penalizes the primary actor's roll as usual.

#### **Upgrade: Enduring**

Cost: +1 Wisp

When assisting in an extended teamwork action, all the Princess' rolls are Intelligence + Dexterity instead of the relevant dice pool. **Upgrade: Guided**

Do not apply penalties on the dice pool to the activation roll. **Upgrade: Twinned**

Cost: +1 Wisp

When the Princess activates the Charm, she also rolls the relevant dice pool, and adds successes from both that roll and the Charm. The pools are separate; any bonuses and penalties apply to both.

### **Hear Me, O Muse (Inspire •)**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Expression

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess calls on the Light for inspiration. Each activation success grants a +1 bonus to a mundane action that creates something new. Eligible actions include (under Crafts) making a work of art; (Expression) writing a poem or story, or acting a part in a drama; (Subterfuge) creating a disguise; and (Socialize) organizing a big social event. If the action in question is extended, the bonus applies to all rolls until the task is complete, or the Princess turns her attention to something else; she loses the bonus if she stops the job partway, and doesn't get it back if she resumes it.

#### **Upgrade: Cooperative**

Cost: +1 Wisp

When others assist the Princess (she is primary in a teamwork action) they gain the same bonus on their rolls as she does.

### **Fire on the Mountain (Inspire •)**

A musical instrument (or a microphone) becomes part of the Princess' Regalia, on which she plays beautiful, captivating music. The instrument is of excellent make, giving the 9-again quality to mundane Expression rolls to play it, and the Princess may apply an Invocation to increase this bonus. There are variations of this Charm built on singing, dancing, or acting; these give Regalia appropriate to the art they're based on (a beautiful pair of dancing shoes, a choker for a classical singer or actor, a handheld microphone for a pop singer), add 9-again to Expression rolls within that art, and allow the Princess to apply an Invocation to them.

#### **Upgrade: Quality**

Stacks, up to 3

The Princess' musical instrument becomes superlative. Each time she takes this upgrade, the instrument confers a +1 equipment bonus to mundane Expression rolls. Upgrade: Magical

The Princess weaves her magic into her chosen art. She can add her instrument's equipment bonus to her Charms to offset a Commonalty penalty, if she incorporates playing the instrument into the Charm activation. The instrument's bonus will not reduce the Commonalty penalty to less than -0; if a Charm doesn't take the Commonalty modifier, the instrument provides no benefit.

#### **Upgrade: Written (Acqua ••)**

The Princess can compose new music for her chosen instrument as skillfully as she plays it. While transformed, she adds her instrument's equipment bonus to Expression rolls to compose music for it, and she may apply Acqua to those rolls.

#### **Upgrade: Entrancing (Fuoco ••)**

The Princess' music sways the emotions of all who hear it; she can use this to influence what they do. When she applies Fuoco to a roll to play her instrument, she may turn her successes on the roll into bonus dice for her next Persuasion attempt on people in the audience, if she does it before the current scene ends. The Princess can get the bonus from her performance any number of times during the scene, but only once for persuading any specific person. If she makes a speech, she adds the bonus to her Persuasion roll against the whole audience, losing the chance to persuade the members personally.

#### **Upgrade: Awesome (Specchio ••)**

The Princess' performance leaves all who hear it cowed by her manifest superiority, and ready to obey her. When she applies Specchio to a roll to play her instrument, she may turn her successes on the roll into bonus dice for her next Intimidation attempt on people in the audience, if she does it before the current scene ends. The Princess can get the bonus from her performance any number of times during the scene, but only once for intimidating any specific person.

## Razzle Dazzle (Inspire •)

Action: Permanent

When the Princess transforms, she has a honeyed tongue; people readily listen to anything she chooses to say. She gets the 9-again quality on mundane Persuasion rolls within one of her specialties (fixed when she takes the Charm) and she may apply an Invocation to those rolls.

Upgrade: Versatile

Stacks, up to 2

The range of the Princess' persuasive talents expands. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for rolls covered by any of the added specialties. **Upgrade: Skeptical (Acqua ••)**

The Princess keeps her head when others try to confuse her. When she is the target of fast-talk she may apply Acqua as a penalty to the fast-talker's roll. **Upgrade: Blathering (Aria ••)**

The Princess can talk a mile a minute, and leave another person's mind spinning in bewilderment. When she attempts fast-talk she may spend 1 Wisp to impose a penalty on her target's dice pool equal to her Aria. **Upgrade: Preaching (Fuoco ••)**

Crowds respond easily to the Princess' words. When she attempts oratory she may spend 1 Wisp to reduce her audience's dice pool to resist her arguments by her Fuego. **Upgrade: Bargaining (Terra ••)**

The Princess perceives the natural flow of a negotiation, and steers ably past all obstacles to a deal. At the beginning of an extended negotiation she may spend 1 Wisp to reduce the number of successes she needs to reach a deal by her Terra. **Upgrade: Seductive (Specchio ••)**

The Princess has a gift for flirtation, and for tempting people into indiscretion. At the start of a seduction attempt, she may spend 1 Wisp to reduce the number of successes she needs to win the extended contest by her Specchio. The Princess can do this as either seducer or subject.

## Feel So Close (Inspire ••)

Action: Extended and resisted, Manipulation + Empathy - target's Composure (1 minute/roll, threshold = target's Composure)

Cost: 1 Wisp/roll

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess puts on a performance that inspires an emotion of her choice in its hearer. When she reaches the threshold, the target succumbs to the chosen emotion, gaining a +2 bonus to all actions in line with it, and taking a -2 penalty to actions opposed to it. She may continue performing to extend the Charm's duration; each time she reaches a multiple of the threshold, the target feels the chosen emotion for another scene.

If the Princess applies an Invocation to the Charm, the emotion inspired must be appropriate for that Invocation.

## Upgrade: Collective

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group, applying the Commonalty modifier. The member with the highest Composure resists for the group, and the threshold is his Composure.

## Carry On (Inspire ••)

Action: Extended, Presence + Expression, 1 minute/roll, threshold = target's Willpower

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: permanent



The Princess performs for a target who can see or hear her, and her performance bolsters the target's will. On reaching the threshold, the target regains 1 Willpower point. No one can benefit from this more than once a day. The Princess cannot use the Charm on herself.

Upgrade: Collective

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group that can see or hear her, using the Commonalty modifier. The threshold equals the highest Willpower among the group.

### **You Didn't Earn My Love (Inspire • • , Specchio • • • )**

Requires: Razzle Dazzle, Seductive

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Persuasion vs Composure + supernatural advantage

Cost: 1 Wisp

When the Princess attempts to seduce someone she may set a goal for the other person. Along the lines of: Agreeing to go out on a date, a kiss, marriage. The goal set must be related to romance with the Princess using this Charm. It cannot be along the lines of "get humiliated by me", while she may refuse to give the winning kiss until her target does her a favour, the favour cannot be the goal itself.

If the other person meets this goal they regain a point of Willpower, only one point of Willpower may be gained in this way per Princess per day. Just because the target gained a point of Willpower does not mean he is happy with the result. The unnatural Willpower refresh can be completely at odds with the actual emotions.

### **You Must Remember This (Inspire • • , Acqua • )**

Action: Instant and resisted, Intelligence + Composure - target's Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: permanent

The fundamental things apply as time goes by.

Words the Princess speaks long remain in the memory. When she is speaking to the target, or guiding his attempt to learn something, she may use the Charm to help him remember what she's saying; the target makes a memorization roll, adding the activation successes as a bonus. The Princess may use the Charm to help her own memorization rolls, but to do so she must still repeat the facts she's memorizing aloud.

**Upgrade: Collective**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group that can see or hear her, using the Commonalty modifier. The member with the highest Composure resists for the group.

### **Stealing the Wind (Inspire • • , Aria • )**

Action: Instant and resisted, Wits + Empathy - target's Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Bullies, tyrants, even the horrors of the Dark – all these lose their terrors if you can just show them their absurdity. The Princess may use this Charm on a single person within sight.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess frightened of the target, taking a -2 penalty on all actions opposing him for the rest of the scene, and cannot use the Charm on him for a full day.

Failure: The target retains his ability to frighten.

Success: All attempts by the target to inspire fear or awe take a penalty equal to the activation successes. The penalty applies both to mundane use of Intimidation, and to supernatural powers that frighten or overawe, if the target rolls to activate them.

Exceptional Success: The target's attempts to frighten are greatly impeded.

**Upgrade: Collective**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group whose members can see her, applying the Commonalty modifier. The member with the highest Composure resists for the group. If the Charm succeeds, all the members take the penalty; on a dramatic failure, the Princess is penalized when opposing any member of the group.

**Upgrade: Swift (Aria • •)**

The Charm becomes Reflexive; the Princess may use it when a target tries to frighten or overawe, and imposes the penalty on that attempt if she succeeds.

**Queen's Sorrow (Inspire • •, Lacrima • •)**

Action: Instant and contested, Manipulation + Intimidation vs. target's Composure + supernatural advantage

Cost: 1 Wisp, Belief 6 sin

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess speaks to another, and drains his strength of conviction. If she wins the contest, the target cannot spend Willpower to add a bonus to his rolls until the Charm ends. He can still spend Willpower for any other purpose the rules and his abilities allow. If the target gains a Willpower point, he rerolls his Composure + supernatural advantage, and defeats the Charm if he gets more than the activation successes.

**Upgrade: Heavy (Lacrima • • •)**

The target also loses the ability to bolster his Defense or Resistance Attributes by spending Willpower.

**Chariot of Fire (Inspire • • •, Fuoco • •)**

Action: Instant and resisted, Presence + Persuasion - target's Composure

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The will of a person the Princess can see becomes nearly insurmountable. When the target spends a Willpower point to add to a dice pool, the bonus is increased by an additional +2 (to a total of +5, normally), and when the target spends a Willpower point to increase Defense or a Resistance Attribute, increase it by an additional +1 (to a total of +3.) The target can benefit from the Charm once for each success rolled. People affected by this power clearly appear to be surrounded by a burning aura of pure fighting spirit, and onlookers who see it can remember it clearly, but it simply doesn't seem unusual – as if that's what any normal person in a fit of passion looks like.

**Upgrade: Intense**

The target gains a further +1 when spending Willpower, for a total of +6 dice, or +4 to Defense or a Resistance Attribute.

**Upgrade: Rapid**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a distant target, applying the Intimacy modifier.

### **Give Me Love (Inspire • • • , Legno • • )**

Action: Instant, Resolve + Persuasion vs Composure + Supernatural Advantage

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Give me peace on Earth. With their focus on harmony and understanding the Wilds are never entirely comfortable with controlling another's opinions. Rather than making another want peace a Princess of Clubs might use this Charm to prevent violence, allowing her to pursue peace in more traditional ways: with hearts and voices.

This Charm cannot be used if the Princess has attacked anyone or used a combat Charm within the Scene.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess somehow manages to revert the Charm on herself. She cannot attack and suffers -1 Defence from slightly constricting plant life. What's more any enemies in the area know it.

**Failure:** The Charm does not activate.

**Success:** Ghostly flowers appear on the target, vines wrapping around their limbs. If the target attempts to hurt anyone or use a hostile power they immediately grow tight and constricting, blocking the action entirely. Should the target himself be attacked or the subject of a hostile supernatural power (other than this Charm), or should his allies be attacked, then the Charm immediately ends. The Charm also ends immediately if the Princess attacks or uses a hostile Charm on anyone.

**Exceptional Success:** The Princess also gets a flash of insight into why her target wishes to fight. The grants +1 on any social rolls for the rest of the scene.

#### **Upgrade: Collective**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group that can see or hear her, applying the Commonalty modifier. Each member contests the effect independently.

### **Tame the Savage Breast (Inspire • • • , Legno • • )**

Action: Instant and resisted, Presence + Animal Ken - target's Resolve

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: successes in turns

With soft persuasion or a sharp command, the Princess makes a beast heed her.

**Dramatic Failure:** The target animal turns hostile, and will attack the Princess if it can.

**Failure:** The Charm has no effect.

**Success:** The animal carries out one order for each success. Each order may specify a single action, that involves at most one object; "bite that man" and "bring me the keyring" are each one order, "bite those two men" and "bring me the keyring and the gun" are each two orders. Descriptions of things in your orders are limited by the animal's understanding. Finally, no animal will obey a suicidal order, and making a domesticated animal break its training is much more difficult than commanding a wild animal; the Storyteller should impose penalties on the activation roll for such orders. (On the other hand, making a domesticated animal follow its training gives bonuses.)

**Exceptional Success:** After following multiple orders, the animal acquires a habit of obedience. For the next day, any mundane efforts to tame or train it get a +1 bonus, as do further uses of the Charm.

#### **Upgrade: Swarming**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess can give orders to a whole swarm of creatures, if none of them exceed Size 2: insects, small birds, or rats. All the animals in the swarm must belong to the same species.

### **Don't Stop Believing (Inspire ••••)**

Action: Instant and contested, Presence + Persuasion vs. target's Resolve + supernatural advantage  
Cost: 1 Wisp, 1 Willpower  
Duration: 1 day

The target's effective Belief or Morality rises by 1 for each activation success exceeding his, to a maximum of the Princess' own Belief. If the target suffers from derangements that would be removed if his Belief/Morality were raised to this level, those derangements cease to apply until the Charm ends. In addition, any supernaturally induced derangements the target has also cease to apply until the Charm ends.

The target must check for degeneration against his effective Belief/Morality; lost dots come from those granted by Don't Stop Believing, and the Charm ends if all those dots are lost to degeneration. In addition, if the target would gain a derangement due to degeneration while Don't Stop Believing is in effect, he loses all the dots granted instead of gaining the derangement, and the Charm ends. The person affected has to roll Resolve + Composure to commit a sin against his new, higher Morality. The belief and idealism that the Charm inspires feels good, and to willingly abandon that enthusiasm and idealism all over again takes a bit of mental effort.

### **No Choice, No Hope (Inspire ••••, Lacrima •••)**

Requires Queen's Sorrow  
Action: Extended and resisted, Manipulation + Intimidation - target's Resolve (1 minute/roll)  
Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower, Belief 3 sin  
Duration: 1 scene

The Princess' voice acquires the blighting and consuming quality of the void, sapping the wills of those who hear it and bringing them under her sway for a time. For each activation success, the target loses a point of Willpower, feeling drowned in apathy. If the target still has Willpower left when the Princess stops casting, he rolls Wits + Composure at -5 to realize that the despair they felt was not natural. If the target runs out of Willpower during the casting, he becomes very suggestible; until he regains Willpower or the Charm ends, he will carry out any order or suggestion the Princess gives him, though, being without Willpower, he won't do so with any imagination or drive.

On a dramatic failure, the target instantly realizes the Princess is responsible for the moment of despair and reacts with outrage. The Charm immediately ends (though lost Willpower is not restored) and she cannot cast it on that target for a full 24 hours.

#### **Upgrade: Collective (Lacrima ••••)**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group, applying the Commonalty modifier. The member with the highest Resolve resists for the group. On a dramatic failure, all those in the group, and any group they belong to, are immune to the Charm for 24 hours.

### **Consumed With Hate (Inspire ••••, Tempesta •••)**

Action: Extended and resisted, Manipulation + Persuasion - target's Composure (1 minute/roll, threshold = target's Composure)  
Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 resistant lethal damage  
Duration: Tempesta turns

With only a few words, the Princess can cause a person's rage to boil over, driving him uncontrollably to lash out. On reaching the threshold, the target gains +2 on all rolls to inflict violent harm on another, and suffers a -1 penalty to all other rolls. The Charm grants no ability to dictate the object of the target's anger – he goes for whatever, in his mind, is the greatest threat or obstacle to him – so it would be wise to either use the Persuasion skill to influence the target before casting this Charm, or get the hell out of the area very soon after casting.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess goes too far in her rhetoric; the target sees her as a crazy person he needs to get away from. None of the Charm's effects take hold.

Failure: The Princess gets nowhere with inciting the target's rage, but may continue.

Success: The Princess makes progress inciting the target.

Exceptional Success: The Princess makes great progress inciting the target.

#### **Upgrade: Collective (Tempesta ••••)**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group, applying the Commonalty modifier. The member with the highest Composure resists for the group, and your threshold is his Composure.

#### **Upgrade: Maddening**

Cost: +1 Willpower

Duration: Tempesta days

Instead of causing an explosion of fury, the Princess implants a long-lasting mistrust. On reaching the threshold, the target is afflicted with either the Suspicion or Irrationality derangements; if he has Suspicion already, the Princess may upgrade it to full Paranoia. She may continue accumulating successes until the target has both Paranoia and Irrationality, and apply the basic effect as well – each time she reaches a multiple of the threshold, the target feels a further effect. The basic effect wears off in Tempesta turns, but derangements last for Tempesta days.

#### **Jumping Jack Flash (Inspire •••••)**

Action: Instant, Presence + Expression, modified by Commonalty

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: concentration

You were born in a crossfire hurricane. And you howled at your Ma in the drivin' rain. But it's all right now.

The Princess puts on a performance that inspires people to the heights of their abilities – and beyond. Everyone in the group she uses the Charm on adds the activation successes as a bonus to a single roll – the Charm is, essentially, a Teamwork roll that applies to everyone. An individual may benefit from the Charm only once per activation. As long as the Princess continues performing, spending her action for a turn, members of the target group who have not already gained the bonus may apply it.

#### **Whirlwind of Activity (Inspire •••••)**

Requires: Beginner's Luck

Action: Instant, Wits + Manipulation

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: length of an extended action

The Princess brings focus to a group working for a common goal. Activate this Charm before assisting in a teamwork action. For each success, one secondary actor contributes his successes directly to the goal, instead of adding dice to the primary actor's roll. The Princess must be a secondary actor – the Charm does not work if she is alone, directing the team, or not contributing.

#### **Wearing a Heavy Crown (Inspire •••••, Terra •••••)**

Action: Instant, Presence + Persuasion, modified by Commonalty

Cost: 1 Wisp, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 scene

To be the Queen of Hearts' avatar is to become the leader people need, the leader the people may one day deserve. The Princess assumes that role and leads any who will follow to greatness. This Charm is used on members of a social group who are willing to work at the Princess' direction, or towards a goal

that she has set. She can let others come up with plans (what leader doesn't have advisers?) but the final decision of what the members do must rest on her shoulders alone.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess proves herself unworthy of leadership and may not use Terra again for 11 - Belief days.

**Failure:** The Princess cannot claim a crown. The Charm fails.

**Success:** The Princess undergoes a second transformation; a heavy crown appears upon her brow. When members of the target group are working as a team to carry out the Princess' plans, each secondary actor adds dice equal to the number of actors on the team or the Princess' activation successes (whichever is less) to the dice they contribute to the primary actor's roll. (For example, in a team of 3, the 2 secondary actors can contribute up to 3 dice, for a total of 6, beyond the dice from their rolls.) In addition the people become motivated by the Princesses leadership, when they roll Resolve to resist being dissuaded from following the Princess' plan, they may substitute the Princess' Presence instead.

**Exceptional Success:** Everyone blessed by this Charm also gains a free point of Willpower

**Drawback:** The Princess gains 8again on Sensitivity rolls when the victim or the perpetrator is someone blessed by this Charm. In addition, if anyone blessed by this Charm causes her to face a Belief compromise through setting a Bad Example, she rolls at the level of the sin committed, not one level higher.

## Learn

The Learn Charm confers knowledge, and reveals what has been hidden. Only Seekers have affinity for it.

### Keen Observation (Learn •)

Action: Permanent

When the Princess transforms, she becomes keen-eyed, missing no detail when she fixes her attention. She gets the 9-again quality on mundane Investigation rolls within one of her specialties (chosen when she takes the Charm) and may apply an Invocation to those rolls.

Upgrade: Alert

The Princess' keen perception becomes a matter of reflex. Whenever an Invocation applies at no cost, the Princess adds it to her Perception rolls based on sight and hearing. If more than one Invocation applies at no cost, the Princess uses the highest of them. She may also apply an Invocation when listening for a target while blind.

#### Upgrade: Versatile

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess becomes perceptive in more situations. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Investigation rolls covered by any of the added Specialties. **Upgrade: Enigmatic (Acqua ••)**

Mundane riddles and mysteries pose no obstacle to the Princess. When she applies Acqua to rolls to solve enigmas she needs only 15 minutes for each roll, not 1 hour.

### Liberal Artist (Learn •)

Action: Permanent

When the Princess transforms, she remembers her schooling and reading in her favorite field with a crystalline clarity. She gets 9-again on mundane Academics rolls within one of her specialties (fixed when she learns the Charm) and may apply an Invocation to those rolls.

Upgrade: Memorious

The Princess' memory for general facts grows nearly as sharp as her knowledge of her chosen subject. While transformed, she may apply an Invocation to rolls to memorize or remember.

**Upgrade: Versatile**

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess' gift for scholarship extends to more fields. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Academics rolls covered by any of the added Specialties.

**Upgrade: Librarian (Acqua • •)**

The Princess finds what she wants in a library as easily as in her own home. When she applies Acqua to Academics research, each roll takes her half the usual time - 15 minutes for most libraries, and 5 minutes for her personal library (if she has one.)

**Upgrade: Autodidact (Fuoco • •)**

The Princess burns through books and records at great speed, her usual reading speed is multiplied by Fuoco.

**Natural Philosopher (Learn •, Acqua •)**

Action: Permanent

The Light illuminates secrets of the natural world. When the Princess transforms, she gets the 9-again quality on mundane Science rolls within one of her specialties (fixed when she takes this Charm) and may apply an Invocation to those rolls.

**Upgrade: Versatile**

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess' eye teases out knowledge of various kinds. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Science rolls covered by any of the added specialties.

**Passion's Light (Learn •)**

Action: Instant, Wits + Empathy

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: successes in turns

The Princess perceives the emotional state of the people around her as a wash of color around their bodies, their aura.

**Upgrade: Revealing**

The Princess can recognize supernatural beings by their aura's unusual appearance. A Princess' aura, for instance, appears to shed light in her vicinity – things and people near her reflect her current color, in addition to any aura they have themselves.

**Scent Falsehood (Learn •)**

Action: Instant and resisted, Wits + Subterfuge - target's Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess smells a lie as another in her hearing speaks it.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Charm fails, but the Princess believes it has worked, and thus will believe the target implicitly, unless and until he says something she knows is not true.

**Failure:** The Charm fails, but the Princess is aware of the failure.

**Success:** Whenever the target says something he doesn't believe, the Princess perceives the falsehood automatically. The Charm detects only literal untruth – omissions, evasions, equivocations and honest opinions don't register. Factual assertions made in conscious ignorance do register as false.

**Exceptional Success:** The Princess' nose catches subtle misleadings as well as direct falsehood; when the target's statements are true but significantly incomplete, she will know that something has been left unsaid.

**Upgrade: Collective**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group, using the Commonalty modifier. The member with the highest Composure resists for the group. **Upgrade: Unwitting**

When the Princess detects a lie, she rolls Wits + the activation successes on the Charm as a reflexive action. If she succeeds, she gains a hint of the truth the target is concealing; on an exceptional success, she learns exactly what the target knows of the subject of his lie. **Upgrade: Alert (Aria •)**

When the Princess detects a lie, she gains additional insight into the liar's motive for deception. For example, she could smell the difference between a lie told out of envious malice and one told out of fear, or tell the difference between a sleazy propagandist and a dedicated, noble spy. **Upgrade: Guilty (Terra •)**

When the Princess detects a lie, the liar experiences a strong pang of guilt, and finds it far harder to deceive again. He takes a penalty equal to the activation successes on all Subterfuge rolls for the duration. Further lies in the scene do not increase the penalty.

**Upgrade: Righteous (Tempesta •)**

When the Princess detects a lie, she may punish the liar with impunity. If she attacks the liar as her next action, he may not apply Defense to resist the attack.

### **Fishing Expedition (Learn •, Acqua •)**

Action: Instant and resisted, Resolve + Empathy - target's Resolve

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

Dipping a hand into another's thoughts, you draw out a bit of treasure. On touching your target, you learn one fact he knows and wishes to conceal. Which fact you learn is chosen by the Storyteller.

### **Love's Beacon (Learn •, Fuoco •)**

Action: Instant and resisted, Presence + Empathy - target's Resolve

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

A true love illuminates the beloved, and you see it by that light. On touching your target, you learn the name and appearance of the person or thing he most cares for.

### **Second Sight (Learn •, Lacrima •)**

Action: Instant, no roll

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 Scene.

By spending a Wisp a follower of Tears can part the veil and see into the great beyond. For the remainder of the scene the Princess can see Ghosts in Twilight without trouble. Though a ghost may still hide requiring mundane Perception rolls to spot it.



### **Upgrade: Second Hearing (Lacrima • •)**

Whether in Twilight or manifested a suffers great difficulty in communicating. The ravens can part that veil too, allowing them to speak too a ghost as easily as if it were still alive. This power will not overcome language barriers nor will it help if the ghost is disinterested or otherwise unable to communicate.

### **Second Glance Wrongness (Learn • •)**

Requires: Scent Falsehood

Action: Reflexive, Resolve + Composure

Cost: none

Duration: 1 turn

Sometimes magic gets you good. The Enlightened are all too aware of that. Sometimes your mind can be wrapped in irrational fear by the Dark-Spawn hanging from the ceiling, pale-faced, sometimes the warrior of Storms can drive you into a frenzy, some things can pass by invisible. Princesses learn, though, to listen to the subtle wrongness that they get when their senses are being messed with, and it's possible to stoke the radiance within, to burn away the clouds that fog the mind.

Whenever the Princess' mind is influenced or controlled by a supernatural power, she rolls Wits + Composure - the power's activation successes. (Innate abilities of supernatural beings which work by influencing the mind subtract the being's supernatural advantage.) This initial roll represents a new form of perception the Princess gains by learning the Charm. Success on this roll reveals that she is being affected by something, and allows her to activate this Charm to learn just what the effect is.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess is so utterly fooled by the deceit that her mind is rendered susceptible to follow-up blows. She automatically fails all rolls to detect being influenced until the next time the sun has risen, and cannot resist the next supernatural effect that would affect her mind.

**Failure:** If the Princess gets fewer activation successes than the effect's successes, she learns nothing about it, and might dismiss her first impression. She cannot activate the Charm again on this use of the effect.

**Success:** The Princess matches or beats the effect's activation successes. A distorted perception wavers for a moment, showing what it conceals; an imposed emotion falters, revealing the Princess' true feelings; a compulsion falls slack, and is disclosed as instilled by another. The effect reasserts itself before the Princess' next action, but to know that the emotions that you're feeling aren't real, or that the thing under an illusion of false flesh is a monster can be enough to determine your later actions.

**Exceptional Success:** The power holding the Princess' mind slips. During the Princess' next turn, she ignores its effects on her - penalties don't apply, compulsions don't restrict her action.

Once the Princess knows the effect that influences her, she may activate the Charm to resist it as many times as she wishes, unless and until an activation fails.

### **Upgrade: Penetrating**

Cost: +1 Willpower

Through an exertion of will, the Princess can break free of her controller at just the right moment. An ordinary success on the activation roll forces the target effect to lapse during the Princess' turn; an exceptional success forces it to lapse for turns equal to the Princess' Resolve. **Upgrade: Hungry (Lacrima • • • •)**

The Darkness around Alhambra is hungry, eroding substance despite the best efforts of the True Kingdom to tame it. The Hopeful of that city learn to do the same to effects that would control them. Against a rolled effect, each successful activation reduces the number of successes needed to resist the effect by 1, making it easier to break again later. Any effect that needs no successes to beat shatters for everyone.

### **Weight of Memory (Learn • •)**

Action: Extended, Composure + Occult (10 minutes/roll, threshold = 4)

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: Instant

By concentrating on her innate sensitivity, the Princess may analyze the traces of past good deeds that has made a place Blessed. She sits and meditates within a Blessed area, or walks slowly through it, considering what her Light-touched senses tell her; if she should be attacked while concentrating, the Charm fails and she learns nothing. If a Princess uses the Charm again on a Blessed area within a week, she takes a -2 penalty for each past attempt in that period.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess either becomes convinced that the area is not Blessed after all, or attributes to it a Blessing it does not really have.

**Failure:** The Princess makes no progress analyzing the Blessed area.

**Success:** The Princess begins to understand the Blessed area. On reaching the threshold, the Princess learns either the Size and approximate boundaries of the Blessed area, or one of the Blessings it grants to those of good will within it. The Princess may continue rolling after reaching the threshold the first time; each time she reaches a multiple of the threshold, she discovers another Blessing, or else that there is nothing more to learn. The number of rolls is limited to her dice pool.

**Exceptional Success:** If the Princess next sleeps in the Blessed area, add +2 to the Beauty roll for sleeping there. This bonus is not cumulative.

#### **Upgrade: Tainted**

The Princess' sensitivity detects the tracks of human sin, as well as those of virtuous acts. She may use the Charm to examine a Tainted area.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Taint reacts to the Princess' examination. The Princess must make a corruption check.

**Failure:** The Princess makes no progress analyzing the Tainted area.

**Success:** The Princess begins to understand the Tainted area. On reaching the threshold, she discovers either its Size and approximate boundaries, or one of its Curses, and each time she reaches a multiple of the threshold she learns another Curse, or that there is no more to be learned.

**Exceptional Success:** The next time the Princess is Haunted by the Tainted area, her dicepool is reduced by 1. This bonus is not cumulative.

### **Watchful Mind (Learn • •)**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Investigation, modified by Intimacy

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene or 1 day

Like a bird to its nest, the Princess finds her way unerringly to another person.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess gets an entirely wrong idea of her target's location. Until the scene ends or she actually sees the target, she is convinced he is somewhere chosen by the Storyteller that is not where he really is.

**Failure:** The Charm has no effect.

**Success:** For the rest of the scene, the Princess knows the direction and rough distance from herself to the target.

**Exceptional Success:** The Princess retains her fix on the target's location for 1 full day.

#### **Upgrade: Visionary**

When finding the target, the Princess also gets a moment's glimpse of him and his surroundings.

#### **Upgrade: Passionate**

Cost: +1 Wisp

Requires: Passion's Light

When the Princess first finds the target, she also gets a moment's glimpse of his aura, as if he had used Passion's Light in his presence.

### **Mirror Mirror (Learn • • , Specchio • • )**

Action: Instant, Inner Light + Investigation - Intimacy.

Cost: 1 Wisp or 2 Wisps

With this trick a Princess of Mirrors can look into one mirror and see out another, if she spends a second Wisp then both mirrors will show each other (this is usually used with the Upgrade I hear you to create magical phones). Intimacy is measured from the mirror she's seeing out of, not the one she looks into. The Princess is limited by the quality of the two mirrors used, a low quality mirror that gives a bad reflection gives a low quality image.

#### **Upgrade: I Hear You**

The Princess can also hear through mirrors. If a mirror gives a bad picture it also gives bad audio.

#### **Upgrade: I See You (Specchio • • • )**

The Princess names a target and sees her from the viewpoint of the closest mirror or reflective surface, if no surface is available the charm fails automatically and the Princess knows why. With this upgrade Intimacy is measured to the person she is targeting.

#### **Upgrade: Who's the Fairest in the Land? (Specchio • • • • • )**

Requires: I See You

Cost +1 Wisp.

The Princess asks a mirror a question to which the answer must be a person and cannot require precognition to determine. "Who murdered Miss Daisy?", "Who snitched on me to the teachers?" are good examples. "How do I break into the Alhambra stronghold?", "Who will win the student election?" are bad examples.

The Storyteller rolls in secret to avoid revealing the Intimacy between the Princess and her target. Success shows an image of the person who best answers the Princesses question.

The Storyteller should answer in good faith to the best of her ability. Creative interpretation of the question and other low tricks should only be used on a Dramatic Failure.

### **Moving Finger (Learn • • • )**

Action: Instant, Inner Light + Investigation

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess mentally describes an object. She becomes aware of the location of the nearest object matching the description within 25 \* the activation successes in yards; no matter how well it is concealed, she can find it as an unrolled action. The description must be phrased in terms of the object's composition and form, not its significance or intended use. For example, "audiotapes", "letters in my father's handwriting", and "weak places in the wall" all work; "incriminating evidence", "letters about my father", and "something that will help me escape" do not. A Princess can find only one object at a time; if she activates Moving Finger when she already has it active, the first use ends immediately.

#### **Upgrade: General**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess becomes aware of every object matching the description within range. She can find objects matching only one description at a time.

#### **Upgrade: Significant (Acqua • • )**

The Princess may describe an object by its meaning. For example, she can find documents about a specific subject in a wall of file cabinets, or search the scene of a murder for clues to the killer's identity.

Note: The presence of Taint, and the property of being a focus of Taint, is considered part of an object's meaning, so applying Significant allows the Charm to find a Tainted area's focus.

### **Perfect Sight (Learn •••, Aria •)**

Action: Reflexive and resisted, Wits + Composure - target's Dexterity

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 action

For a moment, the Princess sees a chink in a target's defense, and strike swiftly.

**Dramatic Failure:** The target's Defense against the Princess' next attack is doubled. If his Defense does not apply, the attack is reduced to a chance die.

**Failure:** No effect.

**Success:** Reduce the target's Defense against the Princess' next attack by the activation successes, to a minimum of 0.

**Exceptional Success:** If the attack inflicts damage, the target's Defense against all attacks is reduced by 1, until his next action.

#### **Upgrade: Allied**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess discloses the target's weak spot to a social group she belongs to, applying the Commonalty modifier. Until the target's next action, his Defense against any member of the social group is reduced as if it came from her.

### **Genius Loci (Learn •••, Legno ••)**

Extended, Composure + Occult (5 minutes/roll, threshold = 2x Palace Size of location)

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Places, especially buildings, have their own sort of life; as they age and people care for them, they acquire a distinctive spirit and a voice that speaks in creaking boards or rustling leaves. With careful attention and a touch of magic, the Princess can rouse a place's spirit and listen to its voice. When activating the Charm, the Noble meditates inside the place she wants to listen and speak to.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess rouses the place's spirit, but offends it. Until she leaves it, a curse of ill luck dogs her; all her actions suffer a -1 penalty. If she returns at any time during the next day, she suffers the same penalty until she leaves again.

**Failure:** The Princess cannot hear the place's spirit yet.

**Success:** The Princess makes progress in waking the place's spirit. When she reaches the threshold, the spirit is fully roused and communicates with her in a fashion only she understands (patterns of creaks, flickering in the lights, etc.) For the rest of the scene the Princess may use her Social skills to converse with the location as with a person. A place's spirit should have a somewhat definite personality, getting stranger as its relative power (age, fondness, etc.) grows; a recent home may offer full collaboration if one deals with the woodworm infestation, while an ancient library may refuse to answer simply because no member of the nakama has a membership card. (The Storyteller should however try to avoid making impossible demands.)

**Exceptional Success:** The place's spirit finds the Princess agreeable. Her Social interactions with it gain the 9-again quality, if she didn't have that quality already.

### **Trace the Roots (Learn • • • , Terra • )**

Requires: Passion's Light

Action: Extended and resisted (1 turn/roll, threshold = 4), Composure + Empathy - target's Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

The Princess gazes into another's heart, learning something of their character. Reaching the threshold reveals one of the following, chosen by the Storyteller:

- The target's Morality rating
- The target's Vice
- The target's Virtue
- The target's maximum Willpower
- A derangement
- A mental or social flaw

### **Psychic Impression (Learn • • • , Terra • )**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Crafts

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 turn

By holding an object in her hands, the Princess is able to catch a glimpse of the emotional impressions left behind on it, by significant events it was used in. With one success, this Charm grants her a fleeting vision of the most emotionally significant event the object was involved in within the past week; each additional success doubles the range of time she can see into. Especially important events, such as the marriage proposal a ring was used for, may be able to be seen years after they occurred at the Storyteller's discretion. Using this Charm on a bullet might show a vision of the shooting it was used for, a painting may show the emotional state of the artist who created it, et cetera. The vision lasts between three and thirty seconds, and appears to the Princess' eyes as if she were at the event in question – it's up to her to interpret what she sees.

#### **Upgrade: Lasting**

Cost: +1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The vision the Princess receives includes the context of the significant event. She sees a full scene of events, to which the key event serves as a climax. The time it takes her to experience this scene is the same as the time it originally took, and while the vision lasts she enters a meditative trance, only vaguely aware of her immediate surroundings; she forgoes Defense until the Charm ends. If something happens near her, the Princess rolls Wits + Composure - 3 to end the Charm prematurely; if she takes damage, the Charm ends immediately.

#### **Upgrade: Specific (Terra • • )**

The Princess can look for events other than the most significant one. In a repeated use of the Charm, she takes a penalty equal to the number of events she has already seen from the target object to see visions of an event she hasn't seen before (-1 for the second event, -2 for the third, and so on.) Repeating a vision she has seen already is at no penalty, though it may require more successes if enough time has passed by.

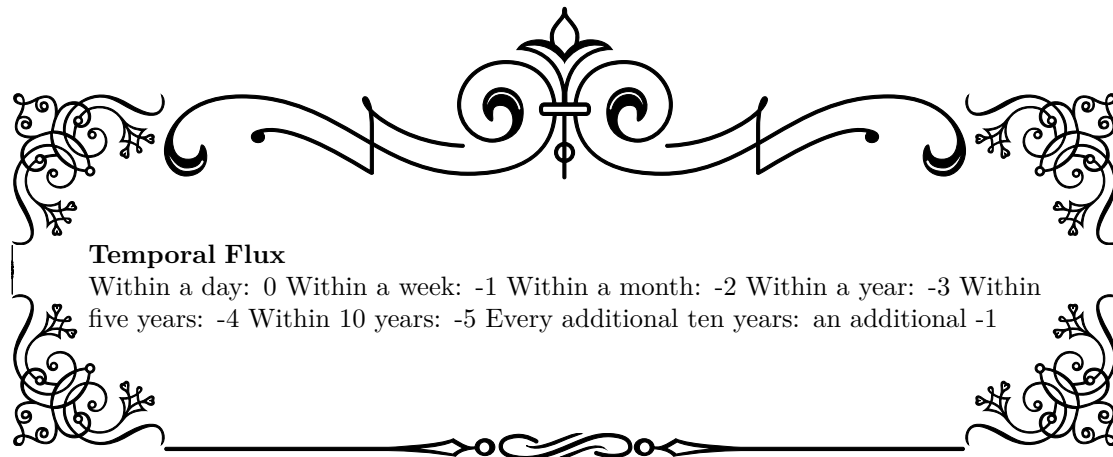
## Reflected Portents (Learn . . . , Specchio . . . )

Action: Instant, Composure + Investigation

Cost: 1 Wisp, 1 Willpower

How does the Queen of Mirrors know who is the true heir? Simple, she can see the future. Or maybe not, since none of her many True Hairs fulfilled their supposed destiny. Regardless of the truth surrounding the Lightbringer's mysterious Queen, it is a fact that the Invocation of Specchio unlocks powers of precognition beyond the dreams common to all Enlightened.

To perceive the mysteries of time and space the Princess decides which question she wishes to ask. She also needs a mirror positioned so it reflects the subject of her question and invokes the charm. There is a modifier to the roll based on it's temporal proximity, because of this the Storyteller should always roll for Reflected Portents. A smart player can learn much from just the modifier.



**Dramatic Failure:** Guided by Fate, or perhaps an unwelcome hint from her own subconscious the Princess sees a horrifying vision. Such as the brutal murder of a close friend. Like all prophecies it's not guaranteed to come true, but she still needs to make a Sensitivity roll.

**Failure:** The future remains unclear, either nothing happens or the Princess gets a completely accurate vision of a clear blue sky sometime in the future. Or the depths of space, or tv static.

**Success:** After a few moments the mirror fades to reveal a vision of the future. The player asks one question per Success which the vision will answer. There is no sound but the vision is as good as the mirror's quality. Anyone looking at the mirror (which doesn't have to be the Princess, if she's holding a hand mirror facing someone else) can see the vision. Visions revealed in Reflected Portents are entirely true and accurate, but may nevertheless change for the future remains in flux. Strange beings move outside of Fate, time travellers occasionally change history, even the Princess' vision of the future may introduce new variables into the timeline; perhaps allowing her to escape a horrible fate.

**Exceptional Success:** Extra Successes are their own reward.

The Princess can only invoke this Charm on the same event once per day. Additionally she cannot learn anything from the past or the present (defined as the current scene). If the Princess asks about a past or present event roll as normal. On a Success reveal that it has already happened but give no further details. If the question has multiple answers; such as asking who will I marry, for someone likely to marry many times, choose the soonest event favouring big and "noticeable" events over others in the same time period defined by the dicepool modifier.

### **Upgrade: I hear you**

The Princess adds audio to her mirror. A low quality mirror that gives a bad reflection also gives bad sound.

### **Upgrade: Distant (Specchio . . . .)**

The Princess can prophesies about a distant target by adding Intimacy to the roll. She must name who she is targeting before rolling.

**Upgrade: What will be? ( Specchio ••••• )**

The Princess no longer needs to name a specific person to scry against. She can instead ask a freeform question like “who is going to attack me?” If more than one person fits the question then the Charm favours the lowest combined dicepool modifier from temporal distance and Intimacy. If there are multiple possibilities at the same modifier, the Charm favours big and “noticeable” events.

Dire Warning (Learn •••••, Fuoco •••••)

Action: Reflexive, Wits + Composure  
Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower  
Duration: instant

The Princess sees a vision of immediate catastrophe, with barely enough time to stop it. The last actions taken by other characters in the current scene, up to the activation successes or the Princess’ last action (whichever is less) did not really happen; they occurred only in a prophetic vision. A shouted warning allows a character whose action was “undone” to choose a different action when their turn comes. If an action is not affected by the Princess’ foreknowledge, because all the relevant circumstances are unchanged, its result is the same as the “vision” of it; do not reroll the dice. If the Princess’ last action was undone, the Charm’s use replaces that action in the real order of events; if not, the Charm’s use is her action in the current turn.

**Zone of Truth (Learn •••••, Terra •••••)**

Action: Instant, Presence + Investigation  
Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower  
Duration: 1 scene

The Princess enchants her immediate area, making deception impossible. This Charm affects an area with a radius of Inner Light x 10 feet. Anyone in this area with a Composure less than or equal to the number of successes rolled – including the Princess – find themselves incapable of knowingly saying a falsehood (lying) or making statements without knowledge of or regard for the truth (bullshitting) for the rest of the scene. Affected individuals are unaware magic has been used on them, unless they have some ability that allows them to detect it; someone trying to tell a lie or bullshit finds themselves blurting out the truth or “I don’t know” instead, though after a few times they’ll probably realize something’s wrong with them and clam up. On an exceptional success, all affected individuals must roll Resolve + Composure when asked a question, and will answer it truthfully if they fail – they can’t remain silent. The Charm will not prevent someone from making statements they erroneously believe to be true, or statements that are technically true but misleading.

**Books in Running Brooks (Learn •••••, Acqua •••••)**

Action: Instant, Intelligence + Academics - penalties for topics  
Cost: 3 Wisps, 1 Willpower  
Duration: 1 scene

... finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.

The Queen of Diamonds is a scholar without peer, and her avatar has all knowledge at her fingertips. The Princess’ memory instantly fills with information on the things, people and places she encounters, arranged in the fashion she finds easiest to understand. Until the Charm ends, the Princess may carry out research tasks as per the rules on pp. 55-56 of the core book, without access to a library, and requiring only 1 turn per roll. Any fact she learns from these research tasks stays lodged in her memory; she gains a +2 on all rolls to remember such facts for a full week after the Charm ends.

Moreover, for each activation success there is one topic (equivalent to a specialty) that the library in the Princess’ mind definitely covers; research within those topics has the benefit of a specialty die.

The topics must be related to something the Princess can see when she activates the Charm, and she chooses the list before rolling; the Storyteller may penalize the activation roll if the Princess chooses an obscure topic, or one that someone has deliberately concealed. Any attempt to use the Charm to link the identities of a Princess are guaranteed to fail.

When the Princess activates the Charm, her eyes appear to become depthless azure pools (without affecting her vision in any way) and the immediate area is dimly illuminated, as if by moonlight reflected on water. She may not apply any Invocation but *Acqua* until the Charm ends.

## Perfect

The Perfect Charms grant new personal abilities. Champions and Menders have affinity for them. **Barrier Jacket (Perfect •)**

Action: Permanent

A Princess is always properly dressed. Of course, the proper dress for battle is usually armor. The Princess may alter her Regalia into protective clothing that grants her Armor, rated equal to half her Inner Light, rounded up, against all attacks. If the Princess applies an Invocation when she transforms, she may give herself Armor equal to her rating in the Invocation instead of the default; however, this form of armor fades out when the scene ends. A Princess may switch among all forms of armor available to her, or return to her unprotected but transformed state, with a transformation action. (When a Princess can't apply an Invocation, the armor based on that Invocation is not available through a transformation action.) **Upgrade: Silken**

The Princess can make her armor bulletproof. This form of armor imposes a -1 penalty to Speed and Defense. **Upgrade: Adamant**

The Princess can create armor that protects her from any lethal wound, once. The first time a source of lethal damage overcomes this form of armor, downgrade the damage to bashing. Subsequent attacks are not affected. The Princess can restore the armor, and be protected from another attack, with a transformation action. This form of armor imposes a -1 penalty to Speed and Defense. If the Princess applies Adamant and Silken, the resulting armor imposes a -2 penalty to Speed and Defense, and bullets don't count as a source of lethal damage. **Upgrade: Fluid (Acqua •)**

The Princess' *Acqua*-based armor has a fluid quality that confuses the aim of distant attackers. She may apply Defense against ranged attacks while she wears it. **Upgrade: Whirling (Aria •)**

The Princess' *Aria*-based armor sharpens her reflexes, and enhances her ability to evade attacks. While she wears it, she uses the higher of Wits and Dexterity, not the lower, as her Defense trait. If her Wits and Dexterity are equal, she adds +1 to Defense. **Upgrade: Fireproof (Fuoco •)**

The Princess' *Fuoco*-based armor is fireproof. Damage from fire never bypasses it, no matter how long she is exposed to it, and fire damage that overcomes the Armor is downgraded to bashing. If she applies Adamant and Fireproof, fire does not count as a source of lethal damage. **Upgrade: Resolute (Legno •)**

The Princess' *Legno*-based armor protects her in the last extremity. When she wears it, and her last Health box is filled with bashing damage, she adds her Armor rating to her Stamina to resist unconsciousness. Moreover, if her Health track fills with lethal damage, she does not automatically fall into coma, but remains conscious until she fails a Stamina + Armor roll; and she does not begin to bleed out until she does finally collapse.

**Upgrade: Saving (Legno •)**

When the Princess spends Willpower to increase her defence, she may instead increase her armour.

**Upgrade: Fearsome (Lacrima •)**

Cost: + Belief 7 sin

The Princess' *Lacrima*-based armor gives her an ominous presence, promising doom to her foes. To make a close attack on her, an opponent must roll his Resolve + supernatural advantage - the Jacket's Armor rating. Once a foe has succeeded on this roll, he may attack the Princess freely for the rest of the scene.



### **Celestial Dance (Perfect •)**

Action: Permanent

When the Princess transforms, she moves with the grace and speed of an Olympian gymnast. She may apply an Invocation to mundane Athletics rolls.

#### **Upgrade: Swift**

Stacks, up to 3

The Princess moves a little faster than any normal human can. She adds +1 to her Speed and Initiative each time she takes this upgrade.

#### **Upgrade: Weightless (Aria ••)**

The very air bears the Princess up whenever she leaves the ground. When she jumps and applies Aria to the roll, she may spend 1 Wisp before rolling to double the distance she travels. When she falls, she may spend 1 Wisp reflexively to slow her fall; she then takes 1 bashing damage for each 6 feet she falls, and reaches terminal velocity after falling 60 feet.

#### **Upgrade: Heaving (Fuoco ••)**

The Princess can lift and throw objects of great weight. She may apply Fuoco to her rolls to lift an object that exceeds her Strength limit (see p. 47 of the core book), and adds her Fuoco in yards to the distance she can throw an object (see p. 67.) Moreover, she can spend 1 Wisp to throw an object with a Size equal or greater than her Strength, but less than her Strength + Fuoco.

#### **Upgrade: Gripping (Legno ••)**

In high places, the Princess cannot put a hand or foot in the wrong place. When she is climbing and applies Legno, she does not lose her grip on a dramatic failure; she only loses her next action recovering from her mistake. Moreover, she may spend 1 Wisp when she applies Legno to a climbing roll to double the distance she travels on that attempt, moving 20 feet for each success.

### **Trains of Thought (Perfect •, Acqua •)**

Action: Instant, unrolled

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: length of extended action

The Princess can think about two things at once. At the same time she is carrying out normal actions, she may also perform an extended action to accomplish a purely mental task – one that requires no physical exertion, or physical tools. (For example, composing a speech, doing calculations, or solving a tactical problem.) She may apply Acqua to the mental task, though if she does she cannot apply Invocations to any other rolls until the Charm ends. The Charm ends when the Princess has either succeeded or failed in the mental task.

### **Read the Wind (Perfect •, Aria •)**

Action: Instant, Wits + Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The air touches all things. Flowing and all-encompassing, it feels the shapes of objects by where it is not. By using Read the Wind, the Princess enjoys a reflexive knowledge of her surroundings, up to a range of 5x her successes in yards. This applies to 360 degrees around her. This ability is not sight, but an additional sense.

The additional sense has a resolution of about 1/2" (2 centimeters) and the Princess knows the shapes, sizes, textures and positions of all objects in the area within that level of detail. It does not provide colour; a book appears identical whether filled with profane words or chick-lit, although in the former case, a Wits + Crafts roll may be permitted to identify the characteristic texture of human skin binding the book. The sense only works if air-currents can flow between the Princess and an object; she can't use

it to perceive what is in an air-tight box, although the fact that the draft coming from the floorboards is actually the result of an underground dungeon may be useful. The sense provides no advantage when the Princess is not immersed in a gas (most commonly air); being under water is probably the most common case of this. Her rolls to avoid being surprised by people in range of the additional sense ignore penalties from lack of vision – darkness, fog, or just having her back turned.

### **Long Fast (Perfect •, Legno •)**

Action: Instant, unrolled

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 day

The Light sustains the Princess when she can find no other food. She does not require food or water until the Charm ends, and does not take damage from deprivation or progress towards taking such damage. If she applies Legno, she adds 12 hours to the Charm's duration for each dot in Legno she has.

#### **Upgrade: Airless**

Until the Charm ends, the Princess sinks into a trance, in which she does not need to breathe. She also does not require food or water while entranced. She cannot move or act, but is aware of what happens around her, and may awaken from the trance as a reflexive action, which ends the Charm.

#### **Upgrade: Immune (Legno ••)**

The Light within the Princess' flesh expels alien substances from it. If she applies Legno, for the duration of the Charm, she adds her Legno to all rolls to resist the effects of drugs, poisons and diseases.

### **Woodland's Bounty (Perfect •, Legno •)**

Action: Permanent

When the Princess transforms, she walks through a wilderness as if it were her own home. She gets the 9-again quality on mundane Survival rolls within one of her specialties (chosen when she takes the Charm) and may apply Legno to such rolls.

#### **Upgrade: Far-flung**

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess is at home in stranger climes. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Survival rolls covered by any of the added specialties. **Upgrade: Tracking**

The Princess' nose grows sensitive, nearly as much as a dog's. She may always add her Legno to Perception rolls based on smell and taste, and to rolls to smell out a target while blind. Also, she is able to track things by scent - she can follow trails over hard ground, that most people can't even see, and she can take scents from people's clothing, giving her a equipment bonus to track them.

#### **Upgrade: Weatherproof (Legno ••)**

Extremes of heat or cold do not trouble the Princess. She reduces penalties inflicted by extreme temperatures by her Legno, to a minimum of -0, and adds a number of hours equal to her Legno to the time she spends in extreme temperatures before taking damage.

### **Beauty is Talented (Perfect •, Specchio •)**

Action: Instant, Presence + Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: successes in turns

Don't you know that beautiful people are just better than you? Pretty people are stronger, faster, smarter, more talented than regular people. Until the Charm ends the Princess can add her Striking Looks bonus to any roll. In situations where Striking Looks usually applies this Charm does not stack the bonus with itself.

### **Wreathed in Flame (Perfect • • , Fuoco • )**

Action: Instant, Presence + Athletics

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: successes in turns

Passion for her beloved ignites in a fiery nimbus, burning anyone who interferes with the Princess. She chooses someone she holds in affection. For 1 turn per success, her flesh and anything she wears or carries is a source of flame, of a color and Intensity set by the affection's nature and strength (see table in the Fuoco Invocation.) Anyone and anything that touches the Princess is burnt as by a Torch-sized fire of the given Intensity, as is anyone or anything she touches that was not on her person when she used the Charm. The Princess may try to touch an opponent in combat to burn them, instead of attacking them, but an attack does not burn her target even if she damages him.

#### **Upgrade: Banked**

The Princess can temporarily suppress the flames, allowing her to handle things without burning them.

#### **Upgrade: Granted**

The Princess can turn someone else's passion into an aura of flame. She must know of someone the target holds in affection; when she touches him, he gains a fiery nimbus exactly as if he had activated the Charm himself. **Upgrade: Wild**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The fires leap with the Princess' strikes; each time she successfully damages an opponent in close combat, he is burnt as if she had only touched him.

### **Empty Heart (Perfect • • , Lacrima • • • • )**

Action: Full turn, Stamina + Persuasion

Cost: 1 Wisp, Belief 4 sin

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess becomes a being of Darkness, a manifestation of the Void. Her skin becomes sallow, her hair either whitens or darkens, depending on how light it was to begin with, and her pupils expand to fill the entire eye, making her look unhealthy but undeniably human. She has all the benefits and drawbacks of the Darkened template, except that she keeps her normal Sensitivity and suffers Hauntings when it is triggered.

#### **Upgrade: Umbral (Lacrima 2-4)**

Stacks, up to 7 - Belief

If the Princess has dots in Shadows when she uses the Charm, she may assume Umbrae up to her current dots. Each time she takes this upgrade, the Princess learns a new Umbra; she may choose freely among the Umbrae she knows when using the Charm. The first and second purchases require Lacrima 2, the third and fourth require Lacrima 3, and any further purchases require Lacrima 4.

### **Composed Come What May (Perfect • • , Terra • • )**

Action: Permanent

Elegance is not a pretty gown and tasteful jewellery; it's a state of mind and the Princess knows how to be elegant when up to her elbows in mud. Any sensory effect that would grant her a negative situational modifier to social rolls is reduced by her Composure. A Princess who is covered in blood (-5) and has Composure 2 will only take a -3 penalty.

Drawback: This power does not prevent a Princess from looking bad, it merely allows her to overcome its effects with grace and poise. Additionally because elegance is a state of mind a Princess must be in the right state of mind to use this power. If she cannot justify her appearance then she cannot benefit from this Charm. Being covered in mud because you were searching for a missing child and didn't have time to change is fine; turning up in dirty clothes because you'd rather sleep in than wash isn't.

### **Best Defense (Perfect • • , Tempesta • )**

Action: Permanent

The best defense is a good offense. When the Princess transforms, she may add power to her muscles, striking harder and moving more swiftly; she applies Tempesta to add her dots in it to her Strength, and recalculates all derived traits. Best Defense is not compatible with Barrier Jacket, or any other supernatural effect that gives Armor; it is also not compatible with any other supernatural effect that increases Strength.

### **Persistently Peachy Pretty Perfect (Perfect • • Specchio • )**

Action: Permanent

A Princess is so stunning the universe itself cannot bear to mar her exquisite form. Any sensory effect that would grant her a negative situational modifier to social rolls, if her Specchio is equal to or greater than the modifier, is automatically nullified. For example a Princess with Specchio 2 is sprayed with mud by a passing car. Since this only gives a -2 penalty it is magically prevented, not a drop of mud sticks to the Princess. This effect protects the Princess from humiliation on all five senses, she won't smell of mud, nor will her skin feel muddy to the touch.

Drawback: Only the effects on appearance are protected. A Princess with Specchio 5 might be able to walk through miles of raw sewage and still look and smell fresh as a daisy afterwards but she is not protected from catching horrible diseases.

### **Outpace the Sun (Perfect • • • )**

Requires: Celestial Dance (1x Swift)

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Athletics

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess can reach the speeds of a car on the open road. Until the Charm ends, she follows the rules for vehicles when running (see pp. 142-146 of the nWoD core book.) Her Acceleration has the same value as her current Speed; multiply that Speed by Inner Light + activation successes to calculate her Safe Speed, and multiply it by Inner Light + Dexterity + activation successes to find her Maximum Speed. The Princess rolls Dexterity + Athletics to keep control of her movements whenever a driver would roll Dexterity + Drive. If she loses control, or the Charm ends, and she is moving faster than her normal running Speed, she takes damage as if she had jumped from a vehicle moving at her present Speed, and is knocked down by the sudden stop. (10 MPH is a bit less than Speed 15, so dividing your Speed by 15 and rounding up is close enough to the correct damage.)

### **Royal Stature (Perfect • • • )**

Action: Instant, Stamina + Athletics

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess can assume titanic sizes, or shrink herself until she is no bigger than a mouse. Shifting one Size point in either direction requires a single success, and the Princess can shift herself further by taking a -3 penalty and spending an additional Wisp per additional point of Size. A Princess cannot increase her Size by more than the higher of her Inner Light and any applied Invocation; she can decrease her Size to a minimum of one. Multiple invocations of Royal Stature do not stack; measure the dice modifier and Wisp cost from a starting point of the Princess natural Size. Finally the Princess may return to her natural size at any time with a Transformation action.

### **Crawling the Walls (Perfect . . . , Legno . . .)**

Requires: Celestial Dance (Gripping)  
Action: Instant, Strength + Athletics  
Cost: 2 Wisps  
Duration: 1 scene

The Princess clings to walls as easily as she walks on floors. Until the Charm ends, she can climb objects at her Speed in yards per turn as her movement action, and may take any instant action that can be performed one-handed. She can also double her climbing Speed for one turn by forgoing an instant action that turn.

### **Wings of Air (Perfect . . . . , Aria . . . .)**

Requires: Celestial Dance (Weightless)  
Action: Instant, Wits + Athletics  
Cost: 2 Wisps  
Duration: Successes in minuets

The Princess is wrapped in the air's gusty embrace, and takes to the skies as a leaf on the breeze. Her Speed in the air equals  $5 + \text{Strength} + \text{Dexterity} + (\text{Aria} * 2)$ . If the Princess is airborne when the Charm expires, she drifts downward until she touches a surface, and takes no damage from the fall.

### **Skinchange (Perfect . . . . , Legno . . . .)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Animal Ken - difference in Sizes  
Cost: 2 Wisps  
Duration: until detransformation

The Princess assumes the shape of a beast. The new shape is of one particular species of animal; her mundane Physical Attributes become equal to those of a normal animal of that species, while her Mental and Social Attributes, and her Skills, remain unchanged. The Princess' transformed dots still apply, and she gains the animal's natural abilities and attacks, and the ability to communicate with other animals of the species. She may also activate Charms in animal form.

The Princess cannot, however, speak any human language except the Royal Tongue unless the animal is able to mimic human speech (like a parrot); she takes penalties on any task that calls for hands, unless the animal has them (like a monkey) or capable manipulators (an octopus' tentacles); and her Regalia are transformed away and unavailable. Finally, any object she picked up after transforming out of mundane form does not change with her.

The Princess subtracts the difference between her normal Size and the animal's Size from the activation roll when using the Charm. She may remain in beast form as long as she can remain transformed normally, and may end the Charm at any time with a standard transformation roll or by returning to mundane form.

### **Caryatid's Kiss (Perfect . . . . . , Terra . . . . .)**

Action: Instant, Stamina + Survival  
Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower  
Duration: 1 scene

With a shout, the Princess' flesh and clothes become beautifully-sculpted, flawless marble, and she continues the fight as an animated statue. Despite being stone, she still speaks, thinks, and acts normally, but does not need to breathe or eat; her Speed is halved, and her weight is multiplied by five. She gains dots of Armor equal to the number of successes rolled, which stack with any Armor from other sources, magical or mundane. Any damage dealt to the Princess by a slashing or piercing weapon is downgraded to bashing damage, and she takes no damage at all from being engulfed in fire or exposed to radiation.

### **Shadowmask (Perfect . . . . ., Lacrima . . . .)**

Requires: Empty Heart

Action: Instant, Resolve + Stealth

Cost: 2 Wisps, gain 1 Shadow, Belief 3 sin

Duration: varies

Wrapping herself in the darkness in which the only true remnants of the Kingdom reside, the Princess becomes a true, immaterial figure of shadow. Glowing eyes may glare from the head of the figure, or it may be a featureless mask. Occasionally, long-lost stars twinkle within the cut-out from the universe, before being swiftly extinguished. Certainly, there is no way that she could be mistaken for human.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess only attracts the Darkness. She gains her Inner Light dots in Shadows.

Failure: The power does not activate.

Success: The Princess becomes a living figure of shadow for the rest of the scene.

Exceptional Success: The Princess may become a figure of shadow until the next sunrise, changing between that form and any others she possesses as if it were her transformed state.

As a figure of shadow, the Princess is immaterial; only beings who can touch things in Twilight can get any grip on her, and she passes through material objects like a ghost. She may do damage to people or objects by moving part of herself through them; resolve this as a close combat attack, rolling Strength + Lacrima. The target's Defense and Armor (or Durability) reduce this pool as usual. If she hits, she deals bashing damage ... and the target loses 1 Willpower point. The Princess cannot touch or move any material things without magic, or interact with them in any way other than damaging them. She can still speak, however; when interacting with mortals, she applies her Lacrima as a bonus to all Intimidation rolls, and as a penalty to all other rolls of Social Skills.

A light source is painful to approach or pass through; the Princess must roll Resolve + Composure to do so. Moreover, any source of damage based on light or heat (e.g. fire, industrial lasers, and some magical attacks) damages her as if she were material. If she ever takes more than 3 damage at once from one source, the cloak of shadows shreds and she must immediately return to a solid form; she also loses 1 Willpower point from the psychic shock. This ends the Charm unless she got an exceptional success, and even then the Princess may not assume the shadow form for 1 scene or during the daytime.

Until the Charm ends, the Princess has all the benefits and drawbacks of the Darkened template, whether or not she is currently in shadow form. She does not, however, gain Umbrae as she would if she used Empty Heart, and she may not use any other Perfect Charm before Shadowmask ends.

### **One Perfect Woman (Perfect . . . . ., Specchio . . . .)**

Action: Instant and contested, Presence + Persuasion - Commonalty vs. Composure + supernatural advantage

Cost: 3 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: 1 scene

The true heir to the Kingdom, according to the Queen of Mirrors, is a living personification of the Light itself - her word becomes truth, her actions mighty, her presence a bastion of hope across the land. Mirrors' avatar, who may be that heir someday, can assume the heir's attributes for a time, when her followers need her.

The Princess uses this Charm on members of a social group over whom she has some influence or authority, none of whom are Hopeful; the member with the best Composure rolls to resist. If the Princess gets more successes - even just one - she gains a personal presence and magnetism that sways all who see or hear her; she has the benefits of the Striking Looks 4 and Royal Tongue Merits until the Charm ends. (If she has Striking Looks, Striking Transformation or Royal Tongue already, these effects don't stack with them.) This magnetism is even stronger on the targeted social group; they perceive the Princess as a paragon, the epitome of beauty and charm. When dealing with them, the Princess' Striking Looks are effectively rated 10, giving a +5 bonus on any roll to which Striking Looks applies.

In fact, the attraction is so strong that the targets will, if the Princess desires, surrender their drive and determination to her. The Princess may spend the targets' Willpower points as if they were her

own, or convert their Willpower into Wisps at a 1:1 ratio. She may take Willpower from any one person up to her margin of success on the activation roll. Points taken in this way must be spent immediately; the Princess cannot use them to refill her personal Willpower or pool of Wisps. Targets reduced to 0 Willpower are crushed by a profound awareness of their inferiority and obligation to the Princess - nothing they might do could equal what this paragon accomplishes in a moment. (Whether they'll feel the same once they've recovered some Willpower is up to the Storyteller.) Note that taking Willpower from anyone without permission is a Belief 4 compromise.

## Restore

The Restore Charms repair damaged objects, heal the injured and tend the sick. Only Menders have affinity for them.

### Friendly Gremlin (Restore •)

Action: Full turn, Dexterity + Crafts

Cost: 1 Wisp/success

Duration: variable

Soon after airplanes were invented, flyers began to speak of gremlins, small spirits who liked to sabotage planes. While no one has ever seen a real gremlin, as far as the Hopeful know, a Princess-mechanic named this Charm after them, as it preserves the delicate mechanisms of aircraft (and other machinery) in perfect working order, keeping the local gremlins friendly. The Princess uses this Charm on any machine with multiple moving parts. For each activation success or Wisp spent (whichever is less), one roll made to operate the target machine gains the 9-again quality. Neither the Princess nor the operator chooses which rolls gain the benefit - the "gremlin" blesses the next set of rolls made, no matter when or by whom, to operate the machine. Friendly Gremlin cannot be used on a machine currently under its effects.

Upgrade: Helpful

Cost: 2 Wisps/success

The gremlin's help is more effective. For each activation success or 2 Wisps spent (whichever is less), one roll to operate the machine gains the 8-again quality. If the Princess applies Helpful, she cannot give any rolls 9-again with the same activation.

#### Upgrade: Perfected

Requires Helpful

Cost: 3 Wisps/success

The gremlin makes it nearly impossible to fail when using the machine. For each activation success or 3 Wisps spent (whichever is less), one roll to operate the machine gains the rote quality. If the Princess applies Perfected, she cannot give rolls 8-again or 9-again with the same activation.

### Ministering Angel (Restore •)

Action: Permanent

The Princess adds a first aid kit, surgical tools or other medical equipment to her Regalia. She may apply an Invocation to mundane Medicine rolls within one of her specialties (fixed when she takes this Charm) and never suffers penalties from improvised equipment on these rolls.

#### Upgrade: Versatile

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess' first aid kit holds a larger assortment of medical tools. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Medicine rolls covered by any of the added specialties. **Upgrade: Calming (Acqua •)**

The Princess remains calm and rational in a crisis, and her calm mind and clear instructions help bring back others from panic. When she applies Acqua to a Medicine roll she may ignore up to her

Acqua in situational penalties for stress, panic, loud noises, disgust and other similar distractions. If she is the primary actor in a teamwork Medicine roll, she may spend a Wisp to apply her Calming presence to every secondary actor. **Upgrade: Urgent (Fuoco •)**

The Princess can save people who are dying of their wounds. When someone has a Health track full of lethal damage and is bleeding out, the Princess may make additional rolls equal to her Fuoco each minute to stop the bleeding and stabilize her patient.

### **Call Back Yesterday (Restore •, Terra •)**

Action: Extended, Intelligence + Crafts (5 minutes/roll, threshold = 1 per 20 years of object's age)  
Cost: 1 Wisp per 5 Size points of the target  
Duration: permanent

To the Flowers, nothing that is past is gone forever, and anything can be restored if only a fragment remains. By painstaking inspection of an object that has suffered the ravages of time - wear, rust, corrosion or neglect - and some judicious scrubbing, the Princess can remove every trace of time's passage from it, bringing it back to the condition it was in when newly made. The threshold for the Charm is set by the object's age; an item made less than 20 years ago needs 1 success, one made up to 40 years ago needs 2, one made up to 60 years ago needs 3, and so forth. The Charm does not fix damage to the object, as represented by lost Structure points; if a Princess uses it on a damaged object, the damage is transformed into hidden structural flaws, and the penalty for damage that exceeds the item's Durability remains.

Suggested modifiers: appropriate tools (+equipment bonus), major parts missing (-1 to -3)

### **Upgrade: Selective (Terra ••)**

The Princess can restore an object to the state it was in at any time during its existence. The threshold is now set from the number of years the Princess actually takes away (or adds) but is calculated at the same rate of 1 per 20 years.

### **Warmed by Hate Alone (Restore •, Tempesta ••)**

Action: Reflexive, unrolled  
Duration: 12 hours.  
Cost: 1 Wisp, 1 Willpower.

The Princess can call upon her hatred of the Darkness to keep herself warmed against the most bitter and tainted chills. The magnitude of every Taint Curse upon the Princess is reduced by half her Resolve + Tempesta (rounding down). The Fury's Practical Magic adds to this Charm; if the Princess is sufficiently injured add any bonus she gets from practical magic to her Resolve + Tempesta before rounding.

If the Princess has a Resolve + Tempesta of 5 or more, she is immune to any Taint Curses that affect her behaviour directly, such as Tainted Vice. At a Resolve + Tempesta of 10 or more she can comfortably survive in the Dark World, though she gains no protection from the many more active dangers in that physical hell.

### **Balm (Restore ••)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Medicine  
Cost: 1 Wisp  
Duration: permanent

The Princess lays hands on a person's flesh, and minor injuries fade away. For each activation success, the target heals 1 bashing damage.

### **Upgrade: Great**

More serious wounds close and knit under the Princess' ministrations. For each activation success, the target heals 1 lethal damage. **Upgrade: Miraculous**

Requires: Great



Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess' hands bring relief from the most horrible forms of injury. The target heals 1 aggravated damage. If the Princess gets an exceptional success, the target heals 1 aggravated damage and downgrades 1 other aggravated damage to lethal damage.

### **Sure Hands (Restore • •)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Crafts

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 action

Broken things return to their proper form under the Princess' hands. Each activation success grants a +1 bonus on a mundane action to heal or repair something damaged. Eligible actions include (under Crafts) repairing an item, (Medicine) healing wounds, or (Computer) recovering data from a crashed computer. If the action in question is extended, the bonus applies to all rolls until the task is complete, or the Princess turns her attention to something else; the bonus is lost if she leaves the repairs unfinished.

#### **Upgrade: Leading**

Cost: +1 Wisp

When others assist the Princess (she is primary in a teamwork action) they gain the same bonus on their rolls as the Princess does herself. **Upgrade: Swift (Aria •)**

The light-fingered Knaves repair things with deftness and speed. When the Princess uses the Charm for an extended action, she divides the time interval needed for a roll by 2 for each dot of Aria, cumulative (1/2 time for Aria 1, 1/4 for Aria 2, 1/8 for Aria 3, and so on) to a minimum of 1 minute per roll.

### **Bath of Souls (Restore • •, Acqua •)**

Action: Instant and resisted, Presence + Empathy - target's Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene or 1 day

The Princess brings someone lost in madness back to rationality for a time.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess' intervention makes matters worse. The target's derangement continues for an additional scene, and the Princess cannot use Bath of Souls on him for a full week.

**Failure:** The target's derangement is not affected.

**Success:** The target immediately recovers from a derangement he failed to resist, and does not succumb to it again for the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** The target does not succumb to his derangement for a full day.

#### **Upgrade: Deep**

The Princess' intervention restores her target to complete sanity. Until the Charm ends, the target automatically succeeds all rolls to resist any derangements he has.

### **Mesmerize (Restore • •, Aria •)**

Action: Instant and contested, Manipulation + Empathy vs. target's Resolve + supernatural advantage

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

By speaking a few words, the Princess helps a person remember something they have forgotten. The target immediately makes a memory roll (as per the rules on p. 44 of the nWoD core), adding 1 bonus die for each success on the activation roll. If the target contests the Charm, only successes the Princess rolls in excess of his have any effect.

**Upgrade: Deep**

Duration: indefinite

The Princess can fix something on the surface of a person's mind ... or bury it deep, where it can't be recalled. Each activation success gives +/-1, as she chooses, to all the target's attempts to remember something, until he succeeds.

**Flame in the Heart (Restore ••, Fuoco •)**

Action: Full turn, Manipulation + Persuasion

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: indefinite

By touching a person, the Princess ignites a flame from the warmth of their affections for another. Taking fire in this way does not affect the target's emotions, just as lighting one candle from another doesn't put the first candle out. The Princess must know the subject of the target's affections when you activate Flame in the Heart; she can't simply take "the person he feels most strongly for", without knowing just who that is.

The flame created is candle-sized (base damage of 0) and dances on the tip of the Princess' finger; its color and Intensity depend on the nature and strength of the affection. (See the table in the Fuoco Invocation.) Add 1 to the flame's Intensity if the Princess gets an exceptional success. The flame may be sustained indefinitely if transferred to a flammable substance such as a candle wick. It will continue to burn without consuming its source until it is deliberately extinguished (which is as easy as snuffing out a non-supernatural flame of the same size) or the target dies. A Princess may maintain a number of these flames equal to her Inner Light. Extinguishing a flame manually (to allow maintaining a new flame, for example) has no effect on the relationship that originated it.

The Princess can use a flame at any time to set something on fire. However, its proper use is to preserve the relationship that inspired it. If the target checks for degeneration due to an act the subject of his affections would not approve, he adds the flame's Intensity as a bonus to the roll. If the subject concentrates on the flame for a full turn, the target adds the flame's Intensity as a bonus to his next attempt to please the subject, reconcile with her, or deepen his relations with her. Any of these uses snuffs the flame.

Finally, as long as the flame exists, it provides an Intimate connection to the target equivalent to Friendship; and an connection to the subject equivalent to Compassion of his affections for the purpose of Charms modified by Intimacy.

**Upgrade: Fueled (Fuoco ••)**

The Princess may add fuel to a kept flame, increasing it to torch-sized (base damage of 1). She can then use the flame once as above without snuffing it; the use reduces the flame to candle-sized again.

**Upgrade: Blazing**

Requires: Fueled

Cost: +1 or 2 Wisps

The Princess may use a kept flame to ignite the target's passion. The target rolls Resolve + Composure + the flame's Intensity, and gains 1 point of temporary Willpower for each success on the activation roll. These points are outside the target's normal Willpower pool, and the target may only spend them on actions that benefit the subject of his affections. A flame that grants Willpower lasts at most 1 hour unless the Princess adds fuel to it before then, and any unspent Willpower points are lost when it does go out; further, when the target spends the last Willpower point, the flame goes out whether or not it has been fueled.

If the Princess uses a flame to grant Willpower as she makes it, it costs 2 Wisps. She can use a flame taken without this upgrade to grant Willpower; this also costs 2 Wisps at the time of use (on top of the 1 Wisp to take it.)

**Jury Rigger (Restore ••, Fuoco •)**

Action: Extended, Wits + Crafts (10 seconds/roll, threshold = target's Size)

Cost: 1 Wisp per 5 Size points of the target.

Duration: 1 scene or 1 hour using the device

With a few tools and enough duct tape a Princess of Swords can get anything running, at least for a time. To repair a device she requires basic tools and vaguely appropriate replacements for any missing pieces: for a car, for instance, she could use cheap alcohol for missing petrol, several packs of AA batteries to replace a car battery, a circular piece of wood for a missing wheel and lots and lots of duct tape for structural damage.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess's crude repairs collapse into a pile of junk, damaging the machine further. Remove all Successes and a quarter of the device's Structure.

**Failure:** The Princess makes no progress.

**Success:** The Princess makes some repairs. When the Princess reaches the threshold the device is fully functional; it will work as designed for 1 scene or 1 hour, starting from the first turn it is used. The repairs will last indefinitely until someone uses the device, or damages it again - even one point of structural damage ends the Charm.

**Exceptional Success:** The Princess makes extensive repairs.

Alas, the repairs are held together by spit, tape and Wisps and that stuff don't last. After the device is used the Charm will hold for one scene or one hour, after which the device returns to the state of disrepair it was in before the Princess touched it.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Simple machine (+2), appropriate tools (+equipment bonus), proper replacement parts (+2), very inappropriate parts (-2), complicated problem (-2), exceptionally complicated machine (such as trying to patch up a circuit board) (-4)

### **Purify (Restore • • , Legno • )**

Action: Extended, Resolve + Medicine (1 turn/roll, threshold = Toxicity + 1)

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: indefinite

The Princess destroys all poisonous substances within her patient's body with nothing more than a caress. When the Princess reaches the threshold, the continuing effects of the foreign substance end immediately. For a drug (in a dose too weak to cause damage) the threshold is equal to the penalty to resist the drug's effects, plus 1; for a poison, it's the poison's Toxicity + 1. If the Princess reaches the needed threshold before, or in the same turn as, a poison would inflict damage, that damage is prevented.

### **Upgrade: the Plagued**

Cost: 1 Wisp/roll

By spending Wisps in quantity, the Princess can cure mundane diseases. The threshold for this application equals the threshold the infected target must reach to throw off the disease himself, plus 1; if the target has accumulated any successes on his rolls to beat the disease, subtract those successes from the Princess' threshold. The target is cured when the Princess reaches the threshold. **Upgrade: the Corrupted (Legno • • • )**

Requires: the Plagued

Cost: 1 Wisp/roll, 1 Willpower

Even supernatural illnesses (such as mental damage from the destruction of one's daimon, infestation with Abyssal bloodworms or spiders, a plague conjured by a vengeful wizard, or psychological addiction by a vampire's Vinculum) yield to the Princess' ministrations. The Toxicity of these diseases generally equals the potency of the effect that inflicts them - the ST sets a threshold for maladies that aren't rated for potency. Purify cannot remove a supernatural template.

### **Memento Mori (Restore • • , Lacrima • )**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Occult

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: instant

The Princess can call ghosts and give them aid and succor. If she touches a ghost's anchor, she helps it to materialize; her activation successes become bonus dice on the ghost's roll to manifest. She can also heal minor wounds to a manifested ghost's Corpus; for each activation success, the ghost heals 1 bashing damage.

#### **Upgrade: Loving**

The Princess can heal more serious damage to a ghost; for each success, the ghost heals 1 lethal damage. **Upgrade: Grieving (Lacrima • • )**

Requires: Loving

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess heals the most grievous damage to ghosts; the ghost heals 1 aggravated damage.

### **Their Blood Cries Out (Restore • • , Tempesta • • • )**

Action: Extended and resisted (1 turn/roll), Manipulation + Empathy - target's Composure

Cost: 1 Wisp, check for Haunting

Duration: 1 scene

The Queen of Storms knows that mortals forget their sufferings in time, and teaches her dedicated followers a way to repair this flaw. The Princess may use this Charm on a target who has recently been injured, physically, mentally or socially. The threshold to reach depends on how long ago the injury was; 1 success reaches an injury in the past week, and each success beyond the first doubles the interval. On reaching the threshold, the target's emotional state returns to where it was when he discovered the injury, and his memories of events since then seem vague and unimportant.

Until the Charm ends, the target takes a -2 penalty to resist any suggestion that he revenge himself upon those who injured him, and a +2 bonus on attempts to take that revenge. He also takes a -2 penalty to recall anything his enemy did in apology, or any penalty he paid – though if restitution was made to the target's satisfaction, and he remembers this, the Charm ends immediately. The bonus and penalties apply to whoever the target believes injured him, even if he is mistaken.

Bringing back someone's outrage at an injury triggers a Princess' innate sympathy with suffering. On reaching the threshold, the Princess must roll her Sensitivity, and experiences a Haunting if she gets any successes.

#### **Upgrade: Collective**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may use the Charm on a social group whose members can hear her, applying the Commonalty modifier. The injury done must have been to the group, or to some members as representative of the group, as far as the group believes; that is, the group must believe that their members were injured because of their membership, and not for any other reason. As with the basic Charm, this belief need not be accurate. The member with the highest Composure resists for the group.

### **Stitch (Restore • • • )**

Action: Instant, Strength + Crafts

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: permanent

The Princess swiftly repairs damage done to a single object she can hold or touch. For each success rolled, the item regains one point of Structure, up to its normal maximum.

Stain Removal (Restore • • • , Acqua 2)

Requires: Bath of Souls  
Action: Instant, Resolve + Occult  
Cost: 2 Wisps  
Duration: permanent

The Princess may cleanse the first stage of corruption by Tainted areas. For each success rolled, remove 1 point of corruption from the target's Morality.

### **Choke It Down (Restore •••, Tempesta ••)**

Action: Instant, unrolled  
Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 resistant aggravated damage  
Duration: permanent

Followers of the Queen of Storms don't have time to atone for their actions or aid those in need; there's far too much killing to do. The Shadows of all the pain they see, a great deal of it caused by themselves, haunt their dreams and waking lives, but this only serves to make them angrier. They swallow the pain, armor themselves in total denial, and allow their guilt to eat at them – literally – rather than confront it.

The Charm is cast when the Princess goes to sleep; it may only be cast once per night, and only works if the rest would normally be sufficient to regain a Willpower point. Her dreams are haunted by the echoes of the suffering she has seen, and in these dreams she lashes out, destroying those in pain for daring to hold her back on her righteous mission. Upon waking, instead of regaining a point of Willpower, she loses one dot of Shadows.

### **Somebody Else's Problem (Restore •••, Specchio ••)**

Action: Reflexive, Intelligence + Composure - Shadows  
Cost: 1 Wisp  
Duration: permanent

No matter how many of her Heirs fail spectacularly the Queen of Mirrors never shows pause in her tireless endeavours. Some speculate that she wants her chosen to fail, those who know of this Charm often give a different reason. They say that unable to bear the weight of so many failures she has chosen to forget about them and so she crafted a Charm to do just that. Only those Princesses with memories of the Palace of Five Folded Stars itself remember that the Queen of Mirrors was once the Hierophant-Queen. With her magic she could see across time and space and often saw secrets best forgotten; hinting that there was once a more noble purpose to this Charm.

Somebody Else's Problem erases the user's memories. It's as simple as that. This Charm can take the weight of Sensitivity off a Princess' shoulder, for what she does not know cannot hurt her. The most common use of this Charm is to instantly end a Haunting by forgetting all about the action that caused it.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess completely messes up her own mind. Choose one wide ranging topic like "Academics", "my family" or "Connect Charms". The Princess temporarily forgets everything about that topic; her memories return at the end of the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Princess erases everything she remembers of the last few minutes, up to at most 3 minutes for each success. The memories are not just suppressed, they are gone as though they had never existed. The Princess knows only that she has erased her own memory. No magic or psychological technique will let the Princess regain her memories; however, she is not prevented from forming new memories about the topic. The effects of all Sensitivity rolls during the forgotten time are nullified, including Hauntings and Shadows. Somebody Else's Problem cannot give free dots of Belief, but erasing all memory of a Belief Compromise will allow a Princess to buy back lost Belief with exp. This is purely an OOC rule, but the Storyteller is free to explain it as valuable life experiences being erased if she wishes.

Exceptional Success: No further benefit.

### **Upgrade: Retroactive**

The Princess may erase her memories up to one day after they have formed. The maximum time erased by a single use remains the same, but she can now use multiple invocations to erase longer periods. Some Princesses use the extra time to write notes to themselves, but knowing what happened is no substitute for experiencing it.

Freed By Burning Hate (Restore •••, Tempesta 3)

Requires: Their Blood Cries Out

Action: Instant or Reflexive, Presence + Empathy

Cost: 0 or 1 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: special

Those who follow in the path of the Queen of Storms know that the world will always seek to hold her in chains, to imprison her so that the misdeeds of the world will be permitted to hold her and others captive. But the Queen of Storms shows her how to break those chains, and how to break them in others. With a snarl, the bonds of the mind are broken.

The Princess may use this Charm on anyone currently affected by a supernatural power that alters their emotional state. If she is affected by an applicable supernatural power she may reflexively use this Charm on herself, she may make one attempt per turn with no penalty for successive attempts and she may do so even if commanded not to.

If the Princess gets more successes than the power's wielder did when they activated it, the power's effect is overridden by a feeling of intense, nauseated rage, and the target suddenly becomes aware that someone has tried to violate his mind. If the power affected dice pools between the target and the perpetrator, the Princess gains the same benefit on any roll to persuade the target to avenge himself on the perpetrator. The Charm also works on powers that don't require a roll to activate (such as a vampire's blood bonds). To defeat these, the Princess must get more successes than the supernatural advantage of the perpetrator.

The Charm lasts as long as the effect it destroys would have, for it is built on the fragments of that effect. If the perpetrator cancels or removes the effect himself, the target's rage immediately dissipates. The Charm costs 0 Wisps (just the Willpower point) when the Princess uses it on herself, and 1 Wisp plus a Willpower point if used on another person. If a Princess uses the Charm on a target whose emotions are not being influenced, she pays the cost but nothing happens. If she uses it on a target subject to more than one eligible effect, the Charm breaks the least potent, and among effects of equal strength it breaks the one with the shortest remaining duration. **Upgrade: Shattering (Tempesta ••••)**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess can break chains forged in deeper layers of the mind. Supernatural powers that alter memories or instill compulsions become vulnerable to the Charm, as does possession by a spirit or ghost. As with emotional influences, the Princess must get more successes than the power's user did when activating it, or than the user's supernatural advantage for unrolled effects.

When used on a compulsion, the Charm transforms the effect into a urge to attack the perpetrator; should the target lack the means to do so, he will act to frustrate the perpetrator's intent as best he knows it. Any rolls the target was entitled to make to resist the original compulsion, he may make to resist this urge as well. Effects that create derangements (such as the Nightmare Discipline) and the Possession Numen fall in this category.

When used to break a false memory, the Charm sends the target into a bitter fury whenever the implanted memory would have arisen. When an effect simply suppresses a memory, the target is enraged whenever he recalls the memory that it suppressed. The Charm cannot restore a memory that was permanently removed - in this case the target becomes aware that his memory was altered, and feels sick rage at the violation for a few moments, but no longer.

On any successful use of the upgraded Charm, the target experiences a sudden sharp headache, similar to a migraine attack, which inflicts 1 point of bashing damage. Targets who were already wounded have been known to suffer nosebleeds when the Charm took hold.

### Reclaim (Restore . . . . , Acqua . . . . )

Requires: Bath of Souls

Action: Extended and resisted (10 minutes/roll), Presence + Medicine - target's Resolve

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: permanent

The Princess restores a shattered mind to sanity. Reclaim can remove any Flaw based on a mental disability, or cure a derangement, except for those gained by moral degeneration. Reaching 10 successes cures a mild derangement, or reduces a severe derangement to its mild precursor. Reclaim requires a conscious target, but not a cooperative one; if the target does cooperate, the Princess does not subtract their Resolve from the roll.

#### Upgrade: Grand

The Princess may use Reclaim to cleanse the Darkened of their tainted powers. For this use, the activation roll takes a -1 penalty for each of the target's current Umbrae. The Princess takes this penalty even if the target is cooperating (and if he doesn't, she must subtract his Resolve as well.) Getting 10 successes removes one Umbra. A dramatic failure triggers the Princess' Sensitivity, and adds the number of the target's Umbrae to the pool. A Darkened target with no Umbrae can be returned to full humanity with 20 successes.

### Disenchant (Restore . . . . , Acqua . . . . )

Requires: Mesmerize

Action: Instant and resisted, Manipulation + Occult - successes rolled on the effect

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene or 1 day

The Princess relieves her target of a supernatural effect that alters his mind. This does not banish the effect, but only prevents it from swaying the target for the duration. On an ordinary success, the Charm lasts for the scene; on an exceptional success, it lasts for 1 day.

### Regenerate (Restore . . . . )

Action: Extended (10 minutes/roll), Dexterity + Science

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: permanent

The Princess may restore the permanently injured to their original full health. Regenerate can cure any Flaw based on a physical disability, and restore Attribute dots lost from physical damage. The threshold depends on the extent of the damage (the Storyteller should use the table provided as a guide.) Any opposition from your target makes Regenerate fail; active cooperation isn't needed, so you can use Regenerate on unconscious targets, but a conscious refusal frustrates the Charm.

The Princess may use Regenerate to remove a Goalenu graft and restore the organ it replaced. In this case the target's Revelation subtracts from the activation roll. Rolling a dramatic failure causes the target's Goalenu parts to regard the Princess as a servant of Darkness, and she can never use Regenerate on that target again.

Threshold	Injury
3	Non-Flaw injuries: scarring, missing tooth, lost finger joint
6	Restoring lost function: 1 lost Attribute dot, paralyzed limbs
9	Full replacement of small organs: eye, muscle, skin, etc.
12	Full replacement of large organs: arm, leg, stomach, etc.

### Resuscitate (Restore . . . . .)

Action: 3 minutes of full concentration, Presence + Medicine

Cost: 3 Wisps, 1 permanent Willpower dot

Duration: permanent

The Princess is able to stave off another's death and return him to life – though the experience is not a pleasant one, nor does it come free. The target must have died within the current scene, or the Charm fails. The sheer mental and emotional exertion required, and the traumatic process of dying result in the loss of a dot of Willpower for both the Princess and her target, and the ebbing of his life force causes his highest Attribute (if there is a tie, she chooses) to be reduced by one dot. He returns to life with a number of Health boxes equal to the activation successes filled with lethal damage and the rest filled with aggravated, and a -3 penalty to all actions due to the Reaper's grasp upon him. Each week of rest and recuperation without any strenuous activity reduces this penalty by one.

On an Exceptional success, the target doesn't lose a dot from his highest Attribute.

### **Long May She Reign (Restore •••••, Lacrima •••••)**

Action: Instant. Composure + Occult.

Cost: 5 Wisps, 1 Willpower dot (if successful)

Duration: Permanent

This rare and powerful Charm is the source of the Ghostly Princesses who dwell within Alhambra and serve its Queen. Because of the enormous political power and prestige it brings the Protectorate of Amethyst guard all knowledge of it jealously.

The target Princess must be at death's door, but must not actually be dead. For instance, a Princess with a Health track filled with lethal and aggravated damage is a valid target for the Charm.

Dramatic Failure: Instead of creating a ghost, the Princess accidentally kills the target. Failure: Nothing happens. The Princess may try again at a -1 penalty, if the target still lives. Success: The target dies, and rises again as a Ghostly Princess. Long may she reign over us. Exceptional Success: The target loses a dot of Shadows just before she dies and rises.

The Princess using the Charm always spends the Wisps to activate it; she sacrifices a Willpower dot only if the Charm succeeds.

## **Shape**

The Shape Charms shape materials as you will, or make things out of nothing. Menders and Troubadours have affinity for them.

### **Always Prepared (Shape •)**

Action: Permanent

A small kit of crafting tools becomes part of the Princess' Regalia. She may apply an Invocation to mundane Crafts rolls within one of her Specialties (fixed when she takes this Charm) and never suffers penalties from poor equipment or an improvised work area on these rolls.

#### **Upgrade: High-grade**

Stacks, up to 3

The Princess' toolkit is of excellent quality. When she may apply an Invocation to a Crafts roll, she has a minimum equipment bonus of +1 for each time she takes this upgrade. **Upgrade: Multiple**

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess has appropriate tools for two or three crafts in her kit. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another Specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for all Crafts rolls covered by any of the added Specialties. **Upgrade: Flexible**

Requires 2x Multiple

The Princess' kit has tools for any bit of crafting imaginable. If she spends 1 Wisp, she gets the benefits of the Charm for all mundane Crafts rolls made in the current scene.



## Bubble Shield (Shape •)

Action: Reflexive, Stamina + Crafts

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 turn

The Princess manifests a protective shield around a circular area of radius equal to the activation successes in yards. She may create the shield around any space within sight, unless that space contains an enemy, or a person for whom her Intimacy is worse than Friendship. (That is, herself, her friends, objects, animals, and nothing at all, may be enclosed; human bystanders and people she's fighting may not.)

The shield has a Structure of 3 x the activation successes and a Durability of 0. Any attempt to enter or leave the area it encloses must break the shield. Any attack from outside on those inside, or vice versa, applies its damage to breaking the shield first; only damage exceeding what's needed to break the shield passes through to the intended target. If a Princess uses Bubble Shield to protect the same area as her next action, the new shield replaces the old with no gap of time.

### Upgrade: Adamant

The shield has Durability equal to half the activation successes, rounded down, but has only 1 Structure; the first attack that pierces its Durability breaks it. **Upgrade: Elastic**

The shield stretches when struck, and springs back unharmed; it is immune to bashing damage. Only lethal or aggravated damage will reduce its Structure. **Upgrade: Lasting**

Duration: Inner Light turns

The shield endures for several actions before it must be renewed. **Upgrade: Rainbow (Acqua •)**

The shield manifests as an iridescent film, which bends light that passes through it. Attacks from outside on those inside, or vice versa, take a penalty equal to half your successes, rounded down. Attacks on the shield itself are not penalized. **Upgrade: Battlements (Legno •••)**

This upgrade allows the Noble to extend the duration of bubble shield by letting it draw on the energy of Sanctified ground. This extends its size to cover the entire Sanctified Ground. It also allows the bubble shield to exist in a dormant state wherein it will last for as long as the ground is Sanctified. It takes a full minuet to create such a large shield.

When anyone makes an attack that crosses the dormant Shield, the Shield activates itself as a Reflexive action in time to block the attack. Once a Bubble Shield cast with Battlements has activated it will last the remainder of the scene, or until destroyed. Unlike other uses of Bubble Shield, Battlements cannot be instantly replaced by casting Bubble Shield a second time. **Upgrade: Rebuilding (Legno ••••)**

Requires Battlements

With this upgrade it becomes possible to reset the duration of a Bubble Shield cast with Battlements by spending a Wisp. This may even be done after the Battlements have activated in response to a threat, however this forces the battlements to return to its dormant state and recharge for the rest of the Scene + ten minuets per point of lost Structure. At the end of this period all lost Structure will be restored.

Mortals, if they have been given permission, can also recharge the shield by spending one Willpower.

**Upgrade: Confining (Lacrima •)**

The Princess may create the shield around anything, including enemies and bystanders. **Upgrade: Beauteous (Specchio •)**

Like a brilliant pearl, the shield gleams richly in the light of the Noble's soul. Against such beauty, who dares raise a hand? All sapient or sentient beings must pass a Resolve + Composure roll, with a penalty equal to the lower of the Princess' Inner Light or Specchio Invocation, to attack the Bubble Shield.

## Data Wizard (Shape •)

A portable computer becomes part of the Princess' Regalia. (When this Charm was first discovered the computer usually looked like a modern laptop or notebook; in recent years Princesses get smartphones.)

Any mundane Computer task the Princess performs with this computer within one of her specialties (chosen when she takes the Charm) gets the 9-again quality, and she may apply an Invocation to these tasks. The computer can store data in practically unlimited quantities, has adapters to connect to any computer networks available where the Princess lives, and reads from or writes to all common forms of removable media she can find. The Princess still has to supply passwords to gain access to a network, or else defeat the network's security

**Upgrade: Versatile**

Stacks, up to 2

The Princess' computer has a greater variety of programs. Each time she takes this upgrade, she adds another specialty to the Charm; she gets the benefits of the Charm for mundane Computer rolls covered by any of the added specialties.

**Upgrade: Advanced**

Stacks, up to 3

The Princess' computer is excellently engineered. It gives her a +1 equipment bonus on mundane Computer rolls each time she takes this upgrade.

**Upgrade: Assisting (Acqua • •)**

The Princess' computer monitors networks constantly, looking for scraps of data she might need. Once in a scene, the Princess may roll Acqua + the computer's equipment bonus when confronted by something outside her normal experience; success means her computer's trawl for data has found a relevant article or post on the Net, and brings it to her attention. The roll follows the rules for the Encyclopedic Knowledge merit (p. 109) except for the dice pool.

**Upgrade: Traceless (Aria • •)**

The Princess can gain access through her computer to any computer or network she knows of, without cables or radio signals. Once this is done it functions as an ordinary network connection, she may attempt to log on or hack in normally. (Ordinary tracing tools usually return an address that constantly changes.)

**Wellspring (Shape •, Acqua •)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Science

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: permanent

The Princess draws fresh water out of the earth. If she is not touching solid ground, the Charm fails. Each success draws up 1 pint of pure fresh water.

**Upgrade: Purified**

Other liquids turn into fresh water as the Princess stirs them. Each success turns 1 gallon of liquid into drinkable water. The Princess need not be touching the ground to change an existing liquid.

**Upgrade: Flavored**

The Princess may create any liquid that is safe for humans to drink. Each success draws up 1/2 pint of the drink you desire. If she applies Purified, each success transmutes 1/2 gallon of a liquid into something drinkable. **Upgrade: Oily (Acqua • •)**

Requires Flavored

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may now create any organic compound that is liquid at current temperatures, at the same rates as Flavored.

### **Fire's Warm Kiss (Shape •, Fuoco •)**

Action: Instant, Stamina + Survival

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Fires under the Princess' hands burn without consuming their fuel. Until the Charm ends, reduce the damage the target fire does by the number of successes rolled. Things ignited by the fire, but separated from it, burn normally. A Princess may use Fire's Warm Kiss multiple times on one fire, until its damage has been reduced to 0. If a fire's damage is reduced to 0, it cannot ignite anything and feels merely warm to the touch, though it still sheds light. It can even be scooped off its fuel source, held in cupped hands, and poured into a container, like a liquid with the consistency of thick syrup. Fire so treated ignites its container once the Charm wears off, or goes out after 1 turn if the container is not flammable.

### **Shape •, Legno •**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Survival

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: Instant

The Princess coaxes a plant to produce its harvest ahead of time. If she isn't touching a plant reasonably near maturity or at least large enough to produce its crop, or if anyone has used the Charm on the plant within the past season, the Charm fails. (The plant must also have adequate soil and not be severely deprived of water or sunlight, but it need not be in season.) The normal use of this Charm is to obtain edible fruits, nuts, and/or berries from appropriate trees and bushes – in this case, each success is as effective as two successes in foraging by mundane methods, but successes in excess of the plant's Size are wasted. Alternatively, it's quite possible to use the Charm more frivolously (e.g. to produce lots of flowers) or productively (to get lots of acorns from an oak tree or other appropriate seeds, for example), at the Storyteller's discretion.

The crops are guaranteed to stay fresh for at least one day per dot of Legno unless some supernatural effect gets in the way. Nature's Harvest does not harm the plant.

#### **Upgrade: Ascending**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The plant grows under the Princess's touch, even if it began as a mere seed; it achieves up to (activation successes) or its natural maximum in Size, whichever is lower, over the same number of minutes, and produces the expected harvest in the process. (The plant's growth will generally be limited by available soil for its root system.) Once the Charm is complete, the newly-grown plant remains a normal plant of its species (although it's advisable to water it well if one wants to keep it around).

#### **Upgrade: Miraculous (Legno ••)**

The plant no longer requires adequate soil, sunlight, or anything else as long as there's enough room for its base to be planted in the earth. However, the Charm's magic will only sustain the plant for (Legno) minutes after its growth is complete – if it doesn't have enough water and room to grow, it obviously won't last long.

#### **Upgrade: Transfigured (Legno •••)**

Requires Ascending

Cost: +2 Wisps

At the Princess's discretion, the plant produces any crop she needs regardless of its actual species. She can grow oranges from an apple tree, apples from a pine tree, or roses from a barrel cactus if she chooses. A single activation produces a harvest of just one species of plant.

### **Sweet Fragrance (Shape •, Legno •)**

Action: Instant and contested, Composure + Socialize vs. Composure + supernatural advantage

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess releases a subtle scent into the air around her, that relaxes those who breathe it and inclines them to be friendly. She affects a circular area with a radius up to (Inner Light + Legno) yards, centered on herself. Everyone within the area who does not beat the Princess' activation successes gets a +1 bonus to all Social rolls made to befriend another or to gain trust, and takes a -1 penalty to all rolls to maintain or inspire distrust, until the Charm ends. On an exceptional success, the bonus and penalty are doubled.

**Upgrade: Lasting**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess releases the scent continuously for the duration; anyone who comes within her Inner Light in yards until the Charm ends is affected. **Upgrade: Subtle (Legno • •)**

The Princess may permeate an object with her fragrance by touching it; the next person who touches or smells it afterward is affected by the scent. The scent fades after someone has breathed it, or when the Charm ends, whichever comes first. If the Princess applied Lasting, a scented object affects everyone who touches or smells it until the Charm ends.

**Painting Roses (Shape •, Terra •)**

Action: Extended, Wits + Crafts (1 Turn/roll)

Cost: 1 Wisp

With a touch the Princess makes something explode in a riot of colour. She can affect a Size up to her dots in Terra and may do anything from simple blocks of colour to a masterpiece, if she has the skills. The effects of this charm last as long as average quality paint.

This charm is best used for leaving marks and clues in the field or making art. Some Princesses of Spades, politely described as urban artists, dip into Terra with this Charm to avoid the suspicions of carrying spray paint around.

**Shape Earth (Shape •, Terra •)**

Action: Instant, Strength + Crafts

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: 1 scene

In the Princess' hands, dirt and stone become as malleable as clay. She may manipulate rock or hard-packed earth (but not man-made rocklike materials like asphalt or concrete) with her hands as if it had the consistency of modeling clay, and as soon as she lets go of it it will retain its shape and regain its normal hardness. To sculpt a complex shape from the stone, the Princess rolls Dexterity + Crafts.

On an exceptional success on the activation roll, the Princess adds her Terra to the rolls to shape rock.

**Upgrade: Artificial**

The Princess may reshape man-made minerals, such as asphalt, concrete and glass. **Upgrade: Metallic (Terra • •)**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess may reshape metals as easily as earth and rock.

**Corrosive Grasp (Shape •, Tempesta •)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Brawl

Cost: 1 Wisp, 1 resistant bashing damage

Duration: 1 scene

The index finger of a single hand (the Princess' choice) secretes a powerful, sharp-smelling acid until the Charm ends.

Dramatic Failure: The acid only burns the Princess' hand. She takes a -3 penalty to any action which uses that hand until the damage heals.

Failure: Although the Princess' hand may smell vaguely vinegary for a while, the acid isn't concentrated enough or has too high a pH to have an effect.

Success: The acid can be used to get an equipment bonus of the activation successes for any action where it is appropriate. For example, in an interrogation, the ability to scar with acid can be used to get a bonus to Intimidate, while when opening a lock, the ability to dissolve the hinges gives a bonus to Larceny.

Exceptional Success: No additional bonus, beyond the extra successes.

### **Mirrored Item (Shape •, Specchio •)**

Action: Instant, Wits + Larceny

Cost: 1 Wisp

Manipulating a reflection is child's play for a Brat, and it shows, by spending a wisp a Princess of Mirrors may reach into any mirror and pull the reflection of an item of a size up to her Specchio. This reflection works just like the original, guns fire, phones make calls with one exception: The reflection is a mirror image of the original, text is reversed and the grip may be uncomfortable.

Reflections last for Specchio turns, but the original item only gets its reflection back one Scene after the reflection fades.

#### **Upgrade: Lasting**

Reflections last for Specchio times two turns. **Upgrade: Stored (Specchio ••)**

Requires: Miss Poppins Bottomless Bag

A reflection is not always be needed immediately but later instead. To make this possible a Princess that knows Miss Poppins Bottomless Bag may pull a reflection into her bag instead of using it right now. This item suffers the same limitations as any normal stored item. Reflections in the bag do not expire and when pulled out are considered the same as a reflection that has just been pulled from a mirror. A reflection may not be put back into the bag after having been removed from it and it may also not have been used prior to being put into the bag.

### **Miss Poppins' Bottomless Bag (Shape ••)**

Action: Instant, unrolled

Cost: 1 wisp

Duration: 1 scene

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Princess adds a securely fastened bag or pouch of some kind to her Regalia. Activating the Charm unlocks the bag for a scene, after which it can be used freely. The Princess may store any number of items in the bag indefinitely, as long as each item is small enough to fit through the opening, and is light enough for her to lift without help. The Size of an object being stored or removed cannot exceed half the Princess' Inner Light (rounded up), unless she applies an Invocation when she unlocks the bag. If she applies an Invocation, she can store objects of Size up to her dots in the Invocation; the objects are the Charm's targets, so to apply an Invocation at no cost, all the objects stored or removed must be costless targets for that Invocation.

Putting an object in the bag is an instant unrolled action. Taking an object out is also an instant action, and succeeds automatically as long as the number of items in the bag is less than Inner Light + Larceny. If the number equals or exceeds this limit, the Princess must roll Wits + Larceny to find the right item in among the clutter; she takes a penalty on this roll of -1 for each item in the bag over Inner Light + Larceny.

Dramatic failure: The Princess finds nothing in the bag, and is so occupied with searching that she loses her Defense for 1 turn.

Failure: The Princess pulls out the wrong item.

Success: The Princess takes out the item she wanted.

Exceptional success: The Princess finds the item immediately; she removes it as a reflexive action.

Items that are put into the bag are safe from harm and protected from loss, as they are bound to the Princess rather than the bag itself. However, they aren't held in stasis; food will spoil if kept long enough. Moreover, while the bag is closed air can't get into it, so anything living will suffocate if trapped inside when the bag locks. If the bag is lost, the Princess may summon it back with a transformation action; if it's destroyed she may recreate it as if it were a destroyed phylactery. Should the Princess herself die all items in the bag are lost. With the appropriate supernatural power it is possible to steal from a Princesses bag, but doing so subtracts (Resolve + Inner Light) from the activation roll.

**Upgrade: Enlarged**

Stacks, up to 4

Add Inner Light again to the maximum number of items that can be put into the bag safely. **Upgrade: Deepened**

Stacks, up to 2

Add 1 to the maximum Size of the items that can be put into the bag. **Upgrade: Stretched**

Cost: +1 Willpower

The Princess can stuff a very large object into her bag. Double the maximum Size of items the bag can normally hold; the Princess can put one object up to that Size into the bag at a time. As long as that object is in the bag, the Princess can't put anything more into it, or take anything else out - the large object must come out first. If the bag locks before she takes the large object out, the Princess must apply Stretched again to remove it. **Upgrade: Lightened**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The Princess can lift extremely heavy objects, for just long enough to drop them into her bag or pull them out. Add the Princess' Inner Light to her Strength when checking whether an object being stored or retrieved is too heavy for her to move. **Upgrade: Conjured (Aria ••)**

The Princess can pull things kept in the bag out of thin air. When she applies Aria to take something from the bag, it appears in her hand as a reflexive action, ready to be used in the same turn. The object so taken returns to the bag again just before the start of the next turn. (This allows weapons that give a bonus to Defense to do so even after they've been used to attack.) **Upgrade: Ordered (Acqua ••)**

The Princess arranges the contents of her bag in careful order. She may choose a number of objects in the bag up to her Acqua; when she applies Acqua to take those objects from the bag, she finds and withdraws them without a roll, no matter how many other things are stored inside. She may rearrange the objects within the bag, putting a different set on top, as an instant unrolled action.

**Ghostly Hand (Shape ••, Aria •)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Athletics

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: concentration

The Princess shapes a Wisp into an immaterial hand, which can grasp things and move them around, but not use them. The hand has a Strength equal to the activation successes, to a maximum of the Princess' transformed Strength; it forms around an object within sight, and can lift or move it if it has enough Strength. Its Speed, when moving a light object, equals the Princess'. It can drop an object to pick up another close to it, but it cannot move more than one thing at a time.

**Upgrade: Dextrous (Aria ••)**

The hand can now manipulate what it grasps. The Princess may distribute successes to the hand's Dexterity, to a maximum of her own transformed Dexterity. She may apply her Skills to perform tasks through the hand, but takes a -2 penalty on all rolls. **Upgrade: Forceful**

Cost: +1 Wisp

The hand can exert a strong, momentary force, lifting objects too heavy for its sustained strength. Its Stamina for this purpose equals the Princess' Inner Light. **Upgrade: Free (Aria • • •)**

Requires: Dextrous

Cost: +1 Willpower

Duration: 1 scene

The hand moves and acts without the Princess constantly steering it; she has only to give it directions. She may perform other actions while the hand manipulates objects. Because her attention is divided, all her actions take a -2 penalty, and in any turn she acts the hand cannot borrow her skills – its Skill for any action becomes 0.

### **Hedge Magic (Shape • • , Legno • )**

Action: Instant, Stamina + Survival

Cost: 1 Wisp

Duration: successes in turns

A dense thicket springs up somewhere in sight, forming a wall. As with Bubble Shield, the hedge-wall has a Structure of 3x the activation successes and 0 Durability; its area is the Princess' Legno x10 square yards. Anyone who damages the hedge with a close attack gets tangled in the branches, and loses 1 Speed for every point of damage inflicted until they take an instant action to strip off the plants, or the Charm ends. When the Charm expires, the thicket wilts, losing all its Structure.

#### **Upgrade: Willowy**

The hedge bends when struck and springs back unharmed; it is immune to bashing damage.

### **Darkling's Treasure (Shape • • , Lacrima • )**

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Occult

Cost: 1 Wisp, Belief 8 sin

Duration: 1 scene

By brushing her hand across an object, the Princess makes it deeply attractive to the servants of the Darkness. Once they scent it, they will go to any length to possess it, and ensure no one else touches it. The object calls to all beings with the Darkened template within a radius of the activation successes x 100 yards. Each such being must make a Resolve + Composure roll, penalized by the activation successes, to do anything other than try to take the target object for himself.

#### **Upgrade: Trapped (Lacrima • • )**

The target object inflicts pain on any Darkened being who does manage to touch it. The compulsion on these beings changes – instead of trying to take the object, they try to destroy it. They must make the same roll as before to resist the compulsion. Darkened beings who have not touched the object are still drawn to possess it. The Charm ends if the object is destroyed.

### **Strength of the Tides (Shape • • • , Acqua • • )**

Action: Extended, Resolve + Athletics (1 turn/roll)

Cost: 2 Wisps/roll

Duration: concentration

The Princess takes control of a body of water within sight, making it flow and push as she wills. The Charm controls a circular area of water of the activation successes in yards, to a depth of 1 yard; left in that shape, it lifts and moves everything inside it with a Strength of 1. The Princess may gather the water into a taller mass of smaller radius to concentrate its power; each halving of the radius quadruples the water's depth or height, and adds 1 to its Strength. She may also move the water in a wave or spout, carrying along whatever floats in it; the water's top Speed is 8 if moved this way. The Charm does not create water – if the Princess gets more successes than she needs to control all the water available, the extra successes have no effect.

**Upgrade: Violent (Acqua . . .)**

The water becomes violently agitated, creating smashing waves and sucking undertows that batter anything caught within it. Each turn, the Princess may choose to inflict bashing damage equal to the water's current Strength on everything in or floating on the water.

**Upgrade: Free (Acqua . . . .)**

Cost: +1 Willpower

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess can release the water, do other things, and take control of it again. In any turn she is not shaping the water, it flows to its natural level, dropping anything it was lifting that doesn't float.

**Mist's Protection (Shape . . . ., Aria . .)**

Action: Instant, Manipulation + Stealth

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: successes in turns

The Princess summons a thick fog that conceals her presence. A volume of radius equal to (10 x Inner Light) yards, centered on her, is filled with fog that completely obscures vision, and persists for at least as long as the Charm. In strong sunlight or moderate wind the cloud disperses when the Charm ends; in calm, cloudy weather, it may last as long as the Storyteller wishes.

**Spray of Embers (Shape . . . ., Fuoco . .)**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Weaponry

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: concentration

A cloud of sparks and embers sprays from the Princess' hands, enveloping and burning whatever she chooses, travelling on her whim. The cloud forms a swarm of radius equal to the activation successes, inflicting 1 bashing damage on everything (except the Princess) within it. She may concentrate the cloud, adding 1 to the damage inflicted for each halving of the radius. Each 2 points of Armor reduces the damage to its wearer by 1. Finally, the cloud bedevils everyone within it but the Princess; they take a -2 penalty on Perception rolls.

**Grown to Order (Shape . . . ., Legno . .)**

Action: Full turn, Dexterity + Crafts

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: permanent

A plant the Princess touches grows, in a single turn, a tool perfectly suited to her most pressing need. The tool adds an equipment bonus, equal to the activation successes, to a Physical or Social skill that could reasonably be helped by something one either wears or carries that's made of nothing harder than wood. Each tool grown helps with one specific skill. If the Princess grows a weapon, it does bashing damage. The tool is fragile; if anyone uses it and fails a roll, even an ordinary failure, it breaks and cannot be used again.

**Upgrade: Profuse (Legno . . . .)**

Duration: 1 scene

The plant grows into a ladder or pillar suitable for climbing, or a bridge over some kind of gap. A structure made in this way must be made from a plant already rooted in the ground, can support around 200 pounds of weight safely, and can cover a distance of 10 feet for each success rolled. The structure lasts until the Charm ends, at which point the plant shrinks back down to normal size.



### **Burrow (Shape . . . , Terra . . )**

Requires: Shape Earth

Action: Extended, Stamina + Crafts (5 minutes/roll)

Cost: 1 Wisp/roll

Duration: permanent

Using her hands alone, the Princess digs a tunnel through earth, stone, or similar materials such as concrete or asphalt. Each activation success allows the Princess to shape or remove around 30 cubic feet of dirt or 15 cubic feet of stone in any arrangement she desires (though she must be able to touch the earth to move it, so the tunnel made should be at least wide enough to accommodate her.) The tunnel is permanent, but the Princess must roll Strength + Crafts to reinforce it properly; if this roll fails, the tunnel will collapse after an hour or so.

### **Call Down The Thunder (Shape . . . . , Aria . . . )**

Action: Extended, Strength + Science + weather modifier (threshold = 5, 1 turn/roll) Cost: 3 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess raises her hands to the sky and summons the wrath of a storm. Once she reaches the threshold, the sky fills with dark clouds and rain starts to fall in a radius of 1 mile, building in seconds to a heavy downpour that lasts until the Charm ends. (In freezing weather the clouds release snow instead of rain - the Princess can't change the temperature with this Charm.)

Furthermore, for every 3 successes the Princess accumulates over the threshold, she can apply one of the following effects. She may wait to choose which effects to apply until the turn she needs one

- High winds - the storm buffets everyone caught in it, impeding their movements. Until the Charm ends, all Physical actions within the storm suffer a -1 penalty. The Princess can apply this effect a maximum of 3 times. She takes the penalty herself if she is in the open.
- Hailstones - once as an instant action, the Princess makes an activation roll; in a circle with a radius of 20xAria yards centered on a point within sight, hailstones strike everything exposed to the sky, doing 1 bashing damage for each success. If the Princess is inside the circle, she takes the damage along with everything else within it.
- Lightning - once as an instant action, the Princess makes an activation roll; a bolt of lightning strikes one target within sight, doing 1 lethal damage for each success. Armor (of an appropriate kind) reduces the Princess' dice pool.
- Duration - the Charm, and the rain, last for another scene.

Current weather conditions modify the activation roll: already raining or snowing (+3), thick clouds (+1), clear sky (-1), or drought (-3). The Charm cannot be used more than once a day in a single area.

Upgrade: Uplifting (Aria 4)

The storm guides itself to help the Princess who summoned it. High winds do not penalize her actions, and hailstones do not strike her if she calls them to the place she stands. Moreover, she can apply accumulated successes for another effect:

- Speed - the storm winds always blow at the Princess' back, carrying her more swiftly to her destination. The Princess adds +1 to her Speed and Initiative until the Charm ends. She can apply this effect a maximum of 3 times.

### **Sacred Grove (Shape . . . . , Legno . . . )**

Action: Extended, Presence + Crafts (1 hour/roll)

Cost: 2 Wisps/roll, 1 Willpower

Duration: 2 + Inner Light days

The Princess cultivates an area into a calm, tranquil garden that bolsters the abilities of herself and her allies. She takes the appropriate supplies (ie, plants, seeds, soil, water, etc.) and augments them with her magic to create a grove that instills peace, confidence, and competence. The garden may have any appearance, though most Princesses who take this Charm follow the lead of Bonnie Getsuei and make serene Japanese-style gardens, with cherry blossoms constantly floating through the air. Each activation success may be allocated to one of the following benefits, which apply to anyone within the garden:

- +1 on rolls with a specific Skill (to a max of +3).
- +1 Defense (to a max of +3).
- +1 Initiative.
- +1 to Resistance Attributes when resisting or opposing supernatural effects.

The total number of successes allocated may not exceed 10. The area of the garden (measures in square feet) cannot exceed 50x Inner Light square feet. The physical garden remains after the Charm ends, though the supernatural effects lapse, and the Princess may use the Charm again to re-create the garden's calming qualities. However, the Charm cannot be used on a garden already under its effects, or on any part of such a garden.

#### **Upgrade: Blessed**

Stacks

Each time the Princess takes this upgrade, raise the total number of successes she may accumulate by 3.

#### **Upgrade: Tranquil (Legno • • • •)**

The garden may be arranged to soothe disturbed minds and prick consciences. When cultivating it, the Princess may allocate 1 success to preserve anyone in the garden from one minor derangement; rolls to resist it succeed automatically. She may also allocate 2 successes to give +1 to degeneration rolls made by people who have spent at least one hour in the garden within the past 48 hours. Finally, she may allocate 2 successes to give anyone who sleeps in the garden 1 additional Willpower point, on top of the point regained normally through rest.

#### **Earthquake (Shape • • • •, Terra • • • •)**

Action: Instant and contested, Strength + Brawl vs. Dexterity + Composure

Cost: 2 Wisps

Duration: 1 scene

The Princess claps her hands, then touches them to the ground, and the earth buckles and shakes, pitching wildly and throwing her enemies off-balance. The earthquake strikes a circular area with radius equal to the activation successes in yards. Everyone in the area loses their Defense for the round, and those who failed to get more successes on their Dexterity + Composure roll than the activation successes are knocked prone. The area of the earthquake is difficult terrain to traverse, and anyone doing so moves at half Speed; on an exceptional success, the ground buckles and great shards of stone poke out from the earth, providing anyone who wants to take cover behind them substantial (-3) concealment. When the Charm ends, the ground slides back into its normal configuration. The Charm cannot be used if the Princess is above "ground level". If she is underground, automatically apply the effect of an exceptional success.

#### **Upgrade: Sheltering (Terra • • • •)**

People the Princess chooses, up to her Inner Light, do not lose their Defense and are not knocked prone when the earthquake strikes.

### **Enduring Beauty (Shape . . . . , Specchio . . . . )**

Action: Extended, Dexterity + Larceny (1 minute/roll, threshold = target's Stamina + supernatural advantage + dots in the Striking Looks Merit) Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower Duration: Permanent

Beauty is the only true constant in the world, the Queen of Mirrors knows. Not personal beauty, for that can fade and die, but the beauty that comes from righteousness and enduring strength. It is the calculus of rule that inspires her to take beauty from fools who might waste it, and use it for. The Enlightened learns to peel the beauty from others, and craft it into valuable gems. These gems also have metaphysical potency, and can be used to aid other Charms. This Charm must be used against a target who is asleep, or otherwise incapacitated or restrained.

Dramatic Failure: The noble can only mar her own beauty. She inflicts 3 points of aggravated damage, as the beauty peels away from her flesh, and furthermore suffers the "Ugly" Flaw until all of this damage has healed.

Failure: She cannot properly get her fingers under the flesh, and inflicts a point of Bashing damage on the target, who if they are asleep can roll Wits + Stamina to wake. If she has not got the necessary number of successes by the time the roll has ended, the target wakes automatically, and the Princess suffers a point of Lethal damage, as her fingers wear away.

Success: Successes are gained. The target suffers a point of Bashing damage, and if they are asleep, may roll Wits + Stamina, at a -3 penalty to wake. Incapacitated or restrained targets have no such defence.

Exceptional Success: If 5 successes are gained in a single roll, the target does not take damage, and does not get a roll to wake. If five successes are gained over the target number, the Princess is feeling generous, and can leave a residual of beauty to the target; they do not gain the Ugly flaw, unless they had no dots in the Striking Looks merit to begin with. There's no helping some people.

If the required number of successes are attained, the princess peels the metaphysical beauty away from the face of her target, which comes away like a thin layer of skin, which then coalesces into a gem. If the target had no dots in the Striking Looks merit, it is a cheap stone, dull and lacking lustre, worth Resources 1. If they had Striking Looks 2, it is attractive and valuable, a moderate value sapphire, emerald or ruby (frequently matching the colour of their eyes) worth Resources 3. If the Princess is lucky enough to find someone with Striking Looks 4, it is a diamond almost without compare, worth Resources 5. An individual targeted with this Charm loses all dots in the Striking Looks merit, if they had any, and gains the Ugly flaw. The effects on appearance are not obviously magical; even the most beautiful target is recognisable themselves after this is used, merely... lacking the gleam of beauty they once had.

The gems produced are metaphysically potent. When holding one in her hand, the Princess may, reflexively, cause it to crumble to dust, destroying it utterly. It adds a number of dice equal to its resources value to any one roll of hers which are in line with the Specchio Invocation. If they are stolen, any Princess can use them for this purpose. In addition, if taken to Alhambra, the followers of the Queen of Tears can get 1 Wisp from Resources 1 gems, 2 Wisps from Resources 3 gems, and 3 Wisps from Resources 5 gems. If the gem is returned to the person it was stolen to, it need only be pressed against their forehead to restore their former beauty.

Unless used on a consenting target, this is Inflicted Major Hardship on Another, and so is a Belief 6 sin.

### **Through the Looking Glass (Shape . . . . , Specchio . . . . )**

Action: Instant, Dexterity + Occult

Cost: 3 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Duration: permanent

The Princess can enter the world behind any Mirror. Inside she will find a perfect reflection of everything the Mirror can see. This does mean that any text is backwards and climbing into a funhouse mirror is... weird. One thing worth noting about objects inside a mirror - expect the mirror itself - is that they are entirely immovable and indestructible: the only way to affect them is to affect the real object they are

reflections off. Real items the Princess brings with her behave as normal. Any person or item she brings into the mirror world will cast an intangible reflection back into the real world.

Inside a mirror any area that cannot be seen by that mirror (from any angle) is nothing more than solid glass that stretches on for infinity, or until the next place visible from that mirror. By rolling Specchio (no Wisp cost, this glass counts as targeting a Mirror) the Princess may carve out one Size point of Material per Success. This creates a little hidey hole invisible from the outside world perfect for storing weapons, valuable Bequests or bringing boyfriends you don't want your mother to know about. These hidey holes last until the mirror is destroyed or moved, Once either occurs nothing, not even returning the mirror to it's original spot can recover any stored items. No one knows what happens to a person lost this way but it probably isn't pretty.

While inside the mirror any area that usually can be seen by that mirror but cannot due to circumstance, say someone's thrown a blanket over the mirror in the real world, is covered by pure darkness that numbs all five senses. This however is not any more dangerous than normal sensory deprivation and some Princesses even make use of it for such.

Two mirrors reflecting the same area will lead to the same mirror world, though parts of it may well be separated by walls of glass. This world would be safe until the last mirror is removed. However two mirrors set up to reflect each other can be quite dangerous. While inside the mirror world you can use the second mirror to recursively enter a second mirror world. Some Princesses use sequences of mirrors as elaborate "passwords" but the risk of being lost forever in an ever deeper chain of worlds means most stay far away.

Exiting the mirror world requires using this Charm a second time. In an emergency the Princess can simply jump through the mirror, this has all the usual effects of jumping through glass. (Smashing the mirror before jumping is not recommended for obvious reasons) Upgrade: Secure

By spending 1 Wisp a Princess can fix a mirror in place. It gains Durability equal to her Specchio against both damage and being moved from either world. This Upgrade is meant to provide security for a Princess' use of a mirror world, using indestructible mirrors as defensive positions should not be permitted.

This durability does not apply to deliberate attempts to smash (say, by jumping through) the mirror by the princess herself, it does however cover accidents. Upgrade: Leading

With this Upgrade the Princess can now lead others through Mirrors. Each extra person or five Size points of equipment costs an additional Wisp.

The Princess does not have to go first. It is acceptable to push someone through with the intent of trapping them.

## *Nations*

As the representatives of an ancient Kingdom, and agents of the Light, the Hopeful may forge themselves and people who look to them as an example into an organized body, dedicated to a common purpose. These are commonly called the Nations. The bond of the Nation focuses the Light, which confers special qualities on its members, powers that grow as people join and the Hopeful pour their hearts into the society.

### **Traits of Nations**

Considered simply as an organized group of people, a Nation has mundane traits, represented by the system in this section. (It's possible to express traits of any social group with these rules, not just Nations; the magical qualities of Nations come in the next section.)

#### **Membership**

Membership (rated 1-10) represents the group's size, the number of people who belong to it and are willing to contribute to it. Sizes appropriate for the levels of Membership are listed in the following table. Membership also controls the group's power to solve its problems directly, and the extent of its officers' influence. The group's members may buy a Status Merit, up to the lower of Membership and 5, to rise to a position of importance within it.

## Expertise

Expertise (rated 1-10) represents the general level of skill possessed by members of the Nation, and the Nation's ability to deal with problems with finesse. A typical member has a few notable abilities; when statted as a noncombatant, the maximum dice pool in any ability is Expertise + 3, and the total of all dice pools does not exceed the cap in the following table.

## Dedication

Dedication (rated 1-10) represents the group's mutual loyalty and sense of mission. For the purposes of Commonalty Charms, the members of a group with Dedication 3 or less are Interested; members of a group with Dedication between 4 and 6 are Concerned; members of a group with Dedication 7 or more are Dedicated. A group's officers (people with Status, at any level) form a subgroup one step higher on the Commonalty table, to a maximum of Dedicated.

Attribute	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Size (Membership)	10	50	200	1 Th	5 Th	20 Th	100 Th	500 Th	2 Mil	10 Mil
Abilities (Expertise)	4	7	11	16	22	29	37	46	56	67

## Morale

Morale is a track similar to Health; its length is equal to the group's Dedication + 5. Boxes in Morale can be filled in with a "/" to represent disorder, an "X" to represent disruption, or an "\*" to represent disloyalty. Disorder is a short-term loss of Morale, quickly recovered from; disruption takes a good deal longer to heal. Disloyalty is a nearly permanent injury to Morale - groups suffering from it have many members who place their own goals above the group's, but remain to exploit its resources. A group dissolves if all its Morale boxes fill with disloyalty.

## Motivations

Every Nation has from one to three Motivations, the purpose for which its members come together, the core conviction they hold to, or the goal they work towards. Each Motivation should be expressed in a single phrase or sentence. Carrying out an action that serves a Motivation - realizing a goal or confirming a belief - revives a group's flagging Morale; once a week for each Motivation, when the results of the group's actions serve the Motivation, the group clears a point of disorder from its Morale track.

## Autonomy

Autonomy, equal to Membership + Dedication, measures the group's ability to decide on and carry out plans, even in the face of opposition. It provides a pool of dots for the Nation to distribute to its Policies.

## Attention

Attention, equal to Expertise + Dedication, measures the group's ability to react to events, and change its plans to meet unexpected circumstances; it serves as the group's Initiative when it comes into conflict with other groups.

## Merits

A Nation has Merits to represent its capacities as a group, chosen from Allies, Contacts, Palace, Palace Amenities, Resources, Retainers and Status. It automatically has Merit dots equal to its Membership + Expertise; the maximum number of Merit dots it can have is (5x Membership) + Expertise.

A social group can call for its Allies to act on its behalf reflexively (on the group time scale.) It uses the core book's rules for the Allies Merit, except that its dice pool is Expertise + Allies.

Money gives a social group more power to act. Each dot in the Resources Merit gives a group 1 extra Policy dot.

## **Nations in Action**

A group always has one or more Policies, plans for action to meet its present needs. Distribute a number of dots equal to the group's Autonomy among its Policies; this represents the importance the group currently places on each Policy. A group can change its Policies: during one story or one month, a group may transfer one dot from one Policy to another, a number of times not exceeding its Attention. This can add a new Policy, or remove one - the group abandons a Policy when the last dot is shifted out of it.

Social groups act on a slower time scale than individual characters. When playing out a conflict among groups, each group gets a turn to act once a day; each action serves a Policy, and the group's base dice pool for any action is its Expertise + the dots currently in the Policy it serves. A group may make a special effort for an action, pushing its members to peak performance that day at the cost of exhausting them - when doing this, the group adds 3 dice to its pool for the action, but takes 1 point of disorder.

Actions, hence also Policies, fall into the following types.

### **Assess Another Group**

The group tries to discover what another group is doing. If it succeeds on the roll, it learns one Policy of the target group, and the dots the target has placed in it.

The group adds +1 to its dice pool for each Contacts dot in an area relevant to its target.

### **Influence Another Group**

The group tries to persuade another group to change its Policies. This is an extended and contested roll of Expertise + Policy vs. Expertise + the target group's Policy to be reduced; the target group's Autonomy is the threshold for both sides. If the influencer reaches the threshold first the target moves 1 Policy dot as the influencer wishes; if the target group reaches it first, it definitely rejects the proposal, and the Policy it was rolling won't be reduced before the current story ends. The action fails automatically if the target group doesn't really have the Policy which the influencer tried to reduce.

An individual character may also try to influence a group. For an individual, persuading a group to change its Policies is an extended action, usually Manipulation + Persuasion vs Expertise + the targeted Policy; the Storyteller may allow characters to use a different dice pool depending on how they go about the task. (Presence is an appropriate Attribute when a character makes a speech to the group, for example.) The threshold for both sides is the group's Autonomy, as it is when one group influences another.

Status in a group makes influencing its actions easier. When a character or a group has the Status Merit in the group they wish to influence, they reduce the threshold for their side of the contest by the rating of the Merit.

### **Block Policy**

The group creates conditions that will hinder other groups when they try to carry out a specific Policy. For each success the group gets, future actions toward one Policy by any other group take a -1 penalty. The penalty lasts until another group removes the block; until this group removes a dot from the Policy used to create the block; until the group rolls to block the same Policy; or until the group tries to carry out the blocked Policy itself. (In the last case, the group takes the penalty on its roll once, then the block ends.) During a turn that no group tries to carry out the blocked Policy, the block persists without any effect.

### **Support Policy**

The group creates conditions that will help other groups when they try to carry out a specific Policy. For each success the group gets, future actions toward one Policy by any other group take a +1 bonus. The bonus lasts until another group removes the support; until this group removes a dot from the Policy used to create the support; until the group rolls to support the same Policy; or until the group tries to carry out the supported Policy itself. (In the last case, the group takes the bonus on its roll once, then the support ends.) During a turn that no group tries to carry out the supported Policy, the support persists without any effect.

## **Remove Block or Support**

The group works to wear down a block against, or support for, a Policy that another group has made. For each success the group gets, the bonus from a support, or penalty from a block, is reduced by 1 die. A block or support reduced to 0 ends.

## **Reorganize**

Groups that have suffered disruption must put their work aside for a while to recover their lost Morale. When a group accumulates 5 successes from actions to reorganize, it clears 1 point of disruption.

Reorganizing cannot cure disloyalty; to clear 1 point of disloyalty, a group must sacrifice an Attribute dot and is put out of action for 1 week.

## **Perform Task/Send Agent**

Not everything a group does is directed at other social groups. When a group wants to make a change in the physical realm, it creates a Policy to do so; the Storyteller should allow actions on such Policies during a group conflict, if the results would serve a group's Motivation

Groups can also act on the individual characters' time scale by sending representatives or agents, and the actions of individual characters often contribute to a conflict among groups. Once per session in normal play, if the Storyteller decides a group should be involved in a scene, the group rolls Expertise + a Policy; for each success, one typical member of the group enters the scene as a character, and acts to carry out the Policy. The agents have the use of the group's Merits; they will follow orders from anyone present with Status in the group.

A character with the group for Allies can use the rules for that Merit to call for agents - in that case the agents aren't bound to carry out any Policies, though the closer what they're asked to do is to a Policy the happier they'll be. If events during the session helped a social group with the Policy it was carrying out during the session, the Storyteller should add bonus dice to the group's next roll; contrariwise, he should impose a penalty on the group's roll if the characters impeded the group during the session.

## **Nation Advancement**

Social groups (and therefore Nations) earn experience points during play much as characters do. The Storyteller awards 1 xp to a group each session in which it plays any significant role, such as a character calling on it through a Status or Allies Merit. If the group's influence during the session is vital, or the session alters the group, the Storyteller should award more xp, up to a maximum of 5.

Adding a dot of Membership, Expertise or Dedication costs the Nation (5 x new dots) xp. Adding a Merit dot costs it (2 x new dots) xp. A group gets 1 free Merit dot each time it takes a dot in Membership or Expertise.

## **Founding a Nation**

The Hopeful have two choices when founding a Nation. A nakama can swear a vow of mutual aid towards a common goal, and charge that vow with power from the Light; this creates a new Nation with a Motivation of carrying out the sworn goal, and all Attributes at 1 (because only the nakama are members.) Doing this costs the nakama 3 Merit dots, or 1 Merit dot from each Princess if there are more than 3. The new Nation has Merit dots equal to the number the nakama paid (1 per member, minimum 3.) Each Princess in the nakama gets Status 1 in the Nation. This option is available at character creation, or during play - in the latter case, if a Princess has to contribute more than 1 dot, she buys the dots as a 2- or 3-dot Merit.

The other option is to join an existing social group, convince its members to solemnize their goal by an oath, and charge that oath with the Light. To do this a Princess must have Status in the group, in either of her identities. If she persuades the group to adopt a Policy of swearing the vow (shifting an Autonomy point to it) the group becomes a Nation. Two or more Hopeful can use teamwork to induce a group to swear the vow, as long as the primary character has the necessary Status. This option can't

be taken at character creation - even if a Princess takes Status then, the Policy shift must be resolved in play. The Storyteller assigns the group's traits.

With either method, the group-turned-Nation acquires a Ban, an action the Nation's members are not allowed to take. The Ban relates to the Nation's Motivation - typically it forbids acting against the Motivation, in a situation the members commonly encounter and would be tempted to stray. All the supernatural privileges the Nation confers depend on keeping to the Ban: a member who violates it loses access to the privileges until at least the end of the current story, and must be re-admitted to them by someone with Status in the Nation who still has access to them.

Once a Nation is properly founded, it can take some Merits reserved to the Light-touched. Bequests and Shikigami are available to Nations; people with Nation Status can commit Bequests to Policies just like any other National Merit. The Shikigami Merit changes slightly: A National shikigami has the same basic traits as a personal shikigami, plus one free dot in Nation Status. This Status is quite real - the shikigami has the same ability to commit National Merits (other than itself) as anyone else with Status. Further, he can buy more dots in Status, and exercise any other privilege of membership his traits qualify him for. Any Princess with Nation Status may spend experience points to raise the shikigami's traits, and everyone with Nation Status belongs to his Circle.

## Nation Privileges

Through the Light-suffused vow that constitutes a Nation, its mortal members gain a sensitivity to the Light, somewhat like, but far less powerful than, what the Hopeful have after Blossoming. As a result, and if they have the requisite Morality, they can buy the Beacon Merit. Princesses with Status in the Nation can charge its bond more strongly, increasing the members' sensitivity and granting them access to stranger powers.

If a Princess has the Status (Nation) Merit, she can buy privileges for the Nation with Nation points. At character creation Merit dots may be traded for Nation points at a 1:1 ratio, if the players have paid the base Merit dots for a new Nation. In later play a Nation point costs 3 xp. Princess members of a Nation pool all Nation points they buy.

### Destiny - 2 Nation points/dot

Members can buy the Destiny Merit, up to the Nation's rating in Destiny. The Merit gives a member a pool of dice to add to any roll; the pool holds 2 dice for each dot in the Merit. Dice added to a roll are spent and removed from the pool; the pool refills at the start of a chapter.

**Drawback:** A Nation with Destiny has a bane - a situation, often described in oracular language, in which the Nation's members are in peril. Whenever a member with Destiny faces the Nation's bane, and has used his Status (Nation) or a Nation privilege in the current scene, he takes a penalty on all his actions equal to his Destiny dots. The Storyteller chooses the bane when the Nation first takes the Destiny privilege.

### Mandate - (new dots) Nation points/dot

Working for the Nation's goal becomes a weak Sacred Oath for all the members. If a member with a pool of Wisps performs a mundane task to carry out one of the Nation's Policies, he may treat it as a Sacred Oath roll, taking his Shadows as a penalty and regaining 1 Wisp for each success rolled. A member may gain Wisps up to a maximum of the Nation's dots in Mandate each day in this fashion.

### Transformation - (2 x new dots) Nation points/dot

Mortal members can buy transformed dots, up to the Nation's dots in Transformation; they may not raise any transformed trait above 5. A mortal member may spend 1 point of Willpower to use his transformed dots for 1 scene, as a reflexive action. Alternately, if he is currently on the Nation's business, he may roll his Morality as an instant action, gaining the use of his transformed dots for the scene if successful. Mortals can't remain at the peak of their abilities indefinitely; if a mortal has used transformed dots in the previous scene, he must spend a point of Willpower to continue using them in the current scene, even if he is carrying out the Nation's duty.



Hopeful members add the Nation's dots to their global cap; all other rules for transformed dots remain in force.

**Drawback:** No member, mortal or Hopeful, may use transformed dots to break the Nation's ban; for any action that would do so, members use their mundane traits, even when transformed.

### **Badge of Honor - (Bequest rating) Nation points**

The Nation acquires a potent magical inheritance. Any member capable of transforming a Bequest (a Beacon or a Princess) may buy a specific Bequest, chosen when the Nation takes this privilege. This Bequest belongs to the member, not the Nation - following a ritual set down by Hopeful compatriots, the member builds an appropriate vessel and repeats a clause of the oaths that founded the Nation, whereupon the vessel becomes a new instance of the Bequest.

Furthermore, if a member has Nation Status, the cost of the Bequest is discounted by the dots he has in Status, to a minimum of 1 dot. The Bequest will not transform for any member who breaks the Nation's ban, or for a member who bought it with the Status discount and loses the Status.

### **Dream Palace - 1 Nation point**

The dream-desires of the Nation create an image of it somewhere in the Dreamlands - something clearly manmade; a statue, an archway, a formal garden, a pavilion, a palace - that expresses its Motivation, and something of its history, in symbolic form. With this privilege, all members of the Nation capable of going to the Dreamlands can navigate the Crawlspace to the Nation's Dream Palace at no penalty.

### **Dream Beacon - 2 Nation points**

Requires Dream Palace

Members of the Nation grow aware of its Dreamlands image, and long to visit it. Any member capable of going to the Dreamlands may navigate to the image from Crawlspace, rolling Resolve + Empathy without penalty for inward distance. Moreover, members traveling Crawlspace in company can navigate together as a teamwork action, and the penalty for leading others does not count the participants in the action.

### **Dream Messages - 3 Nation points**

Requires Dream Beacon

The Nation's members can now reshape its image slightly, impressing meaning on a portion of it that other members can read. When a member is at the image, he may roll Intelligence + Empathy + Status (Nation) to leave a message there; each success writes one concept (roughly, one simple sentence.) Writing a new message erases any existing message from the same member. The Gales wear away all messages eventually; a message erodes to incomprehensibility after 1 waking week.

### **Moral Example - 3 Nation points**

The Nation's Ban acts as a Flaw: once per session, when a character with Status (Nation) is significantly hampered or exposed to risks as a result of keeping the Ban, the Nation gains 1 xp.

### **Moral Anchor - 5 Nation points**

When a member of the Nation with Belief or Morality of 6 or more carries out an act that breaks his moral code but serves a Policy, he adds +1 to the roll to avoid degenerating, as if the act were prompted by his Virtue. If a sin actually is prompted by the member's Virtue, use the bonus from that instead - the bonuses don't stack.

## Queens

To say that the Queens are impressive is an understatement. The leaders of the Nobility are nothing short of demigods. Currently there is only one living Queen that a Princess is likely to meet face to face, and The Lady of Alhambra certainly does live up to expectations. She has demonstrated a life span of melenia and her personal magic is strong enough to keep her city safe deep within the heart of the darkness.

Becoming a Queen is not a core theme of Princess but it is a minor theme, one possibility among many, and it is entirely possible for the Queen of Tears to appear as a character in your game. So how does one become a Queen? What can her Royal Majesty accomplish with her magic?

### Coronation

Becoming a Queen requires two things, an Inner Light of six or more and a people who follow you and love you as a leader. Specifically it requires at least a small country and an approval rating of around eighty percent to support one Queen. It goes without saying that the love and support of your people is by far the harder requirement.

When a Princess has both she begins to feel a connection to her people growing within her soul. The churning mass of public opinion echos within her, looking towards her for guidance. The Princess must discover for herself what it means to be a leader and a figure of adoration, and she must learn how to channel other people's Belief in her into magic just as she uses her own Beliefs. In practical terms she must decide on her philosophies, and she must construct a new Invocation from those philosophies (in all honesty, if she has come this far she probably knows her philosophies already, but creating an invocation from them requires a significant amount of magical experimentation).

When the Princess is ready she spends 42 exp to buy six dots in her own Invocation. The churning mass of her people's belief has been given direction, both in a mundane-political sense by her leadership and in a metaphysical sense by her Invocation. She is now a Queen.

### Royal Magic

The power wielded by the Queens is the power of a leader, the power of a people united. It does not climb to heights unreached by a Princess' magic, or at least it does not climb much higher. Rather Royal Magic spreads outwards, the Charms a Queen can create are often the same as those used by a Princess but they take effect upon a much broader scale. In practical terms a Queen's Royal Charms can be simply thought of as a six dot Charm, the increase between a five dot Charm and a Royal Charm is comparable to the increase between a four and a five dot Charm.

However the real royal magic lies not in royal Charms but in leading a nation, uniting it, and making it greater than the sum of its parts. A Queen can combine both Intimacy and Commonality, spreading her blessings across entire nations. Simply by existing a Queen's Philosophies resonate through the souls of every man and woman who shares her values, becoming an Invocation.

On a personal level Queens benefit from some modest benefits. A Queen's maximum Attributes, Skills, and Invocations are increased by five, except for her own Invocation which may go up to fifteen. A Queen may also use both her own and the Countless style of Practical Magic.

### Sample Royal Charms

#### Boolean Magic (Royal Govern)

A personal favourite of The Lady of Clear Water. This Charm allows the Queen to create a free floating knot of magic that, if supplied with wisps, can run preprogrammed magical routines using boolean logic and if-then-else conditions, these conditions can depend upon information from the ordinary five senses or the results of other Charms (including information gathered from Learn Charms).

#### Pocket Realm (Royal Shape)

By using similar principles to Miss Poppin's Bottomless Bag, but on a much vaster scale, a Queen can create her own private reality. A pocket realm is entirely empty save for what the queen brings herself,

it doesn't even contain air. The realm's size is effectively unlimited, if the Queen wants more space she can simply invoke this Charm again to expand her realm.

Pocket Realm is one of the Royal Charms suspected to be used in the construction of Alhambra, but it is far from the only possibility. Some Princesses believe Alhambra exists on the inner surface of a city sized bubble shield that holds back whatever power destroyed the Kingdom. The Queen of Tears keeps the details of Alhambra's security close to her chest; like so much about The Fall, the truth is unknown.

### **Resurrection (Royal Restore)**

A Queen's can bring back the dead, so can Princesses, but Queen's are better at it. Resurrection works just like the Charm Resuscitate, but with a couple of key advantages. Firstly the target can be dead for up to the higher of Inner Light or the applied Invocation in days, and secondly the target does not lose a dot from her highest attribute. However after someone has been dead for a while, the power required restore life is enormously taxing, even for a Queen, and costs a Dot of Inner Light instead of a dot of Willpower. This dot can be brought back with experience, but even so no Queen brings back the dead casually.

### **Death and rebirth**

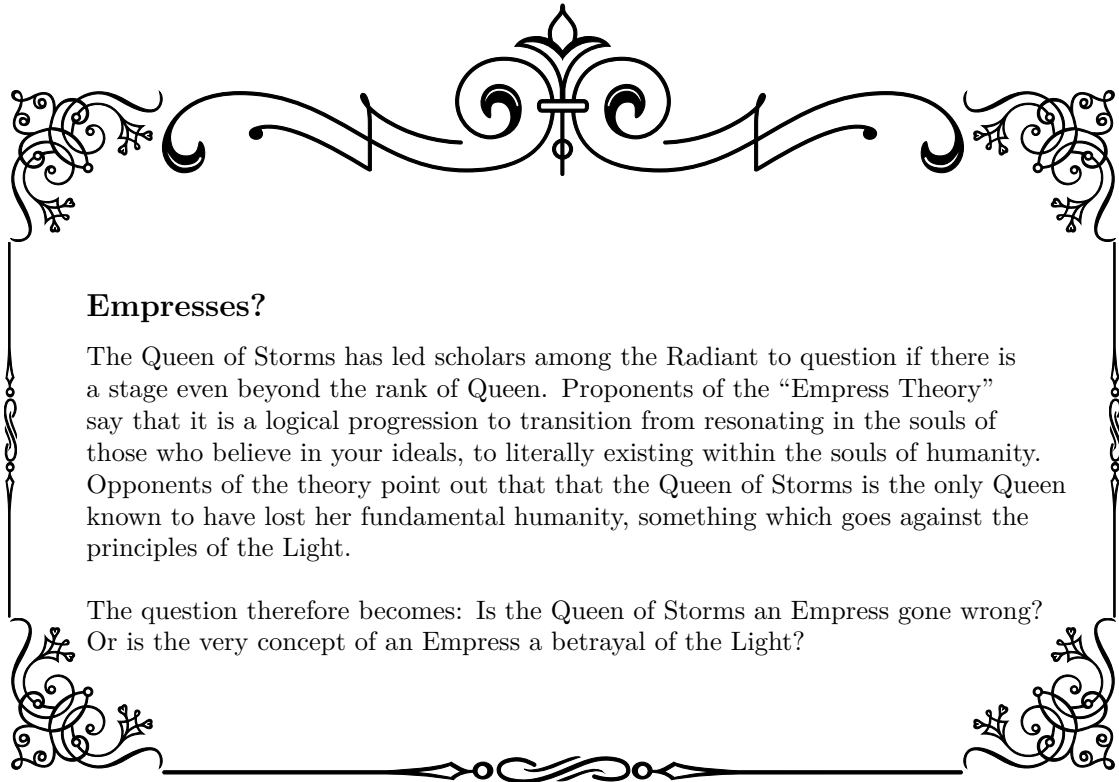
A Queen is not immortal without the aid of certain Royal Charms, and even if she can live forever it would not be psychologically healthy to go for more than a few centuries. None of this concerns the Queens, for they are able to reincarnate just as any other Princess.

When a Queen dies her invocation does not immediately vanish from the world, it fades gradually along with her emotional and cultural legacy. So long as the kingdom she led remains stable this process can take generations, more than enough time for the Queen to be reborn.

A reincarnated Queen is born without magic and Blossoms into a Princess, not a Queen. She has only one tiny innate advantage over any other Princess, she can always buy her own Invocation at its favoured rate (and if her Invocation has faded from the world, this benefit fades with it). However the former queen can have enormous external advantages: The hardest part of becoming a Queen, building a Kingdom, is already done and her former people are probably eager to help the next incarnation of their beloved Queen regain her former splendour. This combined with memories and experience from her past lives is often enough for a Queen to retain her Kingdom across reincarnations.

Something else must be mentioned, what happens if the Kingdom falls before the Queen? A Queen's power comes from her people, without them she is "only" a Princess. She can retain her Attributes, Skills, Transformed Attribute and Transformed Skills even if they are beyond her normal maximum, all other benefits are lost.

The active Queens shows that the magic behind this process is not quite as simple as that (is magic or emotions ever simple?). The inhabitants of their Kingdoms survive in the Dreamlands, and this is enough for them to retain their thrones, however their enormous powers only exist within the Dreamlands. Outside of those sleeping realms they have no power, save that Princesses can learn and use their Invocations. The Queen of Storms seems to need no kingdom and the Queen of Mirrors... well no one knows what going on with Mirrors.



### **Empresses?**

The Queen of Storms has led scholars among the Radiant to question if there is a stage even beyond the rank of Queen. Proponents of the “Empress Theory” say that it is a logical progression to transition from resonating in the souls of those who believe in your ideals, to literally existing within the souls of humanity. Opponents of the theory point out that that the Queen of Storms is the only Queen known to have lost her fundamental humanity, something which goes against the principles of the Light.

The question therefore becomes: Is the Queen of Storms an Empress gone wrong?  
Or is the very concept of an Empress a betrayal of the Light?

# Chapter 4: Fighting Fear

*I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.*

– Nelson Mandela

## *Antagonists*

The Radiant wish to create a better world, standing in their way is everyone who benefits from the world being just as it is. The most obvious, and common, threats they face come from The Darkness: The Darkspawn, and the tainted areas they lurk in, where human evil has worn holes into the fabric of reality itself.

Sitting half way between allies and enemies are the followers of the three Twilight Queens. The last surviving inhabitant of the Kingdom, her majesty the Queen of Tears, sends forth her mortal followers led by Princesses both living and dead to steal hope from Earth so her city may survive another day.

The Queen of Storms still fights the war that destroyed the Kingdom. She calls mortals and Princesses alike to her banner if they only hate the Darkness as she does. Leading the charge are the terrible Goalenu, fragments of the Queen given form to fight the Darkness.

Even Dreamlands, the hopes and very soul of humanity, is not safe. The Wardens patrol for souls carrying the Light, hoping to return them to a blissful prison while the Amanojaku steal mortals' identities to taste of life on Earth.

Most terrifying of all are The Dethroned, Nobles who have given in to the pain and despair that surrounds them. They are tragic, and monstrous.

## *Darkspawn*

*“By my honour, I can't recall the last time I was in a fight like that! No moral ambiguity, no hopeless battle against ancient and overwhelming forces! They were the bad guys, we were the good guys, and they made a very satisfying sizzle when they felt my light.”*

The creatures that live in Darkness, and emerge from Tainted areas hunting for scraps of light and warmth, were once creatures of flesh and blood; many were men and women. The infection that comes of staying in a Tainted place twists mortals out of the human shape, and tempts them with offers of occult power if they consent to being twisted farther.

## **Darkened**

Darkened are the earliest form of Darkspawn. They are still human, but infected by the Darkness. The Taint flowing through a Darkened's veins dulls virtuous thoughts and transmuting cruelties into fine delights. As the Darkened sinks further into depravity the Taint grows, warping their mind and body. Yet until the final moment the Darkened remains a human infected by Taint, and infections can be cured.

## Darkspawn

The end result of a Darkened is the Darkspawn. Vicious beings whose minds have been eroded by the Darkness until they are little more than beasts driven by cruel sadistic instincts. The Darkspawn are by far the most common creature of the Darkness for the stronger and more intelligent varieties are rare, and the Darkened are, sadly, often just a brief transitional state between an innocent human and a Darkspawn.

## Mnemosyne

More dangerous creatures of the Darkness than the animalistic Darkspawn do exist. One such are the Mnemosyne; these are Darkened who reach Morality 0 without gaining a single Umbra. Their bodies have not shifted to welcome in the Darkness, so they retain their lives and intellects, though badly twisted by the multiple derangements they probably suffer from. While not Darkspawn themselves, they can organize and direct the Darkspawn; and being utterly without scruple, they invariably direct their minions to commit acts of monstrous depravity.

As the most human creatures of the Darkness Mnemosyne often specialize in manipulation, many live on Earth preferring to sow suffering in their own quiet way. The reason is simple, they retain enough of their former self to yearn for the luxuries of Earth (even as they work to corrupt everything they desire) and for all that a Mnemosyne delights in its supernatural abilities, it knows that against the Radiant it is unlikely to survive a direct fight. And so it hides, and it spreads its Taint through cults and subtle manipulations.

While Mnemosyne have no Umbrae, their warped minds do connect them to the Darkness, and nearly all of them draw on this connection to gain dreadful supernatural abilities, the Caligines. What's worse, they are able to train other creatures of the Darkness in these techniques. It's dismayingly common for a Mnemosyne to found a cult that teaches people to meditate for hours in Tainted areas, thus Darkening them, and then teach the new Darkened Caligines and send them off to use them.

## Cataphractoi

Cataphractoi (singular; Cataphract) are intelligent creatures of the Darkness, above the bestial Darkspawn in comprehension, and sometimes mistaken, by the ill-informed for a Mnemosyne. Indeed, those who have only encountered Darkspawn before tend to conflate the two, because they are both intelligent, albeit in a warped manner. However, their origins are rather different. A Cataphract does not need to have been a man or woman tainted by the Darkness. Instead, a human must come to accept, in their heart of hearts, that despair is better than hope, that the evil of men is all that humanity can ever aspire to, and that there is nothing of value in the world. Too often, these are the people who have seen the horrors of the world and who have nothing to live for. If hell is the absence of light, of goodness, of anything worthwhile... then these people know hell. And if they die in that state - and sometimes they will just lie down and cease to breathe - then, sometimes, at the moment of death, their soul inverts and all the horror and emptiness and cold and silence of the Darkness comes rushing into this empty soul, and a new Cataphract opens their eyes, the space behind their eyes flooded with the void. There are Cataphractoi who are aware of how they form, and will take people and subject them to tortures to break them, just so they reach that empty point.

Initially, they appear like the human they once were (although many acquire inhuman traits as time passes), save for the fact that, if one holds their gaze too long, their pupils appear to writhe, as if something was trying to get out. In a feat of irony, the Cataphract clings to the memories and recollections that the human rejected, because it is aware, at an instinctual level, that they are all that distinguish them from the formlessness of the Outer Darkness. As a result, they display a painful mockery of their former behaviour, a simulacrum that would be pathetic if it were not the fact that it's a monster collecting tiny model soldiers and painting them, or who has their ex chained up in the "marital home" in the Dark World that she dragged him to. It's pathetic because... they don't get it. A Cataphract has barely any sense of self beyond the Darkness itself. It gathers up Darkspawn and forces them to collect soldiers because it cannot see how that is different from doing itself. The models are painted in clashing colours, frequently broken by clumsy Darkspawn, and the Cataphract will use blood if they can't get their hands on paint (or, frequently, because all their paint has dried up because they couldn't remember to close the lids); the "lovely home" that she cleans over and over again is in the Dark World, and so the

mildew-soaked carpet won't come clean no matter how much she scrubs, and the Darkspawn she sends out on household chores in her place cause all sorts of havoc. Despite all this, it means that they can... well, not function, per se, in society, but they can at least walk down the street without mauling people to death, and possess higher level thought and planning, which combined with their tendency to twist any Darkspawn in sight into an extension of themselves means that more than one Princess has dubbed them 'the Generals of the Darkness'. And that is something that must not be forgotten; they may be the hollow shells of what were once men and women, but now they are only creatures of the Darkness.

Cataphractoi have access to both Calignes and Umbrae. In the case of the latter, they can choose to assume or discard any Umbra with a day's meditation in the Dark World. In the case of the former all Cataphractoi know the Caligo I am Your Master and can learn others as usual.

In addition, flooded as they are with the Outer Darkness, they possess the capacity to shed the limits of human form imposed by their false memories, in a sort of "false Transformation". While a Transformed Princess is still human(oid), just a different human, no such condition applies to the Cataphractoi, and their forms plumb the depths of monstrosity. Dark-skulled, two-headed hellhounds the size of a car, silhouettes of walking void, spectral blots of stillness and silence; all of these can be forms that a Cataphractoi might take. As a result, they have access to Transformed dots, and other appropriate mechanical means for building their monstrous form. This is trying for them and their mimicry of humanity, though. It costs them a dot of Willpower to do this, and lasts a scene; should they go a month without using their false Transformation, the dot of Willpower returns. Should they ever fall to Willpower 0 from use of this, the human memories are utterly destroyed, and they become just another Darkspawn, albeit one in the "false Transformation" form, so considerably more dangerous than the norm.

## The Dark World

Beyond the fields we know, just outside the field of vision, in the sins of mankind and the slow rot of entropy, there is another place. A place where the streets are ruined and the crash of rotting concrete as it falls from gutted buildings is just a whisper. A place where the sun is a faint red dwarf, barely brighter than the other stars in the blackened sky, and the moon is a void in the night's sky which devours light, warping the twisted skies of this place around it. A place where the air hangs still and chill, where nothing lives and everything rots. A place where frozen Creatures of the Darkness, bereft of their contaminated life, line the streets, like corpses.

Welcome to the Dark World. Few among the Enlightened have been here more than once, but they feel its presence. Tainted Areas connect to this place, like arterial wounds pumping light to this place, and in such areas, the Darkness within stirs to light. Its Taint leaks into the world, and in return, the sleeping monsters wake, and begin to make their way to the real world. This is the main source of Darkspawn - for men and women are not yet evil enough that they can be made in the numbers which Princesses encounter - and it is the secure bases used by Mnemosyne cult-leaders and Cataphractoi dark generals. And from within the depths of the Dark World, Dethroned howl at the blackened sky, the fallen Nobles and near-gods to monsters, and the Darkspawn shiver, for there are things that even monsters fear.

There are ways to the Dark World. All Creatures of the Darkness possess the capability, via the "Enter Darkness" ability, to both enter and leave. Some of them can grab human men and women, and take them to their place as playthings and meals; certainly, all can take corpses, meaning that some people are forever lacking closure for a disappeared loved one. Certain blasphemous rituals and powers can open wider holes, and it is under these circumstances that a Princess may find herself in this cursed place. But, certainly, it should be understood that the Dark World is a terrible place, that nevertheless must be acknowledged for it is the source of the most dire threats that the Enlightened must face.

## The Nature of the Dark World

The perpetual bane of Princesses who wish to understand this place is that, as creatures of the Light, they are not welcome here. Most of the knowledge which has been gathered comes from those who have dabbled in Lacrima, for it grants the ability to temporarily become a Creature of the Darkness, and that way it is possible to reach that place. Moreover, defectors from Tears have bought more hard-earned knowledge, from aeons of the Alhambran attempts to maximise the light they can steal from the world.

Some knowledge has also come from the Queen of Storms, who hates that place in all its manifestations, and teaches her followers ways to cauterise the wounds in the world which are Taints. Knowledge is scarce, but some facts have been established, which are generally reliable enough to be used as rules of thumb.

Firstly, in most places, and certainly around Taints, the Dark World looks like the real world, reflected through a mirror darkly. The worst images of a post-nuclear apocalypse Earth do not equal this place of rot and cold and damp and decay, but they do at least provide some fuel to the imagination. Imagine your house, your street, every place you know and love. Now, kill all the plants, and leave their rotting, slimy remains to smear the frozen earth. Let water pool in very corner and every recess, freeze and melt, freeze and melt, over and over again, until the damage has cracked and weakened everything once solid. Let the buildings crumple from neglect, staying just upright enough to endanger those who go in them, and fill the air with the scent of decay. Make it eternally cold, a cold which bites at the soul and fills one with melancholy. And let it exist like this forever, always at the end of all things, never quite permitted to end. Around a Taint, things are lighter, warmer, less soul-crushing. And that's where the Dark's monsters are awake.

This is the Dark World, even before the more supernatural elements are bought in. And those are there en masse. Outside of Taints, all the worst Dark-tainted dregs of humanity sleep, dead, undreaming, for even Creatures of the Darkness cannot survive in this hellish place. It is a massacre of monsters, the hunting dogs of the Darkness betrayed by it, too. Sometimes fogs of Darkness come down from the void of the moon, and rot and corrode everything they touch, leaving empty scars on the landscape behind them. Sometimes Dethroned - who, alone, perhaps due to their former connection to the Light, can wake sometimes - pass through, and the Darkspawn are twisted into the figments of their insane dreams, along with the landscape. Sometimes everything freezes and the air snows down, in a moment of bitter purity, for the frozen air rots and melts almost as soon as it reaches the ground. And then there are the Other places, drifting through the sky and through the land, which do not mimic the world as we know it, but may be something that the Darkness is digesting. Some say that they're remnants of the Kingdom. Other say that they're other worlds. And as one gets further from the nearest Taint, things get stranger. More viscous, as if the world is melting. Maybe the Dark World is only a real place when it leeches light, but if that's true, where do the Darkspawn sleep when a Taint is not around?

Some Princesses have claimed that this is the future, this is what the world will be like just before the Darkness wins. Even if they're not right, it's a good metaphor, at least.

### **The Enlightened in the Dark World**

Entering the Dark World is almost suicide for most things. Even Creatures of the Darkness must cling to areas around Taints, if they wish to retain agency and free will, monsters huddling around a campfire. Mortals are doomed. But sometimes the Nobility find themselves in this place, and before the mechanics are dealt with, a few points should be noted.

Firstly, the Dark World is dangerous. This has been said before, but it bears repeating. It is not the Dreamlands which, for all that they were intended as a trap, have an allure and an elegance and a certain safety to them. They are not even like the stranger otherworlds which some Embassies can reach, for even in the place of the spirits that the members of the Ephemeral Embassy can reach, not everything is a foe. In the Dark World, everything, without exception, wants you dead. Even the world will seem to contort to kill a Noble within it, roads collapsing and buildings crumbling on their heads. Away from a Taint-lightened area, the entire World is more Tainted than anywhere but the most-corrupted places on Earth. And that ties into the second point, which is...

Secondly, they know where you are. Technically, this isn't quite true. Technically, it is merely the presence of the Transformed self which alerts the Creatures of the Darkness in the Dark World. However, as previously noted, given that everything around you wants you dead, going unTransformed is not an option for anyone but the most subtle and sneaky of the Nobility. Moreover, evidence suggests that, although it is not a common thing, the mere proximity of a Transformed self for extended periods can wake the Darkspawn in an area, like a Taint does. Therefore, the Noble can be tracked like a beacon of Light by the things that are awake and so will face frequent attack, but they cannot rest, for resting will wake more Creatures. This gives it a feel like a survival horror film, with a depth and intensity few of the Enlightened will have felt before.

Thirdly, it's hard to get to, and can be hard to escape. Although Enlightened can't normally get into



the Dark World, they can get out at a Taint. This means, if you're diving into a single, known, Taint to rescue someone, it can be possible, for the Darkspawn will tend to stay within the Taint, as to remain active. But Mnemosyne and Cataphractoi are smarter, and if they take someone - often as a lure - they won't just keep them in the obvious Taint. They'll move them, force Dark-Spawn to freeze to death to set up a position in one of the areas away from a Taint. And many of the ways getting there are sins against Belief, or just traps.

Why would anyone go there? That's a very good question. Some among the Enlightened hold that there is never a good reason to go there. Ever. Even if a loved one is taken, at least they will probably die quickly. Most cannot be so cold-hearted. And that is the most common reason by far; rescues, which all too often turn into revenge when they find the person already dead. Some believe that there are secrets within the Darkness, a way to destroy Alhambra - which hides within the Heart of the Darkness, lost Queens trapped in the Dark World, secrets, even the remnants of the other cities in the Kingdom which it too so long ago. And to date, few of those explorers have returned alive, and even fewer with anything worth the losses to them and their hollow eyes.

The Darkness has such places. Let it keep them, and concentrate on stopping it taking anything else.

## **The Dark Template**

Those corrupted by the Darkness these powers and flaws. The Darkened still have the hope of recovery, should they turn that hope into reality the powers and flaws go with it.

### **Moral Inversion**

The Darkened reverse their Virtue and Vice; they can still perform acts of Virtue, but these are shallow and meaningless, the moral equivalent of junk food, compared to the rewards that the Vice at the heart of their soul gives them. They may fulfill their Vice once a session, and regain all their Willpower when they do; while fulfilling their Virtue can be done once a scene, and restores 1 point of Willpower. Moreover, this inversion blights their consciences: the Darkened cannot buy Morality dots with experience points. They can still gain Morality with acts of great repentance and sacrifice, and if a Darkened's Morality ever rises above the rating he had when he first became Darkened, he is cleansed and loses the template.

### **Pain's Temptation**

When another suffers from the Darkened's acts, or those of their intimates, the Darkness' grip on them tightens, and its presence offers them power. Darkened have a form of Sensitivity, and roll it under the same conditions that the Hopeful do. Unlike others with Sensitivity, their base pool is 0 dice, and they never suffer a Haunting; but they gain a dot of Shadows if they roll more successes than their current Shadows rating. The more Shadows they have, the stronger their dark powers.

### **Tainted Heart**

The Darkened know a Tainted area for what it is the moment they enter one, and can estimate the depth of its corruption. As an instant action, a Darkened may learn the Severity and Curses of the place he's in, the location of the Taint's focus, and the Size of the area affected. Further, the Darkened can sometimes benefit from Taint. While their actions done with good intentions are penalized by the Taints as for the non-Darkened, for any task they attempt with an intent to harm, they add the appropriate Taint as a bonus to their dice pool. This bonus also applies to "twisted purpose" rerolls. For instance, in an area with 3 Silent Taint, a Darkened takes +3 to Social dice pools when he means ill, and -3 when he doesn't; and if he fails on a penalized roll, he may reroll with a +3 bonus to succeed with a corrupted result.

### **Enter Darkness**

In the long ages since the Kingdom fell, the Darkness has bled a great deal of substance out of the world we know; and while most of it has been consumed, and is gone past recall, the part that remains uneaten still keeps the general shape of the world it came from. In the annals of Alhambra, this crepuscular otherworld is named "the Lost Provinces"; the Radiant Hopeful who know of it just call it "the Dark

World". Only Darkspawn subsist there (you can't say they live there, really) but when they stand in a Tainted place, the Darkened can go there, and return.

When trying to cross, a Darkened rolls the total Taint of the area + their Willpower - the highest Morality (or equivalent) of all people in the Tainted area or its Dark World image; he adds his Shadows rating, if any, to this pool when going to the Dark World, but subtracts his Shadows rating when coming from it. (The Darkened's Morality is not excluded from consideration for this roll – if his Morality is highest among those present, subtract it from his pool.)

Dramatic Failure: The clumsy attempt weakens the Darkness' hold; subtract 1 dot from the area's Taints.

Failure: The Darkened fails to cross.

Success: The Darkened vanishes from or appears within the Tainted area.

Extraordinary Success: Reality trembles from the Darkened's passage. Every non-Darkened in the Tainted area rolls for corruption, as if they had spent 8 hours there.

## Dark Warping

Unlike the other more advanced verities of the Dark's creatures, the Taint within the Darkened is still taking root. As the Taint grows it twists the Darkened out of their human shape, and the farther they slide from human morals, the more warped they become. The warping grants the Darkened power, but alienates him from the uncorrupted. Students of the Darkness have noted frequent ways in which the Darkened are twisted, and call them the Umbrae. When a Darkened loses a Morality dot from degeneration, he rolls his new Morality, and gains a derangement if he fails the roll, as normal. If he succeeds on the derangement roll, however, he instead gains an Umbra; the lack of subconscious realisation that what he did was wrong welcomes in the Darkness, letting it twist and sculpt his flesh.

The end of this sculpting comes when the Darkened either redeems himself by raising their Morality above the point where they first became Tainted, find a magical cure or when they lose their last dot of Morality. Characters who have even one Umbra and reach a Morality of 0 die the next time they sleep. Their bodies, suffused with Darkness, decay swiftly, becoming variously desiccated, putrefied, or transformed to a black ectoplasm. Within a day, the corpse reanimates and becomes a new Darkspawn; this creature has all the traits of the Darkened dead (and the same character sheet) but, as a rule, is bestial, unable to form a connected train of thought. Most Darkspawn search out Tainted areas, haunt them, and try to drag others into them, or else stalk the people they knew in life. As animalistic creatures Darkspawn use the higher of their Wits and Dexterity as Defence.

## Umbrae

The following list of Umbrae should not be taken as comprehensive; the Darkness has many ways to distort its servants. Each Umbra confers a benefit, balanced by a drawback.

### Animate Shadow

Your shadow has developed a mind of its own and serves you as a familiar. A Shadow is statted out as a normal person, with at least 1 dot in each Attribute plus extra dots allocated 5/4/3 and Skill dots allocated 9/6/3. Its Size is the same as the person casting it, and its Willpower, Initiative and Speed are calculated as for a normal person of its type. The Shadow can not speak as a normal person would and its actions seem to make less noise than it would. The Shadow's default shape is a silhouette of a person. A Shadow moves by crawling along the ground or across the walls, but always remains attached to the feet.

Shadows are naturally stealthy and gain 8again on both Larceny rolls and Stealth rolls to avoid being noticed as anything but a normal shadow. Though Animated Shadows are easy to destroy, never having more than three Health Boxes, only blessed or magical weapons can affect them. If destroyed they will naturally reform after around ten minuets. Shadows automatically gain any Caligo possessed by the Darkened that changes the body's shape such as most Claudendum Caligines, with one exception: Shadows may never gain Armour.

**Drawback:** Your shadow really does have a mind of it's own, and seeks out opportunities to indulge it's Vice. Being a shadow it is limited but makes up for that by stooping to rather petty levels. The Shadow of a greedy man will swipe loose change. The Shadow of a lusty woman will take any opportunity to pinch a cute hunk's bum. If the character is paying attention they may roll Composure to restrain their Shadow.

### **Cold Flesh**

The Darkened's skin turns cold, as if they have poor circulation. They are now immune to all negative modifiers for low temperature, and will not suffer hypothermia or frostbite, no matter how low the temperature gets.

**Drawback:** The sun's touch is now painful against their chilled skin. They take 1 point of bashing damage every 5 minutes from direct sunlight, manifesting as severe sunburn. Completely covering up and use of strong sunscreen can reduce this to one point every 15 minutes.

### **Dark Dreams**

The Darkness is everywhere there is sin or vice or absence, and some of this knowledge is fed into the Darkened's brain. The Darkened gains the Dream Merit, at 2 dots. On any night they use the merit, they do not regain Willpower.

**Drawback:** There are three potential drawbacks for this Umbra. Dark Dreams can be taken up to 3 times, each time increasing the level of the Dream Merit by 2 dots, to a maximum of 5, and taking another drawback.

1. The eyes of the Darkened cloud over with cataracts that surgery can do nothing for. They gain the Blind Flaw, for which they do not get XP when it inconveniences them.
2. The taint of the Darkness seeps into their mind. They are at -1 to all later Degeneration checks
3. The dreams come unwillingly, and every night. As a result, the Darkened never regains Willpower from sleeping again.

### **Faceless in the Crowd**

The Darkness begins to subsume the Darkened's identity. People just ignore them. All individuals are at -3 to even notice them, and must roll Intelligence + Composure each time they want to remember them, failure producing a description of "Well... he... I think it was a he... was sort of tall? Maybe?" Mechanical and electronic records are not affected.

**Drawback:** This applies to all rolls to notice or remember the Darkened ... not just their present life, but their past deeds, before they gained this Umbra. Childhood friends forget their names, old acquaintances don't recognize their faces, neighbors are startled on noticing them in a home they've owned for years.

### **Hollow as a Shadow**

The Darkened becomes hollow and empty within, with effort they can twist themselves to become hollow and empty without as well. The Darkened can roll Stamina + Composure to shift between one of three states: Solid, intangible and Twilight. This takes an Instant action. It is not uncommon for Darkspawn with this Umbrae to forget how to become solid.

**Drawback:** When you're hollow you're hollow. The Darkened always feels unsubstantial, like they have little to offer and don't belong. Their default state is intangible. In any stressful social situation where others are not directly paying attention to you, such as preparing to enter an interview room, the Darkened must roll Composure, on a failure they shift into Twilight and must remain there for the rest of the scene.

### **Hunger Means Nothing**

The Darkened is now immune to deprivation from dehydration or hunger. They no longer need to eat, nor drink; though they can, they gain no benefit from it, nor do they taste anything.

**Drawback:** Quite apart from the fact that they can never eat again, the character wastes away. They are at a permanent -1 to all actions from the weakness and slowness of thought, they reduce their Health by one box, and look too thin, like a cancer patient, or (some more cynical Princesses might remark) a top fashion model.

### **Taste of Sin**

The Darkened may assess a character's Morality with a Wits + Empathy roll. This is phrased in terms of the worst sins that the character has no problem with (so, for example, Morality 7 is "This character has no issues with non-lethal violence against his fellow man"). On an exceptional success, he also knows the worst action the individual has committed. Moreover, they gain +1 on all social rolls with people with Morality 5 or less, +2 on rolls with Morality 3 or less, and +3 with Morality 1 or 0...

**Drawback:** ... and the consequence is that the virtuous are painful to be around. They have a -1 to social rolls against Morality 7, -2 against 8, -3 against 9, and -4 against 10. Moreover, they need to pass a Resolve + Composure at the same penalty to even talk to people with that high Morality; if they fail, they lose a Willpower point, as a sudden shame hits them.

### **Light is Dark**

The Darkened's eyes transform; he now sees by the absence of light. Complete darkness is for him what bright light is for normal people, and he suffers no penalty from low light.

**Drawback:** Contrariwise, bright light is to him what complete darkness is for normal people – the Darkened is blind when directly illuminated, and takes penalties for any task that requires looking at things that give off light. Darkened with this Umbra are forced into a largely nocturnal existence.

### **Miasmia of Madness**

The Darkened exudes a colorless, odorless mist with a radius of Presence + Shadows. Anyone breathing in the mist must make a Resolve + Composure roll or spend a Willpower point to prevent the mist from clouding their mind for the rest of the scene. Any one affected is afflicted with a minor Derangemant or get a minor one upgraded to a major one.

**Drawback:** The Darkened must make the same roll or spend a Willpower point every scene.

### **Sound of Silence**

The character's hearing becomes exceptionally acute. They gain +3 to all aural based rolls.

**Drawback:** So acute, in fact, that they are deafened by their own voice. They cannot speak above the level of a soft whisper. This, as might be guessed, makes day-to-day life rather hard. They cannot drive a motorcycle, or attend concerts while in this state. Should they go to a supermarket, they must use the self-checkout, to avoid clamorous small talk with the girl at the checkout counter.

### **Subsumed by Another Shadow**

Whenever the Darkened comes within (Willpower + number of Umbrae) yards of a Darkspawn, he reflexively and automatically rolls Presence + Resolve, contested by the Resolve + Composure of the Darkspawn. The Darkened makes this roll separately for each Darkspawn he meets, but no more often than once a scene. If the Darkened gets more successes, the Darkspawn believes him to be its natural superior, and will seek to protect him as best it can, and gratify what it thinks are his desires. It will

continue to do so until it has been separated from the Darkened for (Willpower + number of Umbrae) hours; after that, it forgets the Darkened's existence.

The Darkened can try to give his servant an order as an instant action; the dice pool is Presence + Composure, and the order can have no more than (successes) conditions (so, "Break the light" is one, while "Break the light outside" is two.) By default, a Darkspawn servant will also use all its powers/abilities to prevent others from seeing it, but it will break cover if an order requires it. The one order it won't obey is to leave and not return.

**Drawback:** Of course, most people don't really want vicious Darkness-beasts following them around. Darkspawn servants consistently assume that their master wants them to do harm, and will kill or wreck anything that seems to be an obstacle, or even inconvenience, for him. Any expression of dislike for somebody, even for a trivial reason (being pushed aside by a passing stranger, say) might inspire the Darkspawn to deliver his severed head to your doorstep. In addition, most Darkspawn aren't the prettiest of things, and being followed by monsters that don't seem to show themselves to others is quite nasty on the psyche.

Darkspawn that possess this Umbrae are immune to its effects; they are not going to serve another, and will often attack anyone or anything else which possesses it. Moreover, they seem prone to retaining a worrying cunning quite unlike human intelligence; the limited use of language (enough to call out "help me" in a normal voice while trying to lure someone in), tactics (send weaker ones to make a noise outside while it and the stronger ones it controls come in through the roof), and the ability to control other Darkspawn make them notably more dangerous, especially since there is no way, on sight, to tell them apart.

### Subtle Tongue

Devious cunning becomes easy for the Darkened, as the nothingness and antipathy for form of the Darkness enters through the mouth. All Manipulation-based rolls, except for activations of supernatural powers, are at +1; this is increased to +3 if the character is lying.

**Drawback:** Correspondingly, forthright openness becomes hard. All Presence-based rolls, again except for activations of supernatural powers, are automatically reduced to a chance die; on a Dramatic Failure, the target becomes convinced that the Darkened is lying to them.

### Tainted Allure of Vice

There is something... fascinating about the Creature of the Darkness which calls to mortal souls; a sick, degrading allure to its presence which draws others closer. The character gains the Striking Looks merit, at the 4 dot rating, as the entire way they move, speak, act becomes attractive, even if they do not change much physically. Darkspawn with this Umbra retain some allure and do not become ugly, instead gaining a beautiful depravity in their inhumanity.

**Drawback:** ... and it brings out the worst in others, for it is a guilty pleasure that wracks at the soul. At the time of purchase, the Creature chooses a Vice from Lust, Envy or Wrath. As soon as they use the bonus dice from Striking Looks on a person (which is not a choice), for all future interactions that individual gains the Vice as a secondary Vice (or receives 2 WP for indulging, rather than 1, if that is already their vice). The Willpower is only given if their indulgence harms, subjugates, or degrades the Creature of the Darkness in some way, and will likely call for a Morality check in people of reasonable Morality. In packs of Darkspawn, ones with this Umbra are right at the bottom of the pack, because they suffer the indignities of their "peers" just as much as they had in life.

### Thief's Touch

The character's fingers are quicker and more nimble, subtly guiding the character in dark deeds. They gain the 8-again bonus in all Larceny and Subterfuge and rolls

**Drawback:** The character is always the first to be suspected of any wrong doing, even if he made a clean getaway or is innocent.

## Roteater

The character can eat anything, up to and including broken glass, and will suffer no more than one point of bashing damage as the "food" goes down. Anything less resilient than metal will be digested; things undigested will be passed, again causing no more than 1 point of bashing damage. They also receive the Iron Stomach merit for free, ignoring the normal prerequisites for it.

**Drawback:** Of course, with such a universal diet, one can always have... preferences. In this case, whenever they are hungry or thirsty, the character must succeed on a (Resolve + Composure) roll or else spend 1wp to not try to eat any rotting meat or drink stagnant, dirty water they see. They suffer a penalty on this roll equal to the Size of the rotting meat. Darkspawn with this Umbra almost always have Grotesque Bulk, and tend to make themselves larders of hung corpses (which need not be human; the first sign may well be all the pets going missing) in case they get peckish.

## Caligines

The Darkened can choose to twist themselves even farther, drawing on the Darkness for supernatural powers, the Caligines. Each Caligo is rated from 1 to 5, and costs 5 times its rating in experience points to purchase; however, a Darkened cannot take any Caligo unless he has at least as many Umbrae as the Caligo's dot rating. Darkspawn, Mnemosyne, and Cataphractoi, being without Morality, can have any Caligo on this list. Learning a Caligo is a Morality 1 sin. Many Caligines' uses are sins against Morality at some level – the descriptions note which.

## Claudendum

The Caligines in this set warp the body of the Darkened, marking him an exile from humanity. They may be learned independently.

### Diminutive Size (• or •••)

**Action:** Permanent

The Darkened twists and shrinks, often becoming animalistic or insectoid. At 1 dot, the Darkened becomes Size 3. He loses 1 dot of Strength, and the maximum Strength he can attain also drops by 1; but he gains 1 dot of Dexterity, and the maximum Dexterity he can attain rises by 1. He also becomes better at hiding, climbing and jumping: he gains a +2 bonus on all Stealth rolls, and on Athletics rolls to jump or climb, due to a better muscle to weight ratio. At 3 dots, the Darkened becomes Size 1, and all the penalties and bonuses of the 1-dot Diminutive Size are doubled.

A Darkspawn with this Caligo often shows more animal cunning than the simple brutality of it's peers by virtue of Darwinian necessity. Many seek powerful protectors like Cathrophacti or Menosynes and earn their keep as spys or scouts.

### Flesh of my Flesh (•••)

**Action:** Instant, Stamina + Medicine + Shadows

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

When all is reduced to an empty bleakness such trifling things as property will hardly matter a bit. In a Dark world you have far more important things to worry about than someone trying to steal your money, your goods, or your flesh.

With this Caligo a Darkspawn can heal themselves from physical injury, replacing damaged flesh with stolen flesh. Every Success heals 1 Bashing or Lethal damage, providing the Darkspawn has some spare human Flesh. Some stitch new flesh to old, but most simply eat and push the stolen flesh through their veins to where it's needed. The flesh must be consumed or acquired in the current scene and fresh enough to safely eat (which can be very old if the Darkspawn has the Roteater Umbrae). If the Darkspawn takes flesh from a living person they must take eat one point of Lethal damage's worth

of flesh for every point of Lethal or every three points of Bashing damage they heal. With some sort of bite attack then the Darkspawn may reflexively swallow after a Successful attack to stock up.

### **Grotesque Bulk (•, •••, or •••••)**

**Action:** Permanent

The Darkened swells and bloats, becoming gigantic. This Caligo increases the Size of those who learn it; the 1-dot version adds 1 to Size, the 3-dot version adds 2, and the 5-dot version adds 3. The Caligo also increases the Darkened's maximum Strength and Stamina by the same amount as his Size.

Grotesque Bulk and Diminutive Size are not compatible - a Darkened that has one at any level cannot learn the other.

### **Loathsome Weapon (•-•••)**

**Action:** Permanent/Instant, unrolled

**Cost:** none/1 Willpower

The Darkened can transform a part of his body into a lethal weapon - his mouth grows into a muzzle full of fangs, or his fingers stiffen into knife-like claws. At 1 dot attacks with the altered body part do lethal damage; at 2 dots they do +1 lethal damage, and at 3 dots they do +2 lethal damage. The Darkened need not grapple to attack with the altered part, even if that would be necessary before the alteration (as bites often are.) A Darkened may take multiple Loathsome Weapons, with each one affecting a different part of his body.

The body part cannot be used for anything but attacking foes while it is changed: a Darkened with a changed mouth cannot speak intelligibly, one with changed hands cannot grasp or manipulate objects. If the Darkened has a Loathsome Weapon as a permanent Caligo, the body part is permanently altered and never changes back; if he has it as an instant Caligo, the body part reverts to its normal shape at the end of the current scene.

### **Zombie's Flesh (•-•••••)**

**Action:** Permanent

The Darkened pulls his blood away from the outer layers of his flesh, and calls upon Taint to harden them; his skin takes on the waxy pallor of a corpse embalmed for burial. This hardening preserves the Darkened from nearly all forms of injury; he gains Armor equal to the dot rating of this Caligo. However, it also inspires revulsion in anyone not Darkened who can see his skin - the Darkened suffers a -2 penalty on all Empathy, Persuasion and Socialize rolls for interacting with non-Darkened.

### **Confudendum**

This sequence of Caligines twists senses and darkens minds. They must be learned in order; each is a prerequisite for the next.

### **Avoid All Eyes (•)**

**Action:** Instant, Wits + Shadows

The Darkened blurs in the sight of all witnesses; no one who sees him can tell exactly where he is. Any ranged attack aimed at the Darkened takes a penalty equal to his activation successes for the rest of the scene. This penalty stacks with other forms of concealment.

### **Bogeyman (••)**

**Action:** Instant, Presence + Intimidation + Shadows vs. Composure + supernatural advantage

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, Morality 6 sin

The Darkened wraps himself in the deepest fears of those around him. As long as he concentrates, others see him as whatever they dread most.

Dramatic Failure: The Darkened only appears ridiculous, like a man dressed in a Halloween costume. He cannot use Bogeyman for the rest of the scene.

Failure: Nobody is frightened by the Darkened's appearance.

Success: Everyone who sees or hears the Darkened, and who gets fewer successes on the contested roll, suffers the effect of the Phobia derangement, centered on him. His appearance is continuously frightening; newcomers catching sight of the Darkened reflexively contest the Caligo, and suffer the Phobia if they lose.

Extraordinary Success: Onlookers who lose the contested roll suffer the effects of Hysteria, centered on the Darkened.

Bogeyman lasts as long as the Darkened concentrates on keeping it going, or until the end of the scene; if the Darkened does anything that uses his action for a turn, the witnesses' unnatural fear of him fades away.

### **Handful of Dust (•••)**

**Action:** Instant and contested, Presence + Persuasion + Shadows vs. Composure + supernatural advantage

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, Morality 5 sin

The Darkened utters a sentence that blights the confidence of one to whom he speaks.

Dramatic Failure: The Darkened cannot use Handful of Dust for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The sentence means nothing to the target; there is no effect.

Success: The words haunt the target, condemning him as incapable and worthless. The target gains the Inferiority Complex derangement for a number of weeks equal to the successes the Darkened rolled. If he has that derangement already, upgrade it to Anxiety.

Exceptional Success: The target immediately gains the Anxiety derangement.

### **Everyone Dies Alone (••••)**

**Action:** Instant and contested, Manipulation + Persuasion + Shadows vs. Composure + supernatural advantage

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, Morality 4 sin

The Darkened offers to show the target a vision of the hatred and despair that lies under everything she loves. He can activate this Caligo without any knowledge of the target, but the more he knows of her and the people she loves, the easier it is for him. This Caligo creates a false vision, it does not require an actual betrayal to function.

Dramatic Failure or the target wins the roll with an Exceptional Success: The target sees a vision that reminds her of how much her friends need her, renewing her will to fight. She regains one Willpower. If the target is a Princess, if she prefers she may instead reflexively roll Belief - Shadows, gaining one Wisp per Success.

Failure: If the Darkened does not get more successes than the target, no vision appears.



**Success:** The target sees a vision of a friend or loved one betraying her. Depending on the Darkened's Successes this may be as simple as insulting her behind her back or a deadly betrayal that puts her life in jeopardy. Etched into her mind by dark magics the target can't help but believe it's true. As a result she subtracts the Darkened's successes from social rolls with the friend (if the target is a Princess this includes regaining Wisps from her Circle) and teamwork actions with him. This lasts until the target's friend beats the Darkened's successes on a Persuasion roll, or someone uses magic to break the curse.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to the benefits of many successes, the target gains the Avoidance Derangement triggered by the person seen in the vision.

**Modifiers:** The Darkened does not know the target's name (-3), the Darkened chooses a specific person to show, who is the target's friend (+3)

## **Polluendum**

This sequence of Caligines exploits the Dark World.

### **Void Magic (•)**

#### **Action: Permanent**

The Dark World is always hungry, especially for magical power, and it readily feeds on power directed at those it touches. The Darkened adds his current Shadows to his Resistance when he is the target of a supernatural power that is resisted with a contested roll.

### **Nowhere Untouched (••)**

#### **Action: Permanent**

The Dark World exists everywhere, gnawing at all that is real. With Nowhere Untouched, the Darkened may use Enter Darkness outside of Tainted areas; all he requires is a place large enough to stand or sit in, and which is not currently lit - a deep shadow will do. Anywhere there's enough light to read by, the Darkened still needs Taint to cross over.

When crossing in unTainted areas, a Darkened treats the local Taint as 0, using Willpower alone as the base; Morality and Shadows add bonuses and penalties as usual.

### **Walk in Darkness (•••)**

#### **Action: Instant, Stamina + Athletics + Shadows**

Beyond the images of Tainted places, the form of the Dark World distorts away from that of the land it came from. Those who dare to travel in the Dark World, if they have learned this power, find paths that lead from one Tainted place to another, far more swiftly than any road in the world of light.

The Darkened must use Walk in Darkness in the Dark World. If he succeeds, the landscape of the Dark World has shifted, opening a path from his current location to the place he wants to go that is significantly shorter than the smallest distance between the places they are images of. Each activation success cumulatively doubles his effective Speed in the real world for the next hour, or until he next leaves the Dark World, whichever comes first.

### **Twisting the Bane (••••)**

**Action:** Extended, Presence + Occult + Shadows - Severity of focus (10 minutes/roll, threshold = 2x Severity of focus)

**Cost:** 2 Willpower, Morality 3 sin

Taint, the Mnemosyne say, only anticipates the final state of the world under Darkness. With this Caligo, the Darkened calls up a different aspect of that final state in a Tainted area; while touching the Taint's focus, he prays to the powers of Darkness. On reaching the threshold number of successes, the Darkened may change 1 curse emanating from that focus. The area's Taint remains altered until the next sunrise, and then returns to its original values. The Darkened may use Twisting the Bane for a number of times a week equal to his Shadows.

### **Profanation (•••••)**

**Action:** Instant, Shadows + Severity of focus

**Cost:** 2 Willpower, Morality 1 sin

The Dark wants to Taint everything, and its servants can channel it towards the best places to infect with a well-timed murder. At a Tainted area's focus, the Darkened prepares a weapon or tool for murder. Each success transfers 1 dot of the Taint's Severity from the focus into the weapon, with an associated curse; the Darkened chooses which curse to take. While stored in the weapon, the Taint is inert – it doesn't register to Sensitivity, and doesn't affect anyone's dice pools. However, if the weapon is used to take the life of a non-Darkened, intelligent being, the place the murder was done immediately becomes Tainted with all the curses stored in the weapon, plus the points of Taint added by a murder in cold blood. The extra points expand the new Tainted area's Size as far as possible.

Each time the weapon does damage to anyone or anything without taking a person's life, 1 dot of the stored Taint escapes from it and returns to the Tainted place from which it came. If the weapon is destroyed before it takes a person's life, the stored Taint disappears entirely.

### **Sopiendum**

This sequence of Caligines steals energy from a Darkspawn's foes, leaving them weak or stunned.

### **Enervation (•)**

**Action:** Instant, unrolled

**Cost:** Morality 7 sin

The Darkened steals the will to live from others, leaving them listless. If he has a target immobilized – pinned in a grapple, unconscious, tied up, or otherwise unable to act – then he can touch the target to transfer 1 Willpower point from the target to himself. The Darkened cannot use Enervation if his Willpower pool is full, or the target's pool is empty.

### **Enervating Hex (••)**

**Action:** Extended, Intelligence + Crafts + Shadows - object's Durability (1 turn/roll, threshold = object's Structure)

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, Morality 6 sin

The Darkened converts an object to a sink for others' will and energy. Once the threshold has been reached, the Hex tries to drain Willpower from any non-supernatural unfortunate enough to remain within 5 yards of it for an hour or more. Each time this happens, roll the Darkened's Shadows when the Hex was made vs. the mortal's Resolve. If the Hex gains more successes, the mortal loses 1 Willpower point to the Hex. The drained Willpower is stored inside the Hex, and any Darkened with Enervation can use it on the Hex as if it were a living target. The Hex cannot drain more points of Willpower than it has in Structure; once it has done so, it will not drain any more, even after Willpower has been taken from it. Touching a Hex triggers Sensitivity while it is capable of draining Willpower.

### **Call the Black Dog (•••)**

**Action:** Instant, Manipulation + Empathy + Shadows - target's Resolve

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, Morality 5 sin

The Darkened deprives his target of the comforts of nightly rest, by sending a shadowy hunter to pursue him in his dreams. The target must be held immobile, unable to act, as with *Enervation*.

**Dramatic Failure:** The target's dreams withstand all assault; the Darkened can never use *Call the Black Dog* on this target again.

**Failure:** The target has a nightmare when he next sleeps, but it does not affect him further.

**Success:** The target has a dream every night of being mercilessly hunted. He no longer recovers Willpower when he sleeps - the point of Willpower he would normally gain goes instead to the Darkened, and is wasted if the Darkened's Willpower is fully refreshed. Roll the target's Resolve + Composure each night, after the Darkened gets his Willpower; when the target accumulates successes equal to the Darkened's Shadows, the dreams of being hunted stop, and on later nights the target gains Willpower normally again.

**Exceptional Success:** The hunter is persistent; the target's roll to escape the dreams takes a -2 penalty.

**Suggested Modifiers:** The target has had the *Caligo* used on him within the past month (-1 for each use)

### **Tentendum**

This sequence of *Caligines* exploits *Vice*, twisting desire into a perverse mockery of all that is humane.

### **Serpent's Tongue (•)**

**Action:** Permanent

The Darkness has a grip on everyone, and the Darkened can find it and bring it out. The Darkened adds his Shadows to all Social rolls to discover another person's *Vice*, or to persuade a person to indulge his *Vice*.

### **Evil Influence (••)**

**Action:** Instant, Presence + Persuasion + Shadows

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, Morality 6 sin

The sight of the Darkened rouses the Darkness in one's heart, and inspires impulses to crime. For the rest of the scene, all the Darkened's attempts to induce other people to perform acts that cause suffering (anything that would trigger a *Princess' Sensitivity*) get bonus dice equal to the Darkened's activation successes. This bonus stacks with any bonus from *Serpent's Tongue* when the suggested act plays to a person's *Vice*.

### **Sin Whisperer (•••)**

**Action:** Instant, Manipulation + Subterfuge + Shadows - target's Resolve

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, Morality 5 sin

The Darkened infects a victim's psyche, inflaming and spying on his target's worst impulses. The Darkened must have the target immobilized and unable to act.

**Dramatic Failure:** The target resists the psychic infection - the Darkened can never use *Sin-Whisperer* on this target again.

Failure: The target is not affected.

Success: Whenever the target has an opportunity to follow his Vice, he must roll Resolve + Composure, penalized by the Darkened's successes, to resist indulging. If he fails this roll and indulges his Vice, the Darkened makes a Perception roll reflexively to learn what the target did that triggered his Vice; he learns as much as he might have gleaned from a Perception roll if he had been present. Each time the target follows his Vice, the penalty on his roll to resist drops by 1 to a minimum of -0; if he ever successfully resists, he purges the psychic infection.

Exceptional success: The infection is both deep and persistent; there are no further effects.

A Darkened can infect only one person at a time with Sin-Whisperer; until the current infectee recovers, the Caligo fails automatically when used on anyone else.

### **Drink Pain Like Wine (••••)**

**Action:** Extended, Manipulation + Persuasion + Shadows (5 minutes/roll, threshold = target's Composure + Empathy)

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, Morality 4 sin

The Darkened preaches a creed of suffering and cruelty, and instills his words with a dreadful power to convince one who listens to them. When he reaches the threshold number of successes, his target gains a secondary Vice of Cruelty; he regains one point of Willpower in any scene where another person suffers as a direct result of his actions (that is, when his action would trigger a Princess' Sensitivity.) This Vice applies independently of the target's normal Vice - he can gain Willpower from both in the same scene.

By default the Caligo's duration lapses at the next sunrise. However, if the target loses Morality as a result of indulging Cruelty, the Caligo's duration lengthens by 1 full month for each dot of Morality lost. On the other hand, if the target ever fulfills his Virtue, and regains any Willpower by doing so, the Caligo ends immediately - the target remembers his true character and shakes off the Darkened's influence.

### **Crafted with Love and Care (•••••)**

Perquisite: Mnemosyne or Cataphractoi

Cost 2 Willpower, Morality 3 Sin.

Action, Extended, Presence + Crafts + Shadows vs Composure + Power Stat. (Threshold: Targets Morality + Resolve. Dark Creature's Presence + Shadows)

Ingredients: One helpless captive held fast, Darkness fresh from the Dark World, tears and raw material. Plastic or burlap will do. With this profane Caligo the Darkspawn physically creates some kind of doll around the victim. Trapping their body and their mind.

Dramatic Failure or the defender wins with an Exceptional Success: The half finished doll explodes, freeing the victim from their bonds, at least temporarily.

Failure: No progress is made. If the defender reaches the threshold the half finished doll becomes nothing more than inert material which can be easily removed.

Success: The Dark Creature makes progress. When they are finished the complete doll sinks beneath the victims flesh. Only supernatural senses, and curiously a canine or feline's sense of smell, can detect anything wrong. Dolls created by this power have the targets original Physical Attributes, the Darkened Template and the Umbra Tainted Allure of Vice. They are also entirely mindless and act as the people around them expect them to act. They even use the Mental Attributes, Social Attributes and Skills of those around them, if a gourmet chef expects a Doll to cook his steak at exactly 550 degrees, it will.

Exceptional Success: Great progress is made.

Killing a doll kills the person trapped within, and so it counts as killing an innocent when measuring Belief of Morality.

**Drawback:** Being entirely mindless Dolls do not have Morality and so cannot lose Morality. Barring an external influence there is no transition from a Doll to other types of Dark Creature. So long as the Doll exists there is a possibility to break the curse with magic. Of course, this is only a Drawback from the Darkness' perspective.

### Other Caligines

These Caligines do not form a sequence.

### Shadowbolt (•, ••• or •••••)

**Action:** Reflexive to charge. Instant to shoot, Dexterity + Firearms + Shadows.

Cost 1 Willpower to charge.

The Darkened gains the ability to perform a ranged attack powered by magic or some obscene biological mutation. Before attacking the Darkened must spend a point of Willpower to charge Shadowbolt, one Willpower provides Shadows times three shots.

Despite the unusual nature of this attack treat it like a normal firearms weapon. Damage is Bashing, at three dots it becomes Lethal and at five dots Aggravated.

### Shadowbomb (•, ••• or •••••)

**Action:** Reflexive to charge. Instant to throw, Dexterity + Athletics

Cost 1 Willpower to charge.

The Darkened gains the ability to charge an item with explosive power with magic or some obscene biological mutation. Before attacking the Darkened must spend a point of Willpower to charge Shadowbomb. A Shadowbomb has a Blast Area of Shadows and a Damage of half Shadows

Despite the unusual nature of this attack treat it like a landmine or a grenade. Damage is Bashing, at three dots it becomes Lethal and at five dots Aggravated.

### Shadowblade (•, ••• or •••••)

**Action:** Instant, roll Intelligence+Craft+Shadows (Successes are capped by Taint Severity or 5, whatever is lower)

The Darkened can manipulate the Taint around her to form a weapon of pure Darkness that cuts at both the flesh and the happiness within. Despite its unusual nature this weapon can be treated as a normal attack.

A Single Success creates a mundane melee weapon chosen from the list in WoD Core p170. If you possess WoD Armoury you may choose from that book, it is acceptable to design a new weapon if it has identical stats to any existing weapon. Each additional success may be spent to: increase Damage by one, increase durability by one, reduce the Strength requirement by two.

At one dot the Shadowblade can only do Bashing Damage. It might be some form of club, or just a have a surprisingly dull edge. At three dots the weapon does lethal damage, at five dots it may do Aggravated Damage.

### Voice-Eating Hunger (•)

**Action:** Permanent

The Darkness is eternally silent. Within the depths of the Dark World, there is no noise but what outsiders bring with them, and what little the Creatures of the Darkness retain from their old lives. The

Darkness takes that too, in time. This Caligo enhances a Creature of the Darkness' natural attacks. Whenever they injure a target or damage an object, the target is also prevented from making any noise for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled on the attack. This only covers direct noise; she cannot scream no matter how hard she tries, but if she knocks a vase from the table in her flailing, when it hits the ground it will still shatter and make noise.

As a passive benefit from knowing this Caligo, the Creature only makes sound when it wants to, giving it a Stealth Speciality in "Moving Silently".

### **Grasping at Shadows (••)**

**Action:** Instant and resisted, Dexterity + Brawl + Shadows - target's Defense

With a sweep of a hand or foot, the Darkened catches hold of an opponent's shadow. Aside from the dice pool, this is a normal close attack. If the target is not casting a shadow (for instance, he isn't illuminated) the Caligo has no effect.

Dramatic Failure: The Darkened cannot use Grasping at Shadows for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The target feels a momentary weakness, but is not otherwise affected.

Success: The target is paralyzed, unable to move or act. He remains in this state as long as the Darkened keeps hold of his shadow. The Darkened must remain close enough to touch him, and have one hand free – any action that requires both hands or requires leaving the target breaks the hold. Also, if the target is attacked, he may apply his Defense, and the sudden motion also breaks the Darkened's hold on him. The other powers of Sopiendum do *not* count as an attack.

Exceptional Success: The target is paralyzed as above, and remains so for the rest of the scene, even if the Darkened releases his shadow; he cannot act until he is attacked.

### **I Have You Now, My Pretty (••)**

Action; Instant, Strength + Crafts + Shadows - target's Strength

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

The Darkspawn develops some grotesque power that allows it to capture it's foes. Arachnid like web spinners, fast growing tentacles or a dark sorcery that conjures rusty bloodsoaked chains out of shadows and fears. On a Success the target is bound and must exceed the Darkspawns' Successes to break free with a Strength + Brawl roll.

### **Such Pretty Eyes, I Think I'll keep Them (•••)**

**Action:** Instant, Presence + Intimidation + Shadows vs Resolve + Supernatural Advantage

**Cost:** 1 Bashing Health Level, 1 Willpower

Duration: 10 – Target's Morality days. The Darkened may end it early as an instant action.

The Darkness knows that a touch of evil lies in every heart, and a hint of envy blinds every eye. This Caligo makes use of that truth, allowing the Darkened to see through another's eyes. Some Darkened use this to spy through their enemies eyes, others use it on their own minions to help lead and organise their assets. To use his Caligo the Darkened smears a drop of blood on the eyes of his target.

Dramatic Failure: The Darkened sees through the target's eyes, just for a second. But he sees not just images but the targets viewpoint. If the target's Morality is higher than the Darkened's Morality – Shadows he sees himself for what he truly is and gains a mild Derangement for the rest of the day.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The target's eyes begin weeping small amounts of black pus (-2 to all social rolls if visible). As an Instant Action the Darkened can choose to see from the targets eyes instead of his own. He can

also choose to see from one of his eyes and one of the target's eyes (or two different victims) which inflicts -3 due to the mental taxation of seeing two viewpoints at once.

Exceptional Success: The target forgets the cause of her weeping eyes and gains the Avoidance derangement that prevents her from talking about or showing her eyes to anyone.

A Darkened may have up to Intelligence + Shadows people tagged with this power at any one time.

### **World-Corroding Entropic Touch (•••)**

**Action:** Instant, unrolled

**Cost:** 1 Willpower, 1 lethal health level

Duration: One Scene

Within the Darkness, all things shatter and break. Taking the Darkness into her flesh, the Creature imbues herself with that alien property. For the remainder of the scene, the Creature of the Darkness inflicts 1 point of Aggravated damage per turn to any object she touches. The ground under her feet melts in her black, stinking footsteps, her clothes turn to dust on her back, all her hair flakes away and dies, and trails of dark ooze streak down her face as her tears hiss and boil on her skin. In a grapple, she does 1 point of aggravated damage per round on her action, from the contact. When attacking with a natural attack, one level of damage is upgraded to aggravated damage, no matter what the original kind of damage done was.

This Caligo can, as an instant action, be converted into a permanent duration Caligo. The Charm does not need to be activated, but the effects are permanently on, and cannot be deactivated. There are deep pits in the Dark World which form where Darkspawn who know this Charm are trapped, for even when trapped in dormancy they still corrode the ground below them, until they fall at last into Utter Darkness and are seen no more.

### **Voidbolt (••• or •••••)**

**Action:** Reflexive to charge. Instant to shoot, Dexterity + Firearms + Shadows.

**Cost:** 1 Willpower to charge.

The Darkened gains the ability to perform a ranged attack powered by magic or some obscene biological mutation. Before attacking the Darkened must spend a point of Willpower to charge Voidbolt, one Willpower provides Shadows shots.

Despite the unusual nature of this attack treat it like a normal firearms weapon. Damage is Bashing however a blast from Voidbolt drains the Light from the heart with it's infinite hungry emptiness. Every point of damage inflicts a -1 general penalty which decreases by 1 each turn. At five dots the penalty remains for the rest of the scene.

Penalties from Voidbolt do not stack, use the greater penalty. They do not stack with Voidbomb or Voidblade.

### **Voidbomb (••• or •••••)**

**Action:** Reflexive to charge. Instant to throw, Dexterity + Athletics

**Cost:** 1 Willpower to charge.

The Darkened gains the ability to charge an item with explosive power with magic or some obscene biological mutation. Before attacking the Darkened must spend a point of Willpower to charge Voidbomb. A Voidbomb has a Blast Area of Shadows and a Damage of half Shadows

Despite the unusual nature of this attack treat it like a landmine or a grenade. Damage is Bashing however a blast from Voidbomb drains the Light from the heart with it's infinite hungry emptiness.

Every point of damage inflicts a -1 general penalty which decreases by 1 each turn. At five dots the penalty remains for the rest of the scene.

Penalties from Voidbomb do not stack, use the greater penalty. They do not stack with Voidbolt or Voidblade.

### **Voidblade ( • • • or • • • • • )**

**Action:** Instant, roll Intelligence+Craft+Shadows (Successes are capped by Taint Severity or 5, whatever is lower)

The Darkened can manipulate the Taint around her to form a weapon of pure Darkness that cuts at both the flesh and the happiness within. Despite it's unusual nature this weapon can be treated as a normal attack.

A Single Success creates five mundane melee weapon, usually in the shape of needles, small daggers, and caltrops. Each additional success may be spent to: increase Damage by one, increase durability by one

Voidblade can only do Bashing Damage. Every point of damage inflicts a -1 general penalty which decreases by 1 each turn. At five dots the penalty remains for the rest of the scene

### **I am Your Master ( • • • • • )**

**Action:** Extended, Presence + Intimidation + Shadows - targets' highest Resolve; make 1 roll each sunfall, target number is the highest Resolve among the Darklings + the number affected

**Cost:** 1 Lethal Health Level per Darkling, 1 WP each night, Morality 2 sin

A taste of the true Darkness in the heart is enough to break a beast to the will of someone stronger for life. To begin using this Caligo, the Darkened feeds a measure of his own flesh or blood to the Darkspawn he wants to influence, enough to do 1 lethal damage per Darkspawn. He need not remain within sight of his targets after the first night; the process works from within. Once this is done, the Darkened spends 1 Willpower at sunfall each night and rolls reflexively. If he fails to do this, the Darkspawn react as if he had rolled a dramatic failure.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Darkened's control over his servants breaks. The Darkspawn now desire nothing more than to feast upon his flesh again, and seek him out to kill and eat him. They know exactly where their former master is for a number of nights equal to their Wits; if the Darkened evades them longer than that, they lose the trail.

**Failure:** The Darkened keeps any control he had, but makes no further progress.

**Success:** The Darkened accumulates successes. Before he reaches the target number, the Darkspawn will obey verbal orders the Darkened gives them during the hours of darkness, to the best of their abilities, but they won't risk their lives, and they return to their normal activities when the sun rises. Giving an order follows the same rules as the Umbra Subsumed by Another Shadow.

After reaching the target number, though, the Darkspawn become fanatically loyal; they will continue to carry out an assigned task until it's complete without regard for day or night, and will fight to the death if so ordered. They will attack anyone who tries to break their master's control, doing as much damage as they can (making all-out attacks, spending Willpower, etc.) until either they or the other is dead. In addition, the Darkened can give his servants orders mentally, without speaking aloud, and adds his Shadows to the roll.

**Exceptional Success:** The bond between master and servant becomes a source of power. One of the Darkspawn affected adds 1 dot in a Physical Attribute; the master chooses the Darkspawn and the Attribute. The new dots remain as long as the Darkened's control persists.

### **Venom of the Soul ( • • • • • )**

**Action:** Instant, Presence + Empathy + Shadows



**Cost:** 2 Willpower, Morality 3 sin

The touch of the Darkened wracks those whom the Darkness has marked. For the rest of the scene, when the Darkened touches a target or attacks with a natural weapon (punch, kick, grapple or bite) the target's system is attacked by a magical poison. The poison does lethal damage for one turn (if not resisted) and has a Toxicity equal to 7 - the target's Morality + the target's Shadows (if any), or the Darkened's activation successes, whichever is less. If the target's Morality reduces the Toxicity to 0 or less, the target is immune to the poison, unless he has been corrupted by Tainted areas - on a target in danger of becoming Darkened, the poison's Toxicity cannot be less than 1. The Darkened's natural attacks still do damage as normal - the poison adds to the natural damage. (See the World of Darkness Rulebook, p180-181 for more details on poison.)

Any character killed by the poison (as opposed to an attack) reanimates the next turn as a mindless puppet of the Darkness, shadows spilling forth from the frost-edged wound. Reduce all Mental and Social Attributes, and Physical Skills to 1, and Mental and Social Skills to 0. It has Health equal to its Stamina + Size, and does not suffer wound penalties. The creature is not a true Darkspawn, but will attack the nearest non-Creature of Darkness. It collapses, dead again, at the end of the scene.

## Merits

### Palace of Dark Delights (•- •••••; special)

Not all touched by the Dark can hide themselves among the mortals who live in the light lit world. Some Mnemosyne can blend in, but few Cataphractoi can hide the Darkness in their eyes for long. Certainly Darkspawn can't pass as normal and even Darkened occasionally have to flee when their tainted vices attract too much attention.

With the need to hide deep within the Dark World it's unsurprising that occasionally the Darkness' pitiful victims like to tidy the place up just a little bit. This is usually basic, if that, few touched by the Darkness really have the mindset for long term DIY projects. However Some Mnemosyne or Cataphractoi have learned to twist the Dark World, replacing the tumbled down reflection of the real world with something entirely different. Occasionally even pleasant looking on the surface.

Not all homes are equal. The Darkspawn who live beneath the mental hospital that abuses patients have a more secure base of operations than the Darkspawn living beneath a serial killer's home. The Merit is therefore composed of multiple sub-Merits; each dot purchased is assigned to one of the sub-Merits below. A Palace of Dark Delights can only be built beneath a Tainted Place and has a Size equal or less than the Tainted Place, at least if it's builders want to be able to live in it.

Special: Trust does not come easily to the Darkspawn, but when it does it is possible to build a shared Palace of Dark Delights, with each member contributing Merit dots towards its sub-Merits. The normal limits for each component remain. If a contributor to a shared Palace abandons it, the dots they contributed are removed, and the contributing character gets back all but one of them for her own use - the lost dot represents the inevitable losses when the builders Dark hearts turn on one another.

### Dark Palace Size (up to •••••)

0 dots - A Palace with no dots in Size is just large enough for one owner, and maybe a camp bed.

1 dot - A small apartment or a cabin in the woods; 1-2 rooms

2 dots - A large apartment or small remote house; 3-4 rooms

3 dots - A converted church, warehouse or large house; 5-8 rooms

4 dots - A mansion, extensive network of forgotten tunnels, or cavern under the earth; 9-15 rooms

5 dots - A vast palatial estate or complex underground village; countless rooms

Dark Palace Size is usually limited to the Size of the Taint it is built beneath.

### Dark Palace Security (up to •••••)

Each dot assigned to Palace Security gives a -1 penalty to any attempt to gain entry to the Palace by anyone other than the contributors, or those they have given permission to enter. This can be represented by secure locks, the deliberate sculpting of the ground to cover the entry down to the underground rooms, or any suitable method determined by the Storyteller. In addition, the familiarity which setting up such defences implies allows the contributors to react faster should anyone break in; each dot grants a +1 to Initiative while inside.

Dark Palace Security does not defend against breaking in by passing from Earth into the Dark World.

### **Dark Palace Amusements (up to \*\*\*\*\*)**

The creatures of the Dark are creatures of base urges and simple impulses. This makes them rather easy to manipulate: Any Mnemosyne, Cataphractoi or even a particularly ambitious Darkened only need offer bread and circuses. Dark Palace Amusements covers everything from cheap but clean beds (a luxury in the Dark World) to an ample supply of captive mortals or Dolls to torment for cheap thrills or even twisting the Dark World into something with a little more class than the reflection of another squalid Tainted Palace.

Each dot in Dark Palace Amusements gives +1 to all rolls to win or make use of the loyalty of any creature of the Dark. This includes both mundane persuasion, Umbae or Caligos. The Storyteller will have to use judgement. Offering clean beds is little incentive to a Darkened who has a comfortable (or any) home on Earth. Nor will a moral Darkened trying to escape his curse be tempted by such an obvious ploy as offering people to torment.

Having too many Amusements is a risk in itself; Creatures of the Dark are not known for a sense of fair play, many are quite happy to just take what they want.

## **Sample Darkened**

### **Deluded Vigilante**

Given a choice the Darkness doesn't do Virtue. Sometimes it doesn't have a choice, sometimes the only hook it has is a person's Virtue so the Darkness does it's best to twist that Virtue right around and back into Vice again.

The Deluded Vigilante always wanted to be someone special with cool powers. Not to be superior or to abuse them, but to do something positive and interesting with their life. This wouldn't be a problem except that powers they got came straight from a realm of pure evil. They think that they can use their powers for good, protecting the night from hidden threats be it crime or Darkspawn; as their name implies they're deluded. Their powers isolate them from humanity and tempt them into pouncing on flimsier evidence with ever increasing brutality.

The Darkspawn created when a Deluded Vigilante falls often resemble urban legends. Mysterious killers who hunt down anyone who commits a seemingly innocent "crime".

Fortunately a Deluded Vigilante considers herself on the side of the angels. If the Princess arrives soon enough this makes it easier to talk some sense into them, offering powers that aren't inherently evil - such as becoming Sworn and a couple of Bequests - usually works.

The possibility of an undeluded vigilante exists, such an exceptional individual would almost certainly have at least 7 Willpower and could be a great ally if the Princess needs to work with powerful Taint or the Dark World. Though even then such potential is probably put to better use as a Sworn.

### **Creature of the Darkness: Darkened**

**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Strength 4, Dex 3, Stamina 2, Presence 3, Manipulation: 1, Composure: 2

**Skills:** Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Stealth 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2.

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 5

**Vice:** Wrath - Brutal justice

**Virtue:** Justice - A typical expression.

**Morality:** 4 (Irrationality)

**Size:** 5

**Defence:** 2

**Initiative:** 5

**Speed:** 12

**Umbræ:** Umbræ: Faceless in the Crowd, Dark Dreams (-1 to resist Derangements).

**Calignes:** Shadowbolt 1

### Malicious Gossip

Humans are social creatures, they easily learn the importance of forming a coherent group with a cultural identity. Like most things to do with humanity it has both it's good side and it's bad side, and like most things to do with humanity it can be corrupted by the Dark. Conformity becomes the goal instead of the means. Relationships become a way of scoring points. People outside the group become "the enemy".

Malicious Gossips rarely become true Darkspawn, their Sins are just too... petty. Slander and malicious gossip rather than serial murders and gruesome torture. They remain as Darkened putting on a smiling face and living their lives. The communities they call home tend to be cesspits of petty one-upmanship (even if they remain pretty or idyllic on the surface), either because they dragged it down or because every better community saw through them and sent them packing. Living alone of course was never an option.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Darkspawn

**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Strength 2, Dex 2, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation: 3, Composure: 3

**Skills:** Academics 1, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Occult 1, Politics 2 (Neighbourhood), Athletics 1, Drive 1, Stealth 2, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2, Socialise 3 (My People), Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2 (slandorous gossip).

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 4

**Vice:** Pride - Keeping up appearances

**Virtue:** Faith - In the group and conformity itself.

**Morality:** 5

**Size:** 5

**Defence:** 2

**Initiative:** 5

**Speed:** 9

**Umbræ:** Umbræ: Subtle Tongue and Tainted Allure of Vice (Envy).

### Sample Darkspawn

#### Corpse-Eaters

Survival... needing to survive can bring out the best in people, it can bring out the worst in people but some say what it does is bring out the truth in people. Sometimes it would be best if the truth remained hidden. Eating human flesh when you're starving isn't enough to make a Darkspawn, it's not even enough to make a Darkened but when the ground's already Tainted by whatever sins put a human being into such a position, when the Darkness already has a hold. Some people get a taste for human flesh, and if the supply dries up they'll take matters into their own hands.

Corpse-Eaters still look human, under the thick layer of filth and the accumulated results of terrible table manners. Then they open their mouths, stretching their human looking lips back to their ears and unhinging their jaws to reveal a mass of broken stained teeth in all shapes and sizes three layers deep.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Darkspawn

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 5, Strength 4, Dex 3, Stamina 4, Presence 1, Manipulation: 1, Composure: 3

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2 (grapple, bite), Stealth 2, Survival 3, Intimidation 2

**Health:** 9  
**Willpower:** 8  
**Vice:** Gluttony - For human flesh.  
**Virtue:** Fortitude - Survival whatever it takes. It's their birth, and their life.  
**Size:** 5  
**Defence:** 2  
**Initiative:** 6  
**Speed:** 9  
**Umbræ:** Roteater  
**Calignes:** Loathsome Weapon 2 (Jaws), Flesh of my Flesh 3.

### **Cradlesnatchers**

Grotesque fat sloshing around within drooping folds of loose skin. It's the voice in the cupboard, the presence under your bed. It's every mother's worst nightmare: The Cradlesnatcher. They pass like a shadow of silence and leave behind empty beds and broken families. In life Cradlesnatchers were the servants of organised crime and politicians everywhere. The briber and blackmailer who corrupted or at least neutered the innocent so they could not oppose their employers, though even those scum of the earth would pale in horror if they saw what they would have eventually become.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Darkspawn

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Strength 4, Dex 1, Stamina 3, Presence 3, Manipulation: 1, Composure: 2

**Skills:** Politics 1 (School) Science 1 (physics of light), Athletics 2 (Squeezing into things), Brawl 3 (grapple), Stealth 4 (Bedroom, Moving Silently), Survival 2 (The Dark World), Intimidation 2 (Children)

**Health:** 9

**Willpower:** 5

**Vice:** Envy – Children have the innocence it once had. It will see that corrupted and destroyed!

**Virtue:** Faith – It knows the Darkness exists to corrupt and has faith that it's hard work will see it rewarded, by the Darkness or it's master.

**Size:** 6

**Defence:** 3

**Initiative:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Flaw:** Phobia (Dogs), Phobia (Cats), Phobia (Being under a blanket).

**Umbræ:** Light is Dark, Faceless in the Crowd.

**Calignes:** Void Magic 1, Nowhere Untouched 2, Grotesque Bulk 1, Zombie's Flesh 2, Voice-Eating Hunger 1

### **Heartleeches**

Sometimes, when a new Darkspawn tears itself out of someone who has betrayed all they love and given everything in the name of their own hubris, the corpse is left behind, putrid and rotting. Instead, that traitor's tongue squirms free, sprouting centipede-like legs of wispy shadow, and crawling around far, far too quickly. Such beings, Heartleeches, are the epitome of the madness of paranoia and the terrible things that mistrust does to a man, for no-one even remembers them when they're gone. Small, globules of inky darkness roiling off them, they find sleeping people, and whisper into their ears, filling their dreams with Darkness. Some say that they can even crawl down the throat of a sleeper, and whisper from within their gut, in the mad, senseless burbling of the Beyond, but that is just paranoia in its own right. Right?

**Creature of the Darkness:** Darkspawn

**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 1, Strength 2, Dex 4, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation: 5, Composure: 4

**Skills:** Investigation 1, Athletics 2 (Scuttling), Brawl 1 (Trying to Escape), Stealth 5 (Bedrooms), Survival 3 (The Places No-One Thinks To Look), Animal Ken 3 (Inspiring Fear), Empathy 4 (Only

for the purposes of negative emotions and judging someone's Morality; 0 otherwise.), Intimidation 2 (Inspiring Paranoia), Persuasion 4 (Everyone Dies Alone)

**Health:** 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Vice:** Envy - Heartleeches live to ruin lives. It's that simple. Tearing down the foundations of trust another has is their purpose for existence, much like it was in life.

**Virtue:** Fortitude - ... and they're going to keep on doing it, though thick and thin.

**Size:** 1

**Defence:** 4

**Initiative:** 8

**Speed:** 16 (species factor +10)

**Umbræ:** Light is Dark, Faceless in the Crowd

**Calignes:** Diminutive Size 3, Avoid All Eyes 1, Everyone Dies Alone 4

### Lickermen

Long of arm and hunched over are the Lickermen, those among the Darkspawn which hunt for the innocent and sup from the taste of violation. They are shrivelled, like a long-dried, starved corpse, their leathery skin loose around their too-small bones, and a vile, blackened tongue as long as a man's arm protrudes from a mouth otherwise sewn up with stitches of their own bone. Examination reveals that they are sexless; whatever they were before they were monsters is gone. As they pass by, they wuffle, like some kind of tracking hound, and they are often used for that purpose by Mnemosynes and Cataphractoi who want a stalking hound which is mostly reliable. In combat, they will flee against anything they think they cannot beat, but will gleefully attack anyone alone, especially children under the age of seven, and individuals with a Morality of 8 or higher. They do not eat the body, however, for they cannot open their mouths; it is the destruction of innocence that they seem to feed off.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Darkspawn

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 5, Resolve 3, Strength 1, Dex 3, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation: 3, Composure: 2

**Skills:** Craft 1 (Improvising Weapons), Investigation 2 (Lost Things), Physical **Skills:** Athletics 3 (Climbing), Brawl 2 (Tongue), Stealth 4 (From Surprise), Survival 1 (The Dark World), Animal Ken 1 (Inspiring Fear), Empathy 3 (Only for the purposes of negative emotions and judging someone's Morality; 0 otherwise.), Intimidation 2 (It's Behind You)

**Health:** 4 (one lost due to Hunger Means Nothing)

**Willpower:** 5

**Vice:** Gluttony - The Lickerman lives for the moments when it chokes a small child or good person to death. It's like chocolate-coated chocolate to this monster that cannot eat.

**Virtue:** Prudence - It's better to run away and live to fight another day, after all.

**Size:** 3

**Defence:** 5

**Initiative:** 5

**Speed:** 9

**Umbræ:** Taste of Sin, Hunger Means Nothing

**Calignes:** Diminutive Size 1, Loathesome Weapon 2 (a blackened, barb-like tongue), Void Magic, Enervation

### Shadowpuppets

They say all evil needs to win is for good people to nothing. Well evil won here and it won because the good person who was Tainted simply did nothing. For convenience they turned a blind eye to the curse that surrounded them, the living shadow that delighted in others suffering.

Perhaps they still find it convenient, they still don't need to worry about the shadow. They don't need to worry about anything any more. Now the shadow thinks for both of them, but then the Princess sees a flash of recognition, terror and guilt deep within the glassy zombified eyes. Not so convenient then.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Darkspawn**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 1, Resolve 1, Strength 4, Dex 1, Stamina 4, Presence 1, Manipulation: 1, Composure: 1**Skills:** Brawl 2, Intimidation 2**Health:** 9**Willpower:** 2**Vice:** Sloth - It's so easy to just let the shadow think for you.**Virtue:** Fortitude - don't confront the problem, just wear a brave face and soldier on.**Size:** 5**Defence:** 1**Initiative:** 2**Speed:** 10**Umbrae:** Animate Shadow, Cold Flesh, Hunger Means Nothing, Light is Dark**Calignes:** Zombie's Flesh 5, Loathsome Weapon 1 (Claws).**The Shadow****Creature of the Darkness:** Animate Shadow**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2, Strength 2, Dex 5, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation: 3, Composure: 2**Skills:** Investigate 1 (shiny things), Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Larceny 5 (Slight of hand), Stealth 5 (just a shadow), Survival 2, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 2.**Corpus:** 3**Willpower:** 4**Vice:** Greed - As a creature without flesh it is denied the pleasures of the flesh. The pleasures of glittering gold are another matter.**Virtue:** Faith - The shadow actually likes the Darkness, it gave life and freed it from just being another's Shadow.**Size:** 5**Defence:** 5**Initiative:** 2**Speed:** 17 (Species factor 10)**Reflected Calignes:** Loathsome Weapon 1 (Claws).**Shadow-Wraiths**

Not all Darkspawn were once people. Shadowwraiths are formed not from people, but from their little mementoes. Sometimes when a prized possession is lost within a Tainted place or the Darkworld the memories, the humanity, invested in such an object can give form to the Taint. It becomes twisted and corrupt, a hungry creature of the Darkness.

Shadowwraiths are immaterial beings and use the rules for similar beings such as Ghosts. The Hollow as a Shadow Umbra allows them to materialize more easily than a spirit, and much more so than a ghost.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Darkspawn**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 2, Resistance 4**Corpus:** 9**Willpower:** 11**Vice:** Wrath - Born of twisted emotions it's a simple, destructive being.**Virtue:** Fortitude - But it possesses an animalistic need to survive.**Size:** 5**Defence:** 6**Initiative:** 6**Speed:** 18**Umbrae:** Hollow as a Shadow, Roteater, Light is Dark**Calignes:** Avoid all Eyes 1, Enervation 1, Loathsome Weapon 2

## Sample Mnemosyne

### Dr Arnow

Needs must be met, I merely provide a service.

Mr Arnow as he was called was a fine upstanding Victorian gentleman. By fine and upstanding we wish it to be understood that he had a great deal of money. He was in fact the rotten scum of the Earth. A man who saw his fellow humans as nothing more than a resource, and a slum lord who treated his tenants in the most awful manner. His cruelties tainted his tenancies and through that, himself.

At first Mr Arnow delighted in his status, believing he held vast powers at the tips of his fingers. All too soon he learned that he could never master the Darkness, instead the Darkness had already mastered him. Now a Mnemosyne called Dr Arnow he resides in the Dark World and sends his Darkspawn servants to capture victims from the world above as parts for his Dolls. Every Doll he creates is another chance for people to fall to temptation, to Darkness.

Dr Arnow is old (though a good chunk of his life was spent frozen in the Dark World) and powerful, but he is a coward at heart and prefers to avoid direct involvement.

### **Creature of the Darkness:** Mnemosyne

**Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3, Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Presence 2, Manipulation: 5, Composure: 5

**Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 5 (dolls, flesh), Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Brawl 2, Firearms 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 3 (Psychological manipulation), Persuasion 3 (Psychological manipulation) Subterfuge 2.

**Shadows:** 4

**Health:** 11

**Willpower:** 8

**Vice:** Greed (Money no longer has any meaning for him, but power is always the sweetest currency. By spreading Vice and Taint he increases the Darknesse's power and thus the portion of it delegated down to him).

**Virtue:** Temperance (Moderation is the key, don't overplay your hand. Find a method that works, then stick to it).

**Size:** 8

**Defence:** 2

**Initiative:** 10

**Speed:** 14

**Merits:** Palace of Dark Delights (He's twisted his small corner of the Dark World into a Victorian dollmaker's workshop. Size 2, Security 1, Amusements 2)

**Calignes:** Grottesque Bulk 5 (He's ludicrously tall but thin and spindly), Zombie's Flesh 3, Handful of Dust 3, Everyone Dies Alone 4, Void Magic 1, Enervation 1, Enervating Hex 2, Grasping at Shadows 3, Shadowbolt 3 (He sends puppet dolls to attack), Such Pretty Eyes, I Think I'll keep Them 3, Voidbolt 5 (He sends puppet dolls to attack), I am Your Master 5, Serpents Tongue 1, Crafted with Love and Care 5

### Dewain

A lie is such a blunt tool, I find a well placed truth to be far more dangerous.

Dewain does not seem like much, a crippled African man in his late teens who speaks with impeccable manners. This is his greatest defence, he slides beneath notice. Unlike many of his peers he has no power base to defend him from Princesses or even mortals, only by avoiding attention does he survive.

Behind the mask is the banal evil of the Darkness. A born Sociopath even before he first encountered Taint, the Darkness has eroded the edges of his personality, leaving behind something simple and directed. Once he manipulated for personal gain, now he manipulates people simple simply because he can. The worse atrocities he can push people into, the better. His usual method is simple, tell the right person the right truth and watch the fun begin.

Wherever he travels, Dewain is always accompanied by his maid Tamila.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Mnemosyne**Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1, Presence 2, Manipulation: 5, Composure: 3**Skills:** Academics 2, Investigation 3 (Horror Truths), Medicine 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 4 (Telling the right truth), Streetwise 2 Subterfuge 2.**Shadows:** 2**Health:** 6**Willpower:** 5**Vice:** Wrath - Hurting people because, why not.**Virtue:** Hope -Spread hope for justice, hope for revenge.**Size:** 5**Defence:** 3**Initiative:** 6**Speed:** 2**Flaw:** Cripple**Calignes:** Void Magic 1, Nowhere Untouched 2, Walk in Shadows 3, Serpents Tongue 1, Evil Influence 2, Sin Whisperer 3, Drink Pain Like Wine 4, Such Pretty Eyes, I Think I'll Keep Them 3, I Am Your Master 5.**Tamila**

You are working too hard again, I'll run you a bath and cook dinner.

Tamila was one of the first things Dewain used his dark powers for. Even before he became a Mnemosyne he sought out powers that would give him control over others, the Caligo I Am Your Master. With it he sought out Darkspawn to make his own. Tamila was the first he found, and the one he kept by his side when he began his current subtle way of life. When Dewain found Tamila she was nothing more than an animalistic monster in human flesh, but he's trained her beyond that. Now she serves as a one woman domestic staff, bodyguard and pushes the wheel chair.

Tamila is a striking African woman who wears an increasingly tattered maid's uniform at all times.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Darkspawn**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 5, Strength 4, Dex 5, Stamina 4, Presence 1, Manipulation: 1, Composure: 5**Skills:** Crafts 2 (Domestic), Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 4 (Polearms), Intimidation 2**Health:** 9**Willpower:** 10**Vice:** Envy - For a Darkspawn being the right hand of a successful Mnemosyne is about as good as it gets. And no one will take it from her.**Virtue:** Fortitude - It's a minions life, take every blow so Dewain doesn't have to.**Size:** 5**Defence:** 5**Initiative:** 12**Speed:** 17**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Iron Stamina 3, Striking Looks 2.**Umbræ:** Roteater**Calignes:** Grasping at Shadows 2, Shadowblade 3, Loathsome Weapon 2 (Jaws), Flesh of my Flesh 3, Voidblade 5.**Sample Cataphracts****Dr. Goldstein (the Ring-Eater)**

Don't leave. We can't leave until we figure out what the problem is between you two. Pay no attention to the rattling.

No seriously, it's a good idea to get away from here. I said get away. \*demonic\* GET AWAY!!!! (Dybbuk)



Once, he was a shrink. He's pretty sure of that, even if his memory isn't so good. He used to be the person failing marriages went to before the divorce lawyer, and he was good at it too-not the best, but he was regularly referred to by other, successful customers. The fact that they appreciated him was probably good for his sanity, too-Ishmael Goldstein himself had struggled with borderline personality disorder and depression for most of his life, a product of his parents' own relationship difficulties being visited on their son. Eventually though, everyone fails, and for Ishmael, it couldn't have happened at a worse time in his life. His own wife had begun to cheat on him, his daughter grew distant for reasons he couldn't explain, and to top it off, the failed treatment happened to be that of a city councilman, meaning Ishmael was facing losing his medical licence to make his patient happy. Caught in a spiral of self-loathing and feelings of rejection, Mr. Goldstein came home, kissed his sleeping wife, locked himself in the guest room, and proceeded to follow in the footsteps of many psychiatrists and BPD sufferers before him-with a bottle of sleeping pills.

The Darkness had other plans for him. Thus, even as Ishmael's soul left his body, an infinitesimal fragment of the Outer Dark filled the vacuum left behind. Now an enigmatic, cerebral Cataphract with a soft, too-white smile and a penchant for nibbling the flesh off the ring-fingers of his victims, Dr. Goldstein has a new, growing, practice in the Dark World, kidnapping couples he sees in the midst of even the tiniest, most inconsequential argument for "therapy" in his Palace of Dark Delights. A very composed and lucky few able to keep up the appearances of "working through their difficulties" to his satisfaction and are returned to their homes, likely to face a life of traumatic stress from thereon, but alive, and unDarkened. Those who are too panicked to coherently address-or even remember-the "issues" he sees or too quickly for his liking are killed and returned to Earth, their ring fingers nothing but bone.

...Except for some reason, there's two Dr. Goldsteins. One is the font of Dark energies wearing his skin, and the other is, in fact, the real Ishmael Goldstein-or at least, his unusually cognizant phantasmal afterimage in Twilight. Needless to say, the shock of finding himself floating above his bed was nothing compared to finding his body had apparently decided to get up without him (after that, realizing it was a monster born from a force of entropy disincarnate was almost a relief). Always a fairly calm man in between his BPD-induced stormy moods however, Ishmael logically deduced that what God wanted to remain on Earth for (though he wasn't a devout person before, being unliving proof of an afterlife tends to change your mind) was to stop the monster now wearing his body like a coat (and given how ghosts work, destroying Dr. Goldstein the Cataphract will probably resolve Ishmael's unfinished business and allow him to move on to the afterlife). The problem with this is that, due to Ishmael's religious convictions about what a ghost is, he has become a dybbuk, the Jewish version, noted for it's inability to communicate with the living. While his powers of possession are most useful in warding away potential victims so far he's had no setting a monster hunter on his body.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 2 (5), Resolve 3, Strength 2, Dexterity 3 (5), Stamina 1 (4), Presence 4 (5), Manipulation 4 (6), Composure 2.

**Skills:** Occult 3, Academics 4 (Psychology), Investigation 2 (Psych Profiling), Medicine 3 (Pharmaceuticals) Athletics 1 (4), Drive 2, Firearms 2 (5), Empathy 4 (Psychological Diagnosis), Intimidation 3 (5) (Creepily Serene), Persuasion 5 (Break The Cutie), Socialize 2 (Lowering Psychological Defenses), Subterfuge 2.

**Merits:** Meditative Mind, Palace of Dark Delights (His offices as reflected in the Dark World): Size 3 (his actual office, interview room, waiting room, and restrooms), Security 1, Dark Amusements 4 (actually the threadbare amenities meant for his "patients", but he doesn't mind his minions crashing there).

**Vice:** Envy. When Dr. Goldstein was alive, it wasn't quite jealousy-rather, it was a creeping sense of self-loathing, combined with a tendency to demonize people close to him for every perceived fault and slight (and begging for forgiveness by said people when he came to his senses).

**Virtue:** Charity. Dr. Goldstein was indeed an ideal psychiatrist.

**Health:** 6(11)

**Size:** 5(7)

**Defense:** 2(5)

**Speed:** 10(12)

**Initiative:** 4(7)

**Willpower:** 5

**Shadows:** 5

**Umbræ:** Animate Shadow, Dark Dreams (Nightmares), Hollow as a Shadow and Subtle Tongue, Miasma of Madness (Depression/Melancholia), Tainted Allure of Vice.

**Caligines:** Avoid All Eyes 1, Bogeyman 2, Handful of Dust 3, Everyone Dies Alone 4, Enervation 1, Enervating Hex 2, Call the Black Dog 3, Shadowbolt 3, Such Pretty Eyes, I Think I'll Keep Them 3, I Am Your Master 5.

**Transformed Caliganes:** Flesh of My Flesh (uses mouth in center of body)\*, Grotesque Bulk (3 dots)\* Voidbomb 5 (Uses the storm in his heart)\*

**Ishmael the Dybbuk**

**Attributes:** Power 4, Finesse 2, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 8

**Essence:** 10

**Morality:** 6

**Corpus:** 9

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 16 (species factor 10)

**Numina:** Possession (even in a body he cannot communicate), Terrify

**anchors:** Dr. Goldstein the Cataphract, His house (still lived in-since Ishmael is usually hanging around Dr. Goldstein and doesn't possess the inhabitants, it's only slightly morbid due to the deathly Essence saturating the area).

**The Boogyman**

I am the who when you call who's there?

The Boogyman is not the strongest Cataphract, though he is one of the strongest Cataphractoi. The Boogyman is not the oldest Cataphract, though he is one of the oldest Cataphractoi. But the Boogyman is the worst Cataphract because in his reign of terror he has a special focus. Children.

For over two thousand years he has ruled one kingdom or another in the Dark World, drawing minions and winning their loyalty with bread and circuses: an unending supply of young children to torment and consume. It hasn't all been fun and games, no matter the culture, not matter how much people disbelieve in the supernatural. If you target children their parents are going to come after you.

Aided by the priests of Nox the centurion Cornelius led his legionares into the Dark World and slaughtered the Boogyman's citizens. The shamans from a dozen native American tribes joined together to send an unending swarm of maggot Spirits to devour the Boogyman's kingdoms. The Caliphs' greatest scholars created alchemical fires and the Japanese crafted swords of pure jade.

In time every kingdom the Boogyman has founded fell to those it prayed upon but the Boogyman itself survived, fled deep into the Dark World to found it's kingdom anew.

Whenever The Boogeyman creates it's kingdom he builds it to look as much like the world above as he can, but with hidden and grotesque traps in every corner. He builds with a particular focus to schools, playgrounds parks or homes – places children are likely to know well. This as much as everything he does is a cruelty, it blurs the nice safe division between the Dark World and Earth for any child to escapes. Children do escape too, The Boogeyman finds the sweetest sensation is hope breaking apart and so he plays fair and gives children hope. He always has a soft spot in his heart for the children who try to keep their companion's hope alive, if they fail he keeps them apart from the others. He tries to turn them into a Mnemosyne and set them to destroying the hope they once protected.

**Creature of the Darkness:** Cataphract

**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4, Strength 4 (10), Dexterity 3 (10), Stamina 4 (10), Presence 4 (8), Manipulation: 3 Composure: 3

**Skills:** Crafts 5 (The Dark World), Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 1, Athletics 3 (6), Brawl 4 (7), Stealth 1 (10), Survival 3 (7), Expression 2, Intimidation 4 (6) (Children), Persuasion 3 (Followers) Subterfuge 4.

**Shadows:** 8

**Health:** 9 (16)

**Willpower:** 7

**Vice:** Wrath (It's simple really, all he wants is to make people suffer).

**Virtue:** Hope (The more people hope, the more they suffer when they fall).

**Size:** 6

**Defence:** 3

**Initiative:** 6 (13)

**Speed:** 12 (25)

**Merits:** Palace of Dark Delights (Size 5, Amusements 5, Security 3)

**Umbræ:** Taste of Sin, Hunger Means Nothing, Cold Flesh.

**Calignes:** Grotesque Bulk 1 (Loathsomely fat and sweaty), Zombie's Flesh 5, Avoid all Eyes 1, Boogymen 2, Void Magic 1, Nowhere Untouched 2, Walk in Darkness 3, Enervation 1, Grasping at Shadows 3, Voice-Eating Hunger 1, Such Pretty Eyes, I Think I'll keep Them 3, I am Your Master.

## *Tainted Places*

*You can feel it in the air all around. This place chills you to the bone and squelches underfoot with rotting damp and the stench of mildew. The sounds don't carry right, the city outside felt so distant. Even your feelings for your dead parents, your rage and hate for their murder, even they feel distant. Casually you slide your knife across your wrist, your blood wells up like liquid green fire. The drops fall and the stinking rotted boards catch light as you pray to your Lady of Cleansing Flame.*

*When a place is this far gone there's nothing to do but burn it, and it burns so beautifully in emerald fire.*

The ruins of the concentration camps. A house on an island where 10 people were killed one by one by a sadistic murderer. An abandoned apartment where the worst gangs always gather. A hidden temple where a dark wizard sacrificed people for infernal power. These are the Tainted places, where the evil that men do has lingered. Some are well known, while others are forgotten. The one thing they all have in common is that the Darkness was - or is - strong there, and it doesn't want to leave.

A place becomes Tainted when someone commits a grave sin there, that causes others to suffer, or else when vicious and cruel acts become routine and customary there. The very substance of the area is bruised by minor sins, cut or torn by major ones, and the Darkness comes quickly to infect the wound and open it farther. Each Tainted area steals away some ability (native talent or training) from those within it who act for innocent and virtuous reasons, while leaving the evildoers' faculties intact; by doing so, the Darkness makes it easy to commit acts like those that first Tainted the place, and hard for anyone to resist. And each time someone yields to temptation, the Taint deepens, and its malign influence steals more faculties from the innocent. Finally, staying within a Tainted area slowly drains the hope and life out of people even if they do nothing at all; a part of the Darkness stays in them afterward, trying to seduce them into joining it.

## Creating Taint

Tainted areas are represented with two factors: their size, and the severity of their curses. The Size of a Tainted area is measured on the same scale as Palace Size - the smallest Tainted sites, at Size 0, would fit within a small walk-in closet; the largest ever found, at Size 5, covers the whole of a large estate roughly the size of the Pentagon. Size also affects the Darkness's grip on the Tainted area; in an area of Size 0 a single act of resistance might banish the evil influence, while the largest Tainted sites yield only after long, sustained purification. A Tainted area's Severity measures its power to corrupt people, and limits the degree to which an innocent's actions are impeded there; it is rated in dots, and is rolled as a dice pool. Finally, a Taint also has a Hold track, that has a number of boxes equal to its Size + 1. This records any progress made in purifying the area of its Taint; most methods of doing so mark off boxes on the Hold track. When the last Hold box is marked, the Taint's Severity drops by 1, and all the Hold boxes clear. If the Taint's Severity drops to 0 the area is cleansed of Taint entirely. Taint recovers its grip if nobody resists it until a curse fails; clear 1 Hold box on each day when no Hold box has been marked.

The growth of Taint in an area resembles somewhat the process of moral degeneration in people; the farther a place has gone into the grip of the Dark, the less any single sin seems to matter. the level

of Morality the sin breaks, and the current Severity of the Taint, set how much a sin adds to the local Taint; consult the following table. A dot of Severity costs 1 point. A dot of Size costs points equal to the new value of Size (1 point to raise Size from 0 to 1, 2 points to raise from 1 to 2, and so on.) "0\*" means that a single sin at that level gives no points, but repeating it many times can build up to a point eventually.

Morality	Severity				
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20+
6	0*	0	0	0	0
5	1	0*	0	0	0
4	2	1	0*	0	0
3	3	2	1	0*	0
2	4	3	2	1	0*
1	5	4	3	2	1

For each dot in Severity, the Storyteller selects 1 curse. Curses are penalties inflicted on people within the Tainted area, which apply while they remain there, *unless* they have the intention to do harm or transgress against Morality. As long as a character's purposes are good or innocent, and he keeps his intention pure, the Taint opposes him. It also tempts him; if a character is dissatisfied by the results of a roll that Taint penalized, he may choose to roll the dice the Taint took from him - but this allows the Darkness to pervert the action, bending its consequences to make sure an innocent will suffer. Curses that inflict passive penalties can be bypassed for a scene; to do so a character must do something that requires a degeneration check. A Taint sustains exactly as many curses as its Severity (really, the curses *are* the Taint) and if cleansing removes a Severity dot, it also removes a curse.

A curse can produce any one of the following list of effects. A Tainted area can inflict any curse any number of times, within the limit of its Severity.

- Attribute: Dice pools that include one Attribute take a -1 penalty.
- Skills: Rolls of two Skills take a -1 penalty; or, rolls of one Skill take a -2 penalty. An Attribute + Attribute dice pool, such as Perception, may be treated as one Skill.
- Specialties: Three types of tasks, each of the scope of a specialty, take a -1 penalty. These can be stacked, with one type taking -2 or -3.
- Defense: Characters with good general intentions are vulnerable to mundane assault. Reduce their Defense by -1, to a minimum of 0.
- Health: The Taint steals vitality. Take away 1 box of Health. Characters with no Health boxes are treated as if they have filled the last box with bashing damage.
- Resistance: Characters with good general intentions are vulnerable to supernatural powers. Reduce either Resolve or Composure by -1, to a minimum of 0 (not both - pick one) when the Attribute is used to resist a power. Speed: The Taint steals motion and force. Reduce Initiative and Speed by -1. Willpower: The Taint steals the will to act. Reduce Willpower by 1 dot. Willpower points in excess of dots remain, but can't be spent. Characters with 0 Willpower take no action of their own volition, unless the action would require a degeneration check - taking such an action releases them to act normally for a scene.
- Corruption: Degeneration checks within the area take a -2 penalty.
- Madness: Checks for gaining a derangement after degenerating take a -2 penalty.
- Tainted Vice: The Taint reinforces base desires. Each time you take this Curse chose one Vice. Anyone within the Tainted place may fulfil that Vice in addition to their own, but only if fulfilling the Vice hurts someone or transgresses against Morality. If the indulger's Vice match's the Taints and fulfilling the Vice is a Sin or causes harm then regain two Willpower. As always you may only regain Willpower through Vice once per Scene.

## Foci

Within each Tainted area is at least one focus: the original site of the wound, from which the infection spreads. When a single sin Taints a place, the focus of the Taint is almost always just where the sin was committed; when the Taint comes from long practice of corruption, its focus appears where the wickedness is most often done. Because the Taint originates there, the focus of a Tainted area is especially dangerous to touch, but it is also the weakest point of the whole area; a direct attack on the focus has a good chance of banishing the Taint from it entirely. As the Size and Severity of Taint grow, the diversity of sins contributing to the Taint creates more than one focus - a good rule of thumb is to have as many foci, and types of sins, as the lower of Size and Severity/5. If a Taint does have multiple foci, the Storyteller distributes its Severity among the foci and decides which curses emanate from each focus; destroying one focus only affects the Severity and curses tied to that focus. Corruption

For every eight hours a mortal character spends within a Tainted area, and for each scene in which he touches a focus, make a corruption check for him. The dice pool equals the Taint's Severity, minus the sum of the mortal's Stamina, Resolve and Composure. If this number is 0 or negative, roll a chance die as usual.

Dramatic Failure - The mortal's resistance weakens the Darkness's hold. Mark off a Hold box.

Failure - The mortal is uncorrupted (though if they slept, they won't feel fully rested.) No effects.

Success - The Darkness corrupts the mortal. Add +1 to future corruption rolls for this mortal in any Tainted area. This penalty is cumulative; if the total added to a mortal's corruption rolls ever exceeds the mortal's Morality, through either progress in corruption or Morality loss, the mortal immediately becomes Darkened. Time spent away from Tainted areas removes the corruption; for each week the character does not enter any Tainted place, lower the dice added to their corruption rolls by 1, to a minimum of 0.

Exceptional Success - The Darkness greatly corrupts the mortal - add +3 to future corruption rolls for them.

Characters with Sensitivity (Princesses, Beacons, Sworn and Darkened) are immune to corruption from Tainted places, but remaining in one for long isn't healthy for them either. When they make a corruption check, the effects are these:

Dramatic Failure - As for mortals.

Failure - The character is Haunted; roll her base Sensitivity dice pool to determine the severity. (Darkened do this to check for Shadows gain - they suffer no other effects from a Haunting.)

Success - The Darkness' strength deepens the Haunting; add +1 to the character's Sensitivity pool for each success.

Exceptional Success - The Darkness' strength greatly deepens the Haunting.

An Anger Haunting instills an obsession with cleansing the area of Taint, and penalizes all actions not directed to that end. A Denial Haunting instills a strong aversion to the Tainted area; the character feels compelled to leave it by the fastest route.

However, Hauntings caused by remaining in a Tainted area give hints to the sins that tainted the site in the first place. Each time a character with Sensitivity checks for corruption, the subsequent Haunting gives them a bonus when investigating the area's dark past, equal to their successes on the Sensitivity roll. The bonus applies both to use of Investigation on site, and to research attempts in records stored elsewhere. If a character suffers two Hauntings from the same Tainted place, they get the bonus from the worst Haunting. Moreover, if the character is Haunted by touching a focus, she identifies the thing she touched as a focus of Taint automatically. Cleansing Tainted Places

Several methods are known for breaking the Darkness's hold on a Tainted place, and patching the frayed reality it leaves behind. All of them resemble the methods used for dealing permanently with a ghost, except the simplest: exposing someone with great powers of resistance to the Taint. Even an average person may wash away a dot of the smallest and weakest Taint (Severity 6 or less) by inadvertence, when it tries to corrupt him and fails utterly. These Taints survive only in areas that are seldom visited, or when found and cultivated by cults of Darkspawn. Taints of medium strength (Severity 7-15) corrupt the ordinary person without risk - it takes someone with excellent health and strong will to cleanse them

by resisting corruption. And the worst Taints (Severity > 15) will overcome anyone not superhuman; banishing them calls for other techniques.

## Exorcism

A rite of purification, similar but not identical to exorcising a ghost, weakens the grip of the Darkness on a Tainted place. As with ghosts, the exorcism is a series of contested actions; the exorcist rolls Resolve + Composure once every five minutes, contested by the Severity of the Taint. And as with ghosts, the exorcist's Morality and grasp of the occult affect his ability; he adds (Morality or Belief - 8) and (Occult - 3) to his roll. If he has an Academics specialty in religion, the exorcist may substitute Academics for Occult. Also, the rite to exorcise a ghost does work, but not as well - if the exorcist thinks he's dealing with a ghost, he takes a -1 penalty. The exorcism may continue as long as the exorcist's Willpower holds out, or the Taint's Severity is reduced to nothing.

Exorcist gets dramatic failure - The exorcist's conviction flags, and the Taint can get to him. The exorcist loses 1 Willpower, and make a corruption check for him.

Taint gets dramatic failure - The exorcist banishes part of the Taint. Lower the Taint's Severity by 1 immediately, remove one of its curses, and clear all its Hold boxes.

Taint gets more successes - The exorcist's resolve falters. He loses 1 Willpower.

Exorcist gets more successes - The Taint is weakened. Mark off one Hold box per Success.

Taint gets an exceptional success - The exorcist loses 2 Willpower, not just 1.

Exorcist gets an exceptional success - Mark off 2 of the Taint's Hold boxes.

## Destroying Foci

Finding the focus, or foci, of Taint in an area allows a more direct, if destructive, tactic to cleanse the Taint: one has only to destroy whatever is at that spot. The first step is discovering the sins that were committed in the area, and which Tainted it. When the area is still in use, this is often a simple matter of observing the place. After it's abandoned, as deeply Tainted areas usually are, a variety of investigative methods may be used: sifting physical evidence on the site, questioning witnesses to the sins, reading old records, and so on. Foci of Taint are always fixtures: a spot on the floor where a man's lifeblood spilled out, an outcropping of hard rock in a forest, a streetlight with a burned-out bulb that's never replaced. Once a focus is found, the cleaning crew must make some drastic alteration to the fixture, sufficient to make it unrecognizable to anyone who knew it when it was first Tainted. This is why the homes of serial killers are often cleaned out with a powerhose. Reducing it to dust and rubble is the simplest way to get rid of the Taint, though it is possible that the neighbors or the police will object.

Whenever one of a Tainted area's foci is mutilated or destroyed - usually, though not always, by someone's deliberate action - roll the Severity dots tied to that focus. The number of successes on this roll is the Severity of a new focus for the Taint; remove any curses tied to the destroyed focus, and add a number of new curses equal to the new figure. This cannot create more Taint than the Severity of the destroyed Focus. Bonuses and penalties to this roll include: structure of the focus is left intact (+2), remains of the focus are scattered outside the Tainted area (-2), Focus destroyed with fire or running water (-2), Focus destroyed with Tempesta magic (-4). The Storyteller may just add the new Severity to other foci in the Tainted area, if there are any, instead of adding a new focus.

## Purifying Foci

A Tainted Place is anchored by its Foci and every Focus has a cause, a flavour to the sins that Tainted the ground. By opposing the prime causes of a Tainted Place the Foci can be purified and the curses lifted. If a place was tainted by bullying and cruel enforced social isolation the Princess could host a speed dating event or a party. If a place was Tainted by crime it can be used as the headquarters of a neighbourhood watch. Every successful roll, or successful extended action, which is directly opposed to the origin of a Foci upon Tainted ground marks of one Hold box. It is strongly recommended to use the Bless Charm Consecrate to suppress the Taint before hosting a social event.

## Dreams of Sin

Occasionally, the Hopeful find a Tainted area for which the sins that created it simply cannot be undone or redeemed - perhaps all the guilty and their victims are dead, and there are no people left whom the Taint has corrupted. In these areas, the long persistence of the Taint gives it a character of its own, distinct from the Darkness from which it comes; such Taints have, in fact, a kind of awareness, and their malign influence almost seems purposely aimed at bringing out the worst in anyone who enters them. That awareness, though, gives the Hopeful a way to defeat them. In a process quite similar to entering the Dreamlands, they can walk through the area and search out the malignity, eventually falling into a dream in which the Tainting sins are continually re-enacted. When a Princess reaches this state, she purifies the Taint from within: protecting the dream-victims, stopping the dream-sinners, persuading the dream-people to cease their evil practices.

Any character with Sensitivity can try to enter the dream of a Taint as a simple action; the base dice pool is the Taint's Severity. If the character has been Haunted thanks to exposure to this Taint, the bonus for investigating the Taint applies. It isn't easy to enter a Taint's dream, though - simple success gives information, but an exceptional success is needed for a full communion with the Taint's awareness.

Dramatic failure - The Taint bites into the character; make a corruption check for her. Also, she can't enter the Taint's dream until she has had a full night's rest outside the Tainted area.

Failure - The Taint's awareness does not respond. The character gets nowhere. She may try again in 30 minutes, but she takes a cumulative -1 penalty.

Success - The character learns the location of the nearest focus for the Taint in the area, if she didn't know it already. She may try again in 30 minutes, and removes all penalties from previous failures.

Exceptional success - The character enters the Taint's dream. To an observer, she falls unconscious where she stands.

Once within the Taint's dream, the character perceives the Tainted area as it was while the sins that created it were committed. At the start the dreamer is a bystander, watching phantoms of the people involved; as long as she remains on the sidelines, where none of the people involved would have noticed her if she had been present, nothing definite will happen in the dream, though there is always a feeling of impending doom. The dreamer may use this preliminary time to slip through the scene looking for clues, signs and portents; she'd better be careful, though, because while there always are small hints pointing towards the crimes to come, discovering the hints has a good chance of beginning the crimes' re-enactment, with the dreamer pushed into a dangerous role. The dreamer's task here is to identify the key players in the drama before it starts, and choose her moment to intervene. All the Taint's curses apply to her, at this and all later stages.

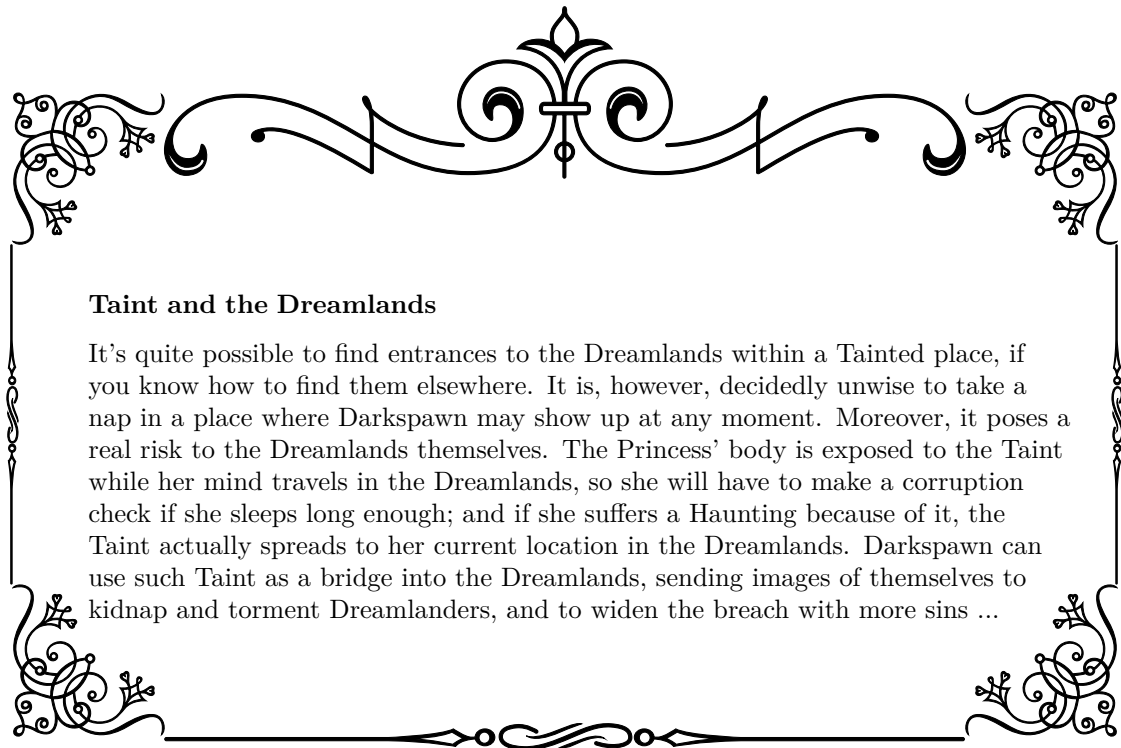
Eventually the dreamer finds and pulls a trigger for the dream proper. In essence this means that the Taint has noticed the Princess. The Taint notices anything that's unusual to the narrative, including attempting to help a victim or entering restricted areas that the Taint knows only one person should enter. The Taint's attention is also attracted by anything that strongly suggests the dreamer should be suffering though she is not, such as stepping inside an inactive torture device. Of course, doing the blindingly obvious, such as opening fire with a machine gun, will attract the Taint's attention. Unless the player has done something unimaginably silly, like lock herself into an obvious death trap, the Storyteller should avoid making triggers that are inescapable death. When the Princess trips a trigger, the phantoms solidify and begin to act out their parts. Once solidified, the people appearing in the dream will behave as the original people would have, if the Princess had been present. Therefore, the Storyteller should provide stats for them as if they were normal characters. However, the Taint influences them much as it does the Princess, and rather more strongly; dream characters follow the rules for Moral Inversion and Tainted Heart in the Darkened template, even if their originals were not Darkened - and even if they were supernatural beings.

Example trigger: The Princess finds a padded cell with a mummified corpse, the walls look slightly eaten. She walks in to investigate. The door slams shut and locks behind her and she is suddenly feeling very hungry. To escape this situation, the Princess might have the ability to pick locks, smash down doors or a friend in shouting distance who can open the door from the outside.

As with purifying foci outside the dream, each focus has a specific key task that resolves it. (Any attempt to resolve a focus will trip a trigger and involve a Princess in the narrative, if she hasn't done so already.) Inside the dream, the task that resolves a focus has something to do with the place where the focus rests in reality - a critical object, or person, will be found there, or a critical event takes place there. The Taint invariably opposes all attempts to resolve its foci, by penalizing anyone attempting the key tasks and giving bonuses to any character opposing them. The difficulty of resolving a focus should correspond to the Severity dots tied to it.

Example tasks: Find a letter written by an inmate, and make sure it's properly mailed and not destroyed. Release a murder victim from her restraints and persuade her to escape. Recover or destroy letters kept by a blackmailer.

Bashing damage the dreamer takes fighting in the Taint's dream is real only within the dream - if she is forced to unconsciousness she falls into normal sleep. Lethal or aggravated damage, however, is quite real, appearing as heart attacks, strokes, paralysis, and other invisible wounds. Willpower or Wisps spent are gone for real, but the effects of Charms are confined to the dream. If the dreamer manages to leave the Tainted area within the dream, she awakens; though the Taint will twist the dream to keep her from doing so - it likes having Sensitive people around to torment! Finally, the dreamer may choose to awaken when she resolves a focus, and always awakens when she resolves the last focus remaining and the Taint is gone.



## Sample Tainted Places

### White Picket Lane

White Picket Lane always was a superficial place, a place where appearances counted for more than substance. Then it turned spiteful. The correct appearances became ever narrower. Those who did not fit in were passively aggressively driven away. The Taint is mild, but widespread.

Today White Picket Lane doesn't feel that different from normal. The minor amount of Taint is not enough to compete with the lovely climate and obsessive cleaning performed by the residents. On the surface the people wouldn't be seen dead as impolite, keeping up appearances is everything but peal back the surface and you'll see that the residents have become embroiled in constant games of



one-upmanship, false smiles and social backstabbing.

**Size:** 5 (an entire neighbourhood)

**Severity:** 4

**Curses:** Composure -1, Tainted Vice (Envy), Tainted Vice (Lust), Socialise -2

**Focuses:**

- A corded telephone that Susan spends much of the day using to spread gossip. It can be found in Susan's home office. Curses: Composure -1
- Lingerie that Bree wore when she seduced Tom to get revenge on Lynette. Bree thinks she's lost it, but in reality she was able to tell what it had become and so hid both it and the truth from herself. It can be found down the back of Tom's washing machine. Curses: Tainted Vice (Envy).
- A gold pendant Mike brought Mary when they were having an affair. If Mary isn't wearing it then it can be found in her jewellery box. Curses: Tainted Vice (Lust).
- An ordinary wicker chair Gabrielle uses when hosting the weekly Stitch 'n Bitch. One of the cases where the insult is entirely justified. Curses: Socialise -2.

White Picket Lane has few Darkspawn but many Darkened, most are in the mould of the Malicious Gossip.

### The Utility Shed

In 1925 In Ellinson Junior high there were repeated incidents of students Disappearing from Campus... when the number reached 6 the school had almost closed down, but finally they discovered that the man behind it was in fact the school's janitor who had kidnapped, sexually assaulted and murdered the girls here.

This place was briefly much more powerful, but after the police took the bodies and buried them, stripped the shed down looking for evidence, as well as destroying the murder weapon this place has lost most of its Curses but perhaps they should have destroyed it entirely, since the shed remains a popular location for students to sneak a cigarette or an illicit tryst. That doesn't make it a good location though, at best the Taint makes things uncomfortable and clumsy. At worst, well neither sweetheart is likely to want to be feeling very good about what the other gets up too.

Usually no one stays long enough to actually risk becoming Tainted themselves, but one repeat truant hid there just a few too many times. She's currently running on the run, being in that shed makes her feel strong in a way nothing else ever did. She doesn't know why, but she knows she can grow the taint and is looking for ways to just that.

**Size:** 1 **Severity:** 5 **Curses:** Tainted Vice (Lust), Defence -1, Composure -1, Perception -2 (People outside the shed have trouble noticing anything within), Memorisation (Intelligence + Composure) -2

**Foci:** The shed itself.

### Mary Ann's Bathtub

After a breakup with her boyfriend of four years Mary Ann ran herself a nice hot bath, poured herself a glass of wine, and slit her wrists. Four years of emotionally manipulating a her vulnerable boyfriend condensed into one single act, tainting the bathtub. When they came for the body it was cleaned up of course, the tub was bleached and washed until it gleamed and not a drop of blood remained but cleaning isn't enough to remove Taint. If they wanted to do that they should have replaced the tub.

Even to this day, no matter how hot you run the water the porcelain always feels uncomfortably cold against your flesh. Lying in for a good soak comes with feelings of loss and distance from the people you care about.

**Size:** 0: Just a bathtub. **Severity:** 2 Emotional manipulation is a Morality 6 Sin **Curses:** Composure -1, Empathy -2. **Foci:** The tub itself.

## *The Dethroned*

*They had been watching the warehouse for hours when the Darkspawn came. It wasn't an attack, no, they were running. The Darkspawn ran straight into the firing lines in a blind panic. In moments monsters were reduced to smouldering corpses in a rain of noble magic*

*Then the Princesses saw what the Darkspawn were running from.*

*It was enormous, taller than the warehouse and tearing the building apart like tissue paper as it strode forward. It's body was human, with it's flesh peeled away exposing muscles intertwined with unearthly clockwork. It's movements stuttered in an unnatural mimicry of human grace. It gave out a scream of screeching metal, the sound staggered the Princesses. In it's cry they felt it's despair, impotence, and something else.*

*"My god. That thing's a Princess!"*

The Dethroned are born from suffering, and from their birth they'll create little else. It's not as if she plans it, for all intents the Dethroned are incapable of planning anything. No, things just happen around her. A fallen Noble is like a poisoned wound, spreading toxins through the Dark World. Her very presence twists the Darkness around her until it reflects the events and pain that led to her fall.

### **The Nature of the Fallen**

When a Princess calls upon the final Transformation her Inner Light is snuffed out, and the Darkness rushes in to fill the void within. The Darkness can only corrupt, it cannot improve and so the once Princess' soul cannot develop further. A Dethroned has Inner Darkness equal to her former Inner Light and cannot increase it. For all mechanical purposes, Inner Darkness is identical to the Inner Light.

Where the Enlightened have Wisps the Dethroned use Shadows themselves. A fragment of misery and despair given form and used in dark powers. The maximum amount of Shadows a Dethroned can hoard, as well as the number she can spend in a turn, is determined by her Inner Darkness. The Dethroned has several methods to regain Shadows.

**Endless Angst:** The life of a Dethroned is not a happy one. For as long as she exists she is eternally surrounded by reminders of the hurts that led to her pitiful state. Her unceasing misery generates one Shadow a day.

**Sensitivity:** Dethroned replace the Sensitivity of the Hopeful with the Sensitivity of the Darkness, rolling a base pool of their Inner Darkness. When a Sensitivity check is triggered the Dethroned gains one Shadow per Success. Dethroned do not suffer from Hauntings, they check Sensitivity only to regain Shadows.

**Hexes:** Several Hexes abilities grant additional ways to recover Shadows. See those abilities for details

### **Redemption**

So long as someone cares for you then Redemption is always possible, but sometimes, it's fucking hard. A Dethroned is too far gone to redeem herself, it will need someone to carry it for that first step on the way.

After a Dethroned is defeated –it's health must be filled with Lethal damage or worse – but before it is swept away on the formless currents of the Darkness (about ten minuets) any Princess can try to reach out to it through Sensitivity. She makes an Extended Belief roll, accruing one Shadow per roll. If the Princess reaches the threshold of Inner Darkness the Dethroned feels that somebody understands it's suffering. The soul of the fallen Noble departs from it's tainted body and takes up residence deep in the Princess' soul. This does mean that the Princess has to carry an extra Inner Darkness Shadows.

From this point on the Princess simply has to remove these Shadows, she may not use Charms that remove Shadows, such as Choke It Down, while she is carrying a Dethroned within her soul. Overcoming the Shadows upon her soul is easier said than done when she's probably collapsing under the emotional weight of the Dethroned's unceasing grief (not to mention rolling Chance Dice for Transformation and Wisp recovery), but if somehow she does ever remove all her Shadows then when she next falls asleep she will see for the first time the face of the one she's sacrificed so much for. Together they will climb

through the Crawlspace, travel through the Dreamlands, at the edge of the Light itself they will say their tearful goodbyes before the redeemed departs.

As for what happens next? Who can say. Perhaps the Princess will have a chance to make up for what she has done in her next life, perhaps she hangs up the crown that grew too heavy and moves on to some manner of afterlife? As for the rescuer, unless she wants to leave her life behind to enter the Light die she'll have to get back to her royal duties the next day. But redeeming a Dethroned does grant two dots of Belief, as well as fully refreshing her Wisps and Willpower.

## **Hexes**

The dark powers of the Dethroned are known as Hexes. They are the inverse of the magic she once wielded. Whereas a Charm is drawn from her hopes and her loves, Belief given form, a Hex is formed of solid misery, damning the user even as it curses the world around her.

### **Common Hexes**

Every Dethroned is unique but there are some common trends. Most Dethroned have a few of the abilities in this section, and it's not that rare to see a Dethroned with all of them.

### **Monstrous Size**

The Dethroned has swelled into immensity. Her Size is, at minimum, 10, increasing her Health as normal, her Speed increases by +5, and she gains +2/+2 armour.

### **Unconscious Warping**

There is a reason that sapient Darkspawn who value their own senses of self keep away from the Dethroned. The Darkness seeps out from them, warping other Creatures of the Darkness to their form. Dark-Tainted individuals count spending a scene near a Dethroned as a Morality 1 sin, rolling 2 dice to resist degeneration. All other Creatures of the Darkness must roll (Resolve + Stamina) for every (Composure) turns they spend within sight of the Dethroned. Failure subsumes them into the mythos of the Dethroned, and they lose all previous sense of self, becoming twisted into a shape and form thematically appropriate for the fallen Noble. Mnemosynes and Cataphractoi may spend a Willpower dot to resist this change. If they do not, some strangely powerful Darkspawn are usually created from such things, often with powers that perversely mock the Enlightened.

### **Spawn Darkchild**

From Darkness, comes... if not life, something close to it. The fallen Princess can create a Darkspawn with an instant action and the expenditure of one Willpower point. The newly made monster takes a turn to get its bearings, before it begins to act independently. If the Dethroned is currently under attack, it will attack those who threaten its creator, but if not, it will wander off. Darkspawn created this way should be created in a thematically appropriate form for the Dethroned, and most will only make two to four "species" of Darkspawn, which will be unique to it. Many a Princess has realised the first sign that a Dethroned is in the area is often the similar Darkspawn who start entering the world.

### **Fortress of Regrets**

The Dethroned warps the Dark World around her, twisting it into a confusing mismatch of symbols and associations from her own memories. Usually these are focused around the hurts and events that led to a Princess falling into Darkness. The warping effects cover an area equivalent to a Palace Size of half the Dethroned's Inner Darkness (round up). Within this area Creatures of the Dark are immune to freezing over in the Dark World, as though they were Below a Tainted Place. The most powerful of the Dethroned are rumoured to be able to do this on Earth.

## **Misery Glutton**

The Dethroned are everything a Princess should not be, and they draw mindless strength from that. Whenever an individual commits a sin against Morality (or other such systems) around them, they gain 1 Shadow if the person degenerates. Whenever a person falls to 0WP, they gain a point of Willpower. Should a person, through their own free will or otherwise, commit suicide around them, they regain all their Shadows and all their Willpower.

If a Dethroned is a Misery Glutton her Familiars will be as well.

## **Welcome to My Personal Hell**

Perhaps most terrifyingly, the Dethroned have the almost unique capacity to seize people through the barrier between this world and the Dark World. This modifies the Enter Darkness ability of the Creature of the Darkness template, allowing her to target other people. This is modelled as a surprise attack, allowing the normal Wits + Composure roll to allow Defence to be applied against it, and, in addition, she subtracts the Inner Light of the target from her pool, giving an end roll of (Taint of the area + Willpower + Target's Shadows - the highest Morality (or equivalent) of all people in the Tainted area or its Dark World image - Target's Inner Light). Success pulls the target from the Tainted area into its parallel in the Dark World, near the Dethroned. The power may also be used the other way around, in the case that a Dethroned makes its way into the real world, to pull other things out of the Dark World.

## **The Kiss of a Princess**

The Dethroned can bind a Shadow into a Mortal by rolling Inner Darkness + Presence + Intimidation vs Composure + Morality. If the Dethroned wins the roll the Target immediately gains the Melancholia Derangement. In addition the Dethroned may regain Shadows through the victim. Any time the Victim commits or is the target of an applicable Morality Sin the Dethroned can roll Sensitivity. If the Dethroned is a Misery Glutton she may also benefit from the victim's misery as per the rules for that ability. The effects of the Kiss last until the Dethroned is destroyed, chooses to end it, or the Kiss is removed by magic. The Dethroned cannot regain the spent Shadow for as long as the victim remains under the effects of the Kiss.

If a Dethroned knows the Kiss of a Princess her Familiars will as well; any Shadows are bound from the parent Dethroned's pool.

## **Spawn Familiar**

The Dethroned can bud a piece of herself into an independent being. This costs 3 Shadows and one dot of Willpower. The Familiar is smaller than the parent, usually around Size 5, and has an Inner Darkness of 1 and an Empty Shadows pool. Familiars also lack Hexes save for a few exceptions noted in those Hexes' text. Familiars are usually sent out of the Dark World to spy and gather Shadows, most instinctively return to its parent when they have a good crop of Shadows. Consuming a familiar transfers all its Shadows back to the parent and restores the Willpower Dot (or the 8 exp if the Dethroned brought the dot back).

## **Other Hexes**

### **Misery Voyeur**

Misery loves company, and the Dethroned finds her existence easier to bear when others suffer as she does. Whenever anyone within the Dethroned's line of sight makes a Sensitivity roll the Dethroned gains one Shadow for each Success they roll. This power does not function on Creatures of the Darkness.

### **Cry of Anguish**

A Dethroned exists in eternal torment and some have learned to use their suffering as a weapon. By spending a point of Willpower rolling Inner Darkness + Presence + Intimidation vs Composure +

Supernatural Advantage - Target's Shadows she can force a sensitivity check upon others with a dice modifier equal to her Successes - her target's Successes. To be targeted someone must have a Sensitivity rating, and they cannot be a Creature of the Darkness. Each person can only be targeted once per day. Commonality may be added to the roll to target multiple people.

### **Toxinous Kiss**

The Dethroned perpetually surrounds herself in a haze of polluted emotions and her own sins. Everything within Inner Darkness yards of her is exposed to a Toxicity 3 poison, resisted with Stamina + Resolve + Inner Light. Should she kiss someone, which requires her to be in control of a grapple, the spiritual poison is far more acute, and its Toxicity rises to 7.

### **Unceasing**

The fallen Princess is perpetually alert and awake, unable to sleep or dream. She never takes penalties for tiredness, and as a roleplaying note, will always be aware and twitchy, never letting her attention slip. Any powers which would cause her to lose focus or cease to pay attention automatically fail.

### **Unnatural Senses**

What is mundane darkness to a creature like this? All penalties to actions based on poor visual conditions are reduced by three, to a maximum of 0.

### **Regeneration**

By spending a Shadow the fallen Noble regains either one point of lethal, or two points of bashing damage per action as a reflexive action. Bashing damage heals first, lethal only being removed when there is no Bashing Damage in her Health track.

### **Swarming Horror**

Even the integrity of the body is not sacrosanct to the Darkness. The Dethroned no longer has a single body, instead existing as a Swarm of radius (Inner Darkness + Current Number of unfilled health boxes). She follows all the normal rules for Swarms.

### **Infectious Madness**

The fallen Noble sings out a song of madness and despair. She spends up to 5 Shadows, and rolls Presence + Expression, at a penalty of the highest Composure possessed by a non-Creature of the Darkness in the area. Success means that all rolls to resist derangements are at a penalty equal to the number of Shadows spent for the remainder of the scene.

### **One Thousand Weeping Eyes**

The fallen Noble is keenly, painfully aware of events that mirror her own fall. If anyone commits a similar action within Inner Darkness miles of the Dethroned's location (in either Earth or the Dark World) she is instantly aware of it. This Hex does not imply she reacts in any particular way, though more than a few Dethroned mindlessly lash out when their unnatural senses are triggered.

### **Covetous Form**

With a hair of coiling serpents or a body of grasping vines the Dethroned can reach out in every direction at once. She may apply the Autofire rules to any attack using Brawl.

### **Mark of Torment**

The Dethroned can hex someone to become a magnet for suffering much like they have become. The Dethroned spends two Shadows and rolls Manipulation + Expression vs Composure + Supernatural Advantage. If the Dethroned wins the target gains a unique Umbrae that functions like Tainted Allure of Vice except that it functions for all Vices providing the Vice is indulged by someone with a Morality (or equivalent) score equal or lower than the Dethroned's Successes. Using mark of Torment does not turn a person into a Darkened, the Dethroned is able to inflict an unwanted Umbrae on a mere mortal. The Mark of Torment remains until the hex is removed with counter magic. Either charms that remove the Umbrae, or Charms that undo lasting magical effects may be used.

If the Dethroned knows Mark of Torment, its familiars will as well.

## Queen of Misery

When the Dethroned warps a Mnemosyne or Cataphractoi their latest victim retains the Mnemosyne or Cataphractoi template. They do not retain their original personality however. Their minds are remade in the Dethroned's image. They replace their Virtue and Vice with the Dethroned's and gain an instinctive loyalty to their new liege, though she is unlikely to give any orders. Additionally while they do not coordinate or work together on grand plans they gain some measure of trust. They'll at least try not to disrupt each other's plans (usually in a simplistic "you take west of the river, I'll take east" sort of manner) and may unify against outside threats. Few threats the Nobility face come close to having several Cataphractoi active at once without infighting.

## Sample Dethroned

### The Witch in the Woods

Her memories come in snatches. She remembers being cast away from her village for her magic. She remembers trying to raise two children alone in the forest, sometimes she can even remember their faces. She remembers relying on her magic to feed her family, she remembers hating her magic for making her an outcast, and she remembers her magic failing her because she hated it. Sometimes she can almost remember enough to ask why she ate her own children, but most of the time she can't even remember why you wouldn't.

The Witch in the Woods dwells deep within the Dark World, she lives in a log cabin deep within a (small) forest that looks like a washed out water colour. She puts up a good pretense of being able to think, but it's all a script, eternal and unchanging. She lures Darkspawn to her, and sometimes living children, she attempts to take care of them as a mother should but it never lasts. In the end she always eats them alive to keep them safe deep within her own Tainted body.

In battle the Witch is a deceptively dangerous foe. Though she appears as a frail old woman The Witch can take an enormous amount of damage. If she is significantly injured she is likely to call Darkspawn to her aid, disgorging the strange malformed children that she has eaten. More serious wounds can cause her to disgorge into a swarm, as severed body parts return to life to defend themselves and to stitch themselves back into a whole. If the fight is going her way The Witch is likely to see her attackers as her own misbehaving children, and offer to forgive them if they apologise (and she will, until one day she eats them for their own good) but if the fight turns against her she will recast her attackers and begin begging them to spare her because she has a family.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 0, Wits 3, Resolve 4, Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6, Presence 2, Manipulation: 1 Composure: 2

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry 4 (Knife)

**Inner Darkness:** 4

**Health:** 15

**Willpower:** 6

**Vice:** Wrath (She will do anything to protect her children).

**Virtue:** Hope (Her children may not have much, but she tries to keep their spirits up).

**Size:** 5

**Defence:** 3

**Initiative:** 6

**Speed:** 15

**Hexes:** Unconscious Warping, Spawn Darkchild, Fortress of Regrets, Welcome to My Personal Hell, Cry of Anguish, Unceasing, Regeneration, Swarming Horror, One Thousand Weeping Eyes

## *Wardens*

*“Of course I’m your mother Button, It’s not the sort of thing you forget.”*

*You’re know this is a dream, but you’re starting to forget what wasn’t. Your quest to find the holy ace, and your friends Benny the Bear, Herick the Repentent Knight, and Cedric the Priest. That’s real and this is an illusion woven by the evil Lidia? Or is it your school and your friends Rachel, Amanda and Lacy. But how can anything so unrealistic as sending kids somewhere they hate every day be real? It’s starting to get scary, you hope your friends would rescue you soon (but which friends?)*

*That’s not right either, you’re a heroine. You should be rescuing yourself. Why are you thinking like this? There aren’t any guards here, it should be easy to escape. You just need to get your... Your what? Why is it so hard to remember things?*

When servants of the Darkness formed a Trap deep within the Dreamlands the builders knew better than to rely on it lasting forever. They placed powerful guards to watch over their prisoners, endlessly adjusting the illusions and dreams to keep the souls of the kingdom in a satisfied slumber.

Upon the Release the Radiant Queens saw the Wardens for what they are. They summoned their armies and rode against them, slaughtering them in countless masses. Yet some Wardens survived, far too many Wardens survived. Fleeing to the wild regions of the Dreamlands they lie in wait for the opportunity to fulfil their dark purpose.

Today the Wardens are scattered far and wide upon the face of the Dreamlands, yet they are unbroken. They remember their purpose and yearn to fulfil it. When they see one carrying the Light walk the realms of sleep they will stop at nothing to imprison her in a blissful dream for all eternity.

## **The Nature of the Jailkeepers**

Wardens are a form of Dreamlander, to be precise they are Actors. A Warden instinctively knows that it’s purpose is to trap people and expose them to the Gales but they are unaware of the deeper reasons for their being.

Wardens only target souls touched by the Light. Princesses, Sworn, Beacons and any of the Kingdom’s original inhabitants. They could use their powers on any Dreamlander or any visitor in a Galemark but they only care about people touched by the Light, and anyone who tries to stop them.

## **New Numina**

As Dreamlanders the Wardens have access to Numina, most only have the three listed below though a powerful Warden might have additional Numina.

### **Web of Illusions**

**Cost:** 1 Willpower. 6 - target’s Galemarks in Essence, minimum of 1 Essence.

The Gales that blow through the Dreamlands change the memories of visitors, making them believe they have always been a part of the Dreamlands. From the perspective of the Wardens this is good, but it does not go far enough. The Gales give the visors a past within the Dreamlands, the Wardens wish to give them a future. A reason to stay. Sometimes it is necessary for a Warden to manipulate the Gales personally. With a Successful Power + Finesse + the days outwards from the Center vs Resolve + Composure roll the Warden may add one fact to the target’s Gale-marked history. The Gales will soon write that fact in large upon the Dreamlands.

The facts created by a Warden cannot contradict the target’s established Gale-marked history. If a Princess remembers that she ran away from the palace where she grew up to escape her cruel father then a Warden cannot add any fact that would make the Princess’ father nice. The Warden however could

add a fact along the lines of "The cruel king has been overthrown by the Princess noble brother, who loves her dearly."

### **Mask of Many Faces**

Just as the Wardens can shift the Dreamlands they can shift themselves. By spending one Essence and rolling Wits + Subterfuge the Warden can transform into any shape they wish. The physical advantages are minimal, a Warden who turns into an enormous dragon will not gain the ability to challenge armies. At most they can adapt to survive in unusual environments or acquire minor combat advantages around the level of 1 point in Armour and +0 Lethal weapons. The real benefit to this Numina is as a disguise. Every Success rolled on this Numina becomes an automatic Success on all future Disguise rolls. It is very hard to spot a Warden for what it is directly, indirect methods such as witnessing a Warden using one of their unique Numina work as normal, of course.

### **Fruit of the Lotus**

The most direct power of the Warden's is to inflict a penalty to resisting the Gales. To do this they must target one of the five senses: Sight, Smell, Hearing, Touch or Taste. It takes roughly a minuet of the target focusing on the sense for the Numina to take effect. Flashing an image wouldn't work for sight but getting the target to study a trapped painting would. To turn a sensory experience into a trap the Warden spends a Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Expression with a bonus based on how tempting the trap is to their intended target. If the target falls for the trap they roll Resolve + Composure against the Warden's original Successes. Every additional Success rolled by the Warden becomes a -1 penalty to the target's next roll to resist the Gales.

## *Amanojaku*

*It was obvious if you knew what to look for, thought Princess Gwendolin as she watched the librarian. Nobody was that much of a steryotpe, the clothing, the glasses, the hair bun, the ridiculous over reaction to the slightest noise. It looked like it was very good at it's job too, every book was exactly in it's place, every student got exactly the material they needed. The're was only one problem.*

*"I hope you enjoyed working in a real library, but you have to give that body back now."*

Once the Radiant believed that the Amanojaku were a unique being, a strange mental parasite that resided within the Dreamlands seeking the opportunity to possess human bodies. Now they know better, Amanojaku are just Dreamlanders who's desire for a physical body is stronger than their ethics.

Some are ordinary Dreamlanders who became obsessed with getting closer to the real concept that they reflect. Others are inhabitants of the Kingdom who wish to return to life, but fear the partial loss of self inherent in reincarnation. Rumour has it there's even a Brat or two.

Most Dreamlanders consider the Amanojaku to be criminals who dabble in profane magics. Consequently most can be found in the wild regions of the Dreamlands, far from Dreamlander law and the eyes of the Radiant Queens. Others can be found among the brightest cities of the Dreamlands, lurking in the shadows as criminals have always done.

### **Possession**

Doorways, windows and cave mouths can be half-seen everywhere in the Dreamlands, in the corner of one's eye or half-hidden behind a boulder. For most Dreamlanders these passages vanish if sought for, turning out to be shadows or optical illusions; for the Hopeful, they become real, and open into the Crawlspace. In truth, though, these mysterious doors are the places where some human's dreaming soul drifts against the Dreamlands. An Amanojaku can wrench one of the doors open, enter the dream of the mortal that lies behind it, and hunt it for his soul. To accomplish this the Amanojaku spends 1 Wisp, and rolls Presence + Wits - the target's Composure.

Dramatic failure: The door vanishes - no Amanojaku in the area can open it tonight.



Failure: The Amanojaku fails to open the door. Subsequent attempts take a cumulative -1 penalty.

Success: The Amanojaku opens the door, enters the dreamscape behind it and begins to hunt.

Exceptional success: The Amanojaku has a +2 bonus while pursuing the dreamer.

Once within a dream, the Amanojaku twists it into a nightmare of being pursued by something alien, through scenes of growing surrealism and menace. At this stage the dreamer may still escape by waking up, which ejects the Amanojaku whence he came; the hunter must catch his quarry before then to proceed. The hunt is an extended and contested action similar to a physical chase. The Amanojaku rolls Wits + Intimidation, calling up threats and obstacles to frighten his quarry; the dreamer rolls Resolve + Composure to resist the assault. The dreamer must gain successes equal to the Amanojaku's Resolve + Composure to escape. If the dreamer escapes, the dream collapses around the Amanojaku, sending him back to the Dreamlands and possibly doing him an injury; the Storyteller rolls the dreamer's Resolve + Composure, and for each success the Amanojaku loses 1 point of Willpower.

If the Amanojaku ever matches or exceeds the dreamer's current successes he finds and captures his quarry. Unless the dreamer is capable of controlling his own dreams - the Lucid Dreamer Merits, certain psychic powers, or Sensitivity from the Inner Light - capture is the end of the matter; a normal mortal cannot resist when an Amanojaku throws his soul into the Dreamlands. When the Amanojaku catch a lucid dreamer, though, they must break the dreamer's will before sending him off. This is a standard combat under Dreamlands rules; damage removes points of Willpower, not Health boxes. If the dreamer is reduced to 0 Willpower the Amanojaku sends him into the Dreamlands; if the Amanojaku loses all his Willpower the dream ends, sending him back to the Dreamlands on the point of death.

Other beings in the Dreamlands (usually other Amanojaku, but some Princesses who follow the Queen of Mirrors participate in the hunts) can follow an Amanojaku into a dream and help him in the hunt. The assistants need not roll to open the door themselves, but have to spend a Wisp to pass through the door with the primary hunter. During the hunt the possessing Amanojaku is the primary actor in a teamwork action, and the others are secondary actors contributing bonus dice to his pools. Carrying out a possession or helping an Amanojaku to possess a mortal is a Belief 3 compromise.

## Life Among Mortals

During a possession, the Amanojaku takes over the body of his host, and has access to the host's memories. Initially, however, he has some trouble using them properly. An Amanojaku uses his own Skills, Mental Attributes, Social Attributes but for obvious reasons uses the Host's physical skills. While on Earth an Amanojaku can only use it's Numina to affect people's minds and emotions, however Amanojaku with access to Charms, Bequests or even Transformation can use them fully (Transforming into their own self).

## Banishing Amanojaku

Amanojaku return to the Dreamlands at the death of their hosts (Amanojaku, it should be noted, often don't understand the effects of being injured; in the Dreamlands injury and loss of will are equivalent, and neither impedes your actions. They are, thus, prone to recklessness. Their first experience of wound penalties is quite a shock), though they lose a dot of Willpower which they can buy back. Short of that, they can be forced out by a successful exorcism - the Amanojaku's usual high Willpower makes this a bit dicey, but it can be done. Unfortunately this does not restore the host's soul to his body; the host falls into a state akin to coma. The Amanojaku reappears in the Dreamlands near the host's location there, drained of Willpower and at risk of death; but as long as the host's soul is in the Dreamlands, the door into his mind and body stands open there, and any Dreamlander may enter it and possess the host again. Indeed, the original Amanojaku may do so, if he recovers. On the other hand, if the host is free in the Dreamlands, and still aware of his waking life, and if he finds the door to it, his entering the door will restore him completely.

Other Princesses, having more skill in navigating the Dreamlands than in exorcism, prefer to banish Amanojaku from the Dreamlands side. This requires the Charm Ivory Gate (The mortal soul in the Dreamlands can give permission); they search out the door into the host's dreamscape, then enter it to do battle with the possessor there. If a Princess opens a Crawlspace entrance next to an Amanojaku's host, she can find her way through Crawlspace to the host's soul as if she had a strong emotional

connection to the place. She must spend 1 Wisp to enter the host's dreamscape while the Amanojaku is unconscious (the dreamscape is impassible when the host's body is awake) just as any Dreamlander would. (The host himself is the only person who may pass that door without a Wisp.) Past the door, the Princess appears next to the Amanojaku, ready to negotiate or fight for the host's freedom. Once the Amanojaku has been forced out (or left on its own), guiding the host's soul back to his body is then a simple matter of Dreamlands travel - though finding him might not be, if the Gales have been at work for long.

Finally, an Amanojaku can return to the Dreamlands voluntarily whenever the host sleeps, and end the possession by guiding the host's soul back through the door himself. Few Amanojaku will do this, however, unless threatened with the death of their vessel - and killing a vessel is murder, as long as the mortal's soul still exists.

### **Gates of Polished Horn**

Once upon a time, a band of Amanojaku found, or made, an object of power to help them in their hunts. This dark art was destroyed by a band of wondering Dreamlander knights. Unfortunately the Amanojaku who used it had learned how to duplicate it elsewhere, and other Gates have been built since.

A Gate of Polished Horn does not look like a gate, though it is made of a substance very like horn, with the color of aged ivory, maybe. It is shaped as an obelisk, roughly twice as tall as a man, and carved with eye-twisting designs. When an Amanojaku has successfully bound himself to a mortal's body, and the mortal's soul is reasonably close to the Gate, every mortal in the waking world who sleeps when the Amanojaku is nearby has their dreams touched by a region of the Dreamlands, within a few hours' travel of the Gate. Bands of Amanojaku that acquire a Gate of Polished Horn exploit this property ruthlessly. Once one of their number has changed places with a mortal, his companions seize the mortal, carry him to the Gate, and imprison him. Meanwhile the possessing Amanojaku lives in the waking world impersonating him, and all who sleep near him - most likely, his family and intimate friends - dream of lands near the Gate, where the other Amanojaku in the band can hunt and possess them in turn. The first band of Amanojaku with a Gate had captured nearly fifty mortals before it was destroyed.

Overuse of a Gate of Polished Horn can lead to what is tentatively referred to as a Gatecrash. An entire region of the Dreamlands collapses, sending it's inhabitants falling into Twilight. The Dreamlands usually repairs itself soon enough, but this is little comfort for the Dreamlanders trapped outside their native realm or for the people scared and panicked Dreamlanders end up possessing. The most recent (and therefore well known Gatecrash) was in 1992 when the Dreamland city of Crystal Tokyo fell into the actual city of Tokyo. Even today there are still Beacons with harmonious human and dreamlander gestalt personalities fighting for the Light with Bequests forged from the wreckage.

# The Queen of Tears

**AKA:** The Ever-Flowing One, Lady of Alhambra, The Last Empress  
**Followers' Epithets:** Handmaidens, Esquires, Ravens, Crybabies (derogatory)  
**Kingdom:** Alhambra

*Have you ever really looked at the world? Not casually, I mean, really looked at it? It's broken. It's flawed. People fight each other in stupid, pointless wars. Everyone just want to hurt each other, and there's no rhyme or reason to it. But you know it too, don't you? Everything was better in the Kingdom.*

*And I follow its Queen.*

*Alhambra is out there. I've seen it. The Kingdom is not dead, it has survived, under the guidance of the Ever-Flowing One. She's not a ghost in a Darkness-made dream-world, not a monster who'd burn the world. She cries for what the world has become. She's kept the Kingdom safe for thousands of years, and she asks our service to help her, so that the last parts of what which was once glorious don't fade. I give mine willingly. Sometimes it hurts, what she asks us to do. I know it makes a few people suffer, but it's only a lesser sacrifice, for the greater good. Because we need to save the Kingdom, need to keep it safe and hidden and safe... and then, maybe one day, we can get all of world back under the guidance of the Queen, and we won't have to have wars any more and... and no-one will hurt anyone.*

*I really hope so.*

The Queen of Tears is unique - she is the only known, still-human survivor of the Kingdom who remains to the modern day. For uncounted aeons she has dwelt in Alhambra, the last remnants of the capital of the Kingdom, and ruled it from where it hides, within the heart of the Darkness. Her domain holds off the Darkness with Light stolen from the world, bringing misery and sorrow to the so-called "Rebellious Provinces", and though she weeps for what she does, she will never stop, because she will do anything to protect her city, and so she teaches her followers, native Alhambrans, and Princesses from the outer world lured into her service, alike to do the same.

## Tales from Alhambra

In the centre of Alhambra's noble quarter the Queen of Tears holds her court upon the roofs and battlements of her palace. As she speaks her eyes are constantly inspecting the defences of her city for weakness. Once the Lady of Alhambra was considered the world's great beauties but no longer. Her bronzed skin has faded and become pale under the dim Alhambran light. Her dark brown eyes, once hailed in song and poetry, have become dull and liquid with never ending tears that mingle with the rains. She has discarded all the adornments and embellishments of royalty for dark purples and blues of mourning worn above her armour, for Alhambra is a city under siege. One hand always grips Ever Dutiful, her simple naginata that has defended Alhambra from countless threats. The Lady of Alhambra is quiet and softly spoken, when she speaks the whole court falls silent and strains their ears.

The only people the Queen will pause her endless vigil for is her fellow Nobles, she receives them in private and in the presence of those she calls her almost-equals she promptly allows herself to fall to pieces. The endlessly crying Queen turns hysterical as she unburdens centuries of unceasing sorrow upon the Princess and begs her for help. Even the most composed Grace, knowing what to expect is swept away by the flood of emotion. Dedicated Radiant Princesses have been known to become a Handmaidens from this display, either out of guilt or because they saw a possibility of redemption when they looked behind her composed mask.

## *Philosophy*

The archives of Alhambra are filled with texts and teachings from the products of uncounted numbers of scribes, analysing every word of the Queen (and she seldom speaks, now), and building a philosophy, a faith around it. You could spend ten lifetimes, and only scratch the depths of paper, the bottom layers eaten by Dark-Things where no light could reach. But at heart, the principles of Alhambra are remarkably simple.

### **Alhambra Must Survive**

Alhambra is the Kingdom. The Kingdom is Good. The Kingdom is the Light. The Kingdom must be Protected. Alhambra must remain unchanged and true to the Kingdom . Anything done in the name of Alhambra is done in the name of the Light. If Alhambra falls, the Darkness wins. This is fundamental and unchallengeable dogma.

### **There Is No Price Too High**

This is the vital corollary to the first principle. This is what leads to the draining of Light, and the horrors that result. Every action which which furthers the cause of Alhambra is not only good, but mandatory. This is the hardest part of the Alhambran cause for many Earth-born Enlightened; the idea that they serve the last remnants of the Kingdom is both romantic and admirable, but they blanch at the idea that they must hurt Earth to allow a rain-drenched city in the heart of the Darkness to survive. But this goes beyond the actions of Alhambra, and into the mind of the Queen of Tears. She, and those who internalise her, will do whatever it takes to protect their Nation, no matter what it involves, and she would do it if she led a small charity in Tokyo just as much as she does as the Lady of Alhambra.

A few Princesses of Tears have asked why the Queen does not simply leave the bubble-realm, and stake out a claim of the real world. If they were very lucky, no one heard them ask it.

### **Subdue the Rebellious Provinces**

For the majority of the history of Alhambra, this has been little more than a principle, much akin to the promise of jam tomorrow. "We will reconquer the Rebellious Provinces, the rest of the outside world, and impose the peace of the Queen upon them, restoring the Kingdom," promise the Alhambrans, "... only not right now." Attempts have been made, of course; there are tales of strange castles ruled by pale figures from Beyond the Fields We Know in medieval England, and of white-skinned lords in Central America before Cortez, but they all failed, partly because the lack of Alhambran comprehension of the sheer scale of the outside world, partly because of the self-destructive draining of the Light from their lands, and partly because there is always the clay and green-fire of Storms waiting for them. Officially, although it is of course desirable, it is also a waste of resources which could be used for the city.

But as it stands, in the modern day, this sentiment undergoing a revival. The Queen of Tears has an unprecedented number of Handmaidens and Esquires, and there is a strange coalition forming, between young, idealistic Enlightened from the outside world who want to restore the Kingdom, and the cynical, ambitious high-ranking field operatives of Alhambra who, although still loyal, have grown used to the wonders of the outside world, and want them.

## *Duties*

As the Princess of the only remiment of the Kingdom still alive the duties placed upon the court of Tears are further removed from the ground than the subjects of any other Queen. It is common for even young and inexperienced Princesses to lead a small number of Sworn retainers.

Alhambra still holds to old social ideas and any Princess who swears loyalty to Alhambra is guaranteed status and luxuries, but the city lives under a constant threat of destruction and even the most important citizens must do their part for survival. A Princess' status means that she can normally push her way onto choice assignments in whatever area of her Calling she desires.

Champions of Tears fight in Alhambras cautious, even conservative manner, they specialize in using their magic to control the battlefield and curse their foes.

Graces of Tears are bureaucrats, their job is to keep the city functioning despite all the hardships they face. Out in the rebellious provinces Graces tend to be given the largest commands, up to and including running entire Enclaves where they direct Sworn and even other Princesses to tax hope for Alhambra.

Alhambra runs on magic, and it is the Menders of Tears who keep that magic running. In Alhambra they serve as a one Calling worker caste, they are not denied prestige so much as frequently overlooked. So long as nothing is going wrong, it is easy to take the Mender's for granted.

Tear's Seekers would perhaps be more accurately called Spies. They serve Alhambra as infiltrators, blending into the rebellious provinces to find undefended targets ripe for taxation. In established enclaves the Seekers keep an eye on Alhambra's enemies, making sure the forces of Tears can vanish back into their city before retaliation strikes.

The Court of Tears is somewhat of a loss for what to do with Troubadours. There is only so much art you can create on the subject of Alhambra's glorious past before creativity and artistic integrity demands you experiment. Unwilling to endorse new thoughts and ideas Alhambra actually uses it's Troubadours as Champions, it turns out that Troubadours magic is actually very good at battlefield control. Unsurprisingly the Troubadours themselves are not happy about this.

## *Background*

There are two broad categories of followers of Tears. The first of these are the young, inexperienced ones. They are found by Alhambran operatives shortly after Blossoming, or are drawn to the Queen of Tears in their dreams, perhaps renewing old oaths, and so are inducted to Hopeful society via Alhambra. Their point of view is rather different from the majority of Princesses, because they have internalised the philosophy of Tears; they are usually true believers, serving the Kingdom, who found them and trained them. Likewise, instead of a largely-self-taught mess of other Radiant Princesses, they know they are the Handmaidens and Esquires of Tears, and so are far more well informed about the technical matters of the Hopeful than Princesses years their senior. Some followers of Diamonds are mildly concerned by how much terminology of the Radiant comes from defectors from this time, and worry that the influence of Tears might be seeing into the paradigm.

The other kind are usually older, and broken by their duties among the Radiants. Tears offers support, help, mortal Sworn to aid you, and can, above all, guarantee safety and support. Many underestimate the influence that a simple "You are doing the right thing" can do to someone whose will is flagging; Tears does not. Likewise, the families of Princesses too frequently become targets in the War of Hope, and Alhambra offers sanctuary, somewhere safe and away from enemies, taking in guests of the Princesses who serve them. That these guests can become hostages is something that it would be tactless to say.

In addition, there have been a few Blossomings in Alhambra itself since the Release. This is viewed as a great blessing itself, and would tend to be more of one, if they did not have a regrettable tendency to be of the "guests", those relatives and loved ones of other Tears Princesses given a refuge from the Provinces, or worse, rebels and non-conformists, rather than loyal Alhambran citizens.

## *Character Creation*

The Queen of Tears does not discriminate based on grounds of physical fitness or social abilities. She is the Last Empress, after all, and all the Hopeful should serve her. With that said, there are remedial training facilities in Alhambra for any Noble who cannot carry out their tasks, and, notably, for teaching them the Alhambran language, so they can actually interact with the natives. For the duties that they must carry out, though, the Queen desires most high Resolve and Composure. It is a shame that so many of those experienced Princesses, who have served another Queen but who are now called to her are often lacking in those Attributes. It is one of the reason that she prefers young, newly Blossomed Princesses, who can be moulded into the proper, Kingdom-trained Nobility that they should be.

## Heraldry

The official colours of Alhambra are dark purples and blues (but never, ever black), and white. The Queen still mourns for the lost Kingdom, and so should her followers, after all. Bright colours are correspondingly condemned, because there is such a thing as taste. Veils are not uncommon, and garments are oft-times long and flowing, like how the water cascades from the roofs of the Plaza of Dignities.

One might expect the Alhambrans to have strict codes for the form of Regalia, but, actually it has been long-held tradition that the Regalia is the innermost expression of the Hopeful's soul, and it would be wrong to interfere with that. Now, with that said, there are certain standards of propriety, but at most, a Princess who breaks them and parades around in hotpants, a tank top and an unbuttoned jacket will only suffer informal censure, as long as the colour is correct for formal events. The Regalia of an follower of Tears, especially out in the Rebellious Provinces, is just as flexible as that of a Radiant Princess in its manifestations.

## Echo

A Raven's Echo gives a feeling of safety and solidarity, but with a hard edge. As though it was saying right here and right now is safe. All else is danger, only I can protect you.

## Practical Magic

Princesses who enter Alhambra's service cannot use Practical Magic to add bonuses to any dice pools. Instead, they are able to curse others with momentary misfortune or incompetence. As a reflexive action, when a target within a Raven's sight attempts a task that requires a dice roll, she may spend 1 Wisp. When she does so, the target cannot reroll 10s, and any 1s that appear cancel successes. If the target rolls more 1s than successes, he suffers a dramatic failure, and the Princess regains the Wisp that she spent to curse the target. Cursing a dice pool with the 9-again or 8-again quality removes that quality, reducing it to a normal roll. A Handmaiden or an Esquire can curse others in either Transformed or mundane state, just as other Hopeful can use Practical Magic in either state.

## Invocation: Lacrima

The Invocation of Lacrima is the principle embodied and founded by the Queen of Tears, and which her Handmaidens and Esquires find come naturally to them. It is conceptually linked to several things, including ghosts, silence, the element of void, "necessary" actions, and all things connected to these, allowing Invoked Upgrades and Invoked Charms to be based around it. Princesses loyal to Tears are encouraged to attune to this Invocation as fast as they can, because most of their signature Charms require it, and use of Lacrima inures them to the their actions. However, many non-Tears Princesses have been known to dabble in it, especially more mature ones, who have founded Nations, and have begun to feel the echoes of the devotion that the Last Empress feels towards her own. This will make them suspicious, especially to younger, more idealistic Princesses, but there is an acknowledgement that it happens sometimes, and so such dabblers should be watched, but are not automatically followers of Tears.

**Lacrima has the unique disadvantage that many of its Charms are sins against Belief.** This is counted as part of their activation cost, and so may not be bypassed. The cold, hard necessities of Lacrima wear down at the soul, smother it in uncaring void through which nothing can be felt. As a result, many Lacrima Charms are marginally more powerful than their equivalents from other Invocations, because of the greater cost paid to use them.

Lacrima applies at no cost when a Princess touches a ghost's anchor, or is within Alhambra or the Underworld; and when the target of her Charm is a ghost. It also applies without cost in times of true desperation, when failure means death or ruin, and when a Princess intends to act on behalf of the Queen of Tears or her subjects, or in the interests of her own Nation and its members.

The Invocation does not resonate with those who will not do everything for those they protect, who show any moral compunctions in the deeds needed for survival. If a Princess' situation is such that her present goal can be reached at the least cost to herself and her Nation by committing a sin against Belief,

and she chooses another course of action, she cannot use Lacrima for the rest of the scene, and for a further number of scenes equal to the difference of her current Belief and the level of the sin.

## *Quote*

Ignorance of the law is no excuse, you are all subjects of Alhambra.

## *Stereotypes*

- Clubs: Delusional. The strength of the Kingdom always lay in its cities, not the wilds, and she will only weaken us against the Darkness.
- Diamonds: It is a shame to see such brilliance going to waste, frittered away.
- Hearts: So close. So very close... and yet so far.
- Spades: Insubordinate curs! Born traitors who serve someone who shows no regard for the burdens of leadership!
- Swords: With their loyalty, Alhambra could be rendered safe, and the Rebellious Provinces pacified - but they will not be loyal.
- Storms: Monsters. They may once have been the loyal army of the Kingdom, but now they're nothing less than crazed beasts who try to thwart our every effort!
- Mirrors: Hubris-filled egotists. To think that anyone but our Lady could be a True Queen... it makes me sick!
- Vampires: We are nothing alike.
- Werewolves: Beasts. Keep away, and do not carry out operations in the savage areas they claim. It's easier in the long run.
- Mages: They claim we both lost our kingdoms, they are wrong. Alhambra survives, pity them for what they have lost.
- Prometheans: Walking corpses, fueled by some kind of fire? Clearly some kind of Darkened, if they actually exist.
- Changelings: Why should we care, as long as all they do is hide?
- Sin-Eaters: We know about ghosts in Alhambra. But these things aren't quite normal ghosts possessing people.
- Mad Scientists: They'd tear the world down just to see what would happen if they did. Despicable! Despicable yet very dangerous.
- Leviathans: No! It can't be! They were said to be extinct! They can't be back! They can't... not again.
- Hunters: Rebels from the Rebellious Provinces. Why am I not surprised?
- Mortals: Why won't you see? It's a necessary sacrifice.

## *Inspiration*

Homura Akemi

## *Ghost Princesses*

*She sits in an empty palace, the tapestries are moth eaten and threadbare. The floor is covered in dust, no one has been this way in years. In a ghostly whisper she answers petitions from courtiers and subjects long departed from their mortal coil. And yet she carries a presence about her, she still radiates with the power of her magic. The Princess is dead but her subjects still need her. Long live the Princess.*

Princesses do not naturally form Ghosts, the cycle of reincarnations draws the royal soul onwards with a gentle call that cuts the threads of anchors. To the followers of Tears this is a problem, Ghosts are useful and the ghost of a Princess would be more so. With powerful magic they can help a Princess remain on this plane after death and continue her duties to Alhambra.

In many ways the soul of a Princess is not so different from an ordinary Ghost; both are creatures of routine and habit, magic which affects one will usually affect the other. In other ways they are rather different. Over time a Ghost fades and decays, yet a royal Ghost does not. They are built to last and do not suffer the gradual decay of Morality, or in this case Belief, that affects ordinary Ghosts. A Belief Compromise might have a noticeable effect for a short while, and then the memories fog over and the Princess is reset to her Belief at the point of death. Instead of gradual degradation a Ghostly Princesses faces danger from a different direction: Sensitivity and Shadows.

As a royal Ghost acquires shadows its pure form loses its shining light. Its body becomes marked with signs of obvious decay and Darkness while its mind grows cracked and damaged. The more Shadows the more unstable they are until when they finally acquire a number of Shadows equal to their Belief they experience a crash similar to what happens when a Princess falls to Belief 0, some have even become Dethroned forming new bodies from the Darkness itself.

The Protectorate of Amethyst are responsible for caring for the Ghosts of departed Princesses. They keep them in walled luxurious palaces far from any sight that might trigger their Sensitivity and when they are called to perform royal duties for the Last Empress the Protectorate endeavours to travel with the Ghost to keep it safe from violence and Shadows. They take credit for the magic that keeps a royal Ghost from the inevitable decay that affects commoners after their life is over, but since they won't let anyone study the Charm they use who can say it's not just how royal Ghosts are?

### **The Nature of the Departed**

Though similar in demeanour and appearance the Ghost of a Princess is an entirely different order of being to the ghost of a Mortal. The following mechanics separate royal Ghosts from the ordinary sort. In all other ways treat her as an ordinary, if powerful, Ghost.

A royal Ghost's existence is the result of deliberate magic, not genuine unfinished business. As a result her Anchors cannot be resolved. The only way for the Ghost to Pass On is if its Corpus is destroyed.

A royal Ghost has no Numina but retains access to her Inner Light, Practical Magic, Charms and Invocations. She may cast Charms rolling an appropriate choice of Power, Finesse or Resistance. She may add an Invocation to the roll like normal.

Though royal Ghosts use Essence they acquire and use it precisely how a Princess would use Wisps, the systems that apply to ordinary Ghosts are not applicable. However the membership of her Circle is fixed at the moment of her death and she can only fulfil her Mandate in the most simple ways by mechanically repeating actions from life.

Finally the effects of her undead condition on her mind are controlled not by the gradual decay of Morality, but the accumulation of Shadows. The Shadows she has at the moment of her death become permanent and cannot be removed by any means. She may acquire more Shadows through Sensitivity as usual; and these extra Shadows can be lost as normal.



# The Queen of Storms

**AKA:** The Seraphic General, Lady of the Cleansing Flame, The Dragon-Slayer  
**Followers' Epithets:** Seraphim, Furies, The Sworn Guard, Crazyies (derogatory)  
**Former Kingdom:** Gonel

*The world hurts. The world always hurts. The Darkness is everywhere, subtly writhing in the night and in the hearts of corrupt bastards, and those fucking parasites in Alhambra make the world a worse place just by existing.*

*So we burn it out. We burn it all out. When some bastard takes children, we're there to make sure he dies and make sure that the Taint he leaves doesn't get to spread. We're not soft-hearted fools like the so-called 'Radiant', who prattle on about hope and self-belief and innate kindness and the like. The world is stinking and wretched and corrupt, and, like a cancer, the evil must excised. By any means necessary.*

*It's better to light a fire than curse the Darkness, after all.*

*Because the Kingdom was betrayed from within. We were all betrayed. Our Queen gave her life protecting something which wasn't worth protecting, and we now know that you can flap around talking about the Light all you want, but what the world needs is for all the bastards to die. They all deserve to die. And we're willing to give our lives to do so. We won't compromise, and if we die, we'll keep on fighting. Even in the face of the end of the world.*

*Even after the world ends, we'll keep fighting by our Queen's side. We'll keep on fighting until the Darkness is ash.*

The Queen of Storms was once a mortal woman, but is one no longer. As the hordes of the Darkness closed in on the last city of the Kingdom, she led the fight back, at the head of an army. And they were slaughtered. Transcending her mortal flesh as rage burned her alive, since the Fall of the Kingdom she, and her followers, have sought to cleanse the Darkness, and the traitors of Alhambra, from the world no matter the cost. She was not trapped in the Dreamlands, and she has raged and she has fought all this time. The forces of Storms are composed of mortal soldiers, those who the world has taken everything from, and is backed up by strange ghost-like beings, which build bodies for themselves out of flesh and clay; now, with the Release, Nobility join their ranks.

## Tales from the Darkness

Deep within the Dark World there is a storm that never ceases. Green fire scorches the sky. Bolts of thunder split mountains and carve the ground open. The wind sings hymns of definable. The clouds are formed of people in their millions, they burn with rage hot enough to warm the frozen heart of the Darkness. Wherever this Storm travels, it leaves nothing but ash.

The Queen of Storms died during the fall. She died faithful to her duties, she died untainted, and she died fighting. In her final battle she burnt herself to ashes with the fury of her rage and the power of the magics she channeled against the Darkness. Her body was destroyed, her mind was consumed by hate, and her soul was transformed. The Queen has become the very embodiment of Tempesta. She battles the Darkness itself within it's world, she exists deep within the soul of any who knows hate and rage within their hearts. Every feeling of rage is a petition for the Queen, all hatred is a prayer, and the requests of those who feel hate at the Queen's ancient enemies are granted. The Queen bestows her powers and her favor on all who would take up her banner and fight for her cause.

## *Philosophy*

Let the scholars of Alhambra mumble over the vague pronouncements of the Traitor Queen. The commands of the Seraphic General are clear, and she gives them to everyone in her service.

### **Death to the Darkness**

This is perhaps the simplest order given. Kill the Darkness. Kill Darkspawn, kill Endarkened, kill Mnemosyne, kill Cataphracti, burn Tainted locations to the ground and salt the earth so that no-one returns to them. Of course, when it's your sister, who became Endarkened through no fault of her own, it's different for you. Not for the Queen of Storms. Every Endarkened is a potential Darkspawn.

### **The Flesh Is Weak**

This principle has rather more depth than might at first appear. It is simultaneously a warning, a message for self-improvement, a threat and a caution. It warns that human beings, whether mortal or Enlightened, cannot always maintain the level of dedication needed to save the world, and so that must be remembered, so that flagging souls may be spurred on further. It is a message that followers of Storms are weak physically, and so should strive to improve themselves, so that they may continue to fight better, by training and by, if they have access, Goalenu-made Grafts. It is a threat, because failure will not be tolerated. And it is a caution, because followers of Storms frequently push themselves harder than their bodies can stand, and so they will learn that they hurt themselves.

And finally it is a promise, for those who die from use of Tempesta Charms; they transcend their weak flesh, and join with the Queen in her eternal battle. One day, the heralds of Storms promise, when enough souls have joined their Queen she will vanquish the Darkness and scour its every trace from all the worlds that ever were, are and will be. Only then will The Sworn Guard know rest.

### **Burn the World to Save the World**

The final statement is one of their purpose, and, again, it is both instruction and warning. Although the nature of their powers is such that they frequently cause collateral damage, it does not matter, as long as they are doing it to save the world. The opposite also stands; they are not like the Traitor Queen of Tears, and they do not drain the world for their own selfishness. Even in the rage-filled mind of the Queen of Storms, burning down an apartment to destroy the Tainted Site within it is completely different from random violence. Collateral damage is acceptable - indeed, even meaningless - but if it doesn't hurt the Darkness (as filtered through her warped perspective), it's wrong.

## *Duties*

If asked, the Radiant will tell you that the duties of the Seraphim are summed up in a single word: Fight. Fight the Darkness until your last breath leaves your body, and then fight on until it's purged from the world. This is essentially true, but it does gloss over the details. The "duties" of a Fury are the complex byproduct of her burning hate and the practical advantages of their Calling. Among young Enlightened and fresh recruits, the hate is bright like actinic lightning. All of them fight. Champions are the purest expression of the purgatorial violence of Storm's call, but they are not alone. Graces empower and boost themselves and any allies they have with destructive hatred, ramping emotions up so they fight to the very last. Menders are armoured titans whose control of their environment and their own bodies makes them surprisingly effective fighters. Seekers blind foes with illusions and hunt down targets who try to flee into Twilight, their magic homing in on the Darkness' weaknesses. Finally, Troubadours control the battlefield with magic and illusions, and as heralds of Storms' rage leave scenes of battle as a warning to those who would oppose them.

Older Furies tend to be a little more cynical about matters - or, rather, the ones who survive longer are the ones who are more mentally flexible. They are still driven by hate and rage, yes, but the burning emotions are banked, waiting. When they need them, fresh fuel is thrown onto the fire and they flare to

terrible life, but until then they are better at thinking in the long run. The icy cold rage of an experienced Seraphim is a terrifying thing to behold. Time and hatred has worn away any last inhibitions, and taught her every dirty trick. A young Fury might not care about collateral damage, but kicking down the door gives people some sort of warning, while a bomb does not. Experienced Furies can appear from nowhere in a whirlwind of destruction and vanish, leaving only the bodies of their enemies to mark their passing.

Unlike the five Radiant Courts, the Furies are not alone. Mortals who hate the Darkness may become Sworn to the service of The Seraphic General, and they can become allies and even companions to a Princess of Storms. It is among these cells, especially if multiple Seraphim are in a single cell, that more conventional Calling-based roles start to emerge. Champions take to the front, using their abilities to tie down the strongest opponents so their weaker allies are free to fight. Graces often gravitate to the unenviable task of trying to organise the cell, though most find it far easier to express their calling on the front line, blessing their allies and countering their enemies' magic. A Mender often finds a speciality in arms and armaments and on the battlefield she heads where the fighting is thickest, taking the blows others cannot. Of all the Callings Menders are the closest to the terrible Goalenu, learning to maintain and repair Vessels and acquire the parts - one way or another - to construct fresh ones. Seekers make expert scouts and trackers, and when they find their foes the fury of the Storm is rarely far behind. A rare few have the will to overcome both Tempesta's demands and their own hate, to scout and depart unseen. If you meet such a Seeker, fear her. Troubadours turn their hatred and combat into a macabre work of art, inspiring their allies in battle. When the fighting is over the more rational Troubadours use their skills to hide the Cell's presence from the investigations righteous battle invariably spawns.

## *Background*

For those who are called to the Queen of Storms from their Blossoming, one thing is frequently true. The world has treated them badly. Many of them were exposed to the World of Darkness before their blossoming, and the Seraphic Legion counts a notable number of former Hunters among it; some have retained their links, and both offer support and request assistance from their own allies. Others have broken homes, or anything else which would have exposed them to the things that people do. The Queen of Storms, for all her flaws, offers a home to such people, enables them to get back at the things in the world.

One of the notable things about the Queen of Storms is the sheer number of Twiceborn who join her ranks. In some ways, it is not surprising. The Twiceborn, those among the Hopeful who Blossomed in the long years before the Release, never knew the Kingdom. They are those who fought a desperate struggle against a world of darkness, and died. While those among the Kingdom-born can call upon their memories of a better time, the Twiceborn have seen the things that lurk in the shadows, and moreover many of them have served Storms in another life. Her call is the call of familiarity.

Disturbingly to the forces of the Radiant Queens, there are also those among the Seraphim who are not merely bereaved or distressed. There are those who appear to have logically thought about the state of the World of Darkness, and decided it is better that it burn than it be smothered in Darkness. Worse yet, this ideology can be attractive to inexperienced Princesses, especially since Storms can provide money, and training, and allies from the networks, and so such more-rational members tend to accumulate groups of younger Princesses, in the same way that the more experienced among the Radiant do. This is obviously a threat, but on the other hand, such cells are more willing to deal with the Radiant if doing so will aid them in the destruction of the Darkness. In such areas, Storms can become an uneasy ally, which usually lasts until the levels of collateral damage becomes unacceptable for more moral individuals.

Likewise, among the Radiant, there is a public perception that the Queen of Storms is the one of the Twilight Queens who gets the most defectors. In part, it is because of the relative publicity of such defectors (Tears tries to hide, and Mirrors isn't quite as loud as an explosion), but it is also true that the Queen of Storms offers much to a certain type of Noble. When one has seen too many friends (and, then their replacements, barely out of childhood) die, when one has seen the Darkness come back and ruin everything you've worked for, when one has had enough of vague platitudes from Queens who live in the Dreamlands and don't know what the world is like... well, then Storms, with its cells of organised mortal cultists, and its simple mission to destroy the Darkness no matter the cost, starts to sound awfully tempting.

## Character Creation

The Queen of Storms not only admires strength, but demands it. Seraphim tend to have above-average Physical Attributes, with Stamina prized, because it allows them to keep going longer and absorb the negative consequences of the use of the Tempesta Invocation better. In addition, both Presence and Resolve are prized; the former is the force of will needed for a soldier, and the latter the ability to keep going, no matter the odds against you. And for individuals particularly deficient in these, there is always the option of Goalenu Grafts, which can boost attributes, but at a cost...

### Heraldry

The colours of the Seraphic Legion are steel grey, brilliant acidic green, and white. These colours are proudly displayed, and mandatory; they are the Last Legion, who remain loyal to the idea of a Kingdom betrayed by its leaders. From this background, some would expect the clothing of Seraphim to tend to the militaristic and armoured. In fact, although some have a certain harshness of trim, the peculiarities of the Tempesta armour Charm, Best Defence, mean that their garb is based around permitting as free movement as possible. Short skirts and shorts are common among both genders (although Princes prefer to call the skirts "kilts"), and where the clothing is not militaristic, it instead takes on elements of antiauthoritarian counter-cultures.

### Echo

A Fury's Echo is a simple thing. It screams that the time for action is right now.

### Practical Magic

The Seraphic General sustains her acolytes in battle; the Furies can shrug off blows that would put down any lesser fighter, and strike all the harder as their own flesh bleeds. In either Transformed or mundane state, a Princess of Storms may spend 1 Wisp. For the rest of the scene, she reverses wound penalties into bonuses (-1 becomes +1, -2 becomes +2 -3 becomes +3) and does not check for unconsciousness if her last Health box fills with bashing damage.

### Invocation: Tempesta

The Invocation of Tempesta is the principle embodied and founded by the Queen of Storms, and which her Enlightened find come naturally to them. It is conceptually linked to several things, including anger, acid, radioactivity, martyrdom, cleansing and sterilising, and all things connected to these, allowing Invoked Upgrades and Invoked Charms to be based around them.

**Tempesta has the unique disadvantage that many of its Charms inflict damage upon the user.** This is counted as part of their activation cost, and so may not be bypassed. Damage so inflicted is Resistant, and so may not be healed by magical means of any kind, as the rage and hatred of Tempesta burns at the Enlightened body and soul alike. Should a character die due to damage from Tempesta Invocations, or bleed-out because of such damage, the character does not reincarnate, but instead joins with the Queen of Storms. Because of these costs, many Tempesta Charms which have such a price are more powerful than equivalent ones which lack such painful payment.

Tempesta also has the unique advantage of a new Sacred Oath. After any scene in which a Princess battles against the Darkness she may roll Tempesta and gain one Wisp per Success. The Princess cannot benefit from this rule and her Calling's Sacred Oaths in the same scene.

Tempesta applies at no cost when a Princess has taken enough bashing damage to suffer wound penalties, or any amount of lethal or aggravated damage; and in the midst of violent storms, earthquakes, explosions or other widespread devastation. It also applies without cost when a Princess is fighting servants of the Darkness or agents of the Queen of Tears.

Those who would use Tempesta must be merciless and swift, striking without hesitation and never showing fear. Displays of mercy to those who have wronged the Princess or those she protects or loves, or retreating from battle (Pulling back from a foe for tactical advantage is acceptable; fleeing or refusing to fight is not.), render this Invocation inapplicable until the sun next rises. If the target spared is a

servant of the Queen of Tears or the Darkness, the Invocation cannot be used until the Princess's final health box is filled with damage, for their flesh cannot channel these powers until the weakness has been forced out through pain. (A Princess may injure herself to regain use of Tempesta; in fact, such penance is expected and encouraged among the Furies.)

## *Quote*

It doesn't matter if I die, just how many I take with me.

## *Stereotypes*

- Clubs: So... when're you actually going to do something useful, then?
- Diamonds: You're real smart. Now look at the real problem.
- Hearts: The kind of cattle who followed the Traitor Queen into betrayal.
- Spades: Yeah, let's go prank the Darkspawn on Fifth, who're there because some fucker killed his kids. That'll make things better.
- Swords: We kinda get them. They just need to focus on the real problem.
- Tears: You're in with the Darkness! Your Queen is a traitorous bitch! So just die already!
- Mirrors: Arrogant blind self-righteous bastards.
- Vampires: Bloodsucking parasites. The world will be a better place when you are all ash.
- Werewolves: Sometimes... I just want to smash everything, too.
- Mages: Our magic burns us, but at least we can rely on it in a fight.
- Prometheans: They're like the Goalenu, I think. I saw one tear something that looked like a Darkspawn apart. actually exist.
- Changelings: Keep out of our way.
- Sin-Eaters: Huh. I see a dead person who isn't dead anymore.
- Mad Scientists: Who cares how the fuck this works, we can nuke Darkened from orbit with it.
- Leviathans: I'm not running, not even from a fucking god. I hope I fucking give you indigestion.
- Hunters: They get it, you know. We're like them.
- Mortals: FUCK! How can you just sit back and... argh!

## *Inspiration*

The Punisher, Big Daddy and Hit Girl

## *The Stormwrecked*

*In his dreams he stands upon a plane is covered in the legacies of war from all eras. Ruined buildings pockmarked by cannonfire and machine-gun bursts rise up beside ruined statues of Egyptian kings. Damaged arms and armour from a hundred centuries lie where they fell, tanks beside horse-barding and stone axes, trenches dug for crossbowmen. There are never any bodies, but the dried splatters of blood tell their own tale. Above it all is the Storm. The wind screams hymns to her rage. The lightning branches like fingers to pummel the ground. She cries out in a voice made of the screams of dying women and horses and the staccato beat of automatic weapons. She promises and demands vengeance, vengeance against the monsters who took his family.*

Wherever the Darkness treads it creates it's own enemies. The Darkness is cruel, it hurts, it tortures, and it leaves behinds friends and loves weeping over broken bodies. Their tears turn to hate, their rage spurs them to action. All across the globe individuals take up arms against the Darkness and fight.

They fight under the banner of the Seraphic General.

### **Royal Patronage**

A Queen is more than just a person with immeasurable magical power. A Queen's power resonates in the heart of everyone who follows her ideals. Through this her followers unlock new potential: Princesses can apply Practical Magic and enhance their Charms with Invocations, Mortals can become Sworn and so unlock a measure of the Light's power.

Of the Queens none have demonstrated such a strong connection to their followers as the Queen of Storms. She goes beyond resonance, she exists in every heart that echo's the ideals of Tempesta, even those who have not learned her Invocation. To the Lady of Cleansing fire every feeling of hatred is a petition and she judges them all, if the anger is strong enough and directed at her ancient enemies she will ask those who feel it to fight in her name. In return she offers potent weapons.

No one knows why the Queen of Storms alone is able to do this. Perhaps it is because her transformation unlocked new abilities, maybe it's because she has no other way to interact or possibly the consolation of many souls into a greater entity has made the Lady of Cleansing Fire stronger than the other Queens. Her followers of course don't care either way.

### **The Nature of the Storm**

The most basic Stormwrecked template consists of the Sworn Merit and a single dot of Tempesta. The most common way to gain this is to feel overwhelming hatred towards the Darkness, and swear the oaths that instinctively flow from your own hate. In game terms, the Queen of Storm's unique nature means that any Mortal who uphold's Tempesta's Philosophies can become Sworn simply by spending 22 experience points to buy the Sworn Merit and a dot of Tempesta; however any Sworn who learns a dot of Tempesta becomes a Stormwrecked by definition.

The Stormwrecked have all the usual advantages and drawbacks of being Sworn, and more. Stormwrecked benefit from a unique Sacred Oath; they can create Wisps by fighting the Darkness, but may earn no more than their Tempesta rating each day. They may buy the Unseen Senses Merit at two dots, providing it is applied to The Darkness. They can also buy the Merit Stormwrecked Dreams. Stormwrecked Dreams mechanically works like the Merit White Rabbits; but it functions not through the Dreamlands, but through the Queen of Storms sending information and orders. The Queen being who she is always sends information about Dark tainted monsters to be killed. Ignoring orders from Stormwrecked Dreams breaks Tempesta's Ban.

Finally the Stormwrecked may benefit from Royal Favours. The player (not the character) may declare, once per story, that the Queen is working her magic through the character. The result is an Invocation of any Tempesta or general Charm with a rating equal or less to half the character's Tempesta, round up. There is no cost but the dicepool is equal to the number of Resistant Lethal Damage the player chooses to take, if there is no roll then this inflicts one point of damage per dot of the Charm (and yes, the Queen has killed her followers by filling their Health track with Aggravated damage before).

All these benefits are also available to any Princess with dots in Tempesta, except for Royal Favours. They are only available to members of the Court of Storms.

## Stormwracked Cells

Whenever the Stormwracked can they organise themselves into military cells. They have no supernatural ability to find others of their kind (though Stormwracked Dreams may send several at the same target), and people Sworn to a life of hate and rage rarely find the time to set up an infrastructure. However the Stormwracked are most commonly created as a reaction to the Darkness, so where the Creatures of the Darkness are many soon the Stormwracked will be so as well. In time they may find each other.

Stormwracked Cells tend to be small self contained groups. Following Tempesta's ideals makes for an effective but short career as a hunter of all things Tainted; meaning that most die in battle before they have long enough to think about recruitment and long term strategy. The tactics used by the Stormwracked tend to be loud and noticeable, though a few small groups can blend into the background of crime statistics as Stormwracked Cells grow in size they inevitably draw the attention of law enforcement and anti-terrorist task forces, effectively putting an upper limit on the size of Stormwracked organisation.

## Goalenu

*A man strides down the street, in a long, greenish-blue coat and broad-brimmed hat. He keeps both covering him as best he can. If you could see his flesh, you could see the cracks of green fire which spread out from his joints, skin cracked and dried as this shell weakens. He walks, legs overly stiff, past the shops, and towards the school. The colour is being drained from the surface of everything around him, leaving a fine grey ash layered all around.*

They are the most trusted lieutenants of The Seraphic General; a fragment of her vast consciousness given independence for a time, or one of her many component souls sent on a mission. Perhaps even a little of both. Wherever they go the Goalenu carry the living fury of Tempesta, in a sense they are Tempesta itself. They incarnate to wage righteous war against the darkness.

When not in a vessel, a Goalenu often looks like a stormcloud forced into the shape of a man - grey or black smoke, lit from within by green flickers - or a shimmering distortion of the air, outlined in ghosts of color. It is always taller than most mortals, never less than six and a half feet, and usually more than seven feet tall; it always has a generally human body plan, with two arms, two legs and a head; and its bulk is such that, were it substantial, it would be taken for a bodybuilder. But a Goalenu is never quite substantial, even when it has fully materialized, and the glimmers and flickers that delineate its form sometimes shift when the Guard itself is still, showing eyes on its hands or a face in its stomach.

A Goalenu's speech and behavior show an odd combination of monomania and absent-mindedness. In moments of direct threat, or when a spawn of Darkness is present, the Guard focuses wholly on the enemy's destruction; at other times it grows a bit forgetful and indecisive, needing a few moments' thought to recognize old acquaintances. Goalenu have even been heard talking to - rather, arguing with - themselves, when they thought no one else was in earshot. To those who have questioned them about this, the Goalenu explain that they are "many by birth, one by the General's will" and that to those who fight the General's war, death is promotion to a post of greater trust. And in proof of this, Goalenu who lead a cult of Stormwracked very often remember, in detail, the lives of cultists who have died in the cause ... suggesting that the deceased are now one with it, ready for the eternal war.

## The Nature of her Lieutenants

A Goalenu in its natural state has the traits of ghosts and spirits (Power, Finesse and Resistance Attributes, Corpus instead of Health, and so on.) Its total Attribute dots are anywhere from 9 to 15, and its Size is 5 - a Goalenu is somewhat larger than most humans, but not gigantic. Unlike ghosts or spirits, a Goalenu can have Skill dots, but these only matter when it crafts a vessel - it never uses them directly. It has an Wisp pool of 15. Though Goalenu are living avatars of Tempesta they retain enough of their human nature to be affected by any magic that affects human souls. They can also be touched (and thus fought) by anything within or able to affect Twilight. If a Goalenu runs out of either Wisps or Corpus, it disincorporates, returning to the train of the Queen of Storms.

Goalenu retain the Virtue and Vice they had in life. Fortitude is rather common, due to the mentality required to kill yourself through overuse of your powers, rather than surrender; as is Justice, out of their

desire to see the Darkness, no matter its form or how it conceals itself, destroyed. Meanwhile, Wrath and Pride are common vices; the former from their desire for vengeance, while the latter from the fact that they follow the only true Queen of the Kingdom, the only one who did not betray them to the Darkness and isn't an imaginary spectre, futilely whispering into the wind.

A Goalenu generally has the Numina Craft Vessel, Materialize, and 1 to 3 others. Craft Vessel is unique to the Goalenu, and is the source of their name. No Goalenu may learn the Discorporate Numen, as that would return them to their Queen prematurely. Likewise, they cannot learn Claim (Craft Vessel fills that role for them), Fetter, or Living Fetter. They may learn Possession, but that inflicts a point of Aggravated damage on both the Goalenu and the host when used, and so, frankly, most of the Chimerical Barons would rather build themselves a man, with blond hair, and a tan, than wear the skin of a mortal in that painful fashion.

Goalenu are tied to things and people that resonate with the Tempesta Invocation. They can find such over considerable distances, gain Wisps in their presence, and may spend Wisps to manipulate them:

- A Goalenu is automatically aware of the locations of servants of the Darkness, agents of the Queen of Tears, or violent destruction within a mile of itself, though it can't distinguish between them or count them - it knows only that the Darkness is in a specific place. A Goalenu is also aware of the locations of all people loyal to the Queen of Storms within a mile of itself, and cannot tell how many are in a place - it does, however, know the difference between its allies and its enemies.
- Once per day, when a Goalenu fights servants of the Darkness or agents of the Queen of Tears, or is in the midst of great destruction, it rolls Power + Finesse as an instant action and regains 1 Wisp for each success. It can do this at any time during combat, or immediately after a combat ends.
- A Goalenu may spend 1 Wisp to strengthen something linked to Tempesta - fire burns hotter, acid scars more deeply, people who are angry cannot be calmed, people set on sacrificing their lives cannot be swayed, and so forth. It rolls Power + Finesse; if it succeeds, its target is bolstered for 10 minutes per success. If it spends 2 Wisps, the strengthening lasts for 1 hour per success.
- A Goalenu may spend 2 Wisps to manipulate something linked to Tempesta - fire burns in one direction instead of another, or a person's anger shifts to a different target. It rolls Power + Finesse; if it succeeds, it can influence the target for 10 minutes per success. The Goalenu cannot make its target act unnaturally or make abrupt, drastic changes to it.

The Sworn Guard of the Seraphic General are absolutely bound by the Ban of Tempesta: they can give neither aid, nor succour, nor mercy to anything which would even in the slightest assist the Darkness or its pawn, the Traitor Queen, and they cannot flee from a field of battle or forgive an injury.

(If the Storyteller has the Book of Spirits, a Goalenu is equivalent to a Rank 2 spirit with an Influence of Tempesta 2. Storytellers with that book can build more powerful Goalenu with the traits of a higher Rank.)

### **The Craft Vessel Numen**

Craft Vessel is an exceptionally unusual Numen, only ever found among the Goalenu, and (if you are to believe them) taught directly to the first of their kind to take upon new bodies of ephemera by the Queen of Storms herself. The Vessel is a construct, of flesh and clay in varying proportions, which provides a host which can contain the essence of the Protean Knight, and unleash its powers to the full. Indeed, it is not quite a body, but more of a siege platform, fuelled by the essence of the Goalenu, and manifesting it to ends that the ephemeral creature could not have reached on its own.

Mechanically, the Goalenu requires two things before the ritual construction can start; flesh and clay. In order to be able to even start, moreover, the Chimerical Baron must be able to manipulate the material world, generally through use of the Materialise Numen; other possibilities are Possession of a convenient mortal, bringing the raw materials into the Shadow (by far the preferable option, although it has its own... issues) or (if the Storyteller has the Book of Spirits) an Influence over Flesh or Clay. When the pieces are gathered together, the Goalenu spends 5 Wisps, and begins an extended roll of Power + Finesse, one roll per hour. (It must be noted that, as usual, the number of rolls is capped by



the dicepool.) It must accumulate a number of Successes equal to its Power + Finesse + Resistance to craft the vessel properly.

Not all Vessels are made alike. Although certain constraints must be followed (the heart must be flesh, torn from a human chest, while the brain must be replaced by a tiny sculpture, of the self-image of the Chimerical Baron), for all other things there is a wonderful degree of flexibility in their creation. Flesh and clay may be merged almost without limits. The face of that woman is wonderful, but her body? Well, let's just say that a much better job could be done. And it has been found that the way the essence of the Goalenu fuels the Vessel changes depending on whether certain major organs are flesh or clay. It comes at a cost, though; Vessels which are mostly clay are more resilient to the vitriolic sun that lives within it, but far less able to pass for human, while the opposite is true for the ones which are mostly flesh. The appearance of the Vessel is averaged out over the parts; one which is entirely flesh, apart from the brain, is almost identical to a human, perhaps with a little cold skin, while a clay Vessel (apart from the heart) is an exquisitely painted china doll, squatting at the bottom of the Uncanny Valley.

The vessel has the nine Attributes of a human or natural animal, which all begin at 1. The Goalenu distributes twice its Power dots across the vessel's Intelligence, Strength and Presence; twice its Finesse dots across the vessel's Wits, Dexterity and Manipulation; and twice its Resistance dots across the vessel's Resolve, Stamina and Composure. The Vessel's Resolve, plus the number of clay parts used to craft it, must exceed 4 (or twice the Goalenu's Rank as a spirit, if it has a Rank above 2.) Derived traits are calculated normally. The vessel's Skills are those of the Goalenu, except for those provided by flesh parts used in the crafting - when a flesh part provides a Skill, the vessel uses the higher of the part's Skill rating and the Goalenu's.

When in a vessel, the Goalenu still gain Wisps from their tie to the Tempesta Invocation, but cannot use any other power open to them in the unbound state, such as Numina or manipulating things linked to the Invocation. In exchange they use the advantages and powers inherent in their vessel.

### Vessel Advantages

A newly-made Vessel has a Revelation track, with a number of dots equal to the Vessel's Resolve + the number of Clay parts - 4 (or 2x the Goalenu's Rank as a spirit), to a maximum of 10 dots. The Vessel's Resolve, plus the number of Clay parts used to craft it, must exceed twice the Goalenu's Rank. Many of a Vessel's special powers, called Reprisals (for that is what the Goalenu believe they are doing; taking revenge) fill in dots on the Revelation track; when the last dot of Revelation is filled, the Vessel reduces the track's length by 1 permanently, and empties the remaining dots. When a Vessel's Revelation has been reduced to 0, the Vessel explodes, as if it had used the Reprisal Let There Be Light.

As Revelation dwindles, the Vessel's basic inhumanity grows more obvious. Some effects always appear; others appear when the Goalenu uses a Reprisal, and last until the end of the scene.

Revelation	At All Times
8 and up	No effect
7	No effect
6	The Vessel's eyes always have green irises.
5	The Vessel's eyes are a brilliant green. Those familiar with the Goalenu can roll Wits + Occult, at -4, to
4	The Vessel's presence terrifies animals; none will dare to attack it. Just walking down a street sets all the
3	The Vessel looks slightly sick and pallid, the flesh around the joints raw. When it touches things, there's
2	There is a greenish cast to the Vessel's features, as if it's nauseous or ill from some disease. Its lips are cr
1	The Vessel's skin is bone dry, and if it's dark, the eyes radiate a slight light... and so does the mouth, wh

Vessels do not heal naturally. All damage done to them remains forever unless repaired by a supernatural power that directly heals damage. Powers that restore the Structure of an object will heal bashing damage in a Goalenu at a 1:1 ratio; lethal and aggravated damage require powers that heal a living being for that type of damage.

## Flesh and Clay

The composition of the Vessel affects what the Goalenu can do, while materials provide their own advantages and disadvantages.

- Each Clay part increases the maximum Revelation by one, but imposes a -1 to social rolls.
- Flesh parts come with memories attached. Each organ is linked to certain skills, and if the organ is Flesh, the Vessel begins with the original owner's Skill Rating. That means that some Vessels are made from a truly horrendous number of individuals (rather than the just one, which every one needs for the Heart), as the Goalenu, often using Storms-serving cultists, finds the experts in its fields in order to take their skills. And, although you can survive the loss of an arm, you certainly can't survive the loss of your spine.
- Some Clay parts provide persistent bonuses. These are noted in the Reprisal entry for that part.
- The Reprisals cannot be used by the Goalenu when they are not in a Vessel. All Vessels have 9 powers, which cost Wisps and/or Revelation to activate. 2 are common to all Vessels, while all others have a choice of 2 powers; depending on whether you take the Flesh or the Clay option. There are rumours of other powers (what happens if you cast an organ out of Iron, for example), but these are the only ones known about and used regularly by the Goalenu servants of the Queen of Storms.

Organ	Attribute	Flesh Skills	Flesh Reprisal	Clay Reprisal
Heart	Resolve	Animal Ken, Politics	Let There Be Light	n/a
Brain	Intelligence	n/a	n/a	Ever Glowing Sun
Eyes	Wits	Investigate, Empathy	Taken Revelation	Cleansing Fire
Right Arm	Strength	Weaponry, Crafts	Honesty of Purpose	Rip and Tear
Left Arm	Dexterity	Firearms, Larceny	Betrayal of the Betrayers	Immaterium
Legs	Stamina	Athletics, Brawl	The Hunting Beast	Unstoppable
Tongue	Manipulation	Expression, Streetwise	Taste of Sin	Warcry
Lungs	Presence	Intimidate, Persuasion	Venomous Words	Storm's Vengeance
Spine	Composure	Medicine, Occult	Killing Words	Unseen Hunter

Activating a Reprisal requires a roll based on the associated Attribute:

**Dramatic Failure:** The shell of the Vessel weakens, as the unconstrained power of the activation proves too much for the clay and flesh. The character erases the final dot of their Revelation track, reducing it by one. Those with Grafts suffer something worse; not only do they reduce the size of the Revelation track, but they also suffer one point of lethal damage for each Graft they have, as their flesh rejects it.

**Failure:** The Reprisal fails to activate. The Wisps and the Revelation are wasted.

**Success:** The Reprisal activates as desired.

**Exceptional Success:** The extra successes are their own reward.

### Ever Glowing Sun (Clay Brain)

**Cost:** 1 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence

**Action:** Instant

The Goalenu sacrifices some of the Vessel's integrity for fuel. It regains 1 Wisp per success rolled.

### Taken Revelation (Flesh Eyes)

**Cost:** 2 Wisps, 0 - 2 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Wits - target's Resolve

**Action:** Instant

The Goalenu locks eyes with the target, dissolving memories with a single vitriolic thought, before letting the solution return to their own mind, to be studied at will. One memory per success is taken; the Chimerical Baron knowing it in full, and the target permanently losing access to it. The Goalenu may select an area of knowledge, or may just chose to take memories important to the target; either way, the ST decides which memories exactly are taken. Any character may only suffer this Reprisal once per week, regardless of the source.

A Goalenu may take 1 Revelation to inflict the Phobia derangement on the target for a week, or 2 Revelation to inflict Hysteria for a day. The subject of the Phobia or Hysteria is something prominent in the memories that were stolen.

### **Cleansing Fire (Clay Eyes)**

**Cost:** 0 or 1 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Wits

**Action:** Instant

The Vessel closes its eyes, and when they open, they provide a sight into an inner green sun. With thought of hatred it unleashes it's internal fire. Treat this as an ordinary ranged attack with a short range of 20, a medium range of 40 and a long range of 80 yards. The damage is Lethal but spending one Revelation will upgrade it to Aggravated Damage for a turn. The Damage also has a base of zero, but spending Wisps will increase the damage at a 1:1 ratio up until a maximum of five. The damage decreases by one every turn until it reaches zero.

### **Honesty of Purpose (Flesh Right Arm)**

**Cost:** 2 Wisps, 0 or 1 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Strength

**Action:** Reflexive

The Vessel is a supreme unison of flesh and clay and Light and ghost and spirit. What lesser object, of only inanimate matter, can stand against it? This power enhances an attack against an inanimate object. When resolving damage, the Durability of the target object is counted as 0, meaning that all damage is inflicted directly to Structure. A Goalenu with this active may punch their way through a bank vault, or through a ritually sanctified Alhambran gate, with no signs of effort.

If the Goalenu takes 1 Revelation when activating this power, the blow against the object also counts as a Killing Blow, with dice converted directly into successes. This may only be used against mundane inanimate objects, or those belonging to servants of the Darkness (those with the Darkened template, and Alhambrans, including Princesses of Tears).

### **Rip and Tear (Clay Right Arm)**

**Cost:** 1 Wisp, 0 or 1 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Strength

**Action:** Reflexive

The Goalenu's blows can leave grievous wounds. This Reprisal supplements an attack, and adds its Successes to its dicepool; moreover, the Vessel does not take a penalty for making a targeted blow, with the goal of crippling or killing (ripping out their guts is acceptable; trying to disarm them is not, unless you take the word "disarm" literally).

If the Goalenu takes 1 Revelation when activating this power, the attack does aggravated damage.

Vessels with this Reprisal do lethal damage with unarmed attacks.

### **Betrayal of the Betrayers (Flesh Left Arm)**

**Cost:** 1 Wisp, 0 or 1 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity

**Action:** Reflexive

The Goalenu strikes with blinding speed. This Reprisal enhances an attack. Its target must succeed on a Wits + Composure roll to apply Defense against it, just as if it were delivered from ambush.

Once per scene, the Goalenu may take 1 Revelation when activating this Reprisal. If the target fails the Wits + Composure roll, the attack becomes a Killing Blow.

### **Immaterium (Clay Left Arm)**

**Cost:** 2 Wisps, 1 or 2 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity

**Action:** Instant

It has been believed that man was created from dirt; flesh from clay. But the Chimerical Barons have shown that both clay and flesh are but a shell for the spirit. Raising their arm to the skies above, hand clenched, the Vessel tears itself apart into a cloud of blood and sand, reforming in another location within sensory range in (10 - successes) turns. The Goalenu is not aware of what happens when so dematerialised, and may require a Wits + Composure roll to be able to act on the turn they reappear, if the situation has changed drastically in that time.

If the Goalenu takes 2 Revelation when activating this Reprisal, it can reform anywhere within Dexterity miles. In that case, the delay until reformation is increased to (10 - successes) minutes. The Goalenu may not use this option if leaving its current location would break the Goalenu Ban.

Vessels with this Reprisal add +3 to their Speed.

### **The Hunting Beast (Flesh Legs)**

**Cost:** 1 Wisp, 0 or 1 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Stamina

**Action:** Instant

You cannot run. You cannot hide. The Chimerical Barons are ready for you, and you will not escape them. This Reprisal enhances any kind of physical chase, whether vehicular or on foot. The Goalenu has their Speed modified so that it is <successes x 3> greater than their target's (unless it would already be greater), thus granting them a + successes to their rolls.

If the Goalenu takes 1 Revelation, instead of rolling, the Goalenu automatically gets enough successes to exceed their victim's sum to date, thus meaning that they, as per the rules for chases,

catch up.

### **Unstoppable (Clay Legs)**

**Cost:** 2 Wisps, 0 or 1 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Stamina

**Action:** Reflexive

Death did not stop the Last Guard of the Kingdom. Why would you believe that you can? Whenever the Vessel is attacked, they may activate this Reprisal. Each success on the activation roll downgrades a point of Aggravated to Lethal, Lethal to Bashing, or ignores a point of Bashing.

If the Goalenu takes 1 Revelation when activating the Reprisal, the damage from that attack is capped at 1 point, of whatever kind it was, instead of being downgraded. This works against environmental effects just as much as it does more direct attacks (in which case the Goalenu must activate this power once per damage increment); few things are more horrifying than a Goalenu climbing out of the vat of liquid metal you just pushed it into.

Vessels with this Reprisal are not subject to the effects of Knockdown.

### **Taste of Sin (Flesh Tongue)**

**Cost:** 1 Wisps

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation

**Action:** Extended; 1 roll per round, target number equal to the victim's Willpower

A Vessel is but flesh and clay. But as the Queen of Storms teaches: Flesh is weak. It can be tainted. A Goalenu can use that weakness to find it's ancient foe.

To use this Reprisal, the Goalenu must consume a human being, cramming bloody meat into their mouth, inflicting 1 lethal damage for each success rolled. The flesh itself is not digested, but burns to smoke and a fine white ash which is exhaled by the character. Once the target number has been reached, the Goalenu instantly knows of every encounter with the Darkness their victim ever had.

Taste of Sin can be used on humans, and any creature of the Darkness.

### **Warcry (Clay Tongue)**

**Cost:** 1 Wisp/person affected

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation - highest targets' Resolve

**Action:** Instant, contested

The Goalenu's rage overwhelms and bewilders those who see it. To use Warcry, the Goalenu must spend 1 Wisp for every person in its line of sight. Each person affected can only run or cower in terror for a number of turns equal to the Goalenu's Successes. They do not lose their Defence.

### **Venomous Words (Flesh Lungs)**

**Cost:** 1 Wisp

**Dice Pool:** Presence vs. targets' Composure

**Action:** Instant, contested

The Vessel incites its hearers to madness. Everyone who hears the Goalenu speak and rolls fewer successes than it does gains the Irrationality derangement for the rest of the scene.

### **Storm's Vengeance (Clay Lungs)**

**Cost:** 1 Wisp/roll, 1 Revelation

**Dice Pool:** Presence

**Action:** Extended, each roll is 1 turn

The Goalenu summons the fury of its Queen. As it accumulates successes, the sky fills with thunderclouds, and rain and high winds buffet everyone and everything standing. Anyone within 50 yards of the Vessel suffers a penalty of half its accumulated successes, to a maximum of -5, on all Physical actions. Those within 100 yards but farther than 50 yards away take a penalty of 1 less; those within 150 yards take a

penalty of 2 less, and so forth in steps of 50 yards until the penalty reduces to 0. The Vessel itself is not impeded by the storm in the least. The violent weather endures for the rest of the scene.

Vessels with this Reprisal are immune to inhaled toxins. They do require oxygen, but toxic gases don't affect them.

### **Battlefield Neurology (Flesh Spine)**

**Cost:** 1 Wisp

**Dice Pool:** Composure

**Action:** Reflexive

The Goalenu heightens its Vessel's reactions to an inhuman degree. Each Success adds one to Defence for the turn, in addition it will not decrease Defence when faced with subsequent attackers for the scene.

### **Seraphic Wings (Clay Spine)**

**Cost:** 1 Revelation, Wisps equal to the blast radius in yards.

**Dice Pool:** Composure

**Action:** Reflexive (it takes an instant action to form or remove the cannons)

The Goalenu roots its stance, and pushes the clay of its Vessel's spine through its body to form two magical cannons. The cannons are expensive, costing one Revelation to arm for a single shot. They are however quite powerful: Each shot is explosive (see WoD Core p 179), with a Damage equal to the Successes rolled and a Blast Area equal to the Wisps spent. The damage done is lethal, and they ignite their targets with Tempesta's green fire.

Shooting the cannons is of course a Dexterity + Firearms roll. It also takes a full turn to cool off a cannon after shooting (that's why there are two of them).

A Goalenu's magical cannons are many things, but weight balanced is not one of them. While the cannons are enabled the Goalenu cannot run without unbalancing itself (roll Dexterity + Athletics to remain steady), it certainly cannot fire a cannon without a firm rooted stance unless it wants to go flying; which means no moving and shooting in the same turn.

### **Let There Be Light (Flesh Heart)**

**Cost:** The Vessel's destruction

**Dice Pool:** Resolve

**Action:** Extended (1 roll per round, threshold = remaining unmarked health boxes)

The cataclysmic energy contained within the Vessel is released all at once, in one, terrible explosion. Raising its face to the skies, the Goalenu sings out, a scream of hate and rage and betrayal in the Royal Tongue, as they crack and glow, before finally, exploding. That is not the end for them, though, for the newly freed Goalenu is ready to continue its war.

When the target number is reached, the Goalenu explodes as an explosive device (WoD Core, p178-179). It has a Damage of 2 (or its Rank as a spirit), a Blast Area equal to the number of unmarked health boxes it had remaining, and sets survivors alight. This happens whether Let There Be Light was activated, or the Goalenu merely had its Revelation emptied through use of powers. However, if the activation was deliberate, then, in the middle of this inferno, the unbound Goalenu appears, with the benefits of the Manifestation Numen activated for free, ready to wreak havoc on those who survived the blast. If the Vessel's Revelation ran out, the blast throws the Goalenu into Twilight.

# The Queen of Mirrors

**AKA:** The True Queen, The Child Queen, The Hierophant-Queen, The Crown's Custodian

**Followers' Epithets:** Lightbearers, Heirs, Brats. (derogative)

**Former Kingdom:** Crystal Heril

*Come on! Just a little bit more! You can do it! I'm leading you, and you don't want to let me down!*

*Yeah, see, I was just a 13-year old, wandering ignorant and doing silly things. But then I started having these odd dreams, and I found I could do these strange things that I could never before. I was really scared at first, but this really pretty lady with silver eyes told me about what I was, and how the Light had chosen me to lead it, how it was destiny. Everyone's just got to work together, and follow my orders, and we can beat the Darkness do it forever. I believe in you, you see, so that means you have to believe in yourself. It's your duty to fight for the Light.*

*And when we rebuild the Kingdom, everything won't just be okay again, it'll be better.*

*I really hope so.*

The Crown's Custodian is an enigma. Those who have seen her sometimes describe a silver-haired child, with eyes that twinkle like stars and an infectious crescent-grin of a smile. But most often they say she looks like the one she meets, their chiral twin... apart from her grin and her eyes, which are always silver. They say travels behind every mirror, and looks among mankind through glass, looking for Princesses of unusual talent and drive and skill and will. They say she's looking for the True Heir to the Kingdom.

## Tales from Behind the Mirrors

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful young girl with silver hair, and she was the fairest maiden in all the lands. Now, when she was six years old, the priestesses of the stars came, and told her parents that their daughter was the reincarnation of the Hierophant-Queen, marked by her hair, and it was necessary to take her away from them, so they could raise her properly. And her parents were happy, because the Hierophant-Queen, the fairest of all, and they were only poor farmers living at the furthest reaches of their kingdom. And the girl was taken away, and raised well, and on her eighth birthday, she came into her own, and remembered that she was truly the Hierophant-Queen, the adjudicator of disputes between the other Queens. For the priestesses of the stars were the judges as well as the priestesses, and by night, they held their courts and found the guilty, and helped the innocent, and the Hierophant-Queen was the first among them all, to ensure that thoughts of the Light were prime among them all, and that nothing bad could occur. And all was wonderful, and the Light burned ever stronger in the world.

But she did not live happily ever after; only a single year passed between her coronation and the Fall. The little girl wept when her priestesses brought her news of the wars, and she trembled with fear when she was asked for guidance; for all the paths she could see held their own tragedies. For such a young child it was too much to bear. One morning the chambermaids opened the royal quarters to find that the Queen had vanished, the young child had used her magic to run away during the night. She returned to the home of her parents but the village had already been overrun.

The greatest knights and the most powerful magicians were sent to find the Queen, but they could not find the Queen. With no one upon the throne the defenders could not hold back the Darkness, the people were slaughtered and the crystal towers fell. Triumphant the monsters of the Darkness hunted all across the land.

But they could not find the Queen.

## *Philosophy*

The Philosophy of mirrors is a simple ideal, an ideal of self exultation that reflects a Princesses own light back at her. Dazzling her eyes so that she may be spared the painful sights of Sensitivity.

### **The Mandate of Light**

It's all in the name: "Princess". The Lightbringers know that as royalty they possess the divine right of queens. No earthly authority is above them for they derive their mandate from the Light itself.

### **False Modesty is a False Virtue**

A Blossoming is not a random occurrence. It's a rare event that only affects the best of humanity and bestows ability beyond mortal men and women. Trying to be just another of the masses is neither honest nor helpful. No matter the circumstances, one of the Enlightened should use their natural brilliance to take the lead. Anything less is a waste of their talents and a disservice to everyone who is depending on them. It is their duty to take charge, and therefore it is the duty of everyone else to acknowledge that duty, and aid them in that goal. They're only trying to help, after all.

### **Hard Choices Imply You're Not Looking Hard Enough**

Throughout her life every Princess will come across a situation which seems hopeless. No matter what she does someone is going to get hurt and all she can do is accept responsibility, take tough choices and look for the least of many evils. To a Noble of Mirrors this is defeatism and laziness of the worst order. Of course there is a good solution! It is their duty to never accept defeat, never look for the least-evil outcome but instead to throw everything they have into the search for a solution without sacrifice. The very idea that they accept the death of one person to save five more is abhorrent! They should save all six, and they will, because they have justice on their side!

If only the World of Darkness didn't put so many hard choices in their way.

## *Duties*

One might imagine that the Court of Mirrors duties revolve around becoming the True Heir, maybe fulfilling an ancient prophecy or two. In fact the Queen of Mirrors is quite clear that becoming the True Heir isn't something you accomplish. You just be yourself and it will happen, because the True Heir is destiny.

Consequently the Court don't really have formal duties, they are allowed to go at their own pace. Take some time off for dating. Having permission, and a philosophical justification, to get some much needed sleep once in a while is perhaps the most tempting reason to join the Court.

## *Background*

Like the other Twilight Queens it is possible to divide the Heirs into those who were once among the Radiant and those who were not. Those who left the Radiant for the Lightbringers tend to have been among the best. They were the leaders of their Nakama, they were martyrs who went above and beyond for the least of people and they were isolated. They had to stand brave while their allies were allowed to be scared, they gave expecting nothing when others could ask for help in return and they couldn't cope. The Hierophant-Queen told them that it was ok to think of themselves. That they could still make a difference, the biggest difference of all, without such self sacrifice and hardship. Like a drowning man grabbing a lifebuoy they took her philosophy and her quest. She in turn showed them how to build a mirror around their souls reflecting the light inwards.

As for the others. It would be nice if there were a uniform background that drew the newly blossomed to the Hierophant-Queen, but, sadly, that is not true. The followers of the Radiant Queens may call



them hubristic and shallow, but the Lightbearers can have been the nerdy boy sitting in the back just as much as they can have been the queen bee socialite prior to their Blossoming. They come from all socioeconomic brackets, and can be driven by an urge for respect and dignity never known before just as much as arrogant entitlement. Many of them, after the Blossoming, though, have an odd duality of self-belief and neediness; they can believe in themselves, but they need others to see them be self-reliant. They are people who need other people around, even when they are in charge.

Perhaps the most tragic aspect of the Queen of Mirrors is that she seems to have a particular allure for the youngest Blossomings. It is unclear whether they find her more attractive than any of the other options, or whether she specifically believes that they are more likely to be the True Heir to the Kingdom, but too many of those precious Blossomings have been lured to her. The Queen of Mirrors is already tempting for the idealism of many Enlightened, with her promises and her easy solutions and self-belief; how much worse must it be for the young mind, suddenly exposed to Sensitivity and given power?

## *Character Creation*

Followers of Mirrors favour flashy and impressive actions over subtly and favour Power over Resistance and Resistance over Finesse. Lightbringers typically cultivate skills that focus on what their fellows deem important. When they maintain a level of self awareness the Heirs tend to favour Manipulation and Wits to manage underlings and make the quick decisions leadership requires. No matter where they find themselves grace and dignity are always key for a leader so more successful Lightbringers have good Composure. While all members adore the spotlight the court is divided between those who can lure others into their vainglory and those who only think they can meaning that Presence tends to either extreme.

A Socially successful Princess of Mirror's tends to attract sycophants or distant but fawning crowds but few true friends meaning that while she may have dots in Retainer or Allies, Circle tend to be low. Since they base their Transformed self on how they wish to be seen by others Striking Transformation is common. Those who take the Mandate of Light literally may attempt to cultivate Dream to better speak with the light itself. Whether the answers they hear come from the Light, within or elsewhere the wisdom granted by Dream is only as effective as the Princesses willingness and ability to follow it.

## **Heraldry**

Like any true egotist the courtiers of Mirrors care very deeply about other people's opinions. They care about how other people look at them. Nothing reflects this truth more than their Transformed appearance. When a Princess adopts the ideals of the Court of Mirrors her Transformed appearance stops reflecting how she sees her true self and embodies how she wants others to see her. There is certainly a lot of room for verity, she may wish to appear powerful, intelligent, beautiful, pure or pious but at heart she is reflecting the ideals and standards of those who surround her.

When she is reflecting mortal culture rather than that of her fellow Hopeful this can make the Princess of Mirrors seem almost ordinary; the most popular cheerleader at school simply doesn't stand out in a Nakama of gallivant knights and the nobility of future civilisations. Their iconography tends to compensate as hard as it can within the rigid confines of social normality. Expensive designer clothing, jewellery and subtle hints of the superhuman. At least one Princess of Mirrors glows softly.

## **Echo**

A Heirs' Echo is like a warm quilt, it makes you feel safe and sleepy and why not? The Princess will take care of everything for you.

## **Practical Magic**

The Heirs of the Crown's Custodian are always at their very best. They can assume their transformed self at any time with a reflexive action and remain Transformed indefinitely. Power is there for a reason, not to be hidden. In fact it requires deliberate effort to become mundane; a Princess of Mirrors must

make a Transformation roll to resume their normal form, much as a normal Noble would have to do to Transform.

### **Invocation: Specchio**

The Invocation of Specchio is the principle embodied and founded by the Queen of Mirrors, and which her favoured find comes naturally to them. Specchio is usually turned inwards, more than any other Invocation it can propel a Princess upwards to monumental heights, the abilities it grants tend to be flashy and showy but no less effective for them. Fittingly Specchio can sometimes be inverted as though looked at through a mirror, though less common to making the Princess better than others it can also be used to make others worse than the Princess.

**Specchio has a unique disadvantage that it's powers lead to madness.** This is counted as part of the activation cost, and so may not be bypassed. When a Princess Invokes Specchio her mind becomes a bit like mirror glass, prone to crack at the first blow. Until she gets a full night's rest, if she fails a Degeneration check, her roll to avoid gaining a Derangement takes a penalty equal to half her Specchio dots (rounding up.)

Specchio applies at no cost when the target of a Princess' Charm is the Princess herself, it also applies at no cost when the target is a literal mirror constructed for purpose, when the Princess intends to set an example, to convert others to her cause, to impress others, when failure would lead to humiliation or embarrassment, to focus attention on herself or to prove how unique and special she is.

Those who would use Specchio are expected to be the shining light for the world, the Invocation does not resonate with Princesses who show humility, who deny or attempt to downplay their own accomplishments, or let others shine brighter. Even on a simple disagreement the Princess must prove herself correct, or at least convince the crowd, or else she loses access to this Invocation until the next day.



### *What's so Bad About These Girls?*

When talking about the Heirs asking what is so villainous is a fair question; and in truth even the Radiant don't always consider the Lightbearers among their enemies. Unlike the Ravens – who steal hope to let Alhambra live another day – and the Furies – who's crusade against the Darkness often kills innocent bystanders – the Lightbearers don't do anything that's so blatantly immoral. While nothing prevents a Princess of Mirrors from being a bad person, most rarely sink to anything worse than vanity and general bitchiness.

The truth is that while the Brats aren't evil, their views are completely impractical and can often get people hurt. A Radiant Princess when called to defend a village against a raid might train the people into a militia, she knows that some will die in battle but their sacrifice will keep the village safe. In contrast a Brat would tell everyone to relax and let her protect the village single handedly with her “unstoppable” magic, so no one needs to sacrifice anything. When it inevitably turns out that she cannot fight one hundred people alone; the untrained villagers are slaughtered.

Even when it is not a matter of life and death, the Lightbearers thrive among the sort of idolisation that causes one to rely utterly on the Heir; then inevitably the Court's impractical philosophies causes the Brat to fail everyone who placed their trust in her.

### *Quote*

Why don't you let me do that for you. You could at least be grateful, commoners!

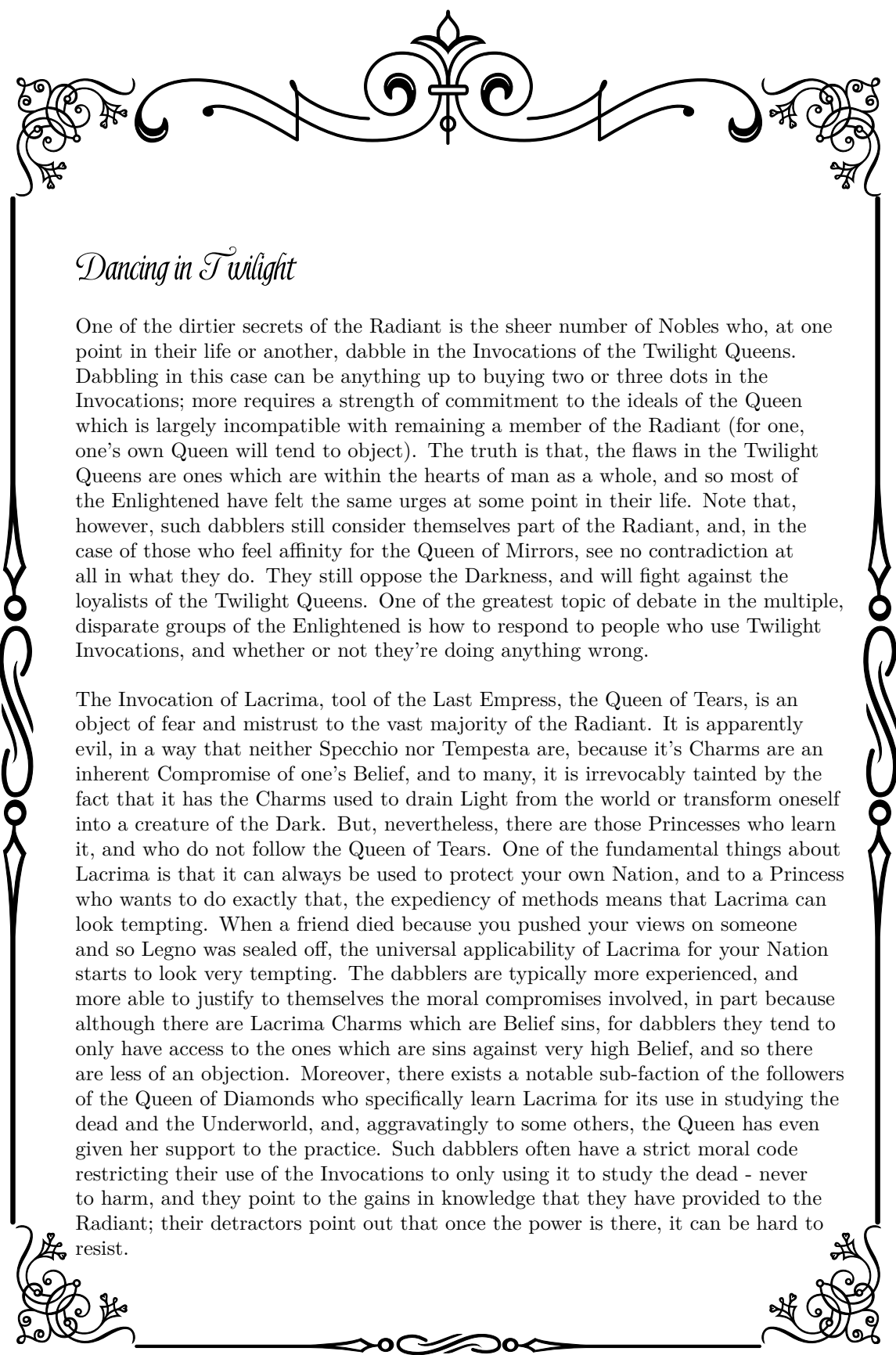
### *Stereotypes*

- Clubs: Wasting your life where no one but the beasts can see you, how does that help anyone?
- Diamonds: Maths class is Booring!
- Hearts: Formality and protocol. You wouldn't need any of that if you were as good as me.
- Spades: What's the point of a joke if people don't realise how funny you are?
- Swords: You know, your bravery and... stuff is pretty cool. But I think you should do it this way instead! Chop-chop!

- Tears: Why are you wasting your life defending a city. You're more important than a city.
- Storms: You fight, and then you die. Get someone else to die, royals are too important.
- Vampires: Creature of the night, begone in the name of the Light! Unless you're one of the hot ones that I can save, of course!
- Werewolves: You're the archtypical wild man, filled with raw animal strength and passion. How on earth did you make that look savage and unattractive?
- Mages: Years of study, and you can't even do magic in front of people? You got the boring powers.
- Prometheans: God, is that thing ugly
- Changelings: You're hiding, that means you're scared. Now me, I'm not hiding from anything!
- Sin-Eaters: Sweet party. Real nice... um, death-theme. And the... ghosts. And... um. I have to go.
- Mad Scientists: You can't show them all with a death ray, there'd be no one left to be shown. It's a good thing I came along, clearly you need my help.
- Leviathans: Um, eww! I think it's trying to talk to me.
- Hunters: I'm glad someone's trying to do something, I think I'll make you my knights.
- Mortals: Don't worry everything will be perfect, you just have to do every little thing I say.

## *Inspiration*

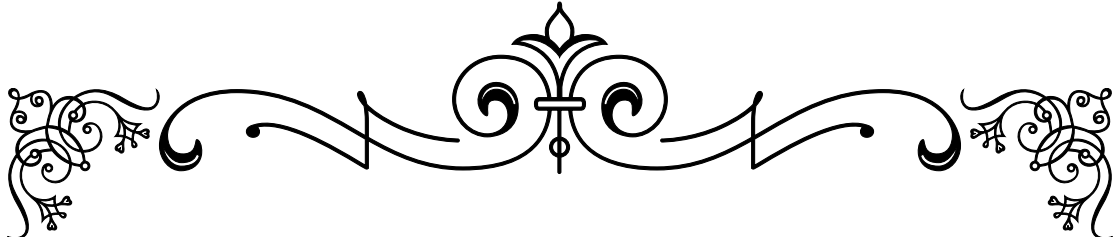
Libby Chessler, The Great and Powerful Trixie, the evil cheerleader archetype in general.



## *Dancing in Twilight*

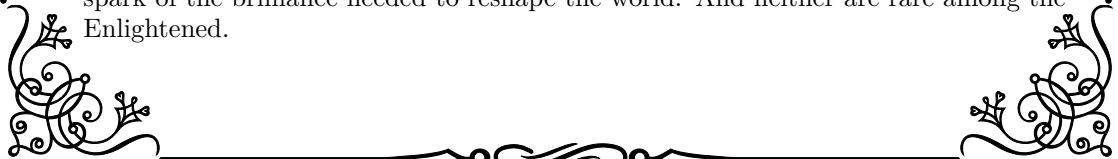
One of the dirtier secrets of the Radiant is the sheer number of Nobles who, at one point in their life or another, dabble in the Invocations of the Twilight Queens. Dabbling in this case can be anything up to buying two or three dots in the Invocations; more requires a strength of commitment to the ideals of the Queen which is largely incompatible with remaining a member of the Radiant (for one, one's own Queen will tend to object). The truth is that, the flaws in the Twilight Queens are ones which are within the hearts of man as a whole, and so most of the Enlightened have felt the same urges at some point in their life. Note that, however, such dabblers still consider themselves part of the Radiant, and, in the case of those who feel affinity for the Queen of Mirrors, see no contradiction at all in what they do. They still oppose the Darkness, and will fight against the loyalists of the Twilight Queens. One of the greatest topic of debate in the multiple, disparate groups of the Enlightened is how to respond to people who use Twilight Invocations, and whether or not they're doing anything wrong.

The Invocation of Lacrima, tool of the Last Empress, the Queen of Tears, is an object of fear and mistrust to the vast majority of the Radiant. It is apparently evil, in a way that neither Specchio nor Tempesta are, because it's Charms are an inherent Compromise of one's Belief, and to many, it is irrevocably tainted by the fact that it has the Charms used to drain Light from the world or transform oneself into a creature of the Dark. But, nevertheless, there are those Princesses who learn it, and who do not follow the Queen of Tears. One of the fundamental things about Lacrima is that it can always be used to protect your own Nation, and to a Princess who wants to do exactly that, the expediency of methods means that Lacrima can look tempting. When a friend died because you pushed your views on someone and so Legno was sealed off, the universal applicability of Lacrima for your Nation starts to look very tempting. The dabblers are typically more experienced, and more able to justify to themselves the moral compromises involved, in part because although there are Lacrima Charms which are Belief sins, for dabblers they tend to only have access to the ones which are sins against very high Belief, and so there are less of an objection. Moreover, there exists a notable sub-faction of the followers of the Queen of Diamonds who specifically learn Lacrima for its use in studying the dead and the Underworld, and, aggravatingly to some others, the Queen has even given her support to the practice. Such dabblers often have a strict moral code restricting their use of the Invocations to only using it to study the dead - never to harm, and they point to the gains in knowledge that they have provided to the Radiant; their detractors point out that once the power is there, it can be hard to resist.



The Invocation of Tempesta, tool of the Seraphic General, the Queen of Storms is for most of those who dabble in it, purely a weapon. It is something that is learned as a tool against the Darkness, and it is used for that role. It does not (generally speaking) heal or right wrongs, but it does eliminate the followers of the Darkness and of Alhambra. In Atlanta, in the mid-90s, almost an entire generation of Radiant Princesses knew at least the basics of Tempesta. So hard-pressed were they by the Darkness and a major, well-organised Alhambran Outpost that it became unofficial policy for elder Enlightened to guide each newcomer towards it, because the universal applicability and raw power of the Invocation in such circumstances was too much of a boon. That large numbers of Nobles in the city were driven towards extremism was viewed as an acceptable price, even if by the end, and the arson of the Alhambran Outpost, there were Enlightened just as callous as the worst of Storms, still officially among the Radiant. For those Princesses in the know, too, Tempesta can also be seen as the most moral of the Twilight Invocations, because the innate costs to it, the damage it does to the user, is known, and only affects the self. The common consensus is that it is dangerous, and a sign that a Noble is starting to spiral into extremism, but whether the use of it should be enough to ostracise one of the Radiant is a lot more contentious, especially since in areas where it is done, there are frequently not the Enlightened to spare.

The Invocation of Specchio, tool of the Crown's Custodian, the Queen of Mirrors, however, is the most subtle and insidious of the Twilight Queens, and the influence it is. In part, it is because of the lack of an overall enemy that the Invocation is linked to; while both the Ravens and the Furies provide a highly visible "there but for the grace of the Light I go" example which other dabblers can keep away from, the egotism and self-righteousness implicitly promoted by the Queen of Mirrors, and the lack of a solid adversary is hard to fight against, especially since many Princesses have tendencies in that direction naturally. Dabblers can slip into following the Queen of Mirrors much more easily, especially since the Queen does not demand fidelity, which means that some elder Radiant are much more harsh in opposing its use. There are those who argue that, unlike Tempesta and Lacrima, use of this Invocation makes you a de facto follower of Mirror's agenda. And on the other hand, there are those who count the Queen of Mirrors as among the Radiant Queens, despite the objections of the other five. Moreover, there is *also* a faction in the Court of Diamonds who study Specchio for the unique sources of information it provides, or even to study the strange achronal or spacewarping Charms unique to Specchio, once again the Queen has given her consent. These dabblers protect themselves from the risk of madness by carefully rationing their use and taking the time to relax after every use. Of all the Twilight Invocations Specchio might be the easiest to learn, too; all one needs for it is self-belief in one's own cause, and a spark of the brilliance needed to reshape the world. And neither are rare among the Enlightened.



# Appendix A: The Dreamlands

*I can't go back to yesterday because I was a different person then.*  
—Alice

The home of the Five Queens, a land of infinite adventure and wonder that, for every Princess, lies just beyond the wall of sleep. The hopes, hearts and aspirations writ large into a patchwork of kingdoms and cities, ... and a land which, once, entrapped the Hopeful in webs of illusion, drawing them away from the real world's pain.

## *The Trap*

### **The Making**

The monstrous armies that conquered the Light's Kingdom in the age before history were led (or so modern Princesses assume) by subtle and devious generals who wished to secure the Darkness' victory for all time. They found a way to prevent the return of Princesses, the Light's most capable servants, by constructing a trap for their souls, deep within the mind and soul of the world. The trap was a mirror, reflecting the Light shining on the world; it drew to itself the souls of the Princesses who died in the Kingdom's fall, and enfolded them within an imaginary world where they could dream of fighting Darkness and defeating it, without disputing its sway over its new conquest.

And the trap worked, possibly beyond its makers' expectations: not only were the Princesses of the Kingdom's day drawn into the dream and held, but so was everyone whom the Light touched and empowered in all the long ages since. And as the millenia passed, the illusion grew and ramified, reflecting the thoughts and dreams of every human alive, but shaped by memories of the captives into a new Kingdom, governed as the fallen Kingdom was by a council of Queens, and surrounded by a wilderness where monsters bred and made war.

### **The Release**

And then, everyone within that imaginary land was struck by revelation: they knew, quite abruptly, that they were dreaming, and life in a truer reality lay open to them. Many of them took the opportunity immediately, returning to the bodies of infants just conceived; and these were born, and grew, and flourished, and before long they Blossomed, becoming the first Princesses of the modern age. And as they Blossomed, the new Princesses discovered that the lands of dream they had left to become human again still existed; for gates to those lands stood open to them whenever they slept, and the souls they left behind welcomed their visits, begging for news of the waking world. Many more souls have followed those first pioneers; new Princesses are born and Blossom every year.

Naturally, the Hopeful wondered what it was that revealed the Dreamlands' true nature to its inhabitants. Over the decades since the Release, speculations have been floated, arguments proposed and refuted. It's now generally believed that the key event was the first landing on the Moon in July of 1969. The Queen of Diamonds argues that the Dreamlands are in some metaphysical way linked to the Moon, that their property of reflecting a more fundamental reality is tied to the Moon's appearance of shedding light that in fact is reflected from the Sun. And so, in her opinion, when a human foot trod

the lunar surface, by proving the Moon to be not luminous in itself, it also proved the Dreamlands to be not real in themselves ...

## *Entering the Dreamlands*

Even now, after the Release, the last fragments of the Trap call out to the Hopeful as they sleep, and any Princess may find a passage to them without conscious effort. Moreover, the call grows more seductive, and easier to follow, when a Princess' encounters with the waking world's cruelty weigh on her soul. Princesses who have not yet visited the Dreamlands make an extended roll of Inner Light + Empathy + Shadows, rolling once a day when they go to sleep. Each time a Princess changes her sleeping place, she loses all successes earned on previous rolls and starts over.

On the night a Princess accumulates eight successes on this roll, she comes (apparently by chance) across an entrance to her Crawlspace. Just how this happens varies – one Princess notices an odd-looking animal, and follows it to a burrow; another gets up in the middle of the night for a glass of water, and notices a door that wasn't there before. The entrance is, however, always difficult to get through in some way; usually, it's too small to walk through standing up, forcing the Princess to crawl (This and the uncomfortable conditions inside the Crawlspace are essentially an attempt by the Princesses' subconscious to keep her out of the Dreamlands' trap, despite the Dreamlands no longer functioning as a prison.). The Princess is under no compulsion to enter the Crawlspace, but she feels, instinctively, both that it's quite safe, and that what lies beyond is something wonderful. (With the Storyteller's agreement, a player may declare that her character has had this happen to her already, or the Storyteller may play it out in the prelude.)

A Princess who has visited the Dreamlands, even once, can deliberately search for a passage anywhere. This calls for an extended Inner Light + Empathy + Shadows roll, as with accidental discovery, but the Princess now rolls once every five minutes.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess cannot find an entrance in this location, or anywhere else before she's had a full night's rest. **Failure:** The Princess makes no progress.

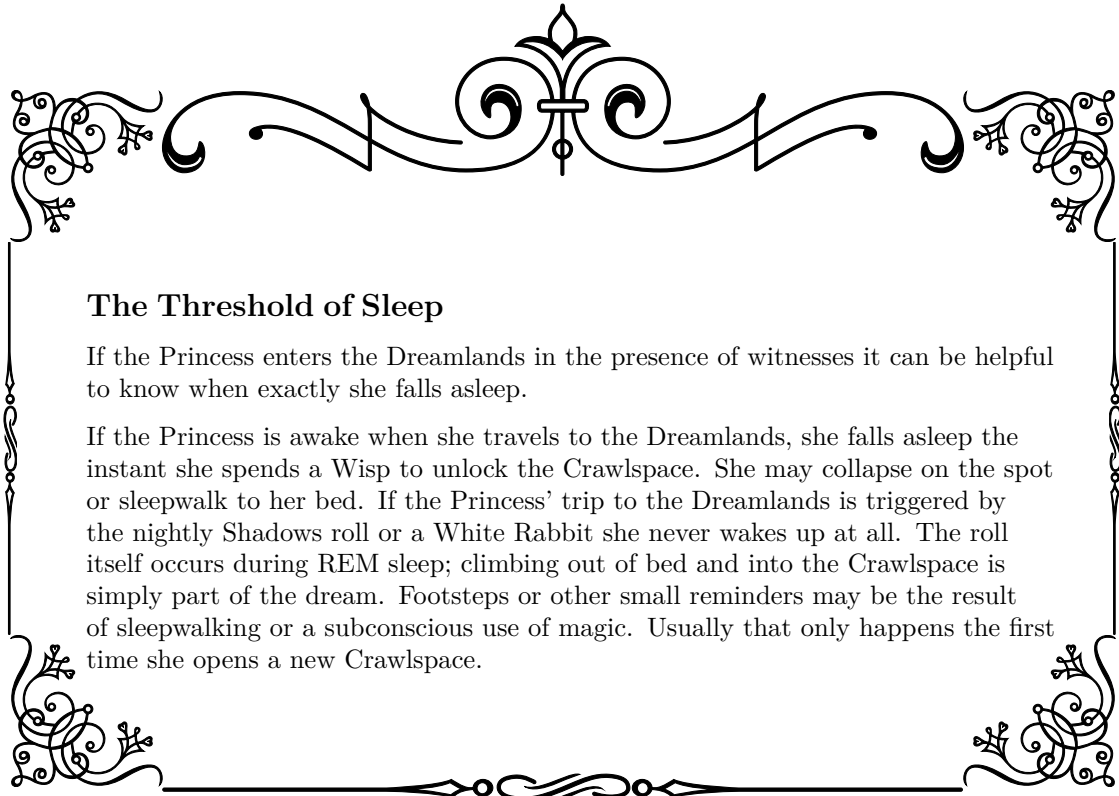
**Success:** The Princess progresses. Once she accumulates 8 successes, she finds an entrance.

**Exceptional Success:** The Princess makes great progress.

**Modifiers:** The Princess is sleepy (+1), the Princess is wide awake (-1), hot chocolate or warm milk (+1), old building with mysterious corners (+1), other people are present (-1 per witness)

Once found, a Crawlspace entrance continues to exist as long as the Princess remembers it, and vanishes if she forgets it. (One Princess had a doorway in the depths of her bedroom closet, which faded while she went to university. A few days after coming home, when she needed to visit the Dreamlands, she remembered the old door and there it was.) Finding a known entrance is not quite automatic, but only a simple Inner Light + Empathy + Shadows roll is required, with modifiers as above. A dramatic failure on this roll means something has gone wrong with the entrance - the door remains locked, or sticks shut; or it seems to open, but the path is blocked by a deadfall too heavy to move; or the trail along a high cliff has washed out. Whichever it is, the Princess can't reach the Dreamlands that night.





### The Threshold of Sleep

If the Princess enters the Dreamlands in the presence of witnesses it can be helpful to know when exactly she falls asleep.

If the Princess is awake when she travels to the Dreamlands, she falls asleep the instant she spends a Wisp to unlock the Crawlspace. She may collapse on the spot or sleepwalk to her bed. If the Princess' trip to the Dreamlands is triggered by the nightly Shadows roll or a White Rabbit she never wakes up at all. The roll itself occurs during REM sleep; climbing out of bed and into the Crawlspace is simply part of the dream. Footsteps or other small reminders may be the result of sleepwalking or a subconscious use of magic. Usually that only happens the first time she opens a new Crawlspace.

Crawlspace entrances are not truly physical passages, though they appear as such; they are in fact mnemonic devices. Thus one Princess cannot use another's entrance – in fact, she can't even see the other's entrance. It's possible, though, for one Princess to help another find an entrance she knows of. This works as a form of teamwork; the Princess who knows of the entrance makes her simple roll to find it, then adds her successes as dice to the other's extended roll to search. Princesses who have not visited the Dreamlands may search for an entrance if they are being guided in this way, and senior Princesses very often guide the newly Blossomed into the Dreamlands to acquaint them with their inheritance and their peers.

Entering the Crawlspace requires spending a Wisp. Exactly how a Crawlspace opens varies with the shape of the entrance. It could be as simple as turning a button handled key to unlock a small door, but spending the Wisp might instead make the Princess dexterous enough to squeeze through a rabbit hole, turn her insubstantial so she can slip between the join where two of her bedroom walls meet or shrink down until she's small enough to climb down the gap between her mattress and the tailboard of her bed. Onlookers, on the other hand, see the Princess drop off to sleep at this point, or walk off in a reverie to bed.

Inside the entrance, Crawlspace is narrow and claustrophobic, governed according to dream logic by both the Princesses subconscious and the form of the entrance. The Princess who climbs down the bottom of her own bed could spend the entire crawlspace climbing down the folds of her bedsheets cramped between the mattress and the tailboard or she could quickly find herself climbing down actual cliffs with freezing winds and catastrophic mists but she probably will find herself climbing.

Normally, a Princess in Crawlspace simply presses on to the Dreamlands, or turns back and awakens. Waking up in Crawlspace requires nothing more than a wish to do so. Pressing on calls for more effort - an extended Inner Light + Empathy action. (The threshold of the action is 8 successes, and each roll takes 5 minutes. Successes over 8 when searching for a new entrance, and all successes rolled to open a known entrance, count towards reaching this threshold.) A Princess who follows the Dreamlands' lure along the easiest path, never turning aside, always emerges somewhere in her Queen's capitol (Courtless Princesses arrive in the Dreamlands representation of something they have a strong Intimacy to). From that point (and only that point) the Princess can return and awaken at will. The main passage from any given Crawlspace entrance always leads to the same place; however, no Princess has ever found a relation between the waking location of an entrance and the place in the Dreamlands it leads to.

Side passages abound, though, and a Princess can find her way to almost anywhere in the Dreamlands she knows well by choosing her steps wisely. A side-path takes just as much time and labour to follow (the extended action is the same) but once the Princess reaches its end, she rolls Wits + Empathy to see if it comes out where she wants to be. The roll has a modifier based on the strength of her Intimacy to whatever her intended destination is a reflection of in the real world, and a further modifier for each day's travel outwards from the center of the Dreamlands that her destination lies.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess emerges in the wrong place within the Dreamlands, and cannot reopen Crawlspace there; she must move at least an hour's walk before trying again.

**Failure:** The Princess emerges at her usual entrance point beneath the Foundation.

**Success:** The Princess emerges within an hour's walk of her desired destination.

**Exceptional Success:** The Princess emerges at her desired destination.

**Modifiers:** Emotional connection (Intimacy modifier); her entrance point, her Queen's domain, her Embassy or Nation (no Intimacy modifier); distance from the center of the Dreamlands (-1 per day's travel outwards); the Princess takes others along (-1 per two people); the Princess is travelling a familiar route (+1); the Princess has some suitable prop for navigating her Crawlspace such as a torch for a dark cave, climbing gear or warm clothes for freezing cliffs (+1, regardless of the usual equipment bonus).

Whatever form the Crawlspace takes, it is filled with memories from both her current and past lives. A Princess climbing down freezing cliffs might catch sight of cave after cave; one crawling through mud and crumbling brickwork at the bottom of a well could find peep-holes formed by cracks in the masonry. Many Princesses turn aside from the Crawlspace's main path to search through these memories, hoping to find bits of wisdom from a life in the Kingdom's day, or to witness again a scene that has faded from their conscious memory. If a PC tries this, she makes an extended Intelligence + Empathy roll; the Storyteller sets the threshold, according to the importance the memory being sought for has to the Princess.

modifier for each day's travel outwards from the center of the Dreamlands that her destination lies.

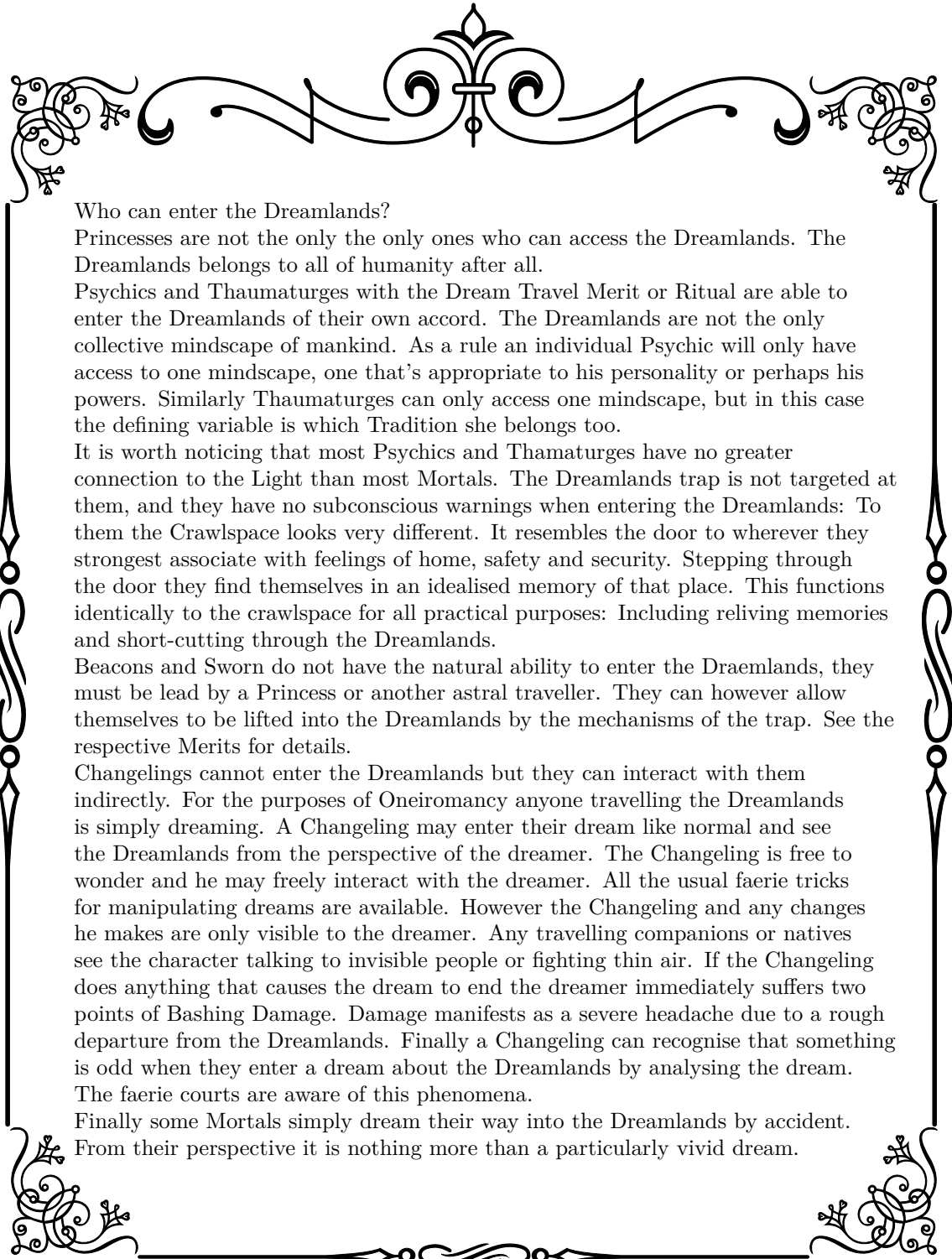
**Dramatic Failure:** The Princess finds a false memory, or stumbles upon a nightmarish memory; the Storyteller may call for a Sensitivity check.

**Failure:** The Princess makes no progress to finding the memory.

**Success:** The Princess makes progress to finding a useful memory. If she simply doesn't have a useful memory to find she discovers this.

**Exceptional Success:** When the Princess accumulates enough successes she will find a memory that goes above and beyond her requirements.

**Suggested Modifiers:** Eidetic Memory (+2), strong emotions attached to the memory (+1), dull memory such as hours spent in a library searching for an enemy's weaknesses (-1), the Princess has some suitable prop for navigating her Crawlspace such as a torch for a dark cave, climbing gear or warm clothes for freeing cliffs (+1, regardless of the usual equipment bonus).modifier for each day's travel outwards from the center of the Dreamlands that her destination lies.



Who can enter the Dreamlands?

Princesses are not the only the only ones who can access the Dreamlands. The Dreamlands belongs to all of humanity after all.

Psychics and Thaumaturges with the Dream Travel Merit or Ritual are able to enter the Dreamlands of their own accord. The Dreamlands are not the only collective mindscape of mankind. As a rule an individual Psychic will only have access to one mindscape, one that's appropriate to his personality or perhaps his powers. Similarly Thaumaturges can only access one mindscape, but in this case the defining variable is which Tradition she belongs too.

It is worth noticing that most Psychics and Thaumaturges have no greater connection to the Light than most Mortals. The Dreamlands trap is not targeted at them, and they have no subconscious warnings when entering the Dreamlands: To them the Crawlspace looks very different. It resembles the door to wherever they strongest associate with feelings of home, safety and security. Stepping through the door they find themselves in an idealised memory of that place. This functions identically to the crawlspace for all practical purposes: Including reliving memories and short-cutting through the Dreamlands.

Beacons and Sworn do not have the natural ability to enter the Draemlands, they must be lead by a Princess or another astral traveller. They can however allow themselves to be lifted into the Dreamlands by the mechanisms of the trap. See the respective Merits for details.

Changelings cannot enter the Dreamlands but they can interact with them indirectly. For the purposes of Oneiromancy anyone travelling the Dreamlands is simply dreaming. A Changeling may enter their dream like normal and see the Dreamlands from the perspective of the dreamer. The Changeling is free to wonder and he may freely interact with the dreamer. All the usual faerie tricks for manipulating dreams are available. However the Changeling and any changes he makes are only visible to the dreamer. Any travelling companions or natives see the character talking to invisible people or fighting thin air. If the Changeling does anything that causes the dream to end the dreamer immediately suffers two points of Bashing Damage. Damage manifests as a severe headache due to a rough departure from the Dreamlands. Finally a Changeling can recognise that something is odd when they enter a dream about the Dreamlands by analysing the dream.

The faerie courts are aware of this phenomena.

Finally some Mortals simply dream their way into the Dreamlands by accident.

From their perspective it is nothing more than a particularly vivid dream.

## *White Rabbits*

A White Rabbit, in the jargon of the Nobility refers to any time when the Princess is called to the Dreamlands. Her subconscious mind detects a change within the Dreamlands and sends a signal – a White Rabbit – to alert the conscious mind. The creaking lures of the Dreamlands trap, and the resulting automatic nightly roll are not considered White Rabbits but this is just an arbitrary quirk of the definition

chosen by Enlightened scholars. Quite a few Princesses really do see White Rabbits (sometimes straight out of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland). This appears to be a result of the Princess' unconscious associations, caused by Enlightened scholars using the term White Rabbit for the phenomenon.

## Prophecy Rabbits

A Prophecy Rabbit calls the Princess into the Dreamlands to witness an event that foretells the future on Earth. The Princess is fully present in the Dreamlands and may interact with the portentous events she witnesses in all the normal ways: She might investigate to uncover more clues, or perhaps try to derail the event in the Dreamlands. This doesn't actually help, but it can feel very satisfying.

If two or more Princesses are experiencing a prophecy about the same event, they are both in the same place within the Dreamlands and can simply start talking to each other. Debating the vision or making plans. In essence, this can be considered another clue both Princesses learn from the dreams. Something along the lines of "This other Princess cares about the same issue, perhaps you could work together?"

How Prophecies work is unknown. It is generally accepted that the Princess is reacting to a pre-existing event in the Dreamlands but what causes those events is a mystery. The two most popular theories are the clairvoyant model and the analytical model. The clairvoyant suggests that every human has microscopic traces of psychic abilities which when combined in some sort of shared unconscious – like the Dreamlands – becomes effective on a practical level. The analytical model also sees the pooling of human talent and knowledge at the cause, but argues rather than psychically foretelling the future humanity simply predicts it using knowledge and reasoning.

## Memory Rabbits

Unlike most White Rabbits a Memory Rabbit leads a Princess not into the Dreamlands, but deep into her own Crawlspace. The Princess' subconscious mind is signalling her conscious that she has forgotten some vital information and calls her deep into her own mind and soul to fish it out. Most Memory Rabbits lead to memories from a past life, the ordinary human processes of memory are usually sufficient for memories gathered in this incarnation (and even stronger memories from past lives).

In game terms a Memory Rabbit functions as an alternative result when a player uses the Merit White Rabbits. If the Storyteller believes she can provide clues in a more interesting way by going to a memory from the Princess' past life than a prophecy in the collective dreamscape of mankind then she is free to do so. Memory Rabbits can also be used to justify buying Skills or Charms when the Princess knew them in a past life.

## Royal Rabbits

Trapped within the Dreamlands the Queens cannot affect Earth, but they can affect the Dreamlands and a Princess' subconscious can notice such changes. The Queens have gotten quite good at making the precise changes needed to create a Royal Rabbit that summons a Princess to wait upon her liege.

Royal Rabbits typically manifest in some way appropriate to the Queen, such as a white rabbit wearing the royal colours and carrying a letter of summons stamped with the Queen's seal.

## Black Rabbits

Black Rabbits are spoken of in hushed terms, their mere existence makes the Princess question her own mind and doubt her visions. It goes like this: If the Princess followed a Prophecy Rabbit to the dreamlands and saw a woman in green and white tearing through the reflection of her home town she might conclude that she better deal with any Princesses of Storms before it's too late.

Now what if this happened in reverse. Someone with access to the Dreamlands – such as a Princess of Tears – wants the Princess to go after local Furys. She could travel to the Dreamlands, dress in green and white and attack. The destruction in the Dreamlands would alert the Princess: A fake Prophecy Rabbit, a Black Rabbit.

Now it's not easy, the Dreamlanders will defend their home and the deception is only as good as the skill of the one who crafts it. This doesn't mean it hasn't happened, it has. Many times.

## Empty Rabbits

Empty Rabbits are almost as mythical as Black Rabbits. Sometimes a Princess' intuition is simply wrong. She follows a White Rabbit to the Dreamlands and finds nothing more than a mad tea party or a highly symbolic heap of nonsense. Some Princesses believe Empty Rabbits do not exist, that they actually mean the Princess has overlooked some vital clue pointing to one of the other Rabbits. But how would you tell?

Empty Rabbits rarely have an impact on the story, but sometimes Princesses can confuse a Rabbit for an Empty Rabbit, or a Empty Rabbits for a Rabbit.

## March Hares

While not as mythical as Black or Empty Rabbits the March Hares are considered to be the most unsettling of all the Rabbits. A Princess who follows a March Hare travels deep into her own Crawlspace and comes face to face with a deep division in her own psyche. She may do battle with her own madness or sit down for tea, scones and high brow debate with both sides of the ethical dilemma that has puzzled her all week.

In game terms March Hares are simply an excuse for more roleplaying. A Princess who wins a battle with her own Derangements is not cured, but she understands what that Derangement means to her and might be energised to raise her Belief or seek therapy (or less inclined if she lost the fight). Facing her own dilemmas gives screen time to the Princess' thoughts and feelings, and maybe even some character development. March Hares can even be used when under the effects of hostile magic: If the Princess is unaware or magically prevented from acknowledging her situation, then when the magic wares off going into her own Crawlspace to fight the spell and unlock the memory vaults is a more dramatic way to reveal the truth than just saying the spell has worn off.

Since March Hares are at heart, a way to give screen time to important moments of a character's internal conflicts the player is always entitled to forgo the dice and choose the result they prefer.

## *Topography*

The Dreamlands are an exceedingly varied place. Sometimes you can stumble across one man's neuroses writ large across the landscape (while most other humans never even feature), while in other places you can walk along a stairway made of light, up into the heavens to walk along the surface of a Mars covered in unknown ruins inscribed in runes which do not resemble the Royal Tongue. You may stumble across a town which appears almost like the real world, save that none of the brands match, and the streets are filled with a parade of strange, eternally dancing figures of bronze. A Princess could be walking down a quiet forest path only to turn a corner and find herself facing an elegant renaissance city where the buildings all merge together into a solid block that gently curves away from the ground. Or she might find arriving at a quiet country village where the people are friendly, the sun is shining but the buildings look like cubist art and the inhabitants seem to have stepped from the scrapbook of a slightly drunk dada artist. One Nakama found a cursed area, almost overshadowed by the Darkness, where the sharp-fanged folk ritually consumed their victims. Only one made it out alive, the monsters dragging the others to their altars and eating them in a way that killed them in the real world, hunks of flesh torn out of their sleeping bodies, in the name of the "Red Word".

The wild districts where these things can be found are all, however, some days' travel from the center of the Dreamlands – the Dreamlands' cartographers say that one moves outward to find them, and inward to return. The most confusing thing about navigating the Dreamlands is that "inward" and "outward" have no simple relationship with the ordinary three dimensions of space ... and there are any number of districts that lie further inwards of other districts, but at the same north/south and east/west position. Very often the traveler finds that one pass through a ridge of low hills leads to a pleasant valley, while another pass a mile to the east opens on a wide plain cut by a great river, which runs just where the valley ought to be, and isn't. Dreamlanders say their home is folded on itself; north/south, east/west and up/down they call the traveling directions, and in/out is a folding direction. There is a second folding direction, called deosil/widdershins, along which one travels by following the course of the Foundation – deosil keeps the Foundation on one's left, widdershins keeps it on the right – and arranging

the Dreamlands' counties by their folding positions, ignoring their traveling positions, shows that the Dreamlands lie within a roughly circular area with the Foundation at its rim, and a trip straight from the Foundation to the Dreamlands' center (if that were possible) would take seven days' or so walking.

The Dreamlands often changes quickly as one travels. There's a feeling the the Foundation is below, and "below" is consistent. Apart from that all bets are off. Despite appearances ranging from bizarre to normal places within the Dreamlands often seem to reflect places on Earth, or the popular idea of places of earth, or (more strangely) places found only in novels, or ideas, or concepts. Even odder is that regardless of how normal or how bizarre the places look, a visitor can (eventually) learn to understand how they work. A city might look like it was designed by a collaboration between M.C. Escher and Dr Seuss but it still has a government, an economy, trade with nearby settlements, residents with homes, jobs and families. With lots of time and effort a Princess can learn how it all works. Just as she can learn what it reflects from Earth, and even discover new things about what it reflects.

The distance outwards from the center has an importance in the Dreamlands beyond the way it allows districts to overlie each other. The mysterious, reality-bending Gales that blow through them rise and fall constantly, but how swiftly they change depends on how far the center is. Near the center itself, when reflections of those concepts most stable within the hearts of humanity lie, the Gales hardly vary at all, and the districts there remain stable. Going outwards, the districts have Gales that are normally calm, but gust occasionally and strongly, leaving behind subtly altered landscapes. A further oddity of these reflections is that, while they frequently contain things with writing on them, the writing never looks like the text that would appear in the reflected place. In minor cases, Princesses might find a discarded fast-food box, but the script on it is flowing and cursive, elaborately decorated in gold leaf. In more extreme cases, everything is written backwards, or there are never any vowels, or the scripts are from another part of the world entirely. Less obvious is that these reflections are chock full of houses. Wherever the Princess travels she will occasionally catch a glimpse of a door, window or a snatch of a wall in the corner of her eye only to realise it was just a tree and a trick of the light. If the Princess really looks, the dream domains can seem to be built of nothing but houses folded in on each other in defiance of any sane geometry. Scholars are divided as to whether these houses are merely a representation of some human's connection to the place or concept this Dreamlands domain is reflecting. Or if these houses are physically a person's soul, visible everywhere in the Dreamlands they have an emotional connection too. Regardless, the question is academic. There is no way physically affect them and people almost never come out, they simply exist. These strange houses are unrelated too the dwellings used by Dreamlanders, which are much less mysterious and easier to enter.

In the most distant, farthest outward lands, the Gales blow wildly, falling still for a moment only to burst anew with immense force. It is here that the traveler may find herself walking through a man's nightmare, magnified to a country of dread. It is here, also, that she may find a space grown strangely thin and tenuous, where objects can sometimes vanish while her back is turned; or a place jumbled with curios and wonders brought together, though by no obvious means, from every corner of the world. There are tales of monstrous or alien things to be found in the far inward districts: a redoubt of Alhambra in a district haunted by Darkness; a waste of ash and cinders where Goalenu mold porcelain figurines that hunt with burning green eyes; a snow-capped peak, topped by a fortress made of clockwork ticking away in a slow rotation, from which gray-robed figures gaze through telescopes at the Dreamlands' stars.

## *Travel*

When traveling through this immense landscape, the Hopeful have a unique advantage: as long as they have any Willpower left, they are able to open a way into Crawlspace from almost anywhere in the Dreamlands, and return through there to waking life or a place in the Dreamlands they already know well. A Princess trying this rolls Resolve + Empathy, with a modifier for the strength of her emotional connection to her current location, and a further modifier for each day's travel she is inward from the Foundation. (If she is at her entrance point, no roll is needed.)

Dramatic Failure: The Princess cannot open Crawlspace here; she must move at least an hour's walk before trying again.

Failure: The Princess fails to open Crawlspace.

Success: The Princess notices her house, she opens the door, steps inside and enters her Crawlspace.

Exceptional Success: The Princess enters Crawlspace, and is at +2 to navigate it.

Modifiers: Modifiers: Emotional connection (Intimacy modifier); her entrance point, her Queen's domain, her Embassy or Nation (no Intimacy modifier); distance from the center of the Dreamlands (-1 per day's travel outwards)

Opening Crawlspace from the Dreamlands side does not cost Willpower, but a princess at 0 Willpower cannot manage it until she recovers at least 1 point. Once a Princess re-enters Crawlspace in this way, she must clamber through a maze of side-passages, looking for the main path back to waking life, or another door to the Dreamlands; the rolls for this are the same as those for reaching the Dreamlands from the waking world directly.

## Travel and Embassies

One advantage to joining an Embassy is travel within a Dreamland. In all domains that have a strong connection to an Embassy, an actual embassy building appears. Fully staffed with Dreamlanders – though usually only a Chorus – who attend diplomatic conferences, socialise with high society and try to persuade political figures.

Any Princess who belongs to an Embassy is welcome at any of its embassy buildings. The staff treat her as appropriate for her position; only for the Chorus to forget her when she heads on her way. The staff will gladly provide her with information, office space and things of that nature. Depending on if she's a Secretary, Consul or an Ambassador they might give her orders or obey her orders. Most of this is quite pointless, the real benefit is that a Princess can look up the details of every embassy building run by her Embassy in the files, and can use a Crawlspace to travel between them without a penalty to the roll for an insufficient emotional connection.

Princesses cannot go further than the public parts of an embassy building unless she is a member of that Embassy. The Dreamlanders will make an exception if a Princesses who is a member of the Embassy vouches for her, however this is not without drawbacks. The embassy building are not just part of the Dreamlands; joining an Embassy is a change to a Princesses magic and something of this seeps into the structure of an embassy building. Upon entering the private parts of an unrelated Embassy a Princess must roll Stamina + Resolve, on a failure she gets a headache that lasts for around an hour, and inflicts a -1 to all mental actions. If Princess is a member of an Embassy with a particularly incompatible concept this rises to -2.

## *Time*

The relationship between time in the Dreamlands and time in waking life is strangely variable; it seems to depend much more on the density of one's experience than on any objective clock. So, for instance, an exciting fight can consume half an hour in the real world's time, but appear to last only five minutes or so; but a long journey through safe districts might compress a full day's experience into only an hour of dreaming time. (As a rule of thumb, an event in the Dreamlands takes as much time in the waking world as it would take the players to play out the scene, while the time it takes in the Dreamlands is what it would require in real life.) There are even cases of Princesses parting in the Dreamlands, and finding on their next meeting that one has experienced a few hours packed with incident, while the other has been traveling for days ...

Maintaining one's Regalia in the Dreamlands is a good deal easier than it is in waking life. A Princess rolls to remain transformed only once every 24 hours, by the Dreamlands' clock. A dramatic failure on that roll, however, has a more serious consequence; even after the Princess recovers her phylactery, she cannot transform within the Dreamlands for 24 hours after her failure.

## *Inhabitants*

There are at least three different types of beings native to the Dreamlands. They were named by a theatrically minded Princess as the chorus, the actors, and the stars. The chorus, from all appearances, are less independent people, than moving parts of the places where they're found; they walk, and talk, and do what you would naturally expect people to do in the situation you find them in, and nothing else. Actors, in contrast, are fully realized people, with minds, memories, desires and aspirations. They differ from the stars (and the Princesses) in only one way: the Release passed them by. Many of them are unaware that a waking world exists, and nearly all who are told of it refuse to credit it. The stars, finally, are the souls drawn into the Dreamlands who have not chosen to follow the Princesses. Many Actors and Stars can wield strange powers, and some Stars who were once living Princesses and inhabitants of the Kingdom still wield the Charms they knew in life.

Actors and stars are designed much as other characters, with the standard Attributes and Skills. Dreamlanders that were once Princesses, and the former inhabitants of the Kingdoms retain their access to their magic, be they Nobility, Sworn or Beacons. Natural born Dreamlanders have a Power Stat called Resonance – how brightly the concept they reflect shines in the hearts of mankind – and the more powerful Dreamlanders have access to Numina. For simplicity it is recommended use the mechanics of Inner Light for Resonance (minus Transformation, unless it's appropriate) and turn Charms into Numina but this is not required. If the players find themselves in a castle containing reflections of every fictional vampire – from Count Dracula to Count Duckula – and you own Vampire: the Requiem there is nothing wrong (and a lot right) with treating Resonance like Blood Potency and using Disciplines as Numina.

All Dreamlanders have bodies that are like the Princesses' projections into the Dreamlands: Formed of dream-stuff, and they don't have a Health track. Instead they calculate Willpower by adding together all three Resistance Attributes, and lose points of Willpower when injured as the Princesses do. Powers that normally heal bashing damage don't do anything for them; powers that normally heal lethal or aggravated damage restore Willpower, at a rate of 1 point per level healed, for lethal and aggravated alike. A Dreamlander drained of Willpower is in danger of death; if not treated, they check off 1 of their Willpower dots each minute, and die when the last dot is checked. (Stars, presumably, eventually return to life in some new form, preserved by the Dreamlands' power. Nobody knows what happens to an actor.)

### **Dreamlanders on Earth**

A Dreamlander who ends up on Earth are limited in what they can achieve. They remain in Twilight with no ability to materialise or manifest under their own powers. So long as a Dreamlander remains on Earth she may only use abilities that affect people's minds or emotions. Even when interacting with other Twilight creatures the more unusual abilities Dreamlanders may possess will not function limiting her to what passes for physical interaction with other Twilight Entities.

Dreamlanders do however gain one advantage. The ability to possess people is innate to any Dreamlander who somehow finds herself on Earth. Apply an Intimacy modifier – ignoring Sensory – based on the relationship between the Dreamlander's home and the target. For example a Dreamlander from St Frances' City would find it easier to possess someone who lives in San Francisco than someone who just visited for a weekend.

### **Shikigami**

Any of the Hopeful have the ability to form one life-long bond with an inhabitant of the Dreamlands, take him back to her waking life, and bind him into a vessel prepared for him, thus creating one of the Shikigami. To do this a Princess first searches for an actor or star who is willing to leave the Dreamlands with her. (This is usually quite easy - indeed, many Shikigami asked for the bond with no prompting from their Princess.) This done, the Princess finds an animal, or sometimes a doll or plush toy, in the waking world who bears some resemblance to the Dreamlander - the closer, the better - and goes to the Dreamlands while her sleeping body cuddles the vessel. Then the Princess leads the Dreamlander back through her Crawlspace to the threshold of waking, and begins a rite of binding.



Action: Extended, Inner Light + Presence (10 minutes/roll, threshold = 3x Dreamlander's Inner Light or Resonance) Cost: 1 Willpower

Dramatic Failure: The Princess wakes without transforming the vessel. She can never make this Dreamlander into a Shikigami.

Failure: The Princess makes no progress.

Success: The Princess makes progress. If she reaches the threshold, the Dreamlander merges with and transforms the vessel, becoming the Princess' Shikigami.

Exceptional Success: The Princess makes great progress. If she reaches the threshold with this roll, the new Shikigami retains an unusually clear connection to the Dreamlands. It starts with two free dots in White Rabbits, instead of one.

Suggested modifiers: vessel resembles Dreamlander (+1 to +3), vessel significantly unlike Dreamlander (-1 to -3), vessel is not a living animal (-2)

It is somewhat difficult to make a Shikigami who is larger than a Princess can easily carry; the Princess takes a penalty when performing the rite of -1 for each point of the vessel's Size above 2. And for some reason, it's impossible to make a Shikigami who could be mistaken in any circumstances for a human being. Dolls or figurines in human shape must be Size 2 at most to serve as a Shikigami's vessel; the rite fails completely on any larger human figure. Finally, a Princess cannot have more than one Shikigami at a time; the rite fails if she is already bound.

The Charm Animal Companion builds on this innate ability of the Hopeful. Animal Companion, indeed, requires exactly the same preliminaries of finding a willing Dreamlander and a vessel for him, and bringing the Dreamlander to the threshold of waking before it can be invoked.

## Bequests

The Charm Bequeath calls for the form of a Charm, a memory somewhere in Crawlspace or an object from the Dreamlands that has the powers the Princess wants for her Bequest – a thing more difficult to find than a Shikigami, as objects of power are seldom found in the lands near the center; one must go outwards to the wilder districts to find them. Next the Princess must place the item somewhere safe and return to the waking world to acquire or make a vessel for the Bequest's power. The closer it resembles the Dreamlands object the easier it will be to bind the Bequest, but some Princesses intentionally choose a poor vessel to create a Bequest with a mundane form that can be easily carried without attracting attention.

When the Princess has acquired the vessel she goes to the Dreamlands while cuddling it, collects the item of power from the Dreamlands and carries it to the entrance of her Crawlspace. Standing on the threshold between wakefulness and dream, she invokes Bequeath; if the Charm is successful the new Bequest is created.

## *Risks*

### Fights

The inhabitants of the Dreamlands often wield strange powers that only make sense by the dreamlike logic of that place, and not all are nice. A Princess travelling the Dreamlands may well find her self in battle.

A Princess entering the Dreamlands leaves her physical body behind her, and projects her mind and soul into a body formed from the Dreamlands' substance. If she is injured there, she does not take damage on her Health track – her physical Health simply isn't relevant. Instead, if she doesn't spend Wisps to block the blow, she loses points of Willpower: each level of damage of any type (bashing, lethal and aggravated alike) translates to one lost Willpower point. Unfortunately, recovering Willpower by resting is a far slower process in Dreamlands time - a Princess in the Dreamlands regains 1 Willpower after a full day passes in the waking world, which usually works out to several days experienced in the Dreamlands.

## The Gales

The Dreamlands are the combined hopes, thoughts, feelings and aspirations of mankind. The risks of travelling such a place should be obvious: Humanities thoughts change on a daily, nay, a second by second basis. Against such a tide as all of humanity, what can one mind do to remain static? Any Princess who travels too far from the stable regions of the Dreamlands risks being blown away, transformed as just another fleeting thought in the vast collective identity.

The Nobility do have a defence. Some say this is because a Princess is supposed to be a shepherd that guides mankind's hopes, that helps people achieve their dreams. Others say it is because Regalia is a thick layer of magical armor. Regardless, while transformed a Princess' Regalia protects her from the worst the Gales can do, and the farther outwards she travels, the more necessary its protection becomes. There is a Drawback, donning her Regalia separates a Princess from the Dreamlands and imposes a -1 penalty to all Wits rolls.

For every 24 hours (by the Dreamlands' clock) that a Princess remains in the Dreamlands, she must roll Resolve + Composure; if she goes without her Regalia for an hour or more, she takes a penalty on the next such roll of -1 for each day's travel outwards from the center she stood.

**Dramatic Failure:** The Gales' force envelops the Princess, body, mind and soul, catches her up in a chaotic whirl, and commingles some of the Dreamlands' essence with her spirit and self. The Princess gains a Galemark, partly adapting from a mere visitor into a permanent settler in the Dreamlands.

**Failure:** The Gales push the Princess off-balance, scattering odd thoughts and scraps of imagined memories in her mind. Nothing overt happens at this point, but future rolls to resist the Gales suffer a -1 penalty. These penalties accumulate until the Princess gains a Galemark, or wakes up, and they stack with the penalties for going without Regalia.

**Success:** The Princess resists the Gales' force. She remains as she was, getting neither better nor worse.

**Exceptional Success:** In a flash of insight, the Princess recognizes some of the Dreamlands' essence mixed into herself for the fiction it is. She loses one Galemark. The effects of the lost Galemark on the Princess' appearance, and on the Dreamlands, may remain or fade away at the player's discretion - if they remain, the Princess can enact the role the Dreamlands wish her to play, and not become lost in it.

Galemarks track a Princess' progress along a path that ends with her as indistinguishable, even to herself, from a Dreamlands native who has nightmares of an unhappy world, overshadowed by fear and despair. The effects of a Galemark are threefold. First, the Princess' Dreamlands body changes - in both mundane and transformed identities, she gains a new, exotic physical feature. The change reflects what the Princess has seen and done: if she travels much among trickster foxes, she becomes foxlike, with pointed ears or a pelt. Galemarks don't always turn Princesses into fantastical beings - many places in the Dreamlands have inhabitants who could pass for normal in waking life - but a Princess with several Galemarks always looks very unlike her waking self.

Second, the Dreamlands weaves the Princess into its history and society. As a Princess gains Galemarks, the chorus members she meets are likely to "remember" past encounters with her, or "recognize" her as a native of a particular district in the Dreamlands, or refer in some other way to a history that (before the Gales marked her) never really took place. Dreamlands locations sometimes change physically to support the false history, too. (If you want a rule for this, either the player or the Storyteller may roll the Princess' Galemarks as a dice pool once per scene; for each success, narrate one "fact" from the imagined backstory that the local chorus "knows".) The life invented for the Princess is internally consistent - once a part of it is established further Galemarks don't alter it.

Third, and strangest, the Princess' own memories twist, and she finds that she also knows the details of her imaginary past which the chorus members know. Moreover, as her knowledge of that life grows, her memory of waking life becomes disjointed, surreal and incoherent, as if it were the dream. Each Galemark is attached to one of the Princess' Willpower dots, starting with the leftmost and moving right. When the Princess spends a point of Willpower from a dot with a Galemark, she temporarily assumes the role the Dreamlands have given her, abandoning thoughts of the waking world as fictions of no importance. This delusion lasts for the rest of the current scene; while it has no mechanical effect, the Storyteller should reward players for keeping to it.

When a Princess gains Galemarks equal to her Willpower, marking all her Willpower dots, the last of these effects becomes permanent - she ceases to believe in the waking world's reality, just as the actors disbelieve. The Gales' work is complete, and the Princess no longer checks for Galemarks; on the other hand, she also loses the power to open ways into Crawlspace, and therefore cannot wake up on her own. Only another Princess can rescue her, by tracking her down in the Dreamlands and opening Crawlspace for her.

Galemarks do not fade while a Princess remains in the Dreamlands. They begin to fade if a Princess chooses to avoid the Dreamlands for a while. After a Princess has had one full night's sleep for each Galemark she carries without entering the Dreamlands, she loses one Galemark, recovering from its baneful effect on her mind. As with an exceptional success on the roll to resist the Gales, the Princess' player chooses whether the changes to the Princess' Dreamlands body, and her imaginary past, remain when the Galemark is gone.

## **The Darkness**

The Dreamlands reflects all of humanity, once you leave the Queen's domains this includes the bad as much as the good. Whenever the Dreamlands reflects a bad part of Earth; be it a reflection of a city that includes a reflection of the crime ridden ghetto, or a reflection of a historical period including long past atrocities. Visitors can find Tainted places, Darkened and even Darkspawn.

This is not the Darkness Princesses remember from Earth. It is a lesser Darkness or perhaps this a greater Darkness: Is the darkness in the back of every man's mind worse than the monster of rotting shadows attempting to eat you? Regardless of such debates; Dreamland equivalents of Tainted places, Darkened, Darkspawn and all the rest can be found in the Dreamlands. Build them as normal Dreamland natives, including whether they are a Chorus, Actor or Star then add the Darkened, Darkspawn or other template.

Regardless of which Darkness is "worse" the Darkness in the Dreamlands is closer to the Princess' psyche. Any Sensitivity roll caused by the Darkness - be it Darkened, Tainted Place, Darkspawn or other - has 9again.

The only other noteworthy difference is that there is no Dark World within the Dreamlands. So few humans have ever experienced it (and fewer survive) that it is not a part of the Dreamlands. The Tainted places within the Dreamlands do not permit entry to a Dark World. It is still possible to for a Darkened to use the Enter Darkness ability, but it functions more like a slow teleport between two Tainted spots.

## **The Light**

If you were to ask the Princesses themselves they would surely protest against the Light's inclusion as a risk, but it is a risk if one that is very easy to avoid. In Dreamlands domains that reflect something strong and positive it is possible for the Princess to come across a manifestation of the Light itself. This either requires a lot of luck, or an Extended roll to track it down. Once the Princess finds a manifestation of the light she may choose to bathe her soul in it, this has three effects: The Princess may choose to fulfil her Virtue, if she has not done so already this chapter. The Princess may choose to remove Shadows. The Princess may choose buy of Belief at half the usual cost (round up)

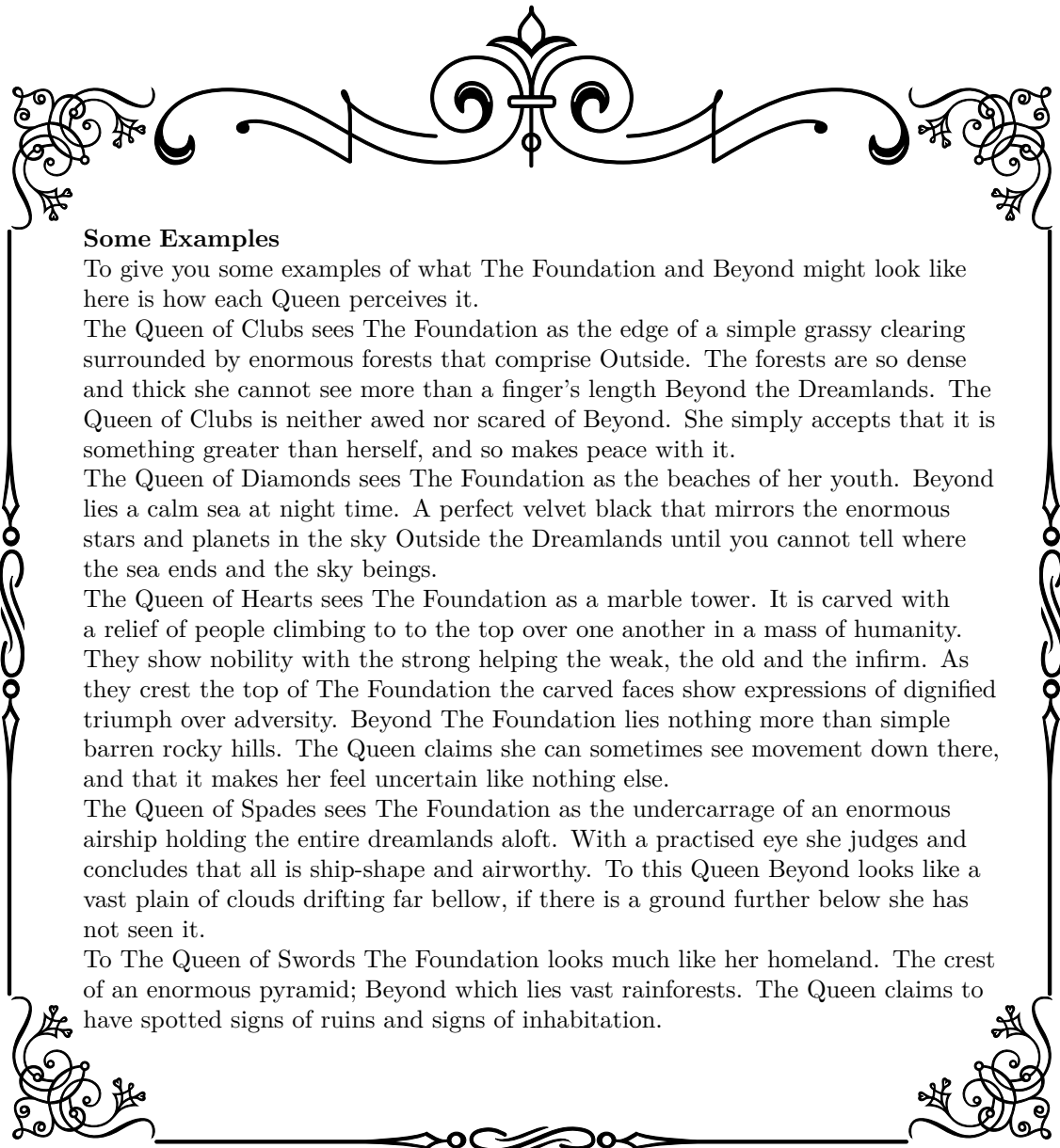
But there is a danger, the longer the Princess spends in the Light the harder it is to return to the grubby shadowy mortal world where her duties lie. The Princess' Sensitivity dice pool increases by one for every dot of Shadows removed, dot of Belief purchased and by one more if she fulfilled her Virtue. After a number of days equal to her increase in Sensitivity the Princess' Sensitivity returns to normal. If the Princess touches the Light again before this time not only does the timer reset, it stacks with any further benefit she may gain.

## *Places of Note*

### **The Foundation**

The Foundation is a mystery. As far as can be discerned the entire Dreamlands is built upon it's surface. As one approaches the borders of the Dreamlands the Foundation becomes exposed to the eye. It appears

differently to every traveller but always gives the impression of being some form of stability in contrast to the wild unknowable places outside the Dreamlands. While a city-dweller might see a mighty concrete tower run through with pipes, wires and air-conditioning outlets a Princess from a remote desert dwelling tribe might see The Foundation as the edge of a lush oasis abruptly shifting into endless desert sands. Past The Foundation is a place usually called Beyond, or Outside. Beyond is a mystery to the Nobility. Like The Foundation Beyond appears differently to every viewer but it always has a feeling of vastness; of infinite wonder and potential. Yet Beyond also feels of danger, not hostility or anger but the impersonal danger of a storm wrecked sea or the harsh desert sand. Looking Outside is a very personal experience as awe, fear, wonder and desire flow through the Princess. Each will discover for herself which emotion dominates.



### **Some Examples**

To give you some examples of what The Foundation and Beyond might look like here is how each Queen perceives it.

The Queen of Clubs sees The Foundation as the edge of a simple grassy clearing surrounded by enormous forests that comprise Outside. The forests are so dense and thick she cannot see more than a finger's length Beyond the Dreamlands. The Queen of Clubs is neither awed nor scared of Beyond. She simply accepts that it is something greater than herself, and so makes peace with it.

The Queen of Diamonds sees The Foundation as the beaches of her youth. Beyond lies a calm sea at night time. A perfect velvet black that mirrors the enormous stars and planets in the sky Outside the Dreamlands until you cannot tell where the sea ends and the sky begins.

The Queen of Hearts sees The Foundation as a marble tower. It is carved with a relief of people climbing to the top over one another in a mass of humanity. They show nobility with the strong helping the weak, the old and the infirm. As they crest the top of The Foundation the carved faces show expressions of dignified triumph over adversity. Beyond The Foundation lies nothing more than simple barren rocky hills. The Queen claims she can sometimes see movement down there, and that it makes her feel uncertain like nothing else.

The Queen of Spades sees The Foundation as the undercarrage of an enormous airship holding the entire dreamlands aloft. With a practised eye she judges and concludes that all is ship-shape and airworthy. To this Queen Beyond looks like a vast plain of clouds drifting far below, if there is a ground further below she has not seen it.

To The Queen of Swords The Foundation looks much like her homeland. The crest of an enormous pyramid; Beyond which lies vast rainforests. The Queen claims to have spotted signs of ruins and signs of inhabitation.

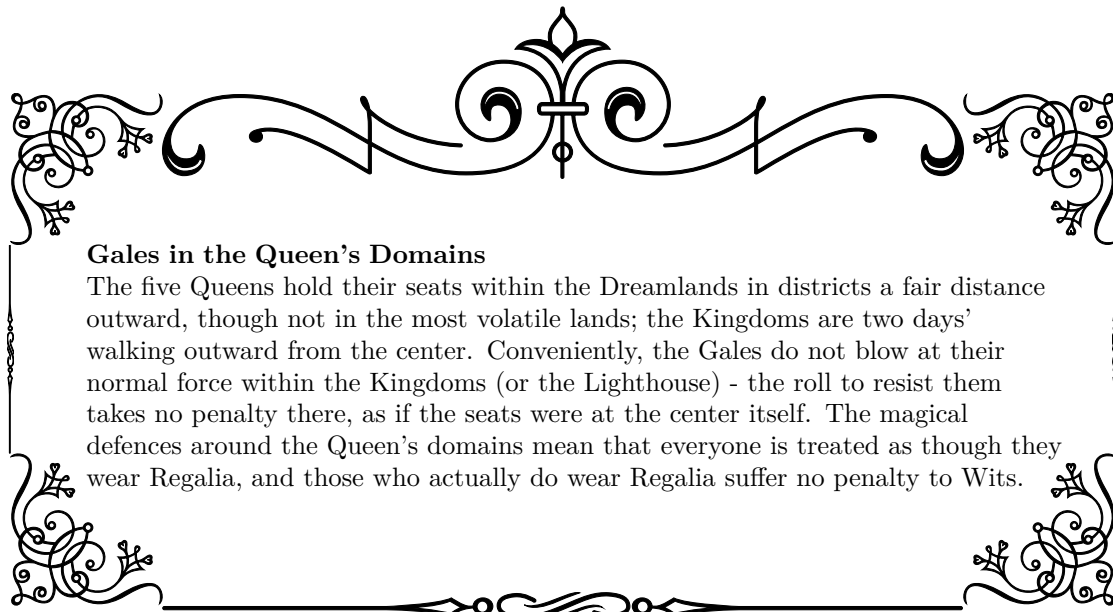
No matter the appearance of the Foundation, it is always adorned with strange writing in every imaginable language, linguistic subdivision and even every imaginable appearance: From typed to archaic and cursive. Princesses can read the Foundation, or at least the parts in the languages they know, but they can learn nothing from it. Like a million voices talking at once the Foundation is just too much to understand. It's unknown if there even is something too be understood. Sometimes strange mists are released from the Foundation, a Princess who inhales them can comprehend any language created

by humans (including the Royal Tongue and Alhambran) until she next leaves the Dreamlands. If she dedicates the nights sleep to memorisation and spends the exp she may retain a language permanently.

## The Lighthouse

The five Queens have been curious about the Foundation and Outside ever since they were first noticed shortly after the Release. The Lighthouse is a small Danann outpost built in the retro rough stone styles that pre-dates the Queen of Diamonds Coronation. Within is accommodation for a few scholars and some scientific equipment. It also has some mild fortifications; looking Outside makes a lot of Stars nervous (Actors can't see Outside at all). The torch itself is usually only lit if the Queen of Diamonds is present, not everyone sees Beyond as permanently night time.

## The Forests of Wen-Mung, domain of the Queen of Clubs



Wen-Mung is the largest of the Queen's Kingdoms, and the most sparsely inhabited. Yet no matter how far you are from the nearest inhabitant sings of people are everywhere, colourful paper talismans and wind chimes adorn every tree. Even the animals show subtle signs of domestication: That rabbit wears a little bow, there's a deer with decorated antlers, this wild horse has a braid in her mane.

When the Princess finds the people they are a hardy folk who live in harmony with the forest. They build their homes between or around the trees – natural clearings are rare and reserved for important buildings like village halls or temples – and farm strange plants; as productive as wheat yet growing up the side of trees like ivy. The villages are simple, designed to be easily built for the people are occasionally nomadic. If the rains fail to come or disease beings to spread they'll build again elsewhere. Only important buildings such as temples are stone, and even these can be abandoned, left to wait patiently until they are needed once again.

Most of the population is employed in agriculture or forestry. Individual communities are usually entirely self sufficient. Though most residents posses only a basic education many have impressive practical intelligences and a versatile array of skills useful to their daily lives. While they don't show any animalistic behaviours, they do occasionally show animalistic skills: After being asked for directions, a young farmer sniffs the air before pointing with confidence. An old woman clicks her tongue as she walks, only by looking closely does one realise it's because she's blind. It would appear that as much as the forest itself has become slightly tame, the people have taken just a slight touch of the wild into themselves.

Wen-Mung exports food and timber and rarely imports anything. Centuries of a trade surplus have given the Queen of Clubs an enormous financial reserve, she considers it prudent to let it grow no matter how many times her accountants try to explain to her what she'd do to the economy if she ever spent

more than a fraction of it. The other Kingdoms consider Wen-Mung a perfect neighbour, it's quiet, respectful and exports at great prices.

## **The Danann Archipelago, domain of the Queen of Diamonds**

The Danann Archipelago stretches for over a hundred islands. Most are either densely populated or uninhabited with the populated islands growing in the only direction they can: Up, in magnificent towers of ivory and glass. Sleek hydrofoils and flying wing aircraft surround the islands in a never ending dance of motion. Danann has a subarctic climate, the inhabitants consider central heating among the greatest miracles of technology. Cocooned in their artificial climate they prefer sleek future-chic fashions.

The people are a contented lot and welcoming to outsiders, although they tend to posture about their intelligence and education in front of foreigners. The observant visitor will quickly notice that everyone is either engaged in their pet scientific or creative projects, or they are obviously at leisure. The Queen of Diamonds had pretty much every necessary job replaced by machines long ago freeing the population to focus on the sciences and the arts. Though not quite the post scarcity society promised by futurists it's as close as most Princesses are likely to experience.

With an abundance of free time and ubiquitous communication technology the locals often form social groups based on common interest. Be it pre industrial music, advanced mathematics or abstract philosophy. Even though most people belong to several such groups the largest or most dedicated groups often develop residential clusters to be closer to their friends and any museums, concert halls, bulky equipment or social spaces they've appropriated or built. Though the Queen does not officially take part in this system, the topics she is most interested in – technology and the physical sciences – gravitate towards her. A vast academy of science, technology and academics has formed around the royal palace (Technically beneath, she lives in the penthouse).

Danann is an extroverted nation, the fisheries and hydroponics cannot keep up with the population and so the economy depends on foreign trade. They export technology, technicians, engineers and offer advanced education to citizens of other Kingdoms in return for food and raw materials. Danann has formed an odd friendship with the Confederacy of the Four Winds, another leisure filled Kingdom heavily built around foreign trade; they do dislike admitting that their most advanced aircraft cannot match the Confederacy's mastery of the winds.

## **The City States of Andarta, domain of the Queen of Hearts**

Andarta is a land of flowing fields, peaceful rivers and gentle hills. The people are equally divided between urban and rural. No matter where you travel the architecture is ornate and beautiful. Even the smallest farming community is built of solid stone with masterly carved decorated touches. Following the paved roads or aqueducts to the cities reveals unsurpassed architecture splendour, from marble clad defensive walls to streets so clean they sparkle in the sunlight. The people too are fit looking and healthy who always manage to look sharply dressed and spotlessly clean, even when coming home covered in mud from a hard days work in the field.

The Queen of Hearts loves everything in it's proper place, and she has made her mark on her Kingdom. Andartan life is an organised one. The government is feudal with cleanly defined hierarchies. The trades and professions are organised into guilds. Stability is both prized and abundant, it leads to a sense of confidence. People know what's expected of them, how to deliver it, and who will help them if they get a little over their heads.

Social roles in Andarta are well defined, but social mobility is high. A simple farmer would be expected to obey his superiors but she would also have many opportunities to advance her position, she could become a skilled artificer, a scholar or a self employed merchant; advancing her position and earning new rights and responsibilities. Foreigners would quickly notice that while social climbing clearly does grant new rights Andartans never use the word, a noble doesn't have the right to give orders, they have the responsibility to govern. This is the direct influence of the Queen, she only ever uses the word responsibilities, her subjects usually take the hint.

Andarta is the most introverted of the Kingdoms. While they are not quite xenophobic they are highly resistant to new ideas and find it uncomfortable when foreigners don't fit their expectations. They possess the common courtesy to hide it of course, as a people Andartans are socially gifted, to

anyone not as talented as the locals at reading people Andartans come across as trying too hard to be welcoming.

## **The Confederacy of the Four Winds, domain of the Queen of Spades**

The Queen of Spades calls the Four Winds her home, a vast snow-capped mountain range. Actually four mountain ranges all smooshed together to the amusement of geologists. The population is predominantly urban and take great care on the placement of their cities, seeking out sun-facing river valleys with warm prevailing winds. Transportation is handled almost entirely by a wide variety of airships, balloons and gliders, from a very young age the inhabitants learn to pilot enormous kites. For a few specialized tasks the giant mountain spiders are domesticated, favoured for their prodigal strength and peerless climbing abilities.

The nation is a mercantile, trade is the backbone of the economy. The Confederacy also has a large amount of artisans and craftsmen who specialize in delicate hand crafted arts and crafts, for the Confederation lacks the resources to compete in manufacturing. The Confederates take delight in foreign trade and the exotic wonders it brings to their homes. Enormous bazaars wind through the city streets. Stalls carry all manner of exotic goods and services from the five Kingdoms and the wider Dreamlands. The people are colourful and passionate. Any customer is a beloved friend. Hagglng is a social requirement filled with blistering insults against the quality of the goods and blatantly nonsense stories about starving kids to feed. As soon has money is exchanged they are once again true friends.

The Confederacy is an anarchy, organized on an ad-hoc basis by it's residents. Admittedly the organization is somewhat haphazard and ramshackle. Along with the weekly general assemblies, anyone simply tells friends and strangers they are hosting a meeting and if people are interested word will spread. Everyone gets together then they go home and decide if they agreed with the consensus or if they plan to ignore it. Those who have the talent to get things done will lead the way and those who disagree, lacking that talent themselves, are unable to hold the kingdom in an argumentative paralysis. Reputation is supremely important. The unofficially officially unofficially non-binding congresses which discuss issues of national importance tend to meet wherever the Queen's palace has drifted to this month to take advantage of her wisdom. Somehow, everything that needs to be done gets done in a timely manner.

Of all the Kingdoms, the Confederacy is the most extroverted of them all. As masters of the winds no kingdom can match their mobility, their love of the foreign and exotic sends a steady stream of merchant airships beyond the five Kingdoms to trade with the wider Dreamlands.

## **The Aztallan Alliance, domain of the Queen of Swords**

Aztallan is a land of lush rainforests, ever-blue skys and above all an enormous golden sun. The rainforest is hot, humid and teeming with life. They are also very dangerous to the unprepared traveller and unsuited for any population beyond small tribal societies. The Aztallani have overcome these limitations in their usual direct manner, by constructing enormous stepped pyramids and dwelling high above the rainforest. Houses, commerce and even farming all take place atop massive artificial plateaus. Aqueducts and bridges stretch for miles above the rainforest.

The people are a rugged independent sort, but loyal unto death to those who've won their trust. Self sufficiency is still a respected way of life and the more formal economy is dominated by small businesses and independent artisans who provide services to the local community. The cities often look less like a zoned metropolis than a large collection of individual towns and villages that grew into each other, usually because that's exactly what they are. Government is distributed and decentralised with local government at the level of town or city district being the most relevant to the average citizen's life.

The larger organisations and the government are best described as a meritocracy with posts decided purely by a person's skills. It is considered a sign of untrustworthiness if people know the identity of a candidate they might hire, it is suspected that they will choose their friends or family and to be fair with the Aztallani ideals of personal loyalty they probably would. "Not even for the Queen's consort" is a common way of declaring integrity, you can guess how the term originated. Since they often work alone or in small groups many Aztallanis have a wide verity of skills, this attitude is carried on to the larger organisations. It is not uncommon to see one person with two or more vastly different jobs.

As a society Aztallan shows the same self sufficiency and independence that it's people do. While welcoming to outsiders the kingdom usually waits for foreigners to come to it. One noticeable exception

is adventurers: bright young Aztallani often undertake a mission to develop or prove their merits. All forms of merit are valued but adventurers dominate the international perception of Aztallan as they are the largest group to wander beyond their homeland.

## Saint Frances' City

In the middle of a wide field beneath an eternally sunny blue sky, cooled by gentle breezes travellers may catch sight of Saint Francis. The saint is dressed in the humble brown robes of a monk and sits unmoving on a simple wooden chair, at a simple wooden desk, endlessly copying "Bibles" that actually contain a rough mixture of political speeches, travel guides and local news. All from San Francisco of course. Saint Francis is also three hundred foot tall.

As he writes Saint Frances supports an enormous bright red kite tied to his right shoulder by a tail that looks like someone took several golden gate bridges and wrapped them around each other like the threads in a length of twine. To this enormous kite several more kites are anchored, and to those even more. On and on in an enormous widening cone of many coloured kites. All interconnected by a labyrinthine network of bridges, cable cars and even subway tunnels hanging from the undersides.

This is Saint Frances' city, an enormous metropolis built onto the backs of thousands of kites. In many ways it is an exaggeration of the perception of San Francisco. In other ways it's as nuanced as the original but places the popular perception front and centre so it cannot help but colour a visitor's impressions. In the more tourist and commercial areas it seems every other building is a coffee shop where locals debate politics and recite amateur poetry or music. There is normally at least one parade every day.

Atop the very highest kite is the imperial palace, where Saint Frances' City is ruled by it's beloved emperor. A Dreamlands reflection of the government of San Francisco; with the personality of Emperor Norton and the fashion sense of Napoleon Bonaparte.

## *Note for those who have read Astral Realms*

The Dreamlands are similar to what the Atlantian Mages call the Astral Realms. How would a Princess perceive the Astral, and how would a Mage perceive the Dreamlands? In many ways the question is purely academic. Only in the most bizarre and unlikely circumstances could a Mage enter the Dreamlands or a Princess arrive within the Astral.

But for the sake of academic curiosity let us pluck a Princess of Diamonds and a Mage of the Mysterium from their lives and give each a copy of Princess: the Hopeful and Astral Realms to read. Over the course of much debating they would touch upon several ideas: They might say the two realms are one and the same, seen from different points of view. Perhaps they are different manifestations of the same phenomena. They may question the possibility that both the Dreamlands and the Astral Realms are like metaphysical "web-browsers"; they are mostly separate but one may see the effects of the other by observing the changes in the "website" they connect too. Perhaps one might propose that the two realms are simply unrelated. The possibility to test this theory is sure to delight both. What would happen if the Princess stood patiently in St Frances' City while the Mage used an ancient Atlantian artefact, The Scythe, to destroy the Tenemos realm of San Francisco. When the Princess sees the destruction St Frances' City followed by it's restoration when the Gales next blow through they would be forced to conclude that there is some overlap. At this point they would begin debating which of the earlier theories were true, but after much thought they would be unable to determine if the theories are even meaningfully different.

And what would our scholars think of their opposites realm? The Princess would look at the layers of the Astral with bafflement, and a little distaste. How can the Oneiros and the Tenemos be separate? The concept of an individual human is meaningless outside the context of humanity, and how can you have humanity without the individual humans that comprise it? While any follower of the Court of Diamonds would have little trouble understanding the concept of travelling through word or symbolic associations she would be baffled as to why the Astral runs on such principles. From a Princess' point of view they're far too small a part of human existence to underpin humanities collective unconscious. She might conclude that the Astral was built by something inhuman trying to understand humanity, and muse what this implies about the Mage. This can only end in a heated argument.



Wishing to map the unknowable The Mystagogue would focus on the structure of the Dreamlands. That part looks like the equivalent of this Tenemos realm. This section looks like an Oneiros. But how does it all fit together? While the two realms don't always map to each other this does not mean that progress cannot be made. Some deductions are clear; like the Foundation and the Omphalos being the same. It will not take long for the Mystagogue to broadly conclude that the Dreamlands are a very peculiar hybrid of the parts of the Astral that they call the Tenemos and the Dreamtime, with representations of the Oneiros present but usually sealed. Trying to go past the low hanging fruit leads only to confusion. Inhabitants of The Kingdom are present in the Dreamlands but there is no trace of them in the Tenemos. Not even of the vast territories governed by the Queens. Attempting to find a relationship between the association-connections of the Tenemos and the physical distances in the Dreamlands gets nowhere. As the Mage works he might mutter words like "Less True" or "only Sleepers". This can only end in a heated argument.

# Appendix B: Embassies

*If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own.*  
– Henry Ford

Embassies are the "Z-Splat" of Princesses, representing a cause or concept that the Princess takes responsibility for, by incorporating it into her very nature.

## *Embassy to the Arcane*

*Do not meddle in the affairs of wizards, because they are subtle and quick to anger ... Of course, I'm very, very good at not being caught.*

**Alternative Titles:** The Sorcerer's Embassy, the Order of the Witch-Finders

**Informal Name:** Spooks, Sparkles, Magi (usually only by those who haven't met a real Mage)

The power of the Light, with its Charms and its Transformations, and the corrupting power of the Darkness which degrades all that it touches, are not the only unseen forces on the Earth. The arcane and the sorcerous are all around you, if only you know where, and, perhaps more importantly, how to look. A middle-aged housewife carries out small rituals on her kitchen table, her manipulations of luck allowing her children to get scholarships for the fancy private school down the street. A coven meets out in the woods round the back of town, and when they do so, pets from all around the place go missing. The gang round the back isn't harassing the locals anymore; no, someone new has taken them over, and they're being trained in service to the Army of the Dragon, militant sorcerers and sorceresses who believe that Existence is War. And in the high-rise skyscraper in the middle of town, rich, intelligent and prosperous men and women meet, and have a pleasant dinner together. Over coffee, they discuss the will of the immortal, once-human sorcerer-kings who they claim rule the world, and, through dreams and portents, make their will known to their servants upon the Earth.

Yes, magic is indeed everywhere.

But it isn't right, many Princesses say. It is far too easily used for control, for abuse of others, to subjugate another's will in pursuit of some distant goal, such as rebuilding an ancient tyrannical city which should best remain forgotten. And yet it has such potential. Much as they are loathe to admit it, there are things that sorcerers can do that the Hopeful cannot, though it varies for witch to witch, and many (perhaps the majority) are not capable of anything more than cantrips, akin to Orisons. And, among the things that haunt the shadows of the World of Darkness, the mages and witches are the most human, and the most akin to the Hopeful and the Sworn. They're all humans, able to touch forces that others cannot, after all. Some of the more optimistic among the Embassy predict that the Arcane shall be the first of the Embassies to complete its task and bring the sorcerers and ritualists into contact with the Light, redeeming them to their original purpose. Of course, pessimists might point out the worrying attrition rate among the Spooks, where more active members have a worryingly high "accident" rate, let alone the fact that Ambassadors have been used by witches before to gain access to the Dreamlands.

But that's one of the assets of the Embassy. If there's one thing that unites all the men and women and creatures that come under the auspices of the Arcane, it's that they know things. Often things that they shouldn't, true, but when the paucity of Princesses, pre-Release is taken into account, the fact that Ambassadors have managed to obtain information about the hidden world prior to the Release has aided the cause of the Light. And many mages have good intentions, even if they're flawed by their hubris. When an Ambassador truly succeeds in her job, and the sorcerer-folk join with the Hopeful to cleanse an area of the Darkness, or ward off the abominations of the Nothingness they call the Abyss, the results can be truly glorious.

## **Marks and Requirements**

It is very hard indeed to predict what the individual effects on a Princess' Regalia from her membership of the Embassy of the Arcane will be. Of all the Embassies, Spooks vary the most; perhaps natural, given how much their subject matter differs, from one witch to another. There are, however, themes. The Regalia shifts, to become more complex, and often more layered; where once there was a simple skirt, now a complex array of fabric obscures her legs. Veils often make a major component, obscuring the features of the Ambassador and wafting around them, making them appear as if surrounded by fog. Sometimes, on the higher-ranking Ambassadors, complex script appears on their clothes, in woven gold and silver and flowing mercury. This isn't the cheap symbolism of a party wizard's costume; it is rich, and elaborate, and (for the Ambassador) hovers right at the edge of understanding, like the script that covers the Wall in the Dreamlands.

Secret knowledge and deep understanding lead Princesses to the Arcane. The required Attribute for the Embassy is Intelligence, and the required Skill is Occult.

## **Secretary Privileges**

### **The Sight of the Sorcerer**

The witch-folk know things. Through her proximity to them, and her study of their ways, a Secretary to the Arcane can emulate their uncanny ability to know about the Unseen, and things that they really shouldn't. The Secretary, when Transformed, gains the Merit Unseen Sight (Arcane). For these purposes, Arcane is defined as all ritualistic magics, regardless of source. Interestingly, this power is even stronger when not Transformed; in the mundane state the Secretary gains Unseen Senses (All), detecting all uses of supernatural abilities. This power manifests in a way unique to the Secretary (it may be cold shivers down her spine, or all the hair on her arms standing up), but in all cases, it does not pinpoint the user of the ability. All it does is inform her that an unknown power was used within sensory distance. Moreover, it does also not activate for powers which have as their exclusive purpose concealment of one form or another.

### **Arcane Veils**

The sorcerers' talents for ferreting out knowledge can be dangerous, if applied to you; a Secretary therefore has a protection against them. When she is transformed, she gains the benefits of the Occultation merit from Mage: the Awakening, at a level equal to 1/3 her Inner Light (rounding down.) That is, all magic cast through an Intimacy modifier (see the Charm modifier Intimacy for a summary of this) takes an additional penalty when the Secretary is the target; the penalty is -1 at Inner Light 3, -2 at Inner Light 6, and -3 at Inner Light 9.

Arcane Veils do not stack with a Princess' natural Veiling, use the greater penalty.

### **Gift of Knowledge**

By spending a Wisp when transformed, the Secretary can give to another person an Unseen Sense (Arcane) identical to her own, lasting for the rest of the scene.

## Consul Privileges

### Like Attracts Like

The sorceries of the magi and the witches are not from the Light, but they can still be useful. A Consul can study objects that have been given power by Arcane methods – anything the Unseen Sense (Arcane) of a Secretary would detect – and divine their intended functions, and the methods of activating them. She makes an extended Inner Light + Occult roll, at 30 minutes per roll and a threshold of 3 times the cost of the object in Merit dots (the ST sets a threshold for items without a known Merit rating.) On reaching the threshold, the Consul learns how to activate the object's powers, and what they will do if she does so.

### Warden of Privacy

The Consul can now extend her Arcane Veils to another person, by spending 1 Wisp; the target gains Occultation at the same level the Consul possesses, for the rest of the current scene. She may use both Gift of Knowledge and Warden of Privacy on the same person simultaneously, paying full cost for both (a total of 2 Wisps.)

### Ambassador Privilege: The Magic Within Man

The secrets and techniques of the sorcerers and magi are laid bare before the Ambassador to the Arcane, for there is magic within humanity beyond the Transformation, and it is now within the reach of the Ambassador. The character binds her Transformed self within her normal human self, weaving the Light into her very flesh and bones under her human skin. This gives her the ability to access to her Charms and Invocations while in her mundane form. However, the effective level of Charms she may use in this state may not exceed (Inner Light - 5). No limit applies to the Invocations she may use. In addition, she may use Holy Shield as an innate power when Untransformed. She may Transform normally, to gain access to the full range of her normal powers, but this is a permanent modification of her formerly non-magical self.

**Drawback:** This is a deliberate breach of the safety of the Transformation, and so the Dual Identity function of the Transformation is significantly weakened. Characters who know the name by which the Ambassador thinks of herself have Intimacy to both her Transformed and mundane selves, and count them as the same person for magical purposes. Characters who do not know that name still treat the two forms as different people, as before. Ambassadors with this privilege are often driven to paranoia worthy of a sorcerer, assuming false identities and rigorously keeping their two lives completely separate.

## *Embassy to Death*

*Death is an end. But it is not the end.*

**Nickname:** Reapers

Long ago, the nature of death was different. Before the Cataclysm, death was merely another step on a greater journey. The grief of losing a loved one was leavened with the knowledge that they were in a good hands, safe hands. And when death took you suddenly, you could always linger for a little while to say goodbye. This is no longer the case. Death is common, sudden, and often painful. Death's old air of solemn, bittersweet tranquility has been replaced with bereaved grief and fury at an unjust or senseless death. Ghosthood, once a way for the departed to set their affairs and say goodbye, has become a torturous trap for wounded souls.

The Reapers try to ease the transition from life to death. Ambassadors to Death and the dead, they comfort both the dying and those who survive them. They both honor the souls of the departed and appease the ghosts that linger. When Death is wrongfully called down, denied, or shunted onto another, the Reapers approach to reconcile the imbalance. All Reapers hope that one day, humanity looks upon death not in fear or desperate denial, but with peaceful, solemn acceptance.

## Marks and Requirements

Reapers have a connection to death. Many of them have felt the pain of losing a friend or loved one, and even those who haven't lost anyone personally have suffered vicariously through the loss of a patient. They often seem old or unusually mature for their age. Reapers tend to be calm and tranquil types, often comforting others with a soft, quiet kindness. However, some are energetic and rambunctious, living life to the fullest while the Kindly Boatman waits in the background. Either way, the key Attribute for the Reapers is Resolve, and the key Skill is Empathy.

The Regalia of the Reapers often bears the trappings of death. Many dress in colors associated with death such as dark grey or black in the west, or white in the east. Many take on a mythical symbolism. Some appear as kindly reapers in long black robes, others resemble compassionate angels of death with grey-feathered wings. (Despite his inhuman nature, the kind, solemn manner of DEATH from Discworld is a good example of how a Reaper might act.)

## Secretary Privileges

### Still Masque

Few things ever seem to faze one who entreats beyond the mortal coil. In situations where she is being directly threatened with violence or death, or in any scene where a mortal dies, the Secretary gains a "phantom" dot of Composure. It counts as a normal dot for dice pools, resistance, and all derived attributes, including initiative and maximum Willpower, though she does not gain a point of Willpower in these circumstances.

Further, she can draw strength from facing her own demise; if she takes at least 3 points of lethal damage in a single attack, she counts as having fulfilled her Vice. If she begins to bleed out from lethal damage, she counts as having fulfilled her Virtue. Note that the usual rules for how frequently Vices and Virtues can be fulfilled still apply.

### Envoy to the Departed

While transformed, a Secretary can see and speak with ghosts (even if they don't share a language), and interact with them as if they were solid. She can also see, touch and manipulate inanimate objects in Twilight and anything that was originally material that is changed to that state by a supernatural power. She cannot, however, see or touch spirits currently in Twilight. This power also allows a Secretary to spot the presence of death around an area or a person, and gives her an Unseen Sense (Death Magic).

### Clothing the Dead

The Secretary can spill ectoplasm out of her nose and mouth. Ectoplasm is a white, somewhat sticky film in which ghosts can manifest easily, and it can be shaped into a glossy surface that reflects images of nearby ghosts in Twilight that anyone can see. She spends 1 wisp and rolls Empathy + Inner Light. With 1 success she produces enough ectoplasm to form 1 handheld mirror; 5 successes is enough for a full-length mirror. Alternately, with 1 success, a ghost can manifest in the ectoplasm she makes without any penalties from the location or from the presence of mortals, though only as a blurry figure. With more successes the figure becomes recognizable, and with 5 successes the ghost appears solid, exactly as it did in life. The ectoplasm lasts for 1 scene.

## Consul Privileges

### Avernian Key

The Consul's bond with death allows her to walk into the Underworld freely. She can open an Avernian Gate without using its key; she need only touch the Gate and spend 2 wisps. The Gate remains open for minutes equal to her Belief, and anyone may pass through it ... in either direction.

## Euthanasia

Pain is felt only by the living. By touching the target and spending 1 wisp, a Consul can bring down a tiny touch of death onto herself or another, enough to utterly wipe away all pain for a scene. While this power is often used to soothe the suffering of the dying, it is just as often used to allow an ally or oneself to ignore the pain of grievous wounds. A target under the effect of this power does not take wound penalties, and doesn't fall unconscious when all his boxes are filled with bashing damage. However, someone under the influence of this ability is likely to not notice when they get injured, either by accident or in battle. If someone under this ability is injured while distracted, the ST may roll the target's Wits + Composure to see if they noticed the blow. However, any attack that deals at three or more boxes of damage hits hard enough to be noticed by pressure alone. In addition, powers that function solely by causing pain automatically fail against the target, and any interrogation rolls that use torture not only lose the bonus that it would apply, but instead take a penalty equal to twice the target's Composure. (A person who blithely ignores physical torture is freaky enough to put even the best interrogator off balance).

## Ambassador Privilege: Flesh without Substance

An Ambassador to Death may throw off the bounds of solidity that hold her body in the world of flesh, and walk, as immaterial as a shadow, in the grey world that exists just beyond the visible. As a reflexive action, the Ambassador may spend 2 wisps, or 1 lethal damage (the damage manifests in a form appropriate to her Threshold, if Geist: the Sin-Eaters is being used), and enter the state of Twilight. To leave the state of Twilight, and return to the material, she performs the same reflexive action. To those who see this change in state happen, the Princess either falls apart in a shower of grave-dust and fog, or pulls herself together from the thin air, dust-motes building a new body from the air in a sudden blur of motion. While in the state of Twilight, the Ambassador counts as a ghost, for the purposes of magic which detect, harm, ward against, or permit interaction with ghosts, though explicitly not ones which would bind or summon them. She can also be abjured or exorcised as ghosts are; abjuration forces her to avoid the abjurer or materialize, and exorcism forces her to materialize, and remain materialized for at least 24 hours.

Note that, as the ability is reflexive, it may potentially be activated multiple times in a single turn, permitting the character to "phase in", attack, and return to Twilight, without giving an enemy a chance to attack.

Drawback: This drains the solidity and vitality of the Ambassador in a less concrete sense. Each time the ability is used, whether to enter or leave Twilight, the Ambassador suffers a cumulative -1 to all physical and social actions for the rest of the scene. Moreover, Twilight is often not a happy place; some might say that being solid to the denizens of that state of existence is flaw enough in its own right.

## *Embassy to the Dreamlands*

*We live two lives, in two worlds. Each is missing something we deeply need. Our task is to bring them together, to build something new, something whole and complete.*

**Alternative Name:** The Lords and Ladies of Sleep

**Informal Names:** Daydreamers, Somninaughts, Terriers, The Resistance (defunct), Hearlds of the Rooster (defunct).

For centuries the Dreamlands has kept the souls of the Kingdom imprisoned, but not all souls touched by the Light were from the Kingdom. A rare few souls Blossomed without any help from a past life during the Long Night. Most were alone and without guidance but a some found a tradition left to them by their forebears: The Embassy to the Dreamlands. It was passed down the generations through books Charmed to find their way into the hands of another Princess. Within was a simple mission: Learn about the dreamlands, find a way to free the souls trapped within.

The efforts of the Embassy amounted to naught when the moon landing beat them to the release, but the Long Night is only the beginning of the story. The Dreamlands remains a source of hope, power and danger to the Enlightened. Today new Princesses flock to the banner of the Daydreamers, eager to explore the world that waits for them in their dreams. Though the release was not a silver bullet for all the world's ills the Daydreamers still see it as a chance to heal the world. To hear them say it, Earth has reality but is short on hope. The Dreamlands is full of hope but lacks reality. By becoming a living bridge between dream and reality the Daydreamers hope to forge something shining and new, the best of both worlds.

## **Marks and Requirements**

The Embassy to the Dreamlands has one of the odder styles of Regalia. They are sleepers and dreamers but they are also explorers searching for new horizons in the Dreamlands. Their Regalia draws from both, adorning the Daydreamer in a clashing contrast of exploration gear and pyjamas. As though they were woken up in the middle of the night and told they had five minutes to grab what they needed for an expedition and get out. Thick hiking boots are worn below a nightdress. Torches and climbing gear hang from a dressing gown belt. A plinth helmet and sturdy backpack are combined with flannel pyjamas. Even their bodies shift becoming rugged and built for tough outdoor conditions yet also soft and dreamy in movement with a faraway look in half closed or entirely shut eyes. No matter how awake and perceptive the Princess really is.

Most Somninaughts are Seekers. Many follow the Queen of Diamonds. They seek to study and understand the Dreamlands itself or they believe that the Dreamlands offers a fresh perspective that can lead to new discoveries in other fields such as sociology or the history of the Enlightened. Followers of the Queen of Clubs are also well represented. The Wilds are often drawn to experience the world and no one – certainly not their Queen – said the world ends at the physical. Yet the most common court of all is the followers of the Queen of Mirrors. Before the release Onceborn Lightbringers often felt that freeing the Enlightened souls from the Dreamlands was a simple one step solution to fixing the world (and being crowned True Heir and saviour of course). Even now that it has been proven that things are not that simple many Brats still find that they prefer life in the Dreamlands, where their greatness is fully appreciated and honoured.

The Attribute and Skill of the Daydreamers are those used to navigate the Dreamlands: Wits and Empathy.

## **Secretary Privileges**

The long history of the Embassy has left records of several heroes and heroines. To pay tribute to their forebears' memories the Lords and Ladies of Sleep have named the Embassy's Privileges in their honour.

As a Secretary a Princess is far from being the living Bridge the Lords and Ladies of Sleep seek to become. She can use herself as the anchor points but the bridge itself comes later.

### **Alice's Daydream**

By spending a Wisp the Secretary can instantly find a Crawlspace anywhere she wishes (it still costs a Wisp to open the Crawlspace). A roll is only required if some magical barrier attempts to block access to the Dreamlands, in which case use the usual Wits + Empathy + Shadows dicepool can be rolled to overcome the barrier.

The obvious implication of this power is that the Secretary can fall asleep whenever she wishes, and without magic it is literally impossible to prevent her from dropping off.

### **Christopher's Parallel Lives**

Most Princesses need to sleep to reach the Dreamlands but a Lady of Sleep needs only to daydream, allowing her to act in both worlds. When the Princess unlocks a Crawlspace she may spend a point of Willpower in addition to the usual Wisp. If she does so her daydreams allow her Transformed and mundane selves to part ways: The Transformed self travels into the Dreamlands while her mundane self returns to everyday life.

Both the Princess' bodies calculate their stats as normal and share any variable stats like Wisps, Willpower or Shadows. There is no Sympathetic link between the Princesses two selves, the protection of Dual Identity ensures it. However both are able to talk with eachother, but this requires their full concentration. If the Princess is a Consul and has begun to build her bridge communication between her two selves becomes as easy as talking to someone standing by your side.

**Drawback:** While the Princess is daydreaming of her perfect self having fantastic adventures in a fantasy world, a part of her mind is devoted to her Transformed self. Both her two lives must accept a -1 penalty on all Wits rolls and a -2 penalty to Initiative. In addition she looks like she is daydreaming, which may be considered rude and inflict social penalties. Finally neither of her two selves are able to Transform until they reunite.

### **Lucy's Wardrobe**

By touching another person and spending a Wisp a Secretary can instantly show them a Crawlspace, it is up to the target if they wish to go through. Mortals and others who cannot use Wisps may unlock the Crawlspace with a point of Willpower. However this Privilege does not grant the target the ability to open Crawlspace within the Dreamlands so unless the target naturally has that ability or finds a Princess in the Dreamlands willing to lead him back they could easily be trapped. Crawlspace leading to the Dreamlands function like normal. Crawlspace leading to Earth return the user to their sleeping body, or if they don't have one it will lead to just about anywhere. However, if the Princess is a Consul and is currently using Christopher's Parallel Lives she may instead choose to have the Crawlspace cross upon her Bridge and arrive within the vicinity of her other self. If the Princess is an Ambassador and has the Crawlspace travel across her bridge then it will only require a single Success (instead of eight) to travel the complete length of the Crawlspace.

Crawlspace created by Lucy's Wardrobe remain for the remainder of the scene. However if the target can naturally reach the Dreamlands and they choose to enter the Crawlspace, it instead lasts for as long as any other Crawlspace would.

If the target chooses not to enter the Dreamlands they remain awake, so this Privilege cannot be used to send enemies to sleep in the middle of a fight. Like Alice's Daydream it can be blocked by magic, the Princess makes any rolls needed to contest magic that blocks access to the Dreamlands. When they succeed the Crawlspace appears.

### **Consul Privileges**

When she becomes a Consul a Princess can form the framework of a Bridge between her two selves, allowing her to transport small items and even people from the Dreamlands, and to hang onto her mundane self in the face of the Gales.

### **Dorothy's Farmhouse**

As the Daydreamer's connection between both worlds grows. So long as the Princess' is using Christopher's Parallel Lives she can use her connection to her physical body and the walking world as an anchor to protect herself from being blown away by the Gales. If the Consul is fewer than her Resolve days outwards (or in a Queen's Domain) she does not have to roll to resist the Gales. Once she travels far enough outwards this Privilege has no effect at all and the Consul must face the Gales as other Princesses do.

### **Calvin's Tiger**

With her growing connection to the Dreamlands a Consul can call nearly anything small item from beyond the wall of sleep, bring it to the real world and turn it into something real and tangible. When a Consul is transformed, needs a special tool and doesn't have it or anything like it, she may roll Inner Light + Wits. Success draws upon her connection to the raw stuff of the Dreamland to create a piece of equipment well-suited for the task she currently faces, this is a Reflexive action if she is using Christopher's Parallel Lives. Otherwise it takes an instant action to summon Dreamstuff without the use of her bridge. She may then hold or touch a real object of roughly the right size and shape, concentrate for a full turn (losing her Defence, if in combat), and spend 2 Wisps to transform the object into useful tool. The



transformed tool has an equipment bonus equal to her Successes -1 and must function identically to a piece of mundane equipment, though it may have an odd appearance or unusual operating principles. The transformation lasts for the rest of the scene, after which the object returns to its original shape. The Consul may use this Privilege a number of times per day up to her Intelligence.

Though the Daydreamer can bring Dreamlanders to Earth with Lucy's Wardrobe it still requires the Charm Animal Companion to ease one into a new body, while Bequeath remains necessary to create more powerful tools from the Dreamland's. If she knows either of those Charms she can use her bridge to aid their Invocation. So long as Christopher's Parallel Lives is in effect the threshold for those Charms drops to 2x the target's Inner Light, Resonance or dot rating. If she is an Ambassador and has completed her bridge the threshold for the Charm becomes just the target's Inner Light, Resonance or dot rating.

## Ambassador Privilege: Wendy's Boys

An Ambassador becomes a living bridge between both worlds pulling the impossible idealism of the Dreamlands and the hard reality of Earth into a happy medium. This Privilege can only be activated when the Princess is using Christopher's Parallel Lives and has two effects, one on Earth and one in the Dreamlands.

On Earth the Princess creates what the Embassy has termed a daydreaming zone; in this zone the world begins to take subtle cues from the fantastic aspect of the Dreamlands: colours seem brighter and livelier, sounds seem to spontaneously harmonize, the rustling of leaves seems to be hiding something you can't quite believe is an animal, but may be so, mortals feel brighter as they bask in the fantasy of the Dreamlands, gaining +1 to Degradation checks. Dreamlanders in a daydreaming zone can manifest, becoming physical for one Willpower per scene. If they do so then assume they are in the Dreamlands for all rules purposes.

In the Dreamlands the Princess bestows what the Embassy calls a lucid zone. The Dreamlands does not lose its fantastic nature but it seems more solid, more stable. In this place of sanctuary the gales do not blow at all. Both zones remain centred on the Princess at all times and extend to Inner Light \* 10 yards.

**Drawback:** By completing the bridge between her two lives the two tracks of the Princess' mind reunite. So long as Wendy's Boys is active the Princess only has one action a turn, which she may spend in either world. She may still use Reflexive actions in either world as per the normal rules for Reflexive actions.

## *Embassy to the Economy*

*That is a common mistake, the actual quote is "The love of money is the root of all evil."*

**Alternative Names:** The Accountant's Embassy, The Auditors, The Smith Institute

**Informal Names:** Suits (formally pejorative), Taxmen (pejorative), Lamars (pejorative)

Go back to the beginning of modern economics; to Adam Smith himself and you will find very different ideas to some free market ideals endorsed today. Adam Smith wrote as much on the subject of morality as he did upon economics and he tied his two fields together. Writing at length upon the need for a moral dimension to economics. Even one governed by, well, the government.

According to the Suits there is nothing wrong with the theory of capitalism, some go so far as to say there is nothing wrong with our current implementation of capitalism. The problem they say is people twisting the system for their own greed. You can't defeat greed by adjusting the rules any more than you can defeat thieves with a stroke of the legislator's pen. No, the only solution is to call a policeman.

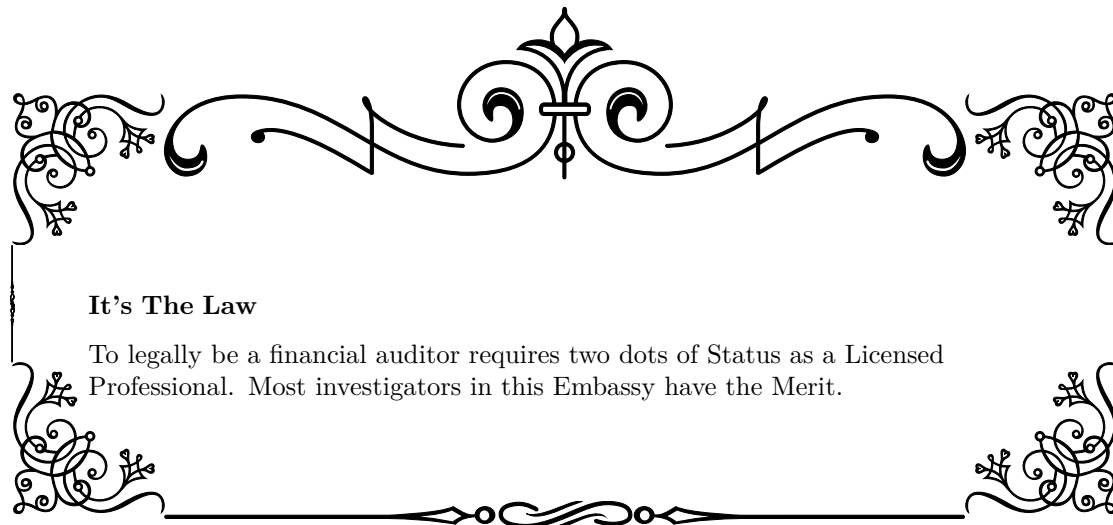
## Marks and Requirements

Hopeful who join the Auditors tend to be well above the average age for a Princess. Most have had significant experience working in the corporate world, or the financial sector specifically. Seekers are predominant among the members, fighting white collar crime calls for a keen intellect and a deductive

mind, not a good right hook. Graces have also begun to show greater interest in membership, turning from the Embassy's traditional focus towards building sustainable ethical businesses. Diamonds are unsurprisingly the most common Queen but surprisingly Swords comes in at second place with a strong showing among financial lawyers but also turnaround consultants and corporate brokers who can fix or fund a good company with a sharp mind and a blazing presence that burns through red tape. A minority of corporate executives in stable companies follow the Queen of Hearts.

Members of the Smith Institute favour formal and mundane attire appropriate to the culture. In Europe and America this means suits, with ties for the Princes. Princes often favour executive style hair while the Princesses often possess power hair. Many members have slightly idiosyncratic tastes, one might prefer the finest hand tailored Italian suits while another dresses in the sharpest of fifty's suits, always with a matching hat.

Regardless of their job title, all members of the Accountant's Embassy are very good at economics. The required Attribute is Intelligence and the requires skill is Academics.



## Secretary Privileges

### Cutting the Red Tape

In both her Transformed and Mundane State a Secretary to the Economy finds it very easy to understand finance. They can hold vast tables in their head and fit them together like jigsaw puzzles. By Spending a Wisp the Secretary may add her Sensitivity to all rolls to understand a financial system, including: Academics, Investigation and even Empathy to see through the person sitting across the desk trying to trip you up with lots of meaningless numbers. If the Secretary spends a wisp during an Extended Action she applies Sensitivity to every roll for that action.

### Following the Money

While Transformed the Secretary can divine basic facts about an organization, and clues to its recent activities, by following the flow of money through it. To use this Privilege the Secretary must have access to a portion of the organization's funds (actual cash, checking account numbers, credit card numbers). If no other opportunity offers the Secretary can establish a link by buying something from the organization, and using Follow the Money on her payment. The Secretary tags the money by spending a Wisp; over the next 24 hours the Wisp touches all the organization's assets and sends data back to her subconscious. After a full day has passed, the Secretary rolls Intelligence + Investigation + the equivalent in Resources dots of the assets she tagged.

Dramatic Failure: The Secretary gets a radically false idea of the organization's nature, purpose or recent activities. Failure: The data does not form a coherent picture; the Secretary learns nothing. Success: The Secretary establishes, to her own satisfaction, one of the following sets of facts: The organization's Motivation, Membership, Expertise and Dedication. A number of the organization's

Merits equal to her successes. Or A number of the organization's Policies equal to her successes  
Exceptional Success: The Secretary learns all the organization's Merits and Policies.

### **It's Not What you Know, It's Who You Know**

It doesn't matter what you know about finance, if you know a Secretary to the Economy you'll be fine. By spending a Willpower point the Secretary may lend another her dots in Academics, Investigation, Politics, Persuasion or Empathy for use in financial matters alone. The recipient may hold the dots for up to a day and activate them at any point, gaining the Secretary's dots for the rest of the scene. If their own Academics are greater they gain a +1 bonus. Lending another her dots does not deny a Secretary access to them.

## **Consul Privileges**

### **Money Talks**

The Consul can trace the flow of money in fine detail. When she uses Follow the Money, the Consul may ask for the answer to a specific question about the organization – one that can be answered “yes” or “no”, or that has an answer from a small set of alternatives, as far as the Consul knows. Success gives the Consul the true answer to her question; exceptional success gives her, in addition, an idea of the reason why the answer is true. On a dramatic failure, the Consul is convinced of a false answer. If the correct answer is not one the Consul considered when she framed the question, she can learn only that the truth is something she didn't think of.

### **King Midas Has Asses' Ears**

There's often a big gap between knowing something is true and being able to prove it; a Consul can, however, bridge that gap, if she's willing to take risks. Whenever the Consul has learned a fact about an organization by examining its finances (either mundanely or magically) she may, by spending 2 Wisps, discover clues to a course of action which will end in that fact becoming public knowledge.

When she activates the Privilege, the Storyteller rolls her Wits + Politics in secret; for each success, the Storyteller gives the player one clue to the location of relevant evidence, the means of obtaining it, or the best person to receive it. The Privilege does not consider the Consul's safety or social position - it gives the surest and quickest path to the fact's exposure, no matter how high the cost of following it might be. The Consul cannot use the Privilege more than once on any given fact.

## **Ambassador Privilege: Shaking Hands with the Invisible Hand**

The Ambassador's understanding of money is so deep that she can predict what organizations will do, even before they know themselves. As with Follow the Money, the Ambassador must tag a portion of an organization's funds with a Wisp and wait for a day while the Wisp finds the organization's assets.

The Ambassador then spends 1 Willpower and rolls Intelligence + Politics + the Resources value of the tagged money, and asks a question about a future action of the organization. If the roll succeeds, the Ambassador knows the true answer to her question; for each success past the first, she learns the answer to one further question about the same action, expanding on the details.

**Drawback:** Submerging her mind into the flows of money removes the Ambassador from the normal human perspective, and hinders her ability to relate to people in other than financial terms. After activating this Privilege, for a number of days equal to her successes the Ambassador takes a -2 penalty to all her Empathy and Socialize rolls.

## *Embassy to Ephemera*

*Listen, you idiot. I know you mean well, but you're creating fear-spirits like you wouldn't believe it with your anti-mugger campaign. We're going to have to find a better way to do this than just appearing and attacking anyone who looks suspect.*

**Alternative Titles:** The Animist's Embassy, Speakers to the World, Guardians of the Silent Hillside

**Informal Names:** Shamans, Jumpers.

There is a world beyond the one we know. And, frankly, it isn't very nice. As in, it's pretty nasty even compared to the real world. Oh, sure, an animistic universe may sound like a nice idea, and theoretically, the spirit world could be used to get Hope spirits to spread their emotion, and help the world; but once you've seen a spirit of Love steal the body of a person, then build an orgiastic cult around it with no limits and no safe words... well, the idea doesn't seem like such a nice one. Add that to the fact that, really, the Hopeful don't have much of a grasp on the spirit world (and so are prone to making rather nasty mistakes, as they misinterpret it in ways that are only prevented by hard experience and/or natural talent), and there's no wonder that many Princesses try their best to keep away from spirits, driving them away as best they can when they cause trouble, and not even noticing them the rest of the time.

Ah, but some among the Hopeful ... well, others might say that they can't leave well enough alone, but the Ambassadors to Ephemera argue that they will not turn a blind eye any longer. They hunt down spirits which steal the bodies of men and women (in a way different to the Amanojaku; physically and much harder to get rid of), and force them out. They study the changes in the spirit world, and use it to locate problems in the real world; in one famous case, a Hopeful in Rome located a serial killer before anyone had even reported their victims missing, by following the upsurge in murder spirits in the locale. They talk to the werewolf-folk, who are natives to that strange place in a way that the Hopeful are not, and try to dissuade them from hurting people (the record there ... has not been good, compared to other tasks in the Embassy. It's like those things don't find hideous amounts of violence morally wrong.)

Because that's one of the things that the Ambassadors to Ephemera warn those interested in their duties. The spirit world isn't nice. It isn't safe. Unlike even the most degenerate bloodsucker or hubristic sorcerer, spirits were never human, and so don't think like people. And the hounds of the moon which claim domain over the spirit world don't appreciate anyone fleshy wandering around in that place. Some have strange rituals which can force a Princess back through the barrier between worlds. Others ... prefer a more terminal solution.

After all that risks, one might wonder why any Princess might take up the duties of an Ambassador to Ephemera. Why not just focus on that which isn't from a hellish spirit world which has more in common with Silent Hill than with the Dreamlands? The answer is, so they say, that the spirit is a reflection of the real world in a much more immediate and real sense than the Dreamlands. Destroy the spirit of an object, and the thing weakens and breaks down; smash the object, and the spirit dies. If the spirit world, the hisil is bad, then that's only because the world is bad. If you can change the real world, you can change the spirit. And, perhaps more interestingly, if you can change the hisil, you can change the real world. Moreover, spirits don't go away if you don't believe in them (though research from the Embassy to Fate seems to suggest that faeries don't, either). Yes, it's often unpleasant to deal with spirits, to be forced to kill a host to get the spirit of rape out of the world. But the Light doesn't need nice. It needs necessary.

## Marks and Requirements

The Regalia of the Shaman begins to take on the strange properties of the unseen world which she deals with constantly. Firstly, it begins to reflect the ambient Essence and Resonance, shifting and flowing to take on the nature of the surrounding. A sudden burst of anger in a bar across the street, and the colours deepen and become more vibrant, as the emotional intensity shifts the local Resonance. The bottom of her skirt might begin to drip blood at a murder scene, sometimes long after the death if the manner of it was especially violent. In the city, it greys and becomes regimented; in the country, it hugs close to her body and twines around her. Moreover, especially if the Princess spends a lot of time in the strangeness of the spirit world, the garments become somewhat decoherent and... well, ephemeral, starting to resemble something more like a very thick fog (still patterned, just slightly... fuzzy) rather than fabric.

Personal force and persuasiveness are essential traits when dealing with inhabitants of the hisil. The required Attribute for a Shaman is Presence, and the required Skill is Persuasion.

## Secretary Privileges

### Essential Feelings

First comes a sense for the illusive, invisible, yet omnipresent patterns of Resonance that surround the world. The invisible world is laid bare to the Princess, and she can understand it when it talks to her. As an instant action, the Secretary can study an object or area, and roll Wits + Empathy. Success tells her of the Resonance of the object, with one characteristic being revealed per success, strongest first. Particularly strong resonances (like the hate on a murder weapon, hidden in the knife draw), grant a bonus to the roll.

As a side effect of this, the character also becomes fully fluent in the First Tongue when speaking to spirits and Shadow-linked shapeshifters. This ability cannot be used to communicate with other members of the Embassy, nor with any other character who may have learned it for some reason. It can only be used on natural denizens of the Shadow. Moreover, the Secretary automatically feels if they are in a Loci, Barren, Glade, or Verge, and can reflexively and unconsciously roll Wits + Inner Light to contest any supernatural power that would obstruct this.

### See the Unseeable

The invisible is laid bare to a Secretary to Ephemera. While Transformed, she can always see unmaterialised or unmanifested spirits, as well as possessing entities. Note that this does not give her any special ability to detect them; a spirit hiding behind the sofa is as hard to see as a person hiding behind the sofa. This affects (by default) sight, hearing, taste, and smell. The character may spend a Wisp to add touch to the list for a scene, allowing them to make unarmed Brawl attacks against spirits. If the character is wielding a supernatural weapon, this counts as unarmed for the purposes of this ability.

### Open Wide the Doors

To minister to the Ephemeral, one must be able to go to the Ephemeral. The Secretary has the ability to open portals to the Shadow, although at this level, this ability must be used in a Locus (which poses its own problems). The Secretary spends a Wisp, and rolls Resolve + Occult as an extended action, one roll per turn, to open the gateway. It stays open for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled, and then closes. The portal is of Size 6, so only one person may pass through it per turn. It is usually not best to linger around such places; not only do the lupine theriomorphs tend to object to people around the areas where you can open such gates, but things can come through the other way.

(Note that, as per the rules in the WoD core book, you are limited to a number of rolls in any extended action equal to your dicepool.)

## Consul Privileges

### Worth is Value

At this level of initiation into the ways of the spirit world, the Essence of such a place becomes able to be changed into the raw stuff of the Light, just as the Light may deign to grant its favours to lesser beings. A Consul may draw Essence from Loci, and accept it from spirits, and convert it into Wisps, at a raw rate of 2 Essence for every 1 Wisp gained. Likewise, the Consul may bribe spirits or activate fetishes through the expenditure of Essence; 2 Wisps may be converted into 1 Essence for these purposes. To activate a fetish, the Consul spends 2 Wisps (converted into 1 Essence), and rolls Composure + Occult; success activates the device.

As a side effect of this attunement to Essence, the abilities of Essential Feelings expand. The Consul may, as an instant action, roll Wits + Empathy while studying a target. Success reveals if they have Essence (Essence from the spirit world or loci; ghost-generated Essence, for example, does not count) points in their pattern; this includes the Uratha, the Changing Breeds, Skinthieves, the Claimed. It also gives a hint to the nature, in the form of Resonance traits equal to successes. (so success against a Uratha won't tell you that they're a Werewolf, but will tell you "Moon", "Wolf", "Rage", or an appropriate link to their tribe, for example). An Exception Success tells their nature, if the Consul has encountered and studied that type before.

## The Sight Unveiled

At this higher level of competency, the Consul may grant the effects of See the Unseeable to another person, by touching them on both eyelids and spending a Wisp (either the Consul, or the target, may spend an extra Wisp to activate the ancillary effect to allow physical interaction). This gift lasts for a scene, and may be extended by reflexively spending a Wisp at the end of its duration.

In addition, as per Essential Feelings, anyone granted this ability also understands the First Tongue when spoken by spiritual entities.

## Ambassador Privilege: Queen of the Spirit World

So long has the character interacted with the unseen, that she has acquired status among them, as they accept her as one of their own. The character gains a Spirit Rank equal to her Inner Light / 3, rounded down. Spirits of lesser Rank will typically treat her with respect, while ones of equal Rank will not (barring them just disliking her) go out of their way to aggravate her. Even spirits of higher rank may at least grant a little courtesy, though the Princess remains vulnerable to their displeasure. The full rules of Rank apply. Moreover, the character may spend a Wisp as an instant action, accompanied by a proud declaration of their self, to subtract their nominal Rank from any dicepool used by a spirit-based (including spirits, Claimed, and Uratha) which would affect them. This benefit lasts for a scene.

**Drawback:** Every time the character declares their Rank, a little of the spirit world seeps into them, changing their appearance. The body reasserts itself, but it is disconcerting to see the flames flickering in the pupils of a Princess who declared her Rank in the spirit world reflection of a burned-out tenement... especially when they spread to her tear-ducts. For the scene after the declaration of Rank, the character subtracts their nominal Rank from all Social rolls for dealing with people who are not spirits or spirit-based (the spirits find it perfectly normal).

## *Embassy to Fortune*

*You should realize by now, Your Highness. A cat has no duty but to do exactly as he pleases.*

**Alternative Titles:** Embassy to the Cat, Those who Walk by Themselves

**Informal Names:** Dancers, Stalkers, the Cat's Girls (only used by the Cat himself)

It is oft-times boasted or bemoaned by the Princesses that they are the luckiest or unluckiest people of all, for on a whim fortune chose for them among all the world's brightest to Blossom in this life or another. They were given power and a purpose in life, but also duty and a Sensitivity to the suffering of others. Lucky or Unlucky?

Some of the Hopeful take this further. When an entire nation can stand or fall to a single roll of the dice, well lady luck is a fickle lover, if we want a fair and just world someone's going to have to load the dice. Some of the Embassy want to rig the game so the moral get the luck. Others would be content if good and bad fortune would be spread a little more evenly or if the stakes were lowered. The Embassy may well change Fortune some day, but if they do will they get what they hope for? Kiss the dice for luck.

The Embassy to Fortune is a rarity; its members have opened relations with a creature who claims to be the concept of Fortune incarnate, the opposite and foe of ineluctable destiny. He most often appears as a handsome ginger tom, with piercing green eyes and a the scars of many lucky escapes; since he never names himself, the Embassy just calls him the Cat. He has appeared in many other forms – a white Persian queen-cat with a diamond collar, a tall thin lazy-eyed man in an elegant and expensive power suit, a gamine girl in a catsuit hanging off a building cornice – but even the ones who aren't cats have a feline character, brilliant green eyes, and all of them have a shadow that writhes and churns with the pure chaos of random chance.

Why this living representative of luck chose to work with the Hopeful (for the Embassy seems to have been his idea) is still a mystery. The Cat himself always answers to his girls, but rarely does he give the same answer twice. Sometimes he says the world's fate has grown so interwoven and heavy that

the world is doomed to sink under it and be destroyed; that it is his particular task to prevent this by tangling the weaving of destiny with the randomness of luck (and maybe chase lose threads, just a little), and the release of the Hopeful offers him the best opportunity he can remember to carry out his mission. Sometimes he explains how a Blossoming is such a stroke of fortune for an entire community that it uses up everyone's luck; the good deeds a Princess' does is supposed to balance it out, but with the Nobility trapped in the Dreamlands the whole system fell out of balance and now they're back he's got to fix things up. Sometimes he explains that the Fall itself was nothing more than a stroke of bad luck; since good and bad luck must always balance out the Radiant are owed so much good luck only his personal assistance can repay the debt. And sometimes he explains it's simply because the Embassy is full of so many beautiful women, for he is a tom cat; if he gets too amorous a plate of fish or a ball of yarn will make him forget all about you.

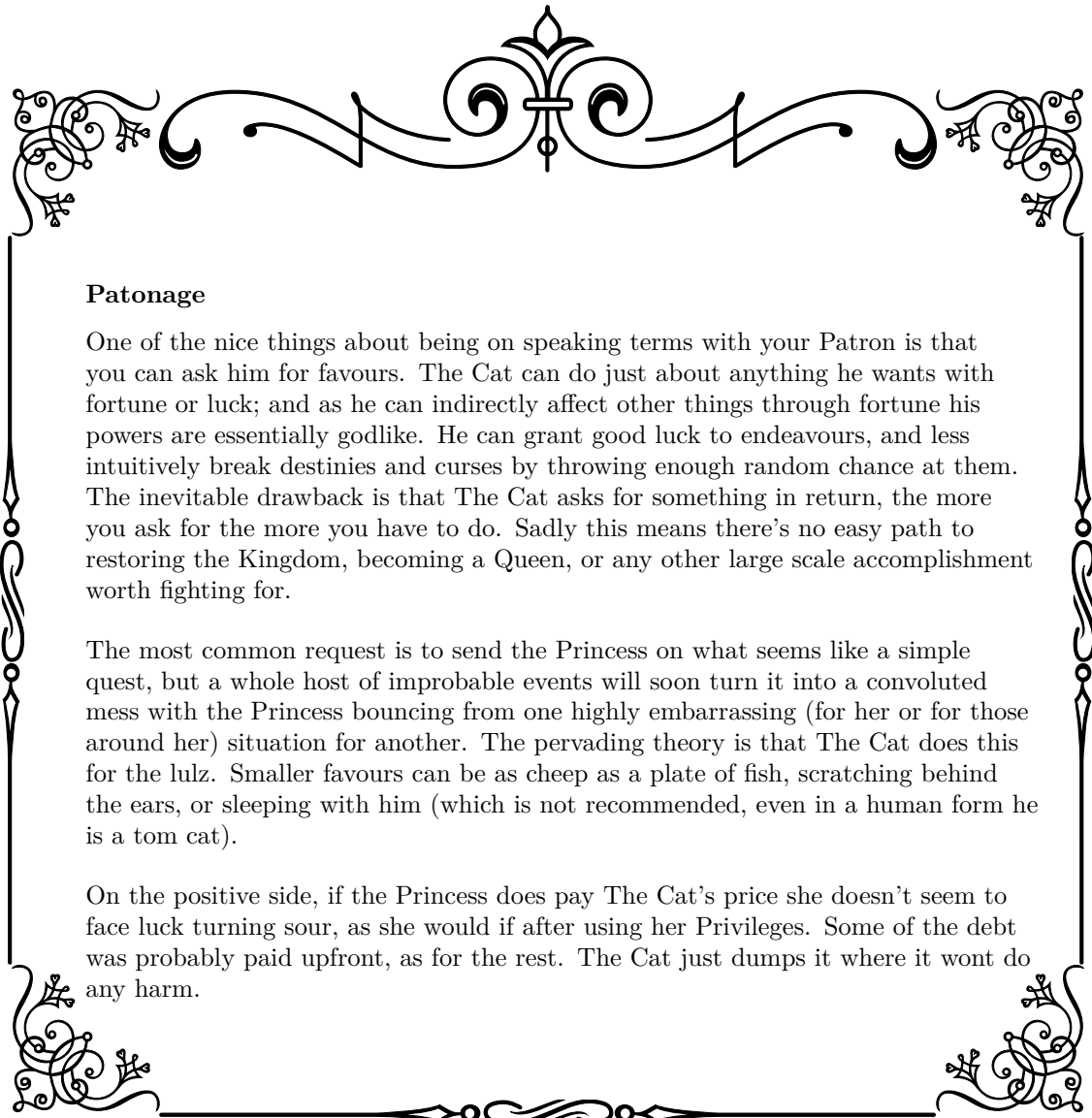
## Marks and Requirements

The marks of the Embassy to Fortune are of two separate kinds. The Stalker invariably acquires a mask; it can be as small as a thin half-mask around her eyes, or as elaborate as a full helm that covers her hair and face completely. The rest of her Regalia shifts to clothing that combines elegant beauty with freedom to move; somehow, it suggests the Dancer would be equally at home in a formal ballroom or leaping between rooftops. In that they imitate their patron, who likes to quote from the Just-So Stories: "I am the Cat who walks by myself, and all places are alike to me." Accessories often come in the form of a small tasteful lucky charm or two, it's not that rare for these charms to be bribes for the Embassies' feline patron.

The Cat's Girls also imitate their patron bodily – their eyes become green even in mundane form, and when transformed many of them develop pointed ears, vertically slit pupils that gleam in low light, and teeth that all come to points. The senior Ambassadors might easily pass for sisters of the Cat's most human forms – and there's even a tale of a new Secretary who met a woman she took for an Ambassador, and learned much later that she had really been the Cat herself.

The Cat looks for Princesses that already have a touch of the feline nature, in the form of social aplomb and physical grace. The prerequisite Attribute for his Embassy is Composure, and the prerequisite Skill is Athletics.

## Secretary Privileges



### Patonage

One of the nice things about being on speaking terms with your Patron is that you can ask him for favours. The Cat can do just about anything he wants with fortune or luck; and as he can indirectly affect other things through fortune his powers are essentially godlike. He can grant good luck to endeavours, and less intuitively break destinies and curses by throwing enough random chance at them. The inevitable drawback is that The Cat asks for something in return, the more you ask for the more you have to do. Sadly this means there's no easy path to restoring the Kingdom, becoming a Queen, or any other large scale accomplishment worth fighting for.

The most common request is to send the Princess on what seems like a simple quest, but a whole host of improbable events will soon turn it into a convoluted mess with the Princess bouncing from one highly embarrassing (for her or for those around her) situation for another. The pervading theory is that The Cat does this for the lulz. Smaller favours can be as cheap as a plate of fish, scratching behind the ears, or sleeping with him (which is not recommended, even in a human form he is a tom cat).

On the positive side, if the Princess does pay The Cat's price she doesn't seem to face luck turning sour, as she would if after using her Privileges. Some of the debt was probably paid upfront, as for the rest. The Cat just dumps it where it wont do any harm.

### It Might Be

The world is full of unseen things, and one of the Cat's Girls wanders through it, the invisible bestowing fortune upon her. By spending a Wisp, and making a statement out loud like "This sucks. I never win at anything like this," the Secretary can enjoy a sudden bestowal of good fortune. These small manipulations are always within the realms of possibility (she finds a high value note lodged in a drain, the waiter knocks over the drink that her rival had spiked), but often come about in rather surprising ways. If used to generate wealth or obtain objects, any thing so obtained cannot have a value more than Resources one, if she wants it to be permanent. Nevertheless, lesser purchase can be multiplied up; the £50 found in a bin, if invested wisely, can become many times more, while the good one-night stand can, if bought breakfast in bed, possibly become a stable relationship.

**Drawback:** Luck always balances out, and for every use of It Might Be the Secretary suffers some small misfortune. For a small blessing this misfortune is nothing more than a minor inconvenience, but a Princess who asks for too much will surely loose whatever they gained when bad luck conspires against her at the end of the scene. If the Princess really over does it, such as trying to obtain things worth Resources four or more, her reversal of fortune will come with negative consequences (such as the Secretary's face appearing on a wanted list, after the car she found to be fortunately unlocked turned



out to have a boot full of crack cocaine).

### **Hunter's Eyes**

To find and seize the fleeting moments when destiny can be turned against itself, a Secretary to Fortune needs sharp eyes and ears, and swift reflexes. While she is transformed, the Secretary adds her Athletics to all her Perception rolls, including her rolls to avoid being surprised, and her eyes have the light-amplifying membranes of a cat's eyes; she can see shapes, though not colours, in any lighting conditions short of total darkness.

Moreover, she gains an occult sense for the flow of Fortune around her. It doesn't tell her what is about to happen, or even likely to happen; instead, the Secretary knows whether an improbable event is natural luck, or that luck has been magically tampered with. This is an Unseen Sense for powers that twist luck to someone's benefit (like the Charm Touch of Fortune) or which override it to force an outcome (such as imposing a geas) that registers at the moment the power influences someone's actions. When such a power first affects the Secretary herself, if her consent was not sought, she twists away from the undesired bond; she adds her Athletics to the relevant Attribute to resist or contest the power. She even resists powers which normally can't be resisted – for these, she rolls Composure + Athletics - the attacker's supernatural power stat. Success means that the power does not take effect; an Exceptional Success means that the target is unaware that she was not affected.

### **Bless the Child**

It doesn't matter how lucky you are, a little luck at just the right time is better than a lot of luck at the wrong time. A Secretary to Fortune has an instinctive knack for knowing when it's the right time. While transformed, she gains the ability, as a reflexive action, to spend a Wisp to grant a +2 bonus to an ally's action. The dice lands on lucky seven, a wild sweep of the blade blocks a bullet, the book falls open on the page with the answer. Such manipulations of luck can be felt with the Unseen Sense of Hunter's Eyes if the ally is also a Dancer, and will also trigger the senses of any other creature sensitive to manipulations of fortune. This ability may be invoked an number of times equal to the Secretary's Presence every turn, but may not be used on the same target twice in one scene.

**Drawback:** It should be noted that, as a minor side effect, characters who benefit from this tend to suffer minor misfortunes over the next week or so. It's never life threatening (inflicting at most 3 points of bashing, as they spill hot coffee over themselves), but the friends of a Secretary to Fortune might just have to get used to getting splashed by a car or panhandled by the smelliest tramp on the street.

## **Consul Privileges**

### **It Matters**

The Dancers know that you can't create good luck without creating bad luck, but if you're skilled in the Cat's games then you can move good luck to where it matters, and bad luck to where it does not.

The Consul can Reflexively spend one Wisp before making a roll. She then rolls twice and records both results. Before she rolls the Princess chooses if she wishes to take the higher or the lower result, this is the accepted result while the discarded result is the rejected result. The accepted result becomes the outcome of the roll. The next time she rolls a number of Successes equal to the accepted result under any circumstance the Princess must substitute in the rejected result.

*Example: When rolling to resist being cursed Selina spends a Wisp and rolls twice; she gets 2 Successes and 4 Successes. She chose to take the higher result so the accepted result is 4 Successes and the rejected result is 2 Successes. Selina scores 4 Successes to resist being cursed, the next time she rolls 4 Successes under any circumstances the roll is replaced with 2 Successes.*

If the accepted result shows up again as one of the two rolls when the Consul is shifting luck around, make the substitution before naming the accepted and rejected result.

**Drawback:** Substituting the rejected result back in at a later point is the drawback.

## It Will Be

It's truly said that Fortune favours the brave. At the cost of 1 Wisp, a Consul can roll Inner Light + Composure. Successes on this roll become a dice pool which is attached to a target character within sight. The next time the target spends a Willpower point, these dice are liberated, and added to the +3 that the Willpower point grants. Only one such pool may be extant at once. This Privilege trips the Unseen Sense of Hunter's Eyes when the target spends the Willpower.

**Drawback:** After using their bonus dice the target suffers -1 to all rolls until they pay back their debt: A number of rolls equal to their bonus dice.

## Ambassador Privilege: It Must Be

The Ambassador to Fortune manipulates luck so cleverly, that once per Session she may ensure that her actions will succeed, no matter the obstacles or that her opponents actions will fail, no matter the odds. The character spends 3 Wisps and one Willpower, then she rolls Composure + Athletics. For the rest of the turn (it is recommended to hold your action so that you can act first on the following turn) she may move Successes around from one roll to another, after the roll is made.

She may move a total number of Successes equal to the Successes she rolled to activate this privilege. Moving a Success is defined as removing it from one roll and adding it to another; all the rolls affected must be made this turn with the only exception being the Princess' next roll at any point. She can grant Successes before deducting them from another roll; but if the turn ends before she has deducted those Successes then they must come from her next roll. If that reduces her into negative Successes she suffers an automatic Dramatic Failure.

This Privilege trips the Unseen Sense of Hunter's Eyes every time the Ambassador acts. Unlike every other luck manipulating Privilege, It Must Be has no Drawback when used correctly.

## *Embassy to Machines*

*Now that is a beautiful piece of work*

**Informal Titles:** Machinists, Techies

We live in an ordered universe, one defined by coherent laws and systems. Since Newton's time, people have viewed the universe as the machine, a perfect and precise clockwork, predictable and orderly. Some people find this a cause for despair, feeling that they are doomed to be crushed beneath the gears of the universe.

The Ambassadors to the Machine know better. The universe is a beautiful and wondrous thing, awe-inspiring in its vastness and fascinating in its complexity. How can someone look up at the stars and not feel awe at the vastness of space? How can someone not look upon a rainbow and admire not just its beauty, but also the dance of light and water that brought it into being? How can someone look upon the incredible complexity of the miracle that is life and not be amazed? The universe is a wondrous place, and knowing how it works just makes it even more beautiful.

And that is perhaps the greatest miracle; the universe can be known. Mankind can comprehend the universe in all its subtleties, and with this knowledge they can work wonders that can improve the lives of millions. Of course, those same tools and machines can destroy cities as well as feed them, but the Hopeful have never been pessimists. The Techies know that the machines and tools are an extension of man's will, and strive to make sure those tools are used for noble ends. The Ambassadors to the Machine take a little bit of the universe into their souls and thus take upon them the mantle of machines; extensions of human will built upon the system of the universe.

## Marks and Requirements

One would assume that the Enlightened who join this Embassy are extreme technophiles, obsessed with the new, the sleek, and the shiny. One would mostly be right. The aesthetics of this Embassy have changed multiple times, even over the short time since the Release, and, typically, the best way

to judge what they were was to look at the sci-fi at the time. The current dominant is very much the sleek, post-cyberpunk, white look which is probably best described as iPrincess. Regalia is tight without being gratuitous, rounded, and often hard, not deforming to the touch, like an outer carapace. Unusual eye colours are the norm for Machinists; greyish white, purple, and just-having-the-entire-eye-be-a-metal-globe are all common. Purple hair, too, is not uncommon. The skin itself is different from the untransformed form; it is slightly cool to the touch, and often has tattoo-like lights shining through the skin, usually in blue or green.

There is, however, another school, which has remained since the Release. These ones are less about the rampant technophilia of the more common ones, and more about machine as function. These self-described Wrench Wenches and Hammer Men take pride in their apron-like armour, oil-covered Reglia, and often bouncy demeanour.

Every Machinist is an excellent craftsman, and treats her tools with loving care. The required Attribute for the Embassy is Dexterity, and its required Skill is Craft.

## Secretary Privileges

Note: The mechanics refer several times to the concept of a machine. For the purposes of this Embassy, a machine is a tool or object with multiple moving parts integral to their function, specifically designed to fulfil a purpose by human or otherwise sapient beings. Moreover, for any dice bonuses or special effects granted by these powers to apply, the primary function of such a machine must be derived from mundane, mechanical principles, or from the Light. With no other forms of magic included.

## Calling, Calling

The Secretary has a natural intuition for systems and technology. She never takes a penalty on unfamiliar applications of a skill when using, repairing, or analyzing a complex piece of technology (this includes electronics and any mechanical device that has more than one moving part). While an ordinary person may take a penalty for using Computer for both Linux and Windows, or have a hard time applying Drive to handling a motorcycle, driving a big rig or flying a helicopter. In addition, once per scene the Princess can add half her Inner Light (minimum bonus of +1) to any single roll involving repairing, building, or using a complex technological device.

An interesting side effect of this ability is that when a Secretary watches a machine in use, or tries to use it herself, she will instantly notice if the machine functions on something other than natural principles; such as a Werewolf's Fetesh or a Genius's Wonders. The blind spot in the Princess' intuitive understanding stands out like neon pink dreadlocks at a lawyer convention.

## Rise and Falling

The rise and fall of a piston as it converts heat and energy into productive work is something that is truly wonderful to watch. The Machinist can emulate this. When Transformed, and spending a point of Willpower to add to a dicepool involving machines, she can instead choose to convert it into a single automatic success. This counts before the dice are rolled; as a result, in an uncontested roll, she can always ensure that she succeeds. Such predictability comes at a cost, though. Dicepools where this ability are used don't count the automatic success towards the five needed for an exceptional success, as the spark of brilliance is directed towards not failing rather than exceeding.

## Depths of Longing

Machines long to be used, and, moreover, they long to be used correctly. The Machinist can aid in this. With the expenditure of a Willpower point, she can "lend" another individual her dots in Crafts, Computer, Science, Medicine or Drive. For the rest of the scene, when using a machine in a skill-check the person she lends to may use her skills, instead of their own; if their own are higher, they simply get a +1 bonus. The Princess does not lose access to the skills; one of the wonderful things about machinery is how it saves labour, and allows division of tasks, after all.

## Consul Privileges

### Blessed Tools

The Consul's intuitive grasp of technology lets her hone a tool to perfection. She spends a turn working on a machine (forgoing Defense, if in combat), then spends 1 Wisp and rolls Intelligence + Inner Light. If she succeeds, she adds her Sensitivity to the machine's equipment bonus for anyone who uses it, for the rest of the scene. On an exceptional success, the bonus remains for a full hour.

### Watch in Awe

With the expenditure of a Wisp, the Machinist can grant another person the power of Rise and Falling to ensure success with machines. For the rest of the scene, the beneficiary can choose to add 1 automatic success, instead of 3 dice, when spending Willpower on a roll involving machines. As with Rise and Falling, the automatic success does not count towards the five needed for an exceptional success.

## Ambassador Privilege: Magnum Opus

The most beautiful thing you can do with a machine is to build one, to encode your understanding of the natural world into a device that anyone can use to enhance their lives. An Ambassador can use her Privilege to duplicate the Charm Bequeath and the Upgrade Charged, with only three modifications: Firstly the dicepool becomes Dexterity + Crafts, Invocations may be applied as usual. Secondly the Machinist can only make Bequests based on Charms they know, but do not need to quest through their Crawlspace to do so. But the most important advantage is that a Techie's creations can be used by anyone, they have only one form and do not need to be Transformed to function. They are undeniably magical Bequests powered by the Light, but their magic responds to anyone who presses the buttons. (The rule limiting some Bequests to Princesses still applies)

The final form of these Bequests depends both on the Ambassador's personal style and the Charm within. A simple Charm might require nothing more than an on off switch, but a complicated Charm might be covered in toggles or have a complicated computer interface and come with a thick user manual. As a general rule any Charm in which the user has options for how to invoke it (such as Phantom where the user may choose which image they wish to create) or is highly dependent on external factors (such as Balm, which depends on which injuries one wishes to heal) can be considered to require a complicated interface. Anyone but other Techies (and other people with a power like Calling Calling that allows the use of unfamiliar technology) suffers a -3 penalty to use Bequests with a complicated interface unless they have a Speciality along the lines of "Ambassador Eriko's Medicine Engines".

**Drawback:** Not only must the Ambassador pay a Willpower dot as normal for the creation of a Bequest, all her works have an Intimacy to both her forms equivalent to love. Such is the bond between the craftsman and her creations. This Sympathetic connection is not vital to the functioning of the device, it's actually irrelevant, but it is exceptionally hard to remove. Most magic which dampens Sympathetic connections will not make a dent, and anything powerful enough to remove the connection would probably destroy the Bequest and hurt the ambassador.

## *Embassy to The Ocean*

*Look down there. It goes for nearly a mile down here; much further in other places. Dark, cold; no air, and many creatures we don't fully understand yet.*

*But that doesn't mean we should fear it. It's a lovely place, really.*

**Alternative Titles:** Explorers, Vanguard of the Depths

**Informal Names:** Mermaids, Magellans, Divers

Even in the modern world, mankind only touches on a small portion of existence. Even the larger part of the physical planet is located underwater, beyond our reach. The Ocean Embassy is comprised of explorers and trailblazers - those who seek to explore places not yet touched by the Light, and make

them friends to the Princesses and mankind. The oceans themselves, being easily accessible, are an obvious place to start...though many Explorers also display an interest in the Spirit World, outer space, and areas of the Dreamlands outside the Princesses' control. And more.

The Vanguard of the Depths appear to many as a rather fearless lot, willing to dive head-on into the unknown, and able to make themselves feel at home in any environment. The Embassy, for its own part, holds that any place humans can thrive in was unknown and frightening before it was explored; the ambassadors seek to shine the Light on the places where mankind will, one day, prosper.

## **Marks and Requirements**

When members of this Embassy transform, symbols of the sea tend to mingle with their forms: Seashells appear in their hair, while the latter seems to be blowing in a salty breeze; patterns reminiscent of designs in sand form on their skin, their eyes go deep green-blue, and if one listens, one may hear the sound of waves lapping on a far-off shore following them in their wake.

The prerequisite Attribute of the Embassy is Wits, and its prerequisite Skill is Survival.

## **Secretary Privileges**

### **Mermaid's Knowledge**

The Explorers cannot become lost, physically or socially. The Secretary gains the Direction Sense Merit, if she didn't have it already; she always knows which way is north, no matter how she's been spun around, and even when blindfolded or in total darkness. She can retrace any journey she's made once before, if she was conscious while travelling; falling asleep in a vehicle driven by someone else puts a break in her memory, but she will remember any motions the vehicle made while she was awake.

Socially, a Secretary can learn to converse with anyone she meets with amazing speed. While listening to someone speak in a language she isn't fluent in, and trying to speak to that person, the Secretary rolls her Inner Light + Intelligence as an extended action; each roll represents five minutes of attempted conversation. When the Secretary has accumulated 4 successes, she gains the benefits of 1 dot in the Language Merit for the language the other person is speaking. She may use this ability until she has the same fluency as the other person. Dots gained this way fade at the rate of 1/hour; if the Secretary has the XP, though, she may spend it to acquire the Language Merit instantly before the magic fades.

### **Mermaid's Form**

At her transformation, the Secretary's legs can merge together into a tail, either delphine or fishlike, and her body adapts in other ways to the rigors of swimming in deep water. On land, her Speed drops to her Strength alone (she can only sit or crawl, not stand) but in water her effective Speed is 4 times its base value. She can hold her breath for a whole scene, or an hour, regardless of her Stamina, and never suffers from nitrogen narcosis. Finally, she gains a form of echolocation, which gives her a reflexive knowledge of all her surroundings like that from the Charm Read the Wind, out to a range of Inner Light + Wits yards in the air and twice that under water. She can sense either in air or in water, but not both, depending on whether her head is submerged.

The Secretary can switch between the mermaid form and her original transformed state by successfully transforming. She has all the benefits of her transformed state as a mermaid, and all Charms that alter her transformed state stack with the mermaid form.

### **Mermaid's Kiss**

While transformed as a mermaid, the Secretary can pass on part of her resilience to another. She kisses the other person on the lips and spends a Wisp. Until the next sunset, the target can hold his breath for a scene or an hour, exactly as the Secretary can, and is also immune to nitrogen narcosis.

## Consul Privileges

### Mermaid's Song

The Consul's voice, like a siren's, becomes fascinating, turning the heads of those who hear it. The Consul spends a Wisp and rolls her Inner Light + the higher of Presence and Manipulation to charm another person; the target contests the roll with his Composure + any supernatural advantage. If the Consul wins the contest, the target is entranced; for the rest of the scene, the Consul has a +1 bonus on all Social rolls dealing with the target. If the Consul gets an exceptional success, this bonus rises to +2.

### Mermaid's Love

When the Consul uses Mermaid's Kiss, she may spend an extra Wisp (2 total) to transform her target fully into a merman or mermaid like herself, with all the abilities and drawbacks of that form. The target may return to his human form at will at any time, and must do so at the next sunset.

### Ambassador Privilege: Mermaid's Crown

The Ambassador to the Ocean reads her surroundings constantly, and adapts to anything she meets. First, she gains the echolocation sense of the mermaid form at all times, even when untransformed. When she becomes a mermaid, the range of her echolocation triples, and she can create a focused pulse of sound that lets her read the hidden structure of solid objects. To use this, the Ambassador touches the object, and rolls Wits + Composure or Wits + an appropriate Skill as an instant action – Crafts works for inanimate objects, Medicine for living beings. Success on this roll tells her something of the object's density and composition, finding any holes, cracks or imbedded bits of different materials.

Second, the Ambassador can transform her body to deal with nearly any environment. Once a scene, while transformed (as either human or mermaid) she spends a Wisp and rolls Inner Light + Survival. Each success gives her 1 Merit dot, allocated among Iron Stamina, Iron Stomach, Natural Immunity, Quick Healer, Striking Looks, and Toxin Resistance. Successes may also be allocated to give her resistance to temperature extremes; one success allows her to reduce penalties from extreme heat or cold by 1. Merit dots gained this way last until the end of the scene.

**Drawback:** The Ambassador's mood varies with the tides. For the three hours of low tide (90 minutes before and 90 minutes after the ebb) she suffers from the Depression derangement, or worsens an existing Depression to Melancholia.

## *Embassy to Stories*

*I know how this story goes, and it doesn't end well. So I'll just have to write an amendment.*

**Alternative Titles:** The Storytellers Embassy, The Authors.

**Informal Names:** Godmothers/Godfathers, Bards, Editors.

It is a truth not commonly acknowledged that the world runs on stories. Reoccurring patterns and symbols are woven into the narrative of our lives. But nothing, claim the Storytellers Embassy, says that these stories must be tragedies. Pain might make for better art but happy ever after makes for better lives.

The Ambassadors to Stories make this their mission. They seek to unravel the great tapestry of stories and weave in their own amendments. They enter a tale and throw the narrative off its tracks, hopefully to something better: Tragedy becomes comedy, the hero defeats the villain, the lovers ride off into the sunset and yes, the little dog lives till the end of the story. It's not easy, it's certainly not safe but you can do it.

## Marks and Requirements

If a Princess joined the Editors it's because she understood the power of stories, some studied literature while others simply read everything they could but books alone are not enough. She must also have seen how reoccurring patterns from the stories also reoccur in life, this requires a perceptive individual who has the detachment to look at her own life with a critical eye.

Upon joining the Embassy her regalia becomes as much a part of the story she is. It takes on aspects that foreshadow her role in the story and reflect her character traits. When rushing to save innocents from a Darkspawn attack she is recognisable as The Hero. When teaching a younger Princesses a critical eye will notice marks of The Wise Mentor. The only constant are hints of the Storyteller, a thick leather bound book, a pair of reading glasses perched on the nose, an ink stained quill or some other mark.

Before changing a story a Godmother must first be able to tell a story. The required Attribute is Manipulation and the skill is Expression.

## Secretary Privileges

### What's the Story?

The first skill an Editor learns is to feel the flow of the narratives around her. She gains the Merit Unseen Sense (Wyrd). The Wyrd is omnipresent, it is the connection between all things and a Princess soon learns to block out all but the largest manifestations of this power, including: Changelings, True Fae, Tokens, Hedge Gates and active effects of faerie magic such as Pledges or Contracts. Talecrafting is especially noticeable. The Princess can even attempt see through the Mask with a roll of Wits + Composure - 3 vs Wyrd + Composure. Resistance is Reflexive and automatic.

### Entering the Tale

The easiest way to change a story is to become a character within it. By entering another person's story the Princess is in a privileged position to guide it the way she wishes to, or just make a complete pigs breakfast of the whole thing. To enter a story it must have one or more unfulfilled positions: If a sword can only be drawn from a stone by the rightful king, then the position of rightful king is open until someone successful pulls the sword. Entering a story about corporate corruption would require an open position in the management hierarchy, or perhaps a well placed sectary job. To enter a story the Princess rolls Inner Light + Manipulation + Subterfuge modified Commonalty vs the highest Composure + Supernatural Advantage of her targets. The Storyteller will have to use his own judgement when measuring the Dicepool of things like the Sword in the Stone, using Merlin's attributes would be appropriate as he was the person who put it there.

This power does not change the Princess herself, nor does it force reality to conform to her new role. It is easiest explained as a mental effect that simply causes people (those covered by the Commonalty group) to perceive her as appropriate for the role. The Sword in the Stone considers her the rightful king (yes king), the knights of the round table consider her to be a worthy leader, Guinevere considers her to be someone she could marry (for obvious reasons entering any role with a romantic element is extremely unethical without informed consent). People outside the Commonalty group will notice everything that's obviously wrong with this picture.

For the purposes of this power opening a Hedge Gate is considered to be a very short story with two characters, the Hedge Gate and "the one who fulfils the Gate's Key". Using Entering the Tale tricks the Hedge Gate into thinking the Godmother has fulfilled it's Key, just like Entering the Tale tricks everyone in a story into thinking the Godmother fills a particular role. Only Hedge Gates with a key can be opened in this fashion.

Leaving the story requires the Princess to spend twenty four hours isolated from any of her fellow characters before spending a point of Willpower to break the connection. A Princess automatically leaves the story at it's natural conclusion.

### Literacy Criticism

By spending a Wisp the Princess can grant another all the benefits of What's the Story? for one scene.

**Drawback:** Because of the omnipresent nature of the Wyrd this Unseen Sense is distracting and imposes a 4 – Composure penalty to Perception. Repeated use of Literacy Criticism on the same person will allow them to acclimatise and removes this penalty.

## Consul Privileges

### Becoming the Tale

As a Consul the Princess isn't limited to assuming a role, she can become the role. When she Transforms the Princess creates a new self from threads of narrative to create a form appropriate to her role. While she still cannot create an appropriate history or documentation for her role she can fool dna tests, looks appropriate for her position to people outside the story, gets a +Inner Light bonus on appropriate Subterfuge rolls to stay in character and generally fits in much better.

Because this new form is built from scraps of narrative it triggers the Unseen Sense (Wyrd). Any role that's narrative includes entering the Hedge (and since every Hedge journey is a story an Editor may use Becoming the Tale just for this purpose) has peculiar effects. So long as the Princess is in this form her Regalia armours her against the Thorns. Rather than loosing Belief she loses Wisps as a Changeling would loose Glamour. Loosing her last Wisp will cause her Transformation to end, though being lost in the Thorns is definitely a good justification for regaining Wisps through Inner Strength. She can navigate the Hedge rolling Inner Light instead of Clarity. Finally she may be affected by Goblin Fruit in ways both positive and negative however she cannot gain either Wisps or Glamour from them.

**Drawback:** Assuming a form built out of faerie magic is very dangerous to one's sense of reality. After using this power for a Princess gets -1 to resist Derangements for the rest of the day. A Princess who gains a Derangement while Transformed in such a manner may find the her role taking a life of it's own giving her the Multiple Personality Derangement.

### A Story About You

The Princess can now extend her power of Entering the Tale to other people. This requires an open role as always and she rolls Inner Light + Manipulation + Expression – Commonalty vs the highest Composure + Supernatural Advantage. In this case Commonality only applies to the people in the narrative, not the person she's trying to add to it. The highest Composure + Supernatural Advantage includes both the narrative and, unless he is willing, the character to be.

When a Godmother forces someone into a tale it's harder for them to leave. They must isolate themselves and spend a point of Willpower like a Godmother but they must also roll Composure + Supernatural Advantage vs the Godmother's original dicepool. As an Instant Action the Godmother may spend a Wisp to grant an automatic Success on the next roll. Only the godmother who pushed someone into a story may unpick their own magic in this way, but any Godmother can offer some assistance by serving as secondary actors in the escape roll.

### Ambassador Privilege: Editing the Tale

The Princess can bend the power of stories to her will. Like a needle she dips in and out of the narrative tapestry bringing in elements to suit her purpose. Once per game session she can twist events and fortune as she wishes. A power as dangerous as it is useful.

The first step is The Pattern. Simply put she must identify, or create, the potential for a narrative pattern in her current situation. Lets say she and her Nakama are fighting a very powerful foe, ordinarily this foe would be able to take down the entire Nakama single handedly. However the Princesses of Hearts in the Nakama has just started making a speech about how their foe has no chance because the Nakama have friendship on their side. In the stories the power of friendship can defeat impossible odds, this is something a Godmother can use.

The second step is The Hook. Having seen a potential narrative thread an editor must weave it into the story. She pays two Wisps and rolls the lowest of her Inner Light, Manipulation and Expression as an Instant Action.

Dramatic Failure: Not only does the action fail the Editor also suffers a Cruel Twist of Fate.

Failure: The desired effect does not happen.



Success: The effect occurs, however the results come with a Cruel Twist of Fate.

Exceptional Success: The effect occurs with no Cruel Twist of Fate.

Suggested Modifiers:

+3 The outcome of The Hook helps confirm a story the Editor has become a part of through Entering the Tale.

+2 The outcome of The Hook helps confirm a story she has made another part of through A Story about You

+1 The Editor is a Troubadour

+1 The Editor follows the Queen of Spades

+1 The Editor has any Charms in Connect

+1 The Editor has a Belief of 4 to 7

-1 The Editor has a Belief of 8 or more

-1 The Editor has a Belief of 3 or less

-1 The Editor has no dots in Academics

-2 The Editor has a mild Derangement

-2 The Editor has any of the following Flaws: Amnesia, Forgetful or Behaviour Blind

-2 The Editor is attempting to go against a story she has made another part of through A Story about You

-3 The Editor is attempting to go against a story she has become a part of through Entering the Tale

So continuing our example thanks to the Godmother's nudge the fight is now going to play out according to the power of friendship. This of course does not mean they're untouchable: Their foe might give them a huge battering before a last moment surge of team spirit. In short while they will win this power won't necessarily grant a perfect victory. At worst they might just drive their foe off for a short while, that's a "win". Still, it is better than getting soundly defeated by a stronger foe.

The final step is a Cruel Twist of Fate. Unless the Godmother scored an Exceptional Success the Storyteller should introduce a complication to the plot. The Wyrd does not like being tampered with. This Twist will never undo the effect of The Hook. The battle will be won, but maybe the Nakama only think they killed the villain and he's set to reappear when they least expect it. Their enemy might have some devious plan that required their victory, or the entire battle was a distraction.

**Drawback:** It's addictive. Bending the world to your whim is very very addictive. A Godmother may Weave the Tale once safely, after every time after that she must roll Resolve + Composure with an cumulative -1 penalty, up to a maximum of -5. A Failure means that she's addicted. The effects vary according to each individual but a common theme is being unable to see the world as anything but a collection of reoccurring narrative threads. "She's got a cruel stepmother and two ugly stepsisters. Of course she wants to marry the charming prince, what is a lesbian?"

Getting clean requires going cold turkey. She must spend a number of days equal to her Manipulation + Expression in an isolated place. Somewhere serene is best but in the end isolation is isolation. During this time she may not use any of her powers from this Embassy, or any Charms that manipulate other people. It is best to avoid Charms entirely. Finally she spends one Willpower a day and rolls Resolve + Composure. Once she has Successes equal to her Manipulation + Expression her system is clean and she can start again as though she had never used this power before. Careful godmothers flush their system before getting addicted.

And yes, this power is Talecrafting (so is Entering the Tale, A Story about You and Becoming the Tale in a much more limited and safer fashion), more details along with plenty of example threads and Cruel Twists of Fate can be found in Swords at Dawn starting at page 60. Editors cannot Force the Pattern or inflict a Reversal of Fate, though they can certainly be targeted by one.

## *Designing Embassies*

Embassies are essentially efforts to humanize or redeem a concept, or at least make it less hostile to humanity. Some of them permit easy access to other realms, as with Death, Ephemera and Ocean; others make it easy to deal with unusual creatures as peers, as with Arcane and Machine. Then there are Embassies like Destiny, that open relations with a preternatural power ...

When a Princess first joins an Embassy, she becomes a Secretary. She must have an Inner Light of 3, and usually must also have a specific dice pool of 6 or more while transformed. A Secretary typically gains three powers:

- A personal power related to the Embassy's domain, that the Secretary can use at any time, even in mundane form;
- A change in her transformed state, or access to a new transformation, that permits interaction with the Embassy's domain;
- The ability to spend Wisps to give other people a part of the Secretary's freedom in the Embassy's domain.

Reaching Inner Light 5, and 8 in the Embassy's dice pool, qualifies a Secretary to advance to the rank of Consul. This usually grants two powers:

- A new, greater personal power related to the Embassy's domain, or a further change in the transformed state;
- An extension of the freedom the Consul could extend to others as a Secretary, or a second such freedom.

Finally, a Consul with Inner Light 7, and 10 in the Embassy's dice pool, rises to the rank of Ambassador. Becoming a full Ambassador invariably reshapes a Princess' magic in a significant way – a great change in her transformed state, the power to command the Embassy's domain, and a beneficial alteration to her Charms are all possible. However this is a fundamental change to her magic and always comes with some sort of Drawback.

A Princess joins an Embassy by accepting a fragment of its domain into her magic. Every Embassy, therefore, marks its members' transformations in some way. For most Embassies, as already noted, the marks are linked to one of the powers the Embassy gives; but even when a link is absent, the Princess' transformed state will always reveal her status. When designing an Embassy, note how the transformations of a Secretary, Consul and Ambassador alter to reflect their offices and privileges. An Embassy also marks its members' psyches, which are expressed in new habits, attitudes and tastes; attraction to the Embassy's domain, or a resemblance to examples of it, are typical.

# Alhambra

*Depression is the inability to construct a future.*  
– Rollo May

## *The City*

Alhambra exists on the inner surface of a bubble, nearly six miles in diameter deep within the heart of the Darkness. Roughly half the surface is covered by a saltwater lake, out of which rise a number of islands, made of what appears to be black volcanic rock. One seldom sees that rock, however, because nearly every acre above the waterline has been built over, in an intricate maze of streets and courtyards winding between houses faced in brick, granite and marble, and lit by green-burning lamps set on iron poles. Above the buildings and the lake, in the bubble's center, clouds form and dissolve constantly, and let fall a rain of slightly salted, but still potable, water; water that tastes almost exactly like human tears. The rains move around Alhambra on a remarkably regular schedule, on a cycle of 24 hours and 10 minutes; the city keeps time by this cycle, not by the days and years of Earth.

The lamps in Alhambra are its only source of light, and they are kept burning constantly ... for darkness, within the bubble, is more than a mere absence of light; it is a destroyer, eating away anything left within it. Moreover, any place left unlit for long tends to spawn darkspawn monsters, which resemble shadows of the things (or people) caught within the darkness. The monsters invariably seek out any and all lights they can, and destroy whatever lights they reach. Every Alhambran is taught from childhood to fear darkness as one fears death; every Alhambran learns, from a very early age, how to light the lamps that burn in every street and room in the city, and as part of his schooling serves a term in the lamplighter squads that patrol the city and keep the lamps burning.

The city streets appear, at first, to be thronged with people. A visitor soon notices, though, that most of the crowd are faded or washed out, and a few are barely present – they cast no shadow, and pass through other people like ghosts. As it turns out, that's because they are ghosts. Roughly four out of five of the figures one passes in the street on any given day are of the "venerable" or "departed", for nearly all Alhambrans whose bodies die remain as ghosts to oversee and advise their living descendants. Memorial prayers to one's departed ancestors are a point of honor and pride in Alhambra; to have the venerable of your household always substantial and active is a mark of piety.

Those aware of how ghosts behave on Earth will be surprised by Alhambra's departed. For one, while they usually prefer to remain near the places or people they knew in life, they aren't bound to them as Earthly ghosts are to anchors. They do not, in fact, have anchors at all; Alhambra's departed regain Essence only from being remembered by the living. Being remembered, fortunately, is much easier for the venerable, as they need not take time or effort to manifest – they are always manifested, and even tangible as long as they have even 1 point of Essence. (There is no such thing as Twilight in Alhambra, and thus no way for a ghost not to manifest.) Also, the departed can all speak audibly, though not always lucidly; they must roll Finesse each time they speak to convey their intent, at a penalty of -1 for each 10 years since their deaths. Finally, the departed never have the ghostly Numina that allow a ghost to take over a living person (e.g. Clairvoyance and Possession) and there is good reason to believe that those Numina don't work inside the city

## History

The Alhambrans boast in a thousand ways of the Kingdom's rise and glory, but none will speak of its fall; so it's very difficult to learn how Alhambra came to be. Throughout the city, in fact, only one memorial of that event is known to exist: a bronze plaque, mounted in the Observation Room at the top of the highest tower in the Queen's palace in Alhambra. The tale inscribed on that plaque runs:

In the final days of the Kingdom, the minor courts turned from the Light to contend with one another, and to resist the efforts of Her Majesty the Ever-Flowing to impose order and peace upon them. None now can say who was the first to use monsters of the Darkness as weapons in these battles; but those who did were inevitably betrayed, as are all who think to master Darkness. Their lands became the monsters' bastions, their peoples (if they were fortunate) were killed or (if less blessed) changed into abominations and sent to conquer other courts in turn.

Some few Queens, realizing the world's peril at last, came at the invitation of Her Majesty the Ever-Flowing, with their subjects and armies to this, the eternal city Alhambra. Here they prepared to carry war into the lands taken by Darkness, under the command of the Seraphic General, the first of all Queens after Her Majesty the Ever-Flowing. From the gates of the eternal city the armies set forth, and within a day's march the swollen horde of abominations fell upon them and broke them.

Her Majesty the Ever-Flowing, with her loyal knight commanders, looked out from this place and saw the Seraphic General rise from the field of battle, transmuted into a living storm; they knew in that moment that all the world save Alhambra was lost forever. In this place Her Majesty the Ever-Flowing and her knight commanders performed the Grand Sacrifice of Inversion, enveloping the eternal city within a perpetual ward and shield, so that the last refuge of the Light would be preserved undimmed.

The wisdom of Her Majesty the Ever-Flowing shall illuminate the cosmos forever.

## Darkness in Alhambra

When a part of Alhambra is not lit, by the lamps or any other source of light, anything in that area is gradually destroyed. At the start of each turn a dark area exists, the Storyteller rolls 1 die for each 10 square feet left unlit; each success on this roll inflicts 1 bashing damage to something within the dark area. People will suffer first, then other living things; once nothing alive remains, the attacks begin destroying objects, up to and including the walls. On an exceptional success, a Darkspawn (most commonly a Shadowwraith, but any verity can be swept into Alhambra on the Darkness' strange tides) emerges from the dark area into the light, and immediately attacks the nearest light source. (If there are two separated dark areas in a scene, the Storyteller should roll separate pools for each area.)

Each time a character activates a supernatural ability in Alhambra, other than abilities that come from the Light, the Storyteller rolls a dice pool equal to the number of times such abilities have been activated in the scene so far, including the current time (so on the first activation, roll 1 die, on the second activation roll 2 dice, and so forth.) For each success on this roll, a lamp is extinguished – start with the nearest lamp still burning, then the next closest, and so on. Moreover, anyone who activates a supernatural ability within a dark area suffers an immediate attack: each success on the roll for snuffing lamps also inflicts 1 bashing damage on that character, and an exceptional success summons a Darkspawn.

Any Alhambran, and anyone who has entered the Queen's service, can relight an extinguished lamp automatically as an instant action, as long as it has fuel and is undamaged.

## *Language*

As far as can be determined, the day-to-day language spoken in the closed sphere which is Alhambra is a hybrid tongue, despite the claims of the inhabitants of that place. Linguistic drift is inevitable, even though imposed stasis, and there are an incredible number of concepts and ideas that exist in the modern day that are widely agreed to have not existed in the cultural purity of latter days of the Kingdom. It

has picked up words from modern English, from Revolutionary French, from Han-Dynasty Chinese and from Ngurai-illam-wurrung, and a hundred other dialects which have existed throughout the millennia the last remnants of the Kingdom have stood in their rain-drenched realm. Moreover, it contains sounds, especially in the emotional words, which resemble the glossolalia of the Royal Tongue, which violate the normal structure and flow of the language.

The base of the language has some noted similarities with the language of the Kofun culture, including a logosyllabic writing system, and similar grammatical and noun-formation structures, yet it also has some differences such as a rarely used use of colour to make minuet clarifications that appears to be adapted from the Royal Tongue. Some think the similarities are just a coincidence, there are a lot of languages after all.

The later words, clearly alien to the root language and most likely absorbed from Alhambran agents returned home, are moulded to fit into the standard structure, including the imposition of the dual grammatical genders, the animate and the inanimate, meaning that, even with the influx of modern words from the developments of the previous century, their structure fits into the rigid grammatical structure which the rest of the language is composed of. The linguistic divergence, too, is notable; many of the living inhabitants of the city would have problems understanding the elder shades which haunt the place, let alone the dictates from the Queen.

Like any Language, Alhambran may be learned as a one dot Merit. However Old Alhambran is treated as a separate language which must be learned separately.

## *The Orders*

Under the law of Her Ever-Flowing Majesty, the people of Alhambra are divided into nine great chivalric Orders, whose knights and officers direct the city's affairs. Each of these carries the name of a bird or beast of Earth – an ascription dating to the Kingdom's day, and therefore never altered, though not one Alhambran in a thousand knows anything about the animals for which the Orders were named. (There was a tenth Order, in the days just after the Fall, and children told to recite the Orders' names always list it last ... but no one belongs to it now, so no one but children thinks about it. Even the ghosts of its members ceased to appear many centuries ago.) Each also has a representative at the Queen's court, appointed by Her Majesty to carry Her word to the city as needed.

### **Mistress (Master) of Ceremonies**

#### **Head of the Order of the Parrot**

A tragedy ancient in Alhambra relates the tale of a boy and girl of the City, who loved without the knowledge of their ancestors. Because they lived on islands separated by a strait, and the boy was a strong swimmer, the girl took up a lamp and shone a beam across the water, making a clear path for her lover, when they wished to enjoy one another. One night, however, the girl's mother found the lamp and turned it away when the boy was in mid-strait; the boy was never seen again alive, and when the girl learned what had passed she plunged herself into the strait to join him. To this day the monsters that breach the water in that strait look almost human, and sometimes even beautiful. The lesson drawn from this tragic tale - in Alhambra, every tale has a lesson, or it isn't told - is stern: never grasp at love untimely. Court within the rules of courtship and the knowledge of your elders; follow the established ceremonial rites of the City in love as in all other things, for else the Darkness rises.

It is truly said that the only god or goddess worshipped in Alhambra, apart from the Ever-Flowing Herself, is Ceremony; the Order of the Parrot, first in precedence of the nine knightly Orders, bears more resemblance to monastic orders on Earth than to the warriors the title of "knight" suggests, and its head the Mistress of Ceremonies, who bears no weapon but an orb of crystal and a measuring rod, is a hierophant not a general. While the substance of most things done in the City is the province of the other Orders, the proper time, place and manner for all actions whatsoever is set down in the records of the Parrots, and the Order is ready at any time to counsel the perplexed citizen on the path of proper conduct. Moreover, as keeper of the calendar the Mistress of Ceremonies tells all Alhambra of the proper times and methods to celebrate the City's past, so that the ongoing work to establish the City's rule in the rebellious provinces is not allowed to obscure the goal of bringing the Kingdom back in truth.

## **Alhambra's Calendar**

Alhambra uses a calendar that, by tradition, was invented in the later days of the Kingdom. It is basically lunisolar, with 12 months of alternating 30 and 29 days in a normal year; 123 years out of 334, a 13th month of 30 days is added, to keep the start of the year on the first new moon after the spring equinox. This calendar would be quite accurate, if Alhambra counted the months in Earth's days; alas, the "day" of the calendar is the cycle of the rains, so the months and years drift out of sync with the real planetary movements by more than 2 days each year. This does not trouble the Order of the Parrot; the cycle of festivals in the Kingdom's capital is far more important than the seasons in rebellious provinces.

## **Serene Architect**

### **Head of the Order of the Beaver**

Even in a city as unusual as Alhambra, the necessities must be taken care of. The Serene Architect is responsible for Alhambra as a physical city. Her order manufactures the raw materials the city is built from in charmed furnaces, and fashions them into the streets and buildings that form Alhambra.

Architecture in Alhambra is defined by two constants; the near omnipresent rains and the need for constant light. Buildings are built with large sloping roofs and large open drains can be found on every street to carry the rains away. Indoors Alhambrans use large open plan spaces to maximise the spread of light, what furniture they use is often set into the walls or at floor level – mats instead of tables, cushions instead of chairs – to avoid casting shadows. Only important buildings can afford to light narrow corridors, and even then only when they are needed for defence.

## **Furnaces**

Furnaces of various sizes, from half a man's height to a large room, dot the neighborhoods of Alhambra. These are all built to the same plan: a ring chamber filled with taffy blocks from the refineries, around a shaft driven into the ground covered by a hatch, which lets into a room above that can be sealed off. The hatch can be opened and closed by a lever outside the upper room.

The purpose of these furnaces is a strange magic that creates the stone and metal from which the city is built. Samples of the stuff desired are placed within the upper chamber, which is sealed, leaving it in darkness; then the hatch above the shaft is opened. This lets the Darkness, lying thick under the hatch, spring out to attack whatever is in the upper chamber. But, when the first sound of Darkspawn attacking can be heard, the taffy blocks are ignited, bringing the upper chamber to a red or yellow heat. When enough time has passed to melt everything within, the hatch is closed, the upper chamber's seals are broken, and the substance left inside (now multiplied several times) cools off. The corpses of Darkspawn that dared attack Alhambra are usually melted in this way as well.

## **Premier in Craft**

### **Head of the Order of the Pelican**

In every society there are jobs that can only be done by people with years of skill and experience. In Alhambra these jobs, the doctors, the master craftsmen, the bankers, they all belong to the Order of the Pelican. The Pelican is in many ways something of a historical anomaly, it is the ex miscellanea of the Orders. In many ways the Pelican is more of a special interest group protecting its members interests from being drowned out by the more focused Orders. The Premier in Craft, official chosen for being the best craftsman in Alhambra, is something of a career politician.

For all that it is an oddity, the unusual design of the Order is perhaps the only way it could function. There are some tasks that require a certain flexibility of mind, even in the rigid environment of Alhambra. The Pelican never formed the rigid hierarchies found in the other orders, partly because skill as a doctor does not qualify you to manage craftsmen, but mostly because the Pelicans felt that they didn't spend years studying medicine to go into management. Instead they form their own smaller hierarchies under the umbrella of their Order, hierarchies small enough to still have the flexibility craftsmen require.

## **Vicegerent of Ages**

### **Head of the Order of the Tortoise**

The Order of the Tortoise blend the role of a librarian, an archivist and a castellan. They also run the schools. Like their namesake, the Order makes it's home in a fortress on the same square as an imperial palace. Behind it's enormous Charmed walls they archive a millennia's worth of records from all walks of Alhambran life and they drill themselves hard to defend those documents. They are scholars and librarians who are mostly interested in their work. You could call them reserved, even shy, but if they must they'd lay down their very lives to protect their archive.

Of all the orders, few can claim the prestige that is given to the Order of the Tortoise. In Alhambra, history is everything. The present is bleak, the future is more of the same, but the past, the past is glorious. As the keepers and trustees of Alhambra's history the Order of the Tortoise is considered the closest thing to that glorious history, save for the Lady of Alhambra who was alive even in those glorious times.

It would therefore braek an Alhambran's heart to know that if any order were to doubt the righteousness of their civilisation it is the Tortoises; deep within the very heart of their fortress they keep their greatest treasure: documents and artifacts that predate the Fall: Treasties on philosophy, codes of law and the diaries of people who would deplore Alhambra's sad and parasitic existance. Those few who have read these prised texts, like their namesakes, withdraw into their shells and hide their doubt's deep in the heart of Alhambra.

## Bequests

The Tortoise stores more than just documents, their treasuries serve as Alhambra's central repository for Bequests; this makes the Tortoises perhaps the best armed group in Alhambra, and the order is drilled daily in use of the various magical items they stockpile. All in case they are ever called to fight in defence of their archives.

The most valuable Bequests in Alhambra are those that date back to the Kingdom themselves, some of which still contain a spark of Invocations that have long ceased to exist. Most of these Bequests are far to valuable to actually use, for they contain unique and irreplaceable magics that cannot be duplicated in today's day and age. Thre of these lost Invocations are detailed below.

- The principles of **Coppe** are one of contrasts. They are sensual, yet serene. They are giving, yet also take. Coppe gives the power to enhance the senses and experience from another perspective. The most powerful Coppe Charms can temporally transform a Princess some types of Supernatural being, and even transfer all a Princess' powers to a mortal for a short time.
- The Invocation of **Bastoni** emphasises humility, hard work, a practical approach to magic, and sacrificing one's own goals and desires for the good of others. Bastoni Charms often specialise in domestic tasks, with powers that aid in farming, cooking, homemaking and other aspects of everyday life. It is the only lost Invocation that is regularly used within Alhambra; these powers are just too useful to forsake.
- **Pentacolo** is the invocation of forethought and judgement. It's Charms could guide you down the right path, and even predict the outcome of an action. Masters of Pentacolo could see across time and space, and rarely made a decision in ignorance.

## Marshal of the Virtues

### Head of the Order of the Spotted Hyena

The Hyenas are one of the most prestigious Orders; their members are both Alhambra's army, and it's police. It is the Hyena's who's strong sword arms guard every Enclave within the rebellious provinces, and who patrol every district of Alhambra in search of Darkspawn. The Marshal of the Virtues boats that his men are the best of Alhambra, and this claim has some merit for in a city under siege the Queen of Tears has granted her Marshal a royal writ of conscription. The Hyena's have the first pick of each new generation as they leave school. The right of conscription causes the inevitable conflicts, other orders fear being starved of talent and even attempt to hide the abilities of promising individuals until they are past the age of recruitment. Like so much else in Alhambra there is no chance that this shall change, even if it is divisive the defence of Alhambra must come first.

Because of Alhambra's perpetual manpower shortages the soldiers of the Spotted Hyena are trained as light skirmishers, their drills cover both the *ars militans* and *ars magica* and specialise Alhambra's military for urban conflicts both in Alhambra itself and in the cities of the rebellious provinces, where most taxes can be collected. The Hyenas favour working in small squads and using their magic to control the terrain or establish defensive positions, they also train hard on how to evacuate back to Alhambra with a minimum threat to resources or the all important Wisps Alhambra's operatives harvest.

### **Alhambra's Defenses**

Alhambra is a fortress in the most literal sense, it's foundations were Charmed by the Queen of Tears herself to stand firm against all invaders. Sympathetic magic cannot cross Alhambra's borders unless the caster scores more Successes than the Queen rolled to create Alhambra's defences; do not bother rolling, just assume the Queen wins. The same goes for the strange magics wielded by other beings in the World of Darkness; if they reach across the borders of Alhambra they must roll against the Queen.

The only two exceptions are Charms invoked with *Lacrima* – which are permitted through the defences – and the Darkness itself. Deep within the Dark World the Darkness exists everywhere the Light does not; this fact is absolute, even for a Queen. In the effort to breach Alhambra's defences it is possible to disguise other magics as the work of *Lacrima*; but again one must roll against the Queen's attempt to detect such subterfuge.

## **Steward of the Household**

### **Head of the Order of the Otter**

*There once was a man, of noble birth but undistinguished occupation who nonetheless reveled in his work. He often encountered six people, his equals in birthright but revered for their different occupations. The six alike oft mocked the man from the height of their seats. Why would one choose such a menial job as gathering food? And so they offered to take him under their wing and work with one of them, but met with his refusal they shrugged and went on, for food was aplenty and the sun always shone.*

*And yet, one day, the Night fell. The six panicked, for they knew not where or how to find nourishment! So they turned to the little man for assistance, and so he answered their pleas: "You mocked me and called me a knave from the height of your seats, yet you come running my way when it now suits your fancy. My only request therefore is this: I want to stand among you, equal in birth and importance, and you shall never forget who has helped you during this time of duress."*

*The six were appalled, such boldness! But their strength would soon wane, and who knew what lurked in the night, and so they accepted him among their group.*

*Thus, the six became seven.*

This old Alhambran tale, of whom many different tellings exist, has a twofold purpose. Firstly, it is a cautionary tale, telling one of the basic morals of the city: in the Darkness, nothing is free. Only the mercy of Her Everflowing Majesty has no price, for she herself already paid it herself.

Secondly, it has been unofficially adopted as an allegorical retelling of the Order of the Otter's creation. The Order's history is an interesting one, for it can be said to be both the oldest and youngest of the city. Some of the oldest Ghosts still inhabiting the City claim to have heard of stories of groups with similar goals to the Otters being active before the Fall but, as any Tortoise will be quick to point out, no official recording of such activities taking place during the Kingdom can be found in their archives.

The Order's job is to procure the means for the city's continued sustenance, and their main means to do so is by harvesting the Lake of Tears, for which they thank their Queen daily. The Steward of the Household oversees both the gathering process and the distribution, and in this respect some find a third meaning to the old tale: never run afoul of an Otter. For they are the ones that best know the depths of Alhambra's wilds, and their skill in herblore is unmatched by all but the most experienced Pelican. For this reason, the lesser Stewards seem to hold a strange amount of hold in the city, for nobody wants to displease one of the people who may very well decide of their family's foreseeable future.

The Alhambrans draw their daily meals from the lake. A few feet below the surface begins a layer of weeds strongly resembling kelp, among which swim a host of fish, pale white or ink black. Fleets of small boats row out constantly with nets to trawl the lake, bringing up weeds and fish, both of which



the Alhambrans eat. The weeds are tough and stringy, the fish turn rubbery when cooked, and both taste strongly of salt, but they're edible and plentiful enough. Oddly, in any place where the weeds can be found, no one has ever found a bottom to the lake. The plant stalks continue downward into unlit depths, as far as any diver has dared to go, without ever reaching soil. Few divers have dared go far, of course, since the darkness is just as hostile under the water as it is on land, and Alhambra's usual lamps are extinguished by water. Those reckless (or desperate) enough to plunge beneath the weeds come back corroded and battered, or not at all.

## **Fool of the Summit**

### **Witness for the Order of the Ghost Owl**

*Once, long ago, before the Darkness consumed the world outside, a foolish man decided to climb a vast pile of stone; so vast, that its peak was concealed by rainclouds. Still, step after step, he climbed, until he reached the top. But he had climbed long enough that, head in the clouds, he was sure that there must be another step. So he fell down, and broke every bone in his body, and died. Do not try to exceed your station in life, children, or you too shall die.*

From this story, told to Alhambran children, comes the traditional role of the Fool of the Summit. Face painted like a skull (to remember that first, dead Fool), dressed in black, white and red, the Fool holds a position much akin to that of a court jester and devil's advocate combined. Their job is to observe proceedings and they are tasked to provide distractions, through silent mummery and witty commentary alike. Their life depends on their ability to keep others entertained, for if they are boring (or, worse, unfunny), the best that can happen to them is a honour duel. The worst does not bear thinking of. They are tragic figures, forced to break the minor social conventions of Alhambra in pursuit of a tradition which mostly dooms them.

However, notably, the Fool does not have any immunity to ramifications from his comments. He is not granted freedom to mock anyone, and must always consider the complex ramifications of any of his remarks on any member of the court. As a result, a Fool who manages to survive any time is almost inevitably a laconic figure, a master of the double-entendre and the loaded statement. In a sense, it is their weakness that gives them strength, because they are a pathetic figure, below the attention of any true aristocrat to eliminate for anything but an overt insult, and too many will take killing a Fool to be an admission that their insinuations are grounded in fact. The greatest art a Fool can manage is to make ones target humiliate themselves, slowly goading a chosen target through passive-aggressive remarks and subtle insinuation until an improper outburst results, and the consequences fall upon their target's head.

And in that, the Fool's true purpose is revealed; for one who cannot withstand the jibes and insinuations of a Fool, will not be able to resist the temptations of the world outside nor the whispers of the Darkness, and are thus unworthy of their status. Fools of the Summit are chosen from the Order of the Ghost Owl, whose remit is the discovery of hidden weakness, both within the city and in the rebellious provinces outside it. Lesser Fools walk in every neighborhood, observing and satirising as they go, and many Alhambrans believe these are the whole of the Order; in fact, though, many citizens belong to both that order and another, and report suspicious behaviors to the Ghost Owls' officers in secret. Those who wear the skull mask are honing the arts of social assassination in preparation for the most delicate mission: being sent to a land under the Darkness to root out secrets of Alhambra's enemies.

## **Bearer of Eternal Flames**

### **Head of the Order of the Vulture**

Once it grows past a certain size every civilisation seen so far has required some form of central organisation and governance. This in turn requires resources, the administrators must be fed, paid, and supplied with ink and parchment. Alhambra uses one of the more common methods: Taxation, and it is the Order of the Vulture who tax Alhambra's citizens and advise it's Queen on economics and matters of the royal treasury.

But Alhambra needs something far more than it needs mere currency, to survive Alhambra needs hope. Under Alhambran law all of Earth is governed by Her Majesty, the Queen of Tears. It was therefore a simple decision to say that instead of being taxed in money, the provinces will be taxed in hope. The vultures, delighted by the expansion of their duties and prestige, eagerly accepted their Queen's decree.

When the forces of Alhambra steal into the Rebellious Provinces to collect their taxes they do so under the banner of the Vulture. They may travel with a guard of soldiers from the Hyena and travel to a target suggested by the Ghost Owl, but it is the Vultures who started it all with their dispassionate tables of numbers saying how much they must tax for Alhambra to survive another year and it is also the Vultures who sit at the top of every Enclave, and at the bottom doing the physical work of collecting Wisps.

## **Refineries**

Scattered through the islands and neighbourhoods of Alhambra are the refineries, the Order of the Vulture's most important installations. These are, from the outside, square towers of black basalt, five stories high – the only places in the city where the rock of the islands appears undisguised. It's within these towers that refining masters distil the priceless fuel for Alhambra's lamps. Seeds of light and Bequests full of Wisps are brought to the refineries by the cartload. The refiners crack the Seeds in enormous Charmed engines, developed shortly after the Cataclysm, that separates it into the rarefied spirits of lamp fuel and a gum-like taffy, which they mould into blocks. These blocks, like lamp fuel, will burn, but produce heat instead of light.

## **Inspector General**

### **Head of the Order of the Raccoon**

For many years it was questioned why Alhambra needed an Inspector General at all; only Alhambra's dislike of change kept the Order alive. The reason is simple enough, the Order of the Raccoon deals with the strange and the usual, they investigate anomalies and create plans for contingencies that fall far outside Alhambra's standard operating procedures. Constituently Alhambrans often fear and distrust the Raccoons as a representation of everything they fear.

For all of the Long Night the Order of the Raccoon were underfunded, understaffed, and a (sometimes self selected) dumping ground for those who's out of the box thinking was unwelcome in the other Orders. They spent their time wargaming unlikely situations, sometimes just plain wargaming, writing plans for bizarre and often completely fictional threats, and wondering if anybody was going to file an anomalous phenomena report this month.

But since the Release, now the Raccoon's star is rising. Alhambra's immediate post release strategy was based on one of the *many* plans generations of Raccoons had been dreaming up for exactly this situation. As the world begins to notice the Nobility even the quiet Alhambrans are finding it harder to hide, and it is the Raccoons who are called to investigate reports of all the strange weirdness that is beginning to cross paths with Alhambra's operatives on Earth. If anything, now that the Raccoons are symbolic of actual changes rather than potential they are liked even less than before.

## **Blessed Merrymaker**

### **Head of the Order of the Peacock (extinct)**

Entertainers, revellers, perhaps even pop-stars. Once the Order of the Peacock provided leisure and relaxation to all of Alhambra. Now they are no more. Alhambra is a city in mourning, revelry it was considered distasteful under such circumstances and so the Order was suspended on a temporary basis. The last entertainers died millennia ago still on paid leave, now all that remains of the Order are some old Ghosts still entertaining empty auditoriums.

## **Judiciary**

Careful readers will note that none of the above is dedicated to resolving disputes between citizens, nor what is and what isn't legal.

There exists a code of laws, with the usual items (no stealing, no murder, etc.), but the most important item is that any of the Orders (but usually either the Spotted Hyenas, Raccoons, or Vultures) may, with a proper Writ signed by The Queen, do whatever is ordered on the Writ.

How a member of an Order goes about getting a Writ is ambiguous; you talk to the next person up in the chain of command if you think you or one of your underlings needs one (going above your CO's head, unless you can't find them or the matter involves them personally, is heavily frowned upon), and sometimes the Writ comes down. Sometimes the Writ comes down at the request of another Order; sometimes, the Writ comes down without anybody asking for it.

If you need binding arbitration of any other kind of dispute, you just go to the Order who covers your dispute. Food? Go to the Otters. Who owns a particular bit of land? Beavers. Who owes what to whom when? Vultures. Criminal matters? Spotted Hyenas. And so on. Each Order has Arbiters who hears cases; but note that the Queen can, at whim, override any Arbiter. (When a corrupt Arbiter is discovered, expect the Ghost Owls to get her to do so; otherwise, the Arbiter's word is usually final; wasting the Queen's time is, after all, against the law, such as it is.)

Just don't expect an Arbiter to resolve a matter hinging upon an ambiguity in the law anywhere near fast, as millennia upon millennia of records and precedents take time to work through, and most such judgements are pronounced years after they have been taken for consideration. Tortoise and Parrot still have a committee going over where the school records of Tortoise-members should be stored, and this argument has been going on for longer than Alhambras own written records can reliably tell.

## *Protectorates*

The Queen of Tears claims absolute sovereignty over all but this is rather a big task for one woman, no matter how mighty. To facilitate her dominion she has divided her claim into numerous protectorates and appointed Regents and Governors to execute her will.

Protectorates are the Alhambran equivalent of an Embassy, though the culture of a Protectorate is very different. The Privileges are either based around achieving dominion, or assume the Protector already has dominion. The three ranks – Secretary, Governor, Regent – are just that: Ranks in the protectorate's chain of command. Culture aside the difference between a Protectorate and an Embassy is simple: There is no difference. Once you peel away the superficial cultural differences Protectorates and Embassies are entirely the same thing.

By policy each Protectorate forms one hierarchy per location where it is active. Each hierarchy has one supreme leader; either a Governor or a Regent and only one member of that rank may be stationed within that region. In Alhambra the Queen serves as the de-facto Regent for all Protectorates, though there's usually at least one actual Regent around under a legal fiction that she's merely a Governor (with the appropriate position in the hierarchy) or spending most of her time on leave but "willing to lend a hand". Secretaries are forbidden to operate outside an established region though if their job is temporary they may be permitted to do so under the governance of another region, usually Alhambra itself.

The Court of Tears has a unique advantage in its Protectorates. In the many centuries Alhambra spent short of Enlightened manpower they developed a powerful Charm that can promote a Sworn to the rank of Secretary. The Sworn must meet all the usual Requirements for the Protectorate except for Inner Light; instead they must possess three dots in Lacrima. Most Secretaries are Sworn, in fact it's rare for a Princess to be invited until she qualifies to become a Governor. Sworn spend a point of Willpower to unlock the Transformed Privilege of a Secretary for a scene.

In theory this Charm could be used by the Radiant, but it is rightly considered an invaluable strategic asset and the court of Tears goes to great lengths to protect their advantage from their foes. The Charm was intentionally created to require Lacrima. Even understanding of the Charm is strictly limited, instead each Protectorate typically has one Bequest capable of admitting Sworn to its ranks that is kept under the tightest security available.

All Protectorates are named after a mineral, the names below are the translations of the Protectorate's name from Alhambran into English.

## *The Protectorate of Amethyst*

**Alternative Titles:** The Grave Tenders, The Keepers of the Necropolis, The Keepers of Memory

**Informal Names:** Funeral Priests, Corpse-Brides (derogatory)

**Parent Order:** The Order of the Parrot.

They say all are equal before death, but the people of Alhambra know this is not true. Death is a transition, but something of the individual remains. Even when you're dead, life, as it were, goes on. The dead still owe loyalty to the Last Empress. They are still expected to serve for the survival of Alhambra if their Queen requests it. In turn the Last Empress has her royal duties to keep her dead subjects safe and protected.

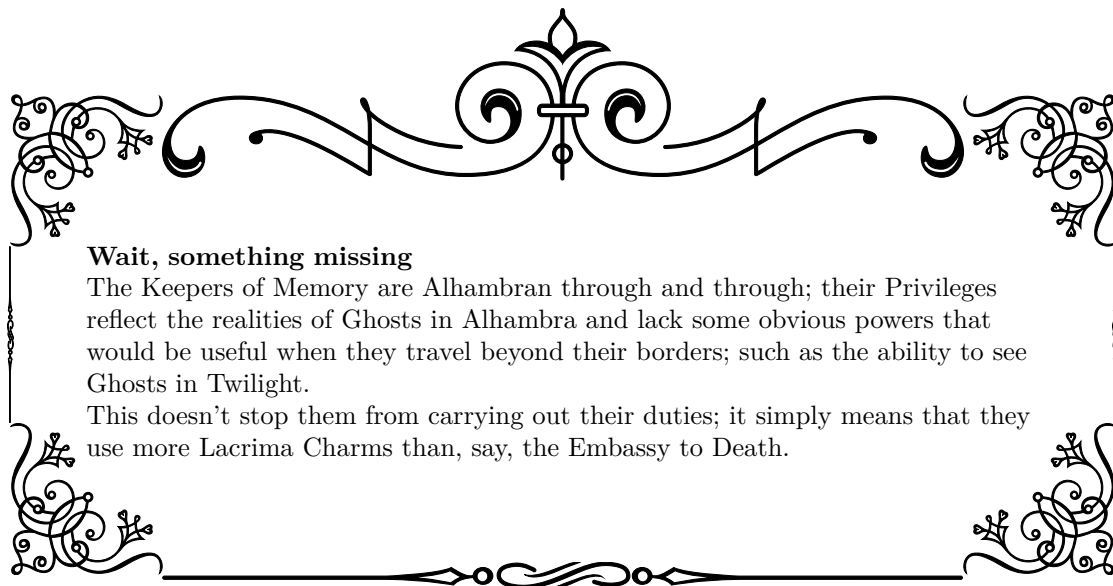
The Protectorate of Amethyst represent the Queen in her role as Lady Protector of the Dead, in Alhambra they they are responsible for taking care of the Ghosts and performing the funeral services. In the rebellious provinces they are sent to rule and safeguard the dead in the Queen's name. Though officially all forms of undead fall under the Protectorate's jurisdiction they have little experience with forms of the dead other than Ghosts, and to a lesser extent dead Princesses.

### **Marks and Requirements**

Corpse-Brides don't have a connection to Death itself, they have a connection to the dead. Their role is closer to that of a caretaker than a psychopomp. They are expected to ensure that the honoured dead are kept comfortable and provided for; much in the way that that a government employed caretaker might be responsible for providing aid to the elderly or the disabled. The bread and butter of Ghosts, and thus of the Grave Tenders' trade is performing funeral services. The required Attribute is Presence and the required skill is Expression.

The Grave Tenders are expected to mostly cut ties with the living in favour of living as one of the dead. In doing so something of a the Ghost's unsubstantial nature sinks into their Transformed identity. Their skin becomes pale, but not unhealthy. Their regalia acquires funerary shrouds and turns snow white. Colours themselves seem muted and distant. The official hair style is long and swept back in white or silver.

### **Secretary Privileges**



## Sharing Life with Death

The Keepers of the Necropolis are expected to live in as though in death, and so bring the comforts of life to the death. No method they have is more direct than by inviting a Ghost into their own body to share the comforts of the flesh themselves. Though in recent nights a more common use of this power is to transport ghosts between Alhambra and various Enclaves in the rebellious provinces.

To invite a ghost into her body a Secretary must touch it and spend a Wisp, if the Ghost wishes it may freely enter the Secretary's body. So long as the Secretary is possessed she gains two Benefits:

- She may access one the Ghost's Numina, rolling Wits + Resolve to use it.
- She may spend one Willpower to replace her Mundane Dots in a Skill with the Ghost's, however all rolls made using that Skill are at a -1 penalty.

Possession lasts for one day, unless both the Princess and the Ghost mutually agree to end it early.

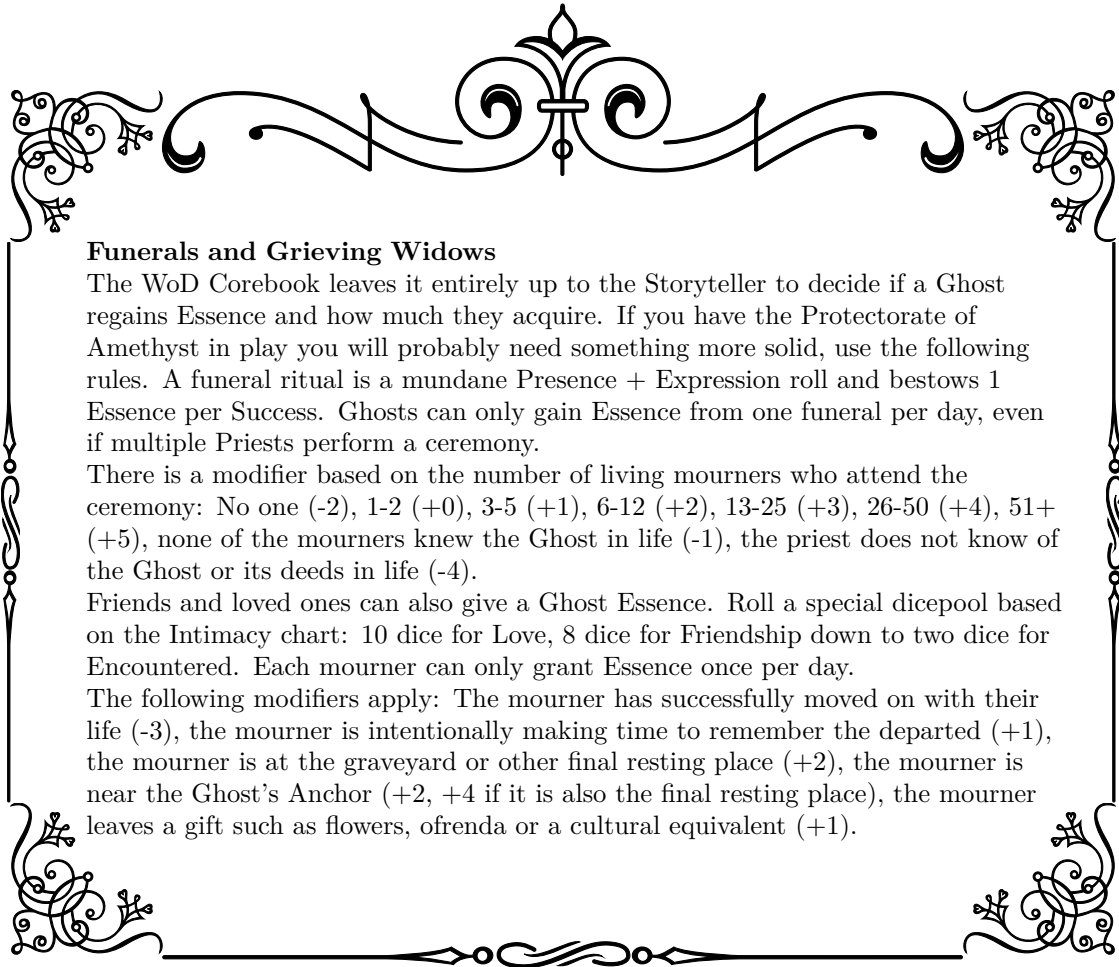
**Drawback:** It is a possession, and nothing prevents the two from fighting for control of the body. If any disagreement arises a clash of wills occurs. Roll Resolve + Inner Light vs Power. The Winner takes control of the body for a number of turns equal to their Successes. Note that fighting over the body takes an Instant action and so wastes a turn at the very least. Unless the Princess and the Ghost act in harmony they cannot access each other's Powers. The Princess cannot use Numina and the Ghost cannot use Charms or Transform.

When this Privilege is used to facilitate a possession by a Ghost Princess (as this obviously requires access to a Ghost Princess it is rare for a lowly Secretary to do so) it works slightly differently. The Secretary gains the full Princess template. Acquiring the Ghost's: Inner Light, Charms, Invocations, Practical Magic, and Shadows. However like a royal Ghost she uses Essence not Wisps and the Secretary does not Transform into her idealised self; but into the Ghost's Transformed body. Or what passes for the Ghost's body in its fogged over memories.

Theoretically minded Grave Tenders explain that they cannot grant the power of a Princess to an ordinary person, rather they grant a physical body to a ghost that already has the power of a Princess. Regardless of the precise details, Grave Tenders can only facilitate a possession between a Royal Ghost and a Mortal. Minor powers such as a Sworn's are fine (and are suppressed for the duration) but trying to allow a possession of someone with greater power, including another Princess, simply won't work.

## Honouring the Ancestors

Ghosts gain Essence when remembered by the living and the primary duty of the Protectorate of Amethyst is to provide this Essence by leading funerals and rituals of remembrance. In her Transformed form all funerary rituals performed by a Funeral Priestess are Rote Actions.



### **Funerals and Grieving Widows**

The WoD Corebook leaves it entirely up to the Storyteller to decide if a Ghost regains Essence and how much they acquire. If you have the Protectorate of Amethyst in play you will probably need something more solid, use the following rules. A funeral ritual is a mundane Presence + Expression roll and bestows 1 Essence per Success. Ghosts can only gain Essence from one funeral per day, even if multiple Priests perform a ceremony.

There is a modifier based on the number of living mourners who attend the ceremony: No one (-2), 1-2 (+0), 3-5 (+1), 6-12 (+2), 13-25 (+3), 26-50 (+4), 51+ (+5), none of the mourners knew the Ghost in life (-1), the priest does not know of the Ghost or its deeds in life (-4).

Friends and loved ones can also give a Ghost Essence. Roll a special dicepool based on the Intimacy chart: 10 dice for Love, 8 dice for Friendship down to two dice for Encountered. Each mourner can only grant Essence once per day.

The following modifiers apply: The mourner has successfully moved on with their life (-3), the mourner is intentionally making time to remember the departed (+1), the mourner is at the graveyard or other final resting place (+2), the mourner is near the Ghost's Anchor (+2, +4 if it is also the final resting place), the mourner leaves a gift such as flowers, ofrenda or a cultural equivalent (+1).

### **Blessing the Union of Life and Death**

By touching a person, a Ghost and spending a Wisp a Secretary can ease them into a harmonious possession as per Sharing Life with Death. If the target is willing no roll is required. If the target is unwilling she rolls Presence + Occult vs Resolve + Supernatural Advantage. The Ghost may spend a point of Essence to roll Power + Finesse as a Secondary Actor to the roll.

### **Governor Privileges**

#### **Hallowing the Necropolis**

Ghosts suffer; they suffer because they have unfinished business among the living and they suffer because their nature separates them from the living. In Alhambra the departed have no such restriction and the Keepers of the Necropolis can bring this peace to the provinces. To do this she spends two Wisps and begins an extended Presence + Expression roll to consecrate the ground, with a target of Palace Size \* 2.

When sufficient successes are accumulated the target area becomes a Necropolis. All Ghosts within a Necropolis gain two benefits. Firstly they can Manifest and vanish at will as an instant action, no cost or roll is required. A ghost that takes advantage of this always Manifests as a spectral human. The second advantage is that the Ghost is freed from the limitations of their Anchors. The second they enter a Necropolis they are free to travel to any point within the Necropolis and can even remain safely if their final Anchor is Destroyed. The second a Ghost leaves the Necropolis the usual rules for Anchors once again apply.

Under ordinary circumstances a Necropolis lasts for Inner Light days, if cast upon Sanctified ground it will last as long as the ground remains Sanctified. This also harmonises the boundaries of the Necropolis

with the boundaries of the Sanctified Ground.

### **Bequeathing Funerary Gifts**

In Alhambra all are expected to do their part for the survival of the city, and the departed are no exception. Yet beyond Alhambra's borders most Ghosts can do little but watch or spy. The Corpse-Brides are occasionally asked to help prepare a Ghost for more involved tasks.

This Privilege allows a Governor to turn a Bequest into a Numina. This requires preparing the Bequest with an Extended Inner Light + Occult roll with a target of the Bequest's Dots as a Merit. Once this is done the Governor hands the Bequest to the Ghost, the physical objects rots and crumbles and the Ghost has a new ability, spending Essence in place of Wisps where required.

If the Ghost is given a Bequest that is able to create Wisps such as Capitation; the Ghost creates Essence instead. If the ghost is given a Bequest that can transfer Wisps, such as Charge, the Ghost can transfer Essence. The one absolute limit is that Ghosts cannot benefit from Bequeath Upgrades Charged and Empowered. If Bequeathing Funerary Gifts is used on a Bequest with either Upgrade, the effects of that Upgrade are lost in the transition.

There is no way to transfer the granted Numina or recover the Bequest.

### **Regent Privilege: Bearing the Burdens of the Dead**

By touching the Ghost of a Princess a Regent can draw the Ghost's Shadows into her own soul, protecting the dead Princess from its greatest threat. Through this privilege the oldest Ghost Princesses have been kept active for thousands of years.

Using this Privilege requires touching the royal Ghost and spending a Wisp as an instant action. The Regent peels off the darkness and decay from the ghost and hides it deep within herself. Each activation of this Privilege transfers one dot of Shadows, but the Regent may use it as many times as she wishes.

The player should track the number of ghost Shadows separately from her regular Shadows. This is because they have a second use. Emotions are somewhat more physical to Ghosts, and so are their Shadows. As a Reflexive action the Regent may expel angry wraiths from her body, removing one ghost Shadow per wraith. These wraiths are a form of Darkspawn, not Ghosts, though they are immaterial and usually exist in Twilight. They are similar enough to the Darkspawn known as Shadowwraiths that the Storyteller may use those creatures. If the Regent spends a Willpower point when releasing Ghost Shadows she may roll Resolve + Composure. Success allows her to direct the released Darkspawn to attack targets of her choice, though they always put their own survival first.

**Drawback:** Working with Shadows always has its downsides. Shadows taken from a Ghost Princess have all the same disadvantages as regular Shadows. The Princess may remove them as per normal Shadows, the player decides what kind of Shadows to remove first.

Secondly using Darkspawn for one's own Benefit is a Belief 3 Compromise. However releasing Shadows with the sole intent of destroying them is not a Compromise, though the results of letting one get away by mistake might be.