

# BLOOD & SALT™



A Savage Paradise for

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# BLOOD & SALT™



## The Deadly Lintha Family

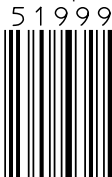
The Lintha are the South's most infamous buccaneers, a deadly gang of pirates so daring as to war with the pirate-lords of the Coral Archipelago to the north and to attack trade as far east as Chiaroscuro, all while under the attention of three imperial fleets and countless local navies. All those who enter the Family are bound by terrible oaths — oaths so fearsome, it is said, that even the ghosts of the Lintha's dead comrades rise from the Underworld to protect the Family's floating stronghold of Bluehaven.

## The Glorious Principalities of An-Teng

**Blood and Salt** details the Lintha Family's organization, history and dark practices, and the geography, culture and history of the lands of An-Teng, an ancient and decadent civilization that lies north of the Silent Crescent. The book also describes many of the gods and monsters of the Southwestern Ocean — providing everything needed to run games set in the exotic and romantic lands of the Southwest.



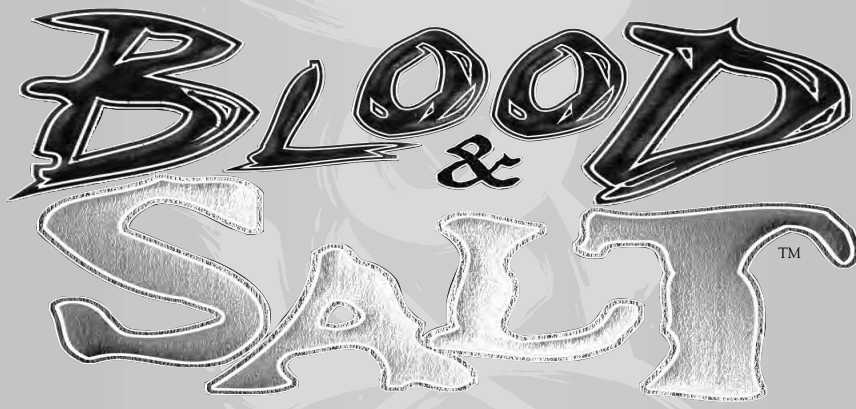
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**Blood**  
&  
**SALT**™

The title is rendered in a stylized, metallic font. 'Blood' is in a bold, black, outlined font with a slight shadow. '&' is a smaller, simple ampersand. 'SALT' is in a similar bold, black, outlined font. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located at the end of 'SALT'. The background features a faint, grayscale illustration of a woman's face with long, wavy hair, looking downwards. The entire composition is set against a dark gray background with a subtle grid pattern.

By GENEVIEVE COGMAN, JAN ELLER AND MICHAEL KESSLER



## CREDITS

**Authors:** Genevieve Cogman, Ian Eller, Michael Kessler

**Additional Material By:** Scott Taylor

**Storyteller Game System Design:** Mark Rein•Hagen

**Developer:** Geoffrey C. Grabowski

**Editor:** John Chambers

**Art Direction:** Brian Glass

**Artists:** Ed Bouelle, Ross Campbell, Sherard Jackson and UDON with Noi Sackda, Eric Vedder and Jim Zubkavich

**Cover Art:** Melissa Uran

**Cover Design:** Brian Glass

**Layout and Typesetting:** Brian Glass



1554 LITTON DR  
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA  
30083  
USA

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# INTRODUCTION



*Hey, hey golden roses around a rajah's mouth.  
Hey, hey all the dead children buried standing  
A Flying Dutchman, smoking gun and spice wind.  
—David Bowie, Amlapura*

To the average citizen of the Blessed Isle, the rest of the world is a strange and dangerous place, full of god-slaves and terrible monsters. Of course, this is imperial propaganda, not terribly different from the outlandish tales about wild tigers, wolves and claw striders the All-Seeing Eye spreads to keep peasants close to their villages and away from the Blessed Isle's vast tracts of private wilderness. To these peasants, Creation is a vast and terrible fairy-

tale world, a helter-skelter mixture of chaos and horror restrained only by the influence of the Immaculate Order.

The Dragon-Blooded know better, of course. Such stories are for the lower orders, to keep them happy with their lot and safe in their villages. The Terrestrials and even the patricians know that beyond the shores of the Blessed Isle lies a vast world, full of both wonder and terror.



No place has more of both than the Southwest. Foremost among its wonders are the glorious principalities of An-Teng. Once, An-Teng was a loyal subject of the Solar Deliberative. For its loyalty to the Celestial Exalted, the land was torn asunder in the fighting during the Usurpation, and the Dragon-Blooded laid the kingdom to waste. Since that time, the people of An-Teng have chosen to let history pass them by. They bowed their necks to the lords of the Shogunate but provided no troops. In the modern era, they never cease to express their thanks for the privilege of paying burdensome tribute to the Scarlet Throne in exchange for occupation by foreign soldiers. Though they are incorrigible idolaters, the denizens of An-Teng are, at least on the face of things, some of the most loyal people under the Scarlet Empire's banner.

This fabulous golden kingdom has long been a holiday resort of the Dragon-Blooded. There, the Terrestrials enjoy the tropical climate and the attentions of the land's docile population. And still, An-Teng fields no real army of its own, for it was laid to ruin in the distant past, and its people know that to gather together en masse for war is to invite slaughter.

Today, the citizens of An-Teng have become restive. Though on the surface their nation remains loyal to the Realm, its people sense the weakening of their imperial overlords. The demands for tribute have become more burdensome than ever, and the excesses of the Dragon-Blooded, which were once tolerable, have become an unceasing source of irritation for nationalistic youths offended by the exploitation of the population at the hands of the Dynasty.

What will come of this has yet to be determined. Unlike Halta and some other kingdoms, An-Teng has weathered the first days of the Age of Sorrows without committing itself to supporting any one faction in the coming Time of Tumult. The youth of the nation have begun to agitate for action against the Dragon-Blooded, but there have been no terrible incidents or irrepressible act of rebellion.

Both Lunars and Solars have their places in the mythology of the people of An-Teng, but no Celestial Exalted have come forth to rule the place openly, and there is no reason to believe that the populace would accept them more than any other alien ruler. After all, for centuries, the interests of An-Teng have lain with the wisdom of meek submission to its invincible overlords. The people of An-Teng and not so naïve as to immediately believe that a heroic leader will allow their nation to rise to glory. Once, the people of An-Teng strove with the Solars against the Dragon-Blooded and were overthrown.

Yet, such is the charisma of the Celestial Exalted that those who hear them are often driven beyond reason. In the years to come, who can say how the fate of this jewel of the Southwest will unfold? Its destiny is left to the hands of heroes and orators to decide. Perhaps An-Teng will number itself foremost among the states of the next Age. Perhaps it will fall to the fires of war. Perhaps it will continue, as it has since the Great Uprising, as a backwater, too important to be left independent but of too little use to demand genuine conquest. Only time can show what the deeds and warrings of the Exalted will bring to this place.

The horror of the Southwest lies in the Lintha Family. Yozi-worshippers, castrati, cannibals and worse, these pirates operate with seeming impunity from their ancient stronghold of Bluehaven. Few save the Realm can match their sorcerous puissance — the Lintha have among their God-Blooded clan Terrestrial outcastes and Lunar Anathema, and they even draw their ships with demon-beasts. This book details both the terrible Lintha Family and the opulent lands of An-Teng, and it provides Storytellers with a wealth of setting information about the lands north of the Silent Crescent. Even before the rise of the Exalted, the Lintha were the favored children of the Primordials. In the many centuries since that time, the power of the Lintha has dwindled.

In some times, the Lintha have railed against their diminishment. In others, they have been accepting. Now, at the ultimate end of history, as the Second Age dims into the blood-red sunset of the Time of Tumult, the Lintha are as ragged as any of the others and are heroes and villains of the Age of Sorrows. The power of the Family declines from generation to generation as the blood of its Primordial mother lessens with each miscegenation. Now, their numbers diminished by time, the Lintha prepare to confront an Age of conflict and uncertainty, when the old world passes away and a new world is born. Though Creation fears their very names, the members of this infernal clan know that they are forever cursed and that, though their twilight may be long, it will never brighten again into dawn.

As such, the future of the Lintha clan would seem to be a dark one. They are reminders of a bygone age, children of banished gods, whose parents have long lost any significant influence. In an age of warring heroes, it seems as if they are merely an atavism of the time before the Contagion, a trove of loot with terrible guardians, ready for some Circle of Exalted to kick them over and seize their hordes and lore.

Yet, the Lintha have endured since the time of the war against the Primordials. Hunted and persecuted even by the Solar Deliberative, they survived



even through the First Age. Now, as the Second Age draws to a close, who is to say that the Lintha Family's ability to survive has declined any faster than the ability of Creation's heroes to offer battle? Barring any greater champion, the Lintha are the largest continual ongoing challenge to the gods and Exalted of Creation. They are the darling of their mother and of other Yozi as well. Those expecting the Lintha Family to quickly fall beneath the blades of Creation's heroes should not doubt the ability of these heroes of the Yozi to persist and do battle with the enemies of the Old Gods.

Indeed, the Lintha are likely to prove crucial in the battles ahead. Surely their infernal masters see the crisis in Creation. While the Yozi can hardly hope to carry Creation before them using such a small force, they can nevertheless bring the power of the Family to bear at crucial moments, tipping the course of events in ways they perceive to benefit themselves. Even though this may risk the survival of the Family, the Time of Tumult certainly constitutes the greatest opportunity for the advancement of their plans for escape and revenge in many long centuries. In such a gambit, even useful, valuable tools might be sacrificed.

And so, like the lands of An-Teng, the future of the Lintha Family is uncertain. It could be that the Lintha will provide nothing more than fodder for the youthful adventures of the Celestial Exalted, or they may persist, as they have, on the fringes of history. Perhaps they will be sacrificed by their dark patrons for some momentary but crucial advantage, and perhaps they will be overshadowed by the emergence of some greater evil, more efficacious and dear to the Yozi. What would the Lintha then be — left in the shadows of history, an abandoned reminder of the Yozi's darkest hour. Even this is not certain to break the family. Despite its reliance on the Cult of Dukantha, the philosophy of the family is inherently a practical one. If the Lintha must accept their lessened place in the world, then the loss of Kimberry's support is merely another tribulation of a declining world.

Thus, do both the beauty and the terror of the modern Southwest reflect the oncoming fires of the Time of Tumult. What will perish in the Age of Sorrows and what will survive into the new Age remains to be seen.

## SUGGESTED READING

As setting material, this book references many other **Exalted** books. Foremost, of course, is the main **Exalted** book. In addition, while most of the supplements are not strictly necessary, many will prove quite useful. In decreasing order of importance, they are **Exalted: The Dragon-Blooded**, **Games of Divinity**, **Savage Seas**, **Exalted: The Lunars**, **The Book of Three Circles** and **Exalted: The Abyssals**. Most important are **Exalted: The Dragon-Blooded** and **Games of Divinity**. The Storyteller should have little problem improvising other material if she doesn't have access to the other books.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

For ease of reference, **Blood and Salt** is divided into three chapters. The first two are almost entirely setting material. The third contains mechanical information useful to Storytellers setting stories in the region.

**Introduction** — This very section of the book — it describes the contents generally and provides a chapter-by-chapter list of the contents. You're reading it right now.

**Chapter One: An-Teng** — This chapter details the three principalities of An-Teng, a once-glorious kingdom humbled in the Usurpation and further ruined. An-Teng is seen as in some ways a "model" province.

**Chapter Two: The Lintha Family** — This chapter describes the history, organization and important figures of the most vicious and feared criminal organization in Creation: the Lintha Family.

**Chapter Three: Gods and Monsters** — This chapter contains not just descriptions of the Exalts, gods and terrible beasts of the region, but also a number of spells and items critical to the areas or generally useful at sea.







# CHAPTER ONE AN-TENG

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An-Teng is a rich and fertile land, spreading from the sea to the north down across wide fields of rice to the mountains in the south. The great River of Queens cuts through the land, providing one of the biggest trade routes, while countless canals spread out from the river, bringing water to the rice fields. The Terrestrial Exalted hunt monsters in the forest and are feted and admired in the land's great cities, supplied with everything they could desire. Ships

bearing rice, silk and silver travel constantly from An-Teng to the Realm, and An-Teng is proud to supply its protector and liege.

An-Teng is a land outwardly as green as bamboo leaves and as smiling as the inhabitants, but scarred by war, by conquest and by the deaths of the Solar Exalted. An-Teng is now a client state of the Realm and, to all appearances, wears its alliance comfortably, but darker forces move beneath the surface.



The old royal family, nearly exterminated by the Terrestrial Exalted centuries ago, schemes to regain its throne. The economy shifts toward providing luxuries and slaves, and crops rot in the fields. Young Dragon-Blooded try to put down rebellion but only succeed in rousing anger against the Realm-backed rulers. Shadowlands blossom in the ancient capital, the fae whisper in the marshes, and the Pale Mistress walks beside the canals, bringing death and change in her wake.

## THE HISTORY OF THE PRINCIPALITY

The principality's history is well documented among An-Teng's noble families, and many of them have scrolls or silk hangings that tell their own family's noble deeds and sufferings from centuries in the past. Among the poorer folk, history is something that is passed down from generation to generation in folk tales, told by parents to children and by older siblings to younger ones. The tales are cherished by the old, fascinating to the young and, sometimes, full of dangerous ideas.

### THE FIRST AGE

During the First Age, An-Teng sheltered the Manses of many Solar Exalted, and its jungles served as home to their Lunar spouses. The people basked in the reflected glory of their masters, who often visited the land in order to relax from their heroic labors. Tribes founded by the Lunars rose to prominence in the far corners of An-Teng and prospered under the guidance of their forefathers and foremothers. The rains came in their season, but never too much, and the drought came in its season, but always within measure. The countless spirits and minor deities bowed their heads to the Solar authorities, and the mortal rulers of the land who held office under the Dragon-Blooded did so with wisdom and fairness.

Then came the Usurpation, and An-Teng was changed forever. Many of the Solars fled to their Manses there or sought haven in a land that had never been other than fiercely loyal to them. The Dragon-Blooded pursued, guided by Sidereal advisors who scryed out the hiding-places of the Solars and Lunars, and laid waste to the land through blood and fire. They raised great storms where lightning fell instead of rain, which dried up the rivers and salted the fertile fields. They cast down the mortal princes who had faithfully served the Solars and Lunars and slew their dynasties and made abattoirs of their palaces and raised up new heirs to guide the lands under the wise rulership of the Terrestrial Exalted. They cut down the Exalted of the

Unconquered Sun and destroyed their Manses and bound their bodies in jade and iron and lead and sorcery and buried the corpses in deep tombs, and it seemed good to the Princes of the Earth.

The new ruling families had been minor nobility before they were raised to the thrones of the land, and they were well accustomed to bowing their heads to the powerful. They swore their loyalty to the Dragon-Blooded on bended knee and spoke not a word of the devastation that had been wreaked upon their land or of the haunted marsh that had once been the capital. Instead, they turned to their people and said, "Let us make offerings to the Pale Mistress that she may let us step from her shadow, and to the Golden Lord, that he may restore stability and peace." And the people went back to their fields and planted rice.

### THE SECOND AGE

The monks of the newly founded Immaculate Order came to the land, and they said, "Let us show you the proper ways to worship, for as you honor the Dragon-Blooded as your monarchs and rulers, so you must also acknowledge them as set above you in the paths of Heaven, to guide you and to intercede for you." And the lords of An-Teng looked one to another and bowed their heads, saying, "Build your temples where you will, and surely the common folk will come to worship." But in private they said, "Let us both give worship to the Dragons and also honor the ways of our fathers. It would be folly to give offense to the Shogunate but greater folly still to anger the gods." And so it was.

Now, at that time, there was great strife among the Terrestrial Exalted, and their armies swept from one land to another as they made war upon the Fair Folk and upon each other and contended among themselves for the Realm. The people of An-Teng said to each new lord of the Dragon-Blooded who claimed ownership of their land, "Let it be as our masters desire. We know our place and serve in humility. But lo, we have no armies to offer you, for those of our sons and daughters who did not die in the war aforesaid have been slain by the illnesses that have struck the land." And they hid their children in the jungles and the swamps until the Princes of the Earth departed.

Then, as all know, the Scarlet Empress took the rulership of the Realm upon her mighty shoulders and was justly acclaimed as Monarch Eternal and Queen of Queens. And the lords of An-Teng, not being fools, took counsel and sent to her mighty treasures of jade and silk and silver and went to their knees before her and said, "We prosper in the shadow of the Realm. By your grace, may we continue to do so." And the



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Empress was pleased and confirmed them as the lords of that land.

### THE AGE OF SORROWS

And it came to pass that news of the Scarlet Empress' disappearance spread through the lands of the Threshold, and even those Immaculates and Dragon-Blooded who abode in An-Teng admitted it at last. She had gone, and none knew whither.

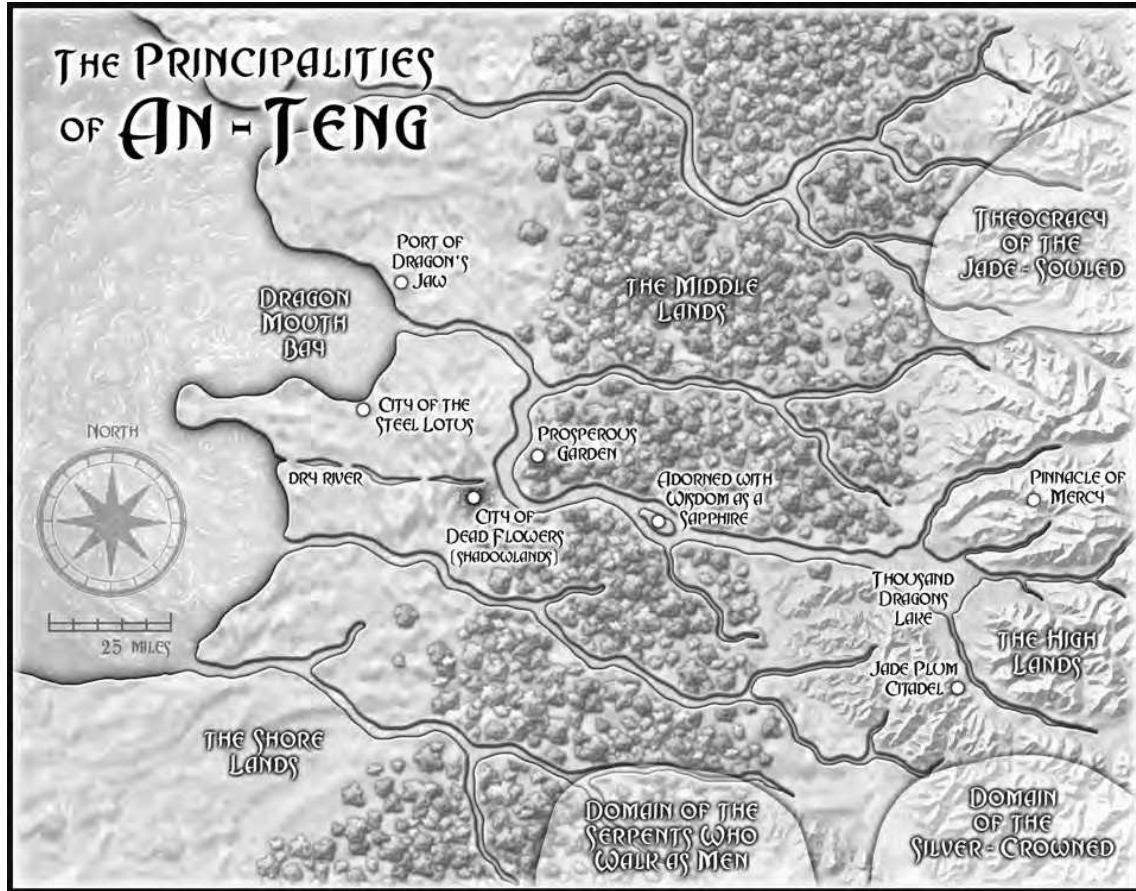
Now, as the years had passed, An-Teng had regained its might and rebuilt its cities and replanted its fields. And there were certain people who abode in the shadows, who were descended from the princes of the distant past, who said, "Our pact was with the Empress, and she is gone. Let us cast off the shackles of our slavery and take this kingdom as our own." Yet, the rulers of the land, who knew that the Dragon-Blooded stood behind them, said, "No, let us remain as we are, lest the Princes of the Earth break our land like bamboo between their hands, and burn what remains." And the Pale Mistress was seen walking the land, so that the common folk knew there was chaos abroad, and the Anathema were reborn with the marks of damnation upon their foreheads, and there was fear in An-Teng.

Many of the young Dragon-Blooded heard of this and came from the Realm, saying, "Let us put down those who attempt rebellion against us and teach them to fear the Dragons once again." And their hand

was heavy upon the people of An-Teng. The Immaculates looked upon those who stood in their temples and saw darkness in the hearts of those who sought power, and their hearts were troubled. Within the palaces, the rulers of An-Teng remembered how their power hung upon the Dragon-Blooded and trembled for their own thrones.

### THE LAY OF THE LAND

An-Teng is divided into three provinces: the High Lands, the Middle Lands and the Shore Lands. The great River of Queens cuts through all three of these, running from the southeast mountains to the great Bay of the Serpent's Mouth in the northwest. Each of these three provinces is ruled by one of the Three Princes of An-Teng. There are a number of small domains scattered through An-Teng that can best be described as minor principalities or baronies, though the lords of those places dub themselves by titles ranging from duke to count to lady. Their relationships with the princes varies between outright fealty to carefully judged alliance. A small domain outright admits subservience, while a large one might avoid open war — which it would probably ultimately lose — and, instead, hover somewhere between client statehood and rival nation. These domains are scattered around the edge of An-Teng. Some were founded long ago by the ancient Solars or Lunars, while others



are the fruits of fae manipulation or of groups of refugees that came together for safety.

The High Lands span from the mountains in the south (the Firepeaks) to the forests below. The folk of the High Lands were spared much of the devastation wreaked upon An-Teng by the Dragon-Blooded and are proud of their adherence to the ancient ways. The highest peak in the Firepeaks range is the Pinnacle of Mercy, Seat of the Golden Lord, Haven of the Dragons. The mountain directly below it is said to be the transformed body of a great dragon of the old days known only as Grandfather to those who recall the legend. A number of small rivers run from the base of the Pinnacle of Mercy to join the River of Queens where it bursts from the ground at the southern edge of the Forest of Compassion. The capital of the High Lands is Jade Plum Citadel, the home of the Prince of the High Lands, which combines both fortress and trade center effectively. On the mountains between the High Lands and the Lap lie the Domain of the Silver-Crowned and a nest of Fair Folk akin to the Mountain Folk of the Realm.

The Middle Lands encompass much of the Forest of Compassion and the spreading rice fields to the north of it. The Forest of Compassion is thick to the south, full of teak and other hardwoods, but it becomes lighter woods and banyans and bamboo as one travels north. The forest hides the ancient Manses of several Solars from the First Age, as well as several tombs built by the Dragon-Blooded to prevent their overlords from rising once again. Loggers send their wood down the river, binding it into rafts or loading the more expensive logs onto barges to be drawn upstream by oxen. Further north are the great rice fields that cover most of the land like an emerald shawl, crisscrossed by countless canals and dotted by the occasional town. This part of the land feeds all An-Teng. Its capital is Prosperous Garden, a large city with little in the way of defenses, where all travel is by canal and where the Prince of the Middle Lands rules. On the southwest border of the Middle Lands, where the forest backs against the High Lands, along the path of the River of Four Lords, lies the Dwelling of the Serpents Who Walk Like Men. On the southeast

border is the recently founded Theocracy of the Jade-Souled, a rankling thorn in the side of the Prince of the Middle Lands.

The Shore Lands lie along the coast, a strip of land 50 miles wide and 800 miles long. Washed by the sea and beaten by the wind, they produce little food, but almost all trade to and from An-Teng passes through them. The River of Queens debouches into the wide Dragon's Mouth Bay, close to the City of the Steel Lotus, the capital of An-Teng. Some distance to the south is the City of Dead Flowers, An-Teng's capital before the Usurpation, but that city is long destroyed, and the Dragon-Blooded altered the course of the River of Queens so that it need no longer pass beside the dead city.

The actual capital of the Shore Lands is Salt-Founded Glory, another canal city, where the Prince of the Shore Lands has his formal palace. Other ports line the coast, connected to the capital by small rivers and canals — and even the occasional road — but none is as large a city. Meetings of the three monarchs take place in the City of the Steel Lotus, and many Terrestrial Exalted visit the place for their first sample of life outside the Realm. Many traders along the coast try to evade the Prince of the Shore Lands' duties — customs and excise are harsh, in an attempt to support the region's economy, and punishments for smugglers range from the merely painful to the obscenely agonizing. The Shore Prince has a treaty with the Lintha Family, which is renewed from generation to generation, ensuring that the Lintha are the only "licensed" smugglers or privateers in the coastal waters.

The climate of An-Teng varies across the country. In the High Lands, the weather is generally temperate, with neither the rainy season nor the dry season being too pronounced, but with the risk of snow among the higher peaks and mountains in winter. In the Middle Lands, the rainy season is heavy and pronounced, and the dry season is short. Houses are built raised on stilt-like pylons to take regular floods into account, and waterways and canals are dug with overflow in mind. In the Shore Lands, the dry season lasts for most of the summer and part of the autumn, and winds from the sea regularly buffet the land. When the rains do come, they are fierce but welcome and prompt festivals in honor of the spirits of cloud and storm who bring them.

The people of An-Teng have a wide range of hair and skin tones, due to the Solars having brought many servants there in the past and broadened the land's natural bloodlines, but the most common combination is dark hair, golden skin and dark eyes. There are occasional God-Blooded or Realm-blooded children

with unusual hair or eyes, and some of the enclaves in the more remote parts of the realm (such as the Dwelling of the Serpents Who Walk Like Men) have inhabitants noticeably divergent from the human norm. However, the people of An-Teng are quite accepting of such things and would certainly not be so discourteous as to treat a visitor rudely on the grounds of a heritage blessed by spirits or divinities.

## POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Before the Usurpation, the political structure of An-Teng was feudal and simple. Each of the three lands was ruled by a prince, all of whom came from the royal family, and the Three Princes all bowed to the ultimate command of the High Queen, who was the oldest living female member of the royal family. From time to time, this resulted in a less than perfect High Queen. Such matters were usually settled by the High Queen's sudden withdrawal to one of the temples of the Golden Lord, an addiction to drugs that kept the High Queen too busy to attend to ruling or the ritual murder of the High Queen, followed by the suicide of the family member who killed her.

The Dragon-Blooded slew all whom they could find of the royal line, putting an end to its rule. In the princes' places, they set three petty lordlings from minor families. There has been no High Queen since, and the entirety of the High Queen's regalia is long lost in the City of Dead Flowers. When An-Teng knelt to the Realm and declared itself an obedient client state, the Scarlet Empress took the place of the High Queen in the hearts of many of the common folk. After all, she was divinely approved, and none could debate her spiritual powers. The families of the three new princes intermarried to the extent that there is really only one royal family now, though there are three well-defined branches that tend to supply the three regions with their rulers.

Beneath the princes in the hierarchy of An-Teng come the families who rule the towns and cities and ports or who control large areas of farming or mining land. The families are matrilineal, and a man leaves his own kin when he marries into another family. A lord governs land in the name of his wife, who, in a spiritual sense, is bound to that land and is believed to protect it from evil forces. In practice, this means that the lords do most of the actual giving of orders, receiving of embassies and commanding of armies, but they do so on their wives' sufferance, as they could raise the peasantry against the lords if they so chose. Family loyalty is intensely important in An-Teng. This often puts men who have married into enemy families in an awkward position and is the source of many classic tragic dramas.





### POWER AND POSITION

Rule in An-Teng is not necessarily a matter of physical or sorcerous power. Most of any given prince's generals could probably beat him in a straight fight. The point is that they wouldn't try fighting him in the first place. The royal family rules. That's their job, that's their social function, that's how matters have been for the last five centuries, and that's how things are likely to continue. Short of an outright countrywide rebellion against the royal families as a whole, the only people who will actually try to assault royalty are other members of the royal family during private quarrels over matters of policy. Of course, one can't always expect foreigners or the insane to understand this, which is why royalty have lots of bodyguards.

### USAGE OF NAMES

In An-Teng, a person of superior social or family rank addresses an inferior by name or by combined name and title, while the inferior addresses her by title. In practice, this means that nobody addresses the Three Princes by name and that very few in the land have the right to address high-ranking nobles by name. In the more old-fashioned families, this even extends to siblings — a younger son will address his older sister as "Older Sister," while she will call him by name. This practice also explains why the two deities of the land are referred to as the Golden Lord and the Pale Mistress. Since nobody holds a superior rank to them, nobody would ever dare to speak their names. Naturally, Dragon-Blooded are exempt from this rule. However, those foreigners who are known to address the Three Princes by name rather than by title are demonstrating very obvious rudeness and are usually overcharged by any vendor who has the opportunity and otherwise hassled under a guise of politeness.

### FAMILY AND SOCIETY

The family is the basic unit of society, and seniority is the basic ranking method within the family. Ideally, An-Teng children are brought up to respect their elder siblings, their parents and their other older relatives and to wisely govern and protect their junior siblings and children. Marriage is for life and is arranged by older family members for reasons of politics, finances or family alliances. However, it is normal for parents to be understanding about their children's wishes, and pairings that

would be actively unhappy are generally avoided. Since the purpose of marriage is to strengthen the family, it makes little sense to arrange a marriage that would weaken it.

Different social strata do not mix. Nobility would not even look for beauty in the peasantry, let alone consider liaisons with them. Assuming that such a liaison did take place, it would have to do so under conditions of absolute secrecy, as either family might declare their child misbegotten (see p. 15) should they discover it. This is the most severe form of social outcasting, meaning that the individual is now no longer part of the family and is a living offence against society and propriety. Many families would rather quietly slay a disobedient or treacherous child than to publicly acknowledge their own shame.

Illegitimate children are a different problem entirely. A married woman is expected to bear only her husband's children. Marriage is part of adulthood, marriage is for the increase of the family, and marriage is a contract sworn to before the gods. Similarly, a husband is expected only to sire children on his lawful wife. There are occasions of in-family sharing of spouses if one husband is infertile, but this is done behind closed doors and with permission from the family matriarch. However, a husband will rarely denounce his wife for unfaithfulness in public, as this would shame the family. Such matters are usually settled within the family, by whippings, imprisonment or death. The child is reared by his mother's family as a full family member and, theoretically, takes none of the blame.

If an unmarried woman becomes pregnant, this is a scandal. Should she give birth while still unmarried, then the child is customarily abandoned at an altar to the Pale Mistress, and the woman kills herself, enters a temple, is dealt with by her family or joins Those Who Serve the Radiance (see p. 16) in hopes of expiation. A number of higher-class families, who have become lax in these modern days and have the facilities to do so, will conceal a pregnant unwed daughter through her pregnancy and till after the child is disposed of, so that no shame will attach to her or to them. Such a thing is highly scandalous, if it becomes known. If the father were identified, he would suffer the same social penalties.

None of this applies to the Dragon-Blooded. The Dragon-Blooded can do as they will and take full advantage of the fact. Only the royal family can gainsay them, and even they tremble at the thought and avoid direct contradiction. To bear (or sire) a child by a Terrestrial Exalted is something that socially *doesn't happen*. No social standing is gained or lost, and if the Dragon-Blood chooses to take the child



when he leaves An-Teng, then the child is formally erased from the family scrolls. However, if the child is left with the family, then she is treated as a full family member and regarded as the full offspring of the parent and her spouse.

While this sort of proper behavior is still the case in much of the High Lands and the Middle Lands, the Shore Lands have been affected by centuries in close service to the Dragon-Blooded. Cultural pollution has damaged the ties of duty that children owe to their parents and that kin owes to kin. Not all families behave as they should do, and worse, the trend looks as though it may spread. Time will tell.

### GENDER ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

In An-Teng, women own the land, and men do their bidding in protecting it, farming it and negotiating over it. In practice, men hold much of the

#### MISBEGOTTEN

The phenomenon of the misbegotten has always existed on some level, but has grown far more frequent in the last century — and especially in the last few years — as internal turmoil and Dragon-Blooded interference have increased. Many of the noble families quietly blame the Terrestrial Exalted for this, feeling that they set a bad example to the young and that the necessity of catering to their needs encourages improper behavior. Peasants blame the increase in foreign trade and foreign visitors. They do not necessarily dislike foreigners, but what may be proper in strange countries is not proper in An-Teng, and children adopting such manners cannot be permitted to remain in the bosom of the family.

The misbegotten tend to gather in the Shore Lands or in one of the small domains, hoping to find others who will accept them and even form quasi-families with them. No misbegotten group would be recognized as a *proper* family by other citizens of An-Teng, and no proper child would be allowed to marry into such a family, but these refugees cling together as best they can.

Many other misbegotten leave the country, seeking employment overseas, or join the Lintha Family. Some join the underworld, but even thieves and murderers look down on the misbegotten. Some seek darker paths, pledging themselves to the Yozis or the Malfeans, selling soul and spirit in search of some bond to give their lives meaning.

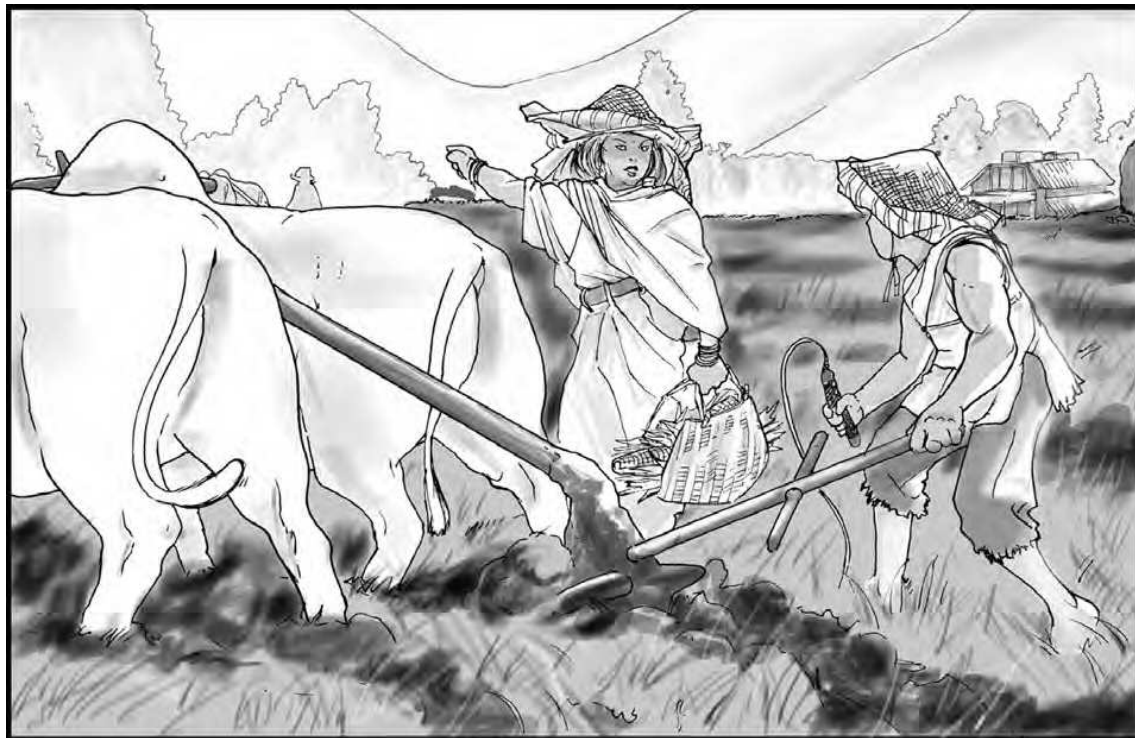
functional authority in day-to-day matters, lead the armies and travel to trade. Women remain at home, especially after the birth of their first child, and spiritually maintain families' connection to their lands. However, women have an ultimate power of veto, just as the High Queen used to hold over the Three Princes. If the matriarch of a noble family called on the local peasants, they would obey her rather than any of her sons, however much her sons might be their technical lords and generals. This tends to result in both sexes consulting privately on important decisions, before acting on them publicly.

Both genders can be craftsmen, farmers, tutors, hunters, elephant trainers or any of the normal run of careers, and it is common for particular crafts or trades to run in family lines. However, women very rarely serve as warriors or take jobs that involve traveling. A woman may be trained in self-defense or to handle weapons, but for her to fight in anything other than strict self-defense is viewed as a betrayal of the land that she is supposed to strengthen. Similarly, women do not generally travel far from home, so only a young unmarried woman or one with no other options would work as a trader. Natives of An-Teng would not discount foreign women working in such occupations, but would expect other — potentially dangerous — eccentricities from them, as well.

All adults marry. It's part of being an adult. However, relationships outside marriage are acceptable so long as spouse and family aren't offended and so long as no children result from the other partner. Same-sex affairs are as accepted as heterosexual ones, though, naturally, both sorts would be conducted with proper discrimination. Sexual release is just one of those things that friends do for each other, but they don't make a big fuss about it. Relationships which *do* offend spouse or family, on the other hand, are regarded as socially unacceptable if they become known and are likely to result in in-family pressure to drop the offending partner. The most "normal" person to have such a relationship with is a cousin or similar distant family member. A foreign lover would be regarded as a little strange but would be tolerated if the family made no overt objection. Dragon-Blooded, as ever, are outside the usual social rules.

Older siblings are expected to educate their juniors in the rules of proper behavior and to make sure that they know how to make maiden tea. Improper conduct from a younger brother or sister casts a shadow on their elder siblings, whether or not it is strictly warranted, and may permanently tarnish their reputations.





## SERVICE TO THE DRAGON-BLOODED

An-Teng is a convenient holiday resort for the Dragon-Blooded. It's a safely subdued kingdom where young sworn brotherhoods can enjoy the humble deference of a client state or adventure in the wilder areas and where every wish is gratified by bowing servants. An-Teng provides courtesans, drugs, silk cushions, elephants to ride and gratifying obeisance. Even the Three Princes are courteous to Dragon-Blooded visitors and show a proper understanding of the fact that they exist only by the Realm's sufferance.

The people of An-Teng view the Dragon-Blooded much as they view thunderstorms, fires, hurricanes, volcanoes or other natural disasters. They give the Terrestrial Exalted whatever they may want, then wait for them to go away. There is no social penalty for partnering with them in bed or from acceding to their wishes in public or from anything else that the Dragon-Blooded may desire. An-Teng has not forgotten that it was crushed into the mud once before. Its people do not wish it to happen again. As to those who dream of rebellion — for the moment, they are quiet and plot in secret.

Since it would be discourteous to disturb Dragon-Blooded visitors with such mundanities as requests for cold hard cash in payment for services, many of those who work in businesses or crafts that serve the Terrestrial Exalted receive a monthly

royal stipend, commensurate with the degree of their service. Any gifts that they may receive in addition from their clients are theirs to keep. (Nobody troubles the Dragon-Blooded by informing them of this arrangement, though some of the older visitors must surely suspect.)

**Those Who Serve the Radiance** are a particular group in the Dragon-Blooded service industry and are usually paying for some personal sin or attempting to salvage family honor by sacrificing themselves. Their task is to serve the most degraded and perverse desires that visiting Dragon-Blooded may have, whether such service involves procuring innocent peasant boys, fetching rare drugs or worse. While not quite as degraded as misbegotten, they are outside the normal societal rules and separated from their families and are liable to persecution or prosecution from the authorities or casual cruelty from Dragon-Blooded visitors. Their eventual deaths are the expiation of whatever sins drove them to this function.

## PROSTITUTION

One of the amenities that visiting Dragon-Blooded expect of An-Teng is physical service from attractive companions of either gender. This has evolved into a service industry that is accepted, if not highly respected. Expert courtesans of either gender have the same social status as qualified craftsmen.

There are various training establishments (the most famous being that of the Silk-Bound Hair in the City of the Steel Lotus) that educate children from a very young age in the amatory arts. The children in question come from other families who provide for the Dragon-Blooded or are illegitimate babies who were left on the altar of the Pale Mistress. Those who are not sufficiently beautiful or skilled are eventually trained in other ways of serving the Terrestrial Exalted, while those who give offense in some way are thrown out on the street and generally end up working in lower-class brothels.

Prostitutes can get married and be part of a family, just like most other citizens of An-Teng. However, they are extremely unlikely to marry into a noble family and often espouse someone else who helps to provide for Dragon-Blooded visitors. There are several large families in the City of the Steel Lotus composed mainly of prostitutes, couturiers, cooks and similar functionaries. Much of what they learn from their patrons is reported discreetly to the Prince of the Shore Lands.

Lower-grade brothels serve the entourages of the Dragon-Blooded, the lusts of visiting sailors and the misbegotten. It is rare for any regular citizen of An-Teng to want a brothel's services or to even consider going to one. Adults are almost always married and possibly have a discreet lover as well,

and it is commonly understood that only the shameful and the degraded (and foreigners) need to use such places. High-class brothels are reserved for the Dragon-Blooded.

#### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type: Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, God-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Solar**

Tender Rose has collected five young newly Exalted Dragon-Blooded, who she intends to send to the Realm so that they may be trained in the use of their powers. Solars may want to see the children grow up outside of the Realm — possibly for the children's own sake, possibly as future agents of theirs. Abyssals would like to train the children as future minions and servants of the Malfeans (or to foil the plans of another Deathlord who wants them). Dragon-Blooded may be tasked with seeing that the children reach the Realm safely or maybe agents of a Great House sent to steal the children — if possible, without letting Tender Rose know they've gone missing. A kidnaping en route, perhaps. God-Blooded or heroic mortals might see the children as vital to the future of An-Teng, heroes-to-be who will help defend the country, and will want to liberate them to that end.

#### DRAGON-BLOODED CHILDREN

Despite the regular use of maiden tea, the occasional pregnancy results from Dragon-Blooded attentions. While the mothers in question will usually be upper-class courtesans, it can happen that the Exalt — or the unExalted house member — took advantage of someone more lowly. In either case, the child is usually raised as a member of the mother's family, as discussed above. However, every once in a while, that child may eventually Exalt and have the power of the Dragons descend upon her.

The Empress was canny enough to realize that this might happen and maintained a presence in town. Tender Rose, an outcaste by birth who rose through the Red-Piss Legion, is a hard-bitten middle-aged woman ideally suited to locate such children and to persuade them to offer their services to the Realm. She and her staff keep abreast of the rumors in and around the City of the Steel Lotus, watching for signs of Exaltation. Persuasion isn't difficult. What teenager wouldn't want to learn how to use his newly discovered powers, to become one of the nobility and to live in a marble palace with servants to minister to his every need? Of course, such children are outside of the Great House system and never attended any worthwhile boarding school, but they can hope for a worthwhile career in the military or the clergy, and their own children may some day be part of the system. Where Tender Lotus can trace a direct family connection and the child is young, it is generally arranged for the family to sponsor the outcaste so that he can be educated in the Realm as any other young non-Dynastic Exalt. Where there is no obvious connection, the Exalt is generally given to other Exalted friendly to the Realm living outside of the Blessed Isle. This is a bit outside the imperial norm, but it was considered acceptable, as An-Teng is so thoroughly pacified.

Naturally, a number of the Great Houses would like to get their hands on these unformed, malleable children. This is why the Empress took pains to ensure that they were collected by someone loyal to her. In the Empress' absence, several of the Great Houses have made approaches to Tender Rose, but so far, she remains loyal and has rejected all such bribes and threats.





## ARMIES AND THE MILITARY

An-Teng has no regular standing army. This is a direct result of the Dragon-Blooded wasting of the land after the Usurpation. The Terrestrial Exalted felt that, with them governing and garrisoning the land, the people of An-Teng did not *need* any large military forces of their own. The princes obligingly agreed to this, not wishing to offend their protectors. As matters stand, there are a few thousand Realm troops garrisoned in each of the three parts of An-Teng. It is considered something of a luxury posting and certainly too easy for an organization such as the Red-Piss Legion.

However, An-Teng is not as defenseless as it might seem. Each of the Three Princes has a group dedicated to the protection of his land whom he can call upon in times of need. The Shore Prince has the Shadow Puppeteers, the Middle Prince has the Elephant-Riding Ghost Generals, and the High Prince has the Masked Commanders of the Animals. In addition to this, it is considered normal for most noble families to maintain a small troop of guards or bodyguards (10-100 men, depending on the wealth of the family) and the princes themselves have personal guards of up to 500 men each. In the event of an attack on the country, the princes have the right to commandeer any and all warriors to their own banner. In open battle, this results in wild charges by thousands of uncoordinated soldiers, possibly led by elephant cavalry, which is impressive but not always efficient.

But An-Teng doesn't tend to employ troops in open battle. The tradition of the land is guerilla warfare. The enemy is allowed to penetrate the country until he is overextended. At that point, human and spirit allies alike move in to cut his supply trains to pieces, to assassinate his superior officers, to foul his drinking water and food supplies, to leave poisonous snakes and scorpions in the bedrolls and to pick off the soldiers one by one. In the end, only a few straggling troops are left in the middle of enemy territory. The Pale Mistress walks across the land, bringing chaos and entropy with her. Her touch dries up the riverbeds and parches the rice, and plague and malady follow in her train. The local spirits remember the offerings that they have received and bring misfortune down upon the enemies of the land. An-Teng is an easy land to attack but a hard one to hold.

## LAW, CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

An-Teng has a comparatively simple system of justice, which endeavors to avoid complicated civil law in favor of fines, servitude or execution. Each prince appoints 10 judges to oversee his lands. Of these 10, six are settled in cities or major towns and oversee all judgment

in those areas, while four travel the land. (This system was borrowed, in part, from the Dragon-Blooded — during the Solar rule of the land, justice was handled by the Solars and Lunars themselves or by the High Queen and the Three Princes.) Judges have authority to impose sentences up to and including execution by being torn apart by four oxen, though the latter is reserved for particularly brutal multiple murders or treason against the princes. Torture is permitted — and, indeed, expected — to resolve conflicting testimonies in court. The usual method is simple beating with a cane, though a judge can also order the use of thumbscrews, flame or burning splinters.

Generally speaking, deliberate murder carries a sentence of death. The punishment for killing in self-defense varies with the event, although it may require a payment to any dependents left behind by the deceased. Assault and rape are punished by fines paid to the victim or to the victim's family. Theft, embezzlement or any crimes involving money have a threefold fine levied, of which two-thirds goes to the victim of the crime and one-third to the prince. If the culprit is unable to pay, then he is indentured into the prince's service until such time as he has done work equivalent to his debt, and the victim is paid from the prince's own treasury. While slavery does not exist as such in An-Teng, such indentured service is quite normal, and there are, at any time, several hundred such laborers working on canal digging, road repair or similar tasks. The prince is required to have them fed, clothed and housed, but he may judge the rate of their repayment however he wishes. Few ever leave their indenture.

The social element in all this is also an important factor in punishment. If an individual is publicly convicted of assault, murder, rape, theft or the like, then his entire family is shamed by contamination. It is not uncommon for criminals whose guilt is known to have family members "assist" them in committing suicide, leaving their death as apology. People consider that this act redeems the family's reputation to some extent, as it shows that the family felt a proper guilt for its offspring's action. It can also mean that a number of criminal cases are settled quietly between the elders of the culprit's family and the victim's family, before matters can come to a judge's attention and result in a public trial. Such resolutions often involve vastly overpaid commercial transactions or gifts or marriages between the two families.

Of course, none of these laws apply to the Dragon-Blooded, though under certain circumstances, such as wholesale slaughter, the local judge might send a humble letter to the prince of that land and ask him to intercede with the most honorable visitor.

### DRINK AND DRUGS

Nothing is illegal. Any citizen of An-Teng is free to addle his brain and indulge his senses with anything that may come into his hands. Rice wine and beer are common in all three lands, and hashish and betel nut are common in the High Lands and moderately frequent in the Middle Lands and the Shore Lands. On the other hand, families have their own ways of enforcing self-control, not to mention private cellars where younger members can break their addiction out of the public eye, and the prince has the right at any time to declare that a particular substance is illegal, if he so desires. Wise characters know their limits and keep their self-indulgence behind closed doors.

## GODS, SPIRITS AND GHOSTS

Nobody in An-Teng would deny the supernatural, when it is so much part of their lives. Every adult goes through daily life making tiny offerings — of incense, of food, of muttered prayers — to the spirits and ghosts who inhabit the world around him, and this is one of the aspects of “proper behavior” that every child learns from her older siblings. The fact that the Dragon-Blooded fail to show such casual reverence is yet another reason for the populace to hold them in fear and respect.

### GODS AND SPIRITS

An-Teng is a profoundly animistic nation. Every major building has a small “spirit house” set up outside in order to shelter passing spirits or deities, and in the case of the wealthier families, it is expensively gilded and lacquered. Despite minor regional variations, everyone acknowledges the same patron deities — the Golden Lord and the Pale Mistress — and sets out offerings to the Serpents Who Crawl Upstream and bring the storms in the rainy season.

The Golden Lord and the Pale Mistress represent two separate poles of life and are both honored in their place, though they are worshiped under different names and with different aspects across An-Teng. The Golden Lord represents and protects stability, proper social conduct, honor, fertility and just rulership. He boasts regular temples across the land (though his primary seat is believed to be the Pinnacle of Mercy in the High Lands) and is served by dedicated priests and priestesses. Those who seek him out may petition him for righteous judgment or for a tool or weapon to help them restore order in their homelands.

The Pale Mistress, however, represents entropy, chaos, the fall of kingdoms, disease, drought and death

but, also, the necessity of change and the turning of the seasons. She has no priests or priestesses. Altars are set up to her at crossroads and in deserted places, and the fearful leave offerings there in the hopes that misfortune will turn aside from them. She dwells between the sea foam and the sand of the shore, and during storms, she can be seen walking there, with the wind blowing her white hair. Anybody who dares to approach her may ask her to call down malady, starvation or war upon his homeland, and she will do so if the land is currently prosperous.

The Immaculates preach that the Dragon-Blooded stand between the mortals and the gods, but this doesn't prevent the people of An-Teng from offering countless minor acts of homage. These range from people leaving prayers tied to the zelvova trees that flourish in most public places to throwing a rice cake in whenever someone crosses a canal or river to coming to the Immaculate temples in hopes of any spare divine mercy that may be available. The people of An-Teng are in the market for any spiritual blessings that happen to be around. If worship of some new god proved to have results, temples would promptly be raised and offerings made. (Of course, the local divinities would then take prompt steps to dispose of temple and interloper alike, but that's a different matter entirely.)

However, this enthusiastically ecumenical attitude leaves the door open to darker things, such as worship of the Malfeans or the Yozi. Such things are certainly not approved of and would be stamped out should they come to the attention of the authorities or even to the priesthood of the Golden Lord or the Immaculates. The Princes of An-Teng are aware of the currents of Yozi-worship in the Lintha Family, their ally, but have no wish to see it take root in An-Teng itself. But the current times breed rebellion, and rebels are prepared to take advantage wherever they may find it. Necromancers make their way to the City of Dead Flowers or to the Bone Wings Crag, and the Seven-Stranded Vine flourishes and spreads, bringing worshippers to the Yozi.

### ANCESTRAL GHOSTS

The people of An-Teng know that their ancestors are always with them. Any house worthy of the name has a tablet in a place of honor on the wall that lists the family's honored ancestors, so that the family can burn incense in front of it and offer bowls of delicacies at public celebrations. Poorer households may simply have a scroll or a plain wooden tablet. Richer ones will have embossed pieces of ebony inlaid with gold and mother of pearl. If a member of the family gains a medal or award for meritorious service, he will present it in front of the tablet, with an account of the deeds that won it. If a daughter of the family feels that suicide is the only





acceptable expiation for her actions, she will leave a written apology in front of the tablet before performing the deed.

In consequence, the ghosts of the dead remember their living descendants. It is well known that ghosts may appear in dreams to warn the living of upcoming calamities and may even intervene more forcefully to preserve a descendant who has always honored their memory. In times of war, the ghosts of the dead follow the invading armies, bringing bad luck and nightmares down upon them. The Ghost Generals possess the commanders of the armies of the Middle Lands and lead elephant charges against the enemies of An-Teng. Strong-minded ghosts have been known to bring bad luck on opposing commercial families or to hold grudges against rivals in love, necessitating the services of professional exorcists.

The exorcists of An-Teng are not formal priests, but come from families of exorcists and are assisted by their own ancestral ghosts. They are easily recognizable by their short-cut hair, their long, heavily beaded necklaces and their black robes with white stitching. They make charms which bar particular ghosts from crossing thresholds, sprinkle consecrated ink, burn poppy seeds and chant ritual hymns that charge the ghost to remember its proper duties under Heaven and to return to its own family. If all else fails, the best charm against hostile ghosts is to invoke the Pale Mistress against them, asking her to tear them limb from limb and to devour them with her tiger-jawed mouth. This is extraordinarily dangerous, as the Pale Mistress may actually come when she is called.

If the Pale Mistress is invoked under these circumstances and chooses to answer the call, her coming is always foreshadowed by a troop of *kaleyi*, the Hungry Dancers, who move to the distant sound of gongs and who suck the blood from pregnant women and the entrails from young children. For this reason, such ideal victims are always evacuated from the village before such an exorcism. The Hungry Dancers look like stooped human beings from a distance, but close up, they are clearly skeletal monkeys draped in graveclothes and smelling of mold. They will attack any priests of the Golden Lord, children or pregnant women present but leave others alone. If the invocation does not stop at this point, then the Pale Mistress herself will appear, walking between one shadow and another, as tall as five normal men together, her breasts drooping, her white hair hiding her face and her fanged mouth drooling and hungry. She will tear apart any ghosts present with her long ragged nails and scoop the oozing remains into her wide mouth, before vanishing again. Woe to the exorcist who has not bid his own ancestral ghosts leave him for their own safety! Afterward, disease and drought

will linger where she has trod, and a full purification from priests of the Golden Lord — or even the Immaculates — is advisable.

## THE SHORE LANDS

The Shore Lands are ruled by the youngest of the Three Princes, Laxhander of the Glorious Reign, unparalleled in his own estimation, and currently indulged by his two older cousins. Laxhander is a sycophant to the Dragon-Blooded — evincing even more than the usual attitude of humble acquiescence that the country as a whole adopts — and dreams that he or his children may some day be Exalted. In consequence, he has made it known that any visiting Dragon-Blooded who belong to a Great House may, if they wish, indulge themselves with his family. This has done nothing for his reputation with the general population or inside the royal family. His cousins and mother intend to replace him with someone more suited to the position as soon as the current crisis with the Realm is over. For the moment, having a humble flatterer on the throne of the Shore Lands mollifies the Terrestrial Exalted and keeps them at ease.

The Shore Lands were the hardest hit by the Dragon-Blooded armies during the Usurpation, and they still show the scars. Shadowlands such as the City of Dead Flowers mar the land, and rivers, which were diverted during the war, still bend unnaturally in order to provide passage between villages and cities. The River of Queens itself curves in a wide arc around the City of Dead Flowers, leaving it to rot in its own dark corruption. As little of the land is fertile and the peasants can only produce enough for themselves to survive, trade is the lifeblood of the region. Timber and silk and gems come downriver from the High Lands, and rice and tea arrive on barges from the Middle Lands, and all of this passes through the Shore Lands on the River of Queens and countless small canals on its way to the sea. Some of it is spirited away down the less well-known canals and smuggled out of An-Teng in an attempt to avoid the Shore Prince's taxes, and several villages along the coast have families who have been smuggling for generations and view it as an occupation sanctified by custom.

The typical garb in the Shore Lands is a jacket, a robe and trousers for both men and women, though women's clothing is usually in paler shades than men's garb. When in private or inside a family home, both genders wear loose robes, carefully draped and folded. Those who can afford it wear silk, while the lower classes wear cotton. Wool and furs are an extravagance that only the rich know. Jewelry is gold or silver, set with gems and ivory, heavy but tasteful. Only the royal family may wear jade.

### FOAM-SHROUDED PALACE

An ancient Solar Manse lies off the coast of An-Teng, several dozen miles north of Dragon's Jaws. The village that supplied it was razed by the same Dragon-Blooded who slew the Manse's mistress, so few now know more than the legend of a foam-wrapped silver palace that was ruled by Milesandra Dark-Cowled, the Mistress of Cormorants. Parts of the palace were destroyed by the Terrestrial Exalted, but what remains is hidden by Milesandra's ancient spells, keeping casual seekers or passing sailors unaware of its presence. The Water-aspected level 4 Manse currently has no master. Its Hearthstone, a seacalm gemstone (see *Exalted*, p. 339) rests in a well at the center of the Manse. Ghostly cormorants guard the place, and the silver-and-pearl mannequins that once served Milesandra now lurk in the dark cellars.

### DRAGON'S JAWS

The port of Dragon's Jaws spreads along part of Dragon's Mouth Bay, a thin strip of civilization that is clearly designed far more for functionality than for beauty. The sailors and officials who live and work there come from families who have done so for generations. Being transferred to Dragon's Jaws from elsewhere in the kingdom is generally done as a demotion or as a tacit punishment for improper conduct. Such newcomers to the port often believe they have been given the opportunity of a lifetime but arrive to find that they are outside most of the social networks that keep the port function-

ing and have little experience with handling foreigners and foreign customs.

Dragon's Jaws is also a haunt of those misbegotten who have decided to leave An-Teng. As they are usually poor and with no significant allies or abilities, they frequently end up with menial jobs as sailors or cargo guards. Courtesans who were expelled from the houses in the City of the Steel Lotus find employment here too, working to please the foreign sailors. The potential for cheap labor (or, rather, convenient slaves) has been noted by passing ship captains from time to time, and while ships' holds have space to hold slaves and chains to restrain them, sailors will continue to kidnap healthy victims. Naturally, this is against every custom of An-Teng, and if An-Teng officials or legion representatives or even Lintha patrollers catch the ship, then the responsible sailors and captain will be chained to the cliffs of Dragon's Jaws, to drown in the rising tide.

A Realm garrison of 1,000 men is also based at the port and regularly bristles with anger at seeing barely disguised Lintha ships engaging in regular trade. Its duties include guarding imperial ships, enforcing imperial law for citizens of the Realm and providing a defense for An-Teng if anybody tries to invade it by sea. The garrison is currently commanded by Shuri the Scarlet, a veteran of the Red-Piss Legion who's acquired this comfortable, profitable assignment and who regularly visits the City of the Steel Lotus to indulge his desires.

Shuri wants to marry upward in the Great Houses and is looking for a suitably malleable candidate among the young Terrestrial visitors to An-Teng, so that he can approach her parents or guardians with suitable bribes or blackmail, whichever is most appropriate. Shuri is an efficient administrator, who doesn't object to his junior

### THE LINTHA ALLIANCE

While the alliance with the Lintha Family is supervised by the Prince of the Shore Lands — somewhat loosely, given the current prince, who is far more interested in the Dragon-Blooded — and all direct orders must come from Salt-Founded Glory, practical dealings generally take place at Dragon's Jaws. This is where Lintha Family representatives hand over captured smugglers to the local guard and where items of particular trade interest (rare gems, special drugs, jade from deceased Dragon-Blooded and First Age artifacts) are passed to the Lintha Family. The Lintha ships give a nod to decorum by entering Dragon's Jaws under plain sail and with no obvious weapons drawn, and no regular inhabitant of the port is so rude as to suggest that they might be from the notorious Lintha Family. Private discussions under cover of night, resulting in a few corpses floating in the sea come the morning, are accepted as part of the cut and thrust of social debate.

It is quite acceptable for entire families to relocate to Bluehaven if their descendants join the Lintha Family and is entirely in keeping with An-Teng's traditions. Several of those families, now among the Lintha cousins, have the duty of negotiating current treaties with the princes. Their loyalty in these negotiations is expected to be solely to the Lintha Family, and they use their knowledge of An-Teng to get the best concessions possible. Among these concessions are the rights of Lintha ships to call on An-Teng ports for food, water and assistance in shipbuilding if necessary. The Lintha have promised assistance in the event of any naval attack, and the princes have promised them the rights to any ships, treasure and bodies lost at sea during such an attack.





bellion in the land, and if open war comes, she will appear to these worshipers and touch them with her clawed fingers, driving them out into the streets to bring chaos and plague and death to Dragon's Jaws. Those who serve her with true dedication and loyalty may even gain the ultimate boon of being transformed into a *kaleyi* in her service, to prowl graveyards joyfully and dance lewdly to the music of iron gongs.

## THE CULT OF THE PALE MISTRESS

Not all those who go missing are the targets of kidnappings or the natural victims of busy port life. While the Pale Mistress has no official priesthood, she does not deny those who wish to cause entropy and bring death in her name. A small cult has sprung up in Dragon's Jaws and even goes so far as to include some of the more acceptable misbegotten. It is led by Eighth Renunciation, who was once a priest of the Golden Lord, but saw his sister handed over to the retinue of a visiting Dragon-Blooded of House Mnemon. Eighth Renunciation vowed to bring plague and death down upon the Dragon-Blooded and chooses his sacrifices from among their servants or those who cater to those servants' desires. It is possible that, in time, he will turn to darker masters, such as the Malfeans or the Yozi. His 50 followers help him to capture sacrifices, whom they eviscerate, weigh down with rocks and cast still living into the deep parts of the sea.

The Pale Mistress has taken notice of the cult but has not taken any action concerning it. As far as she is concerned, the mere act of killing is worship, and she requires nothing more from mortals. However, she can taste the currents of change and rebellion in the land, and if open war comes, she will appear to these worshipers and touch them with her clawed fingers, driving them out into the streets to bring chaos and plague and death to Dragon's Jaws. Those who serve her with true dedication and loyalty may even gain the ultimate boon of being transformed into a *kaleyi* in her service, to prowl graveyards joyfully and dance lewdly to the music of iron gongs.

officers making a bit of money on the side or taking advantage of An-Teng's amenities, so long as they're on duty on time and don't cause *him* any problems. While he's heard rumors of rebellion in the distant parts of the High Lands, he doesn't truly believe them. An-Teng has been at peace for centuries and will be at peace for centuries more. He has authority over the garrisons stationed in the Middle Lands and High Lands as well and can communicate with their commanders through the use of a set of enchanted mirrors. He does so once a week to take their reports.

## CROPLANDS

Further in from the coast lie swathes of fruit orchards, grown as a luxury for export. The climate of this part of the land is poor for rice and subsistence crops, but suits certain kinds of fruit, such as persimmons, golden plums, starfruits, blood oranges and the rare ananate berry, which ferments to give a blend of wine much admired by connoisseurs in the Realm. Much of this part of the land is owned by noble families, who provide for the peasants who work the fields, in exchange for the



peasants toiling on the cash crops rather than trying to support themselves from their own fields. Some families, notably the Prosperous Cloud family, take this opportunity to oppress their peasants and enrich themselves, while others are more equitable.

Opium poppies also flourish here. While there has never been any large-scale move to farm them, certain recent inquiries from factions in the Realm connected to the drug trade are causing some of the more avaricious nobles to consider converting their orchards — or the peasant fields — into poppy plantations. Of course, barring various sorts of magical intervention, a newly set-up poppy farm would take several years before it began to produce in bulk, and the owner of the land would suffer from the loss of regular earnings. It is an interesting question, and Pearl Lily, the ancient matriarch of the Red Soil District, is considering it very carefully.

### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Solar

Pearl Lily's second son, Ruby Key, intends to force the issue, start a poppy plantation, avoid royal taxation, get rich and eliminate his mother, all in one neat plan. He has no idea that he is actually the tool of House Iselsi agents, who are posing as House Cynis in an attempt to frame Cynis for major damage to a client state of the Realm and loss of revenues from said client state. The idea is that Dragon-Blooded agents will help Ruby Key stage a large fire that will burn much of the Red Soil plantations to the ground and then secretly use sorcery to establish opium farming within the year. Of course, the Red Soil family will claim to be nearly bankrupted by the disaster, and it will be several years before it is expected to pay much tax on its ruined lands.

The Iselsi plan for the fires to sweep across the Shore Lands. As this is the dry season, a conflagration without any supernatural activity to stop it might reach as far as the River of Queens. Evidence will be found tying House Cynis and Anathema agents of theirs to the deed. Solars will have an interest in preventing this monstrous calumny or in stopping the fire should it be started. Dragon-Blooded and heroic mortals might want to prevent it — or might be involved in causing it. Indeed, supporters of the old royal line might see it as an excellent provocation to help rouse the populace in their favor. And as for agents of the Guild, Exalted or otherwise — well, no doubt they can see all sorts of opportunities.

### SALT-FOUNDED GLORY

Salt-Founded Glory dates to before the Usurpation, even though large parts of it were crushed and burned by the invading Terrestrial Exalted. Some of the oldest spirit houses still shelter local spirits who nurse a bitter and abiding hatred against the Dragon-Blooded and whisper malicious dreams into those who loiter nearby for too long. It is a canal city, crisscrossed by channels of varying depth, where small rowboats, punts and paddle boats serve as transport. Nobles, royalty and visiting Dragon-Blooded travel in silk-canopied racing boats rowed by slaves or servants, while trade passes through in large paddle-driven craft. Constant offerings are made to the spirit of the Sea-Greeting River, a tributary of the River of Queens that drives the flow of water through the city, that she may keep the water fresh and preserve the inhabitants from disease. It is considered rude and the mark of an ignorant foreigner not to burn a pinch of incense at one of the many shrines on the outskirts of the city.

The architecture is mainly in wood, though some of the older buildings — such as the Shore Prince's palace — have stone foundations. (Sadly, the original building was severely damaged during the Dragon-Blooded invasion and had to be rebuilt.) The building style throughout the city is the same: steeply tilted roofs, inward-sloping walls, the house itself set on pilings to elevate it above possible flooding in the rainy season. Common houses have a single large airy room inside, while noble families or rich merchants can afford elaborate multi-tiered roofs, several large rooms and an inner garden or courtyard — not to mention their estates and houses outside of the city. The most noticeable building in Salt-Founded Glory is the Immaculate temple, recently redecorated in grand style by Prince Laxhander and garnished with large amounts of aniconic gold and silver. Attendance among the commoners has increased, as they assume the prince knows what he is doing in making such gestures of appeasement. The local Temple of the Golden Lord has been sadly neglected in comparison, and some doomsayers are muttering that this will surely offend the deity himself.

The Shore Prince himself spends most of his time in the City of the Steel Lotus, courting Dragon-Blooded attention, and only returns to Salt-Founded Glory for major festivals or to contact the Shadow Puppeteers. In his absence, his son Uplifting Snow technically rules the city, but in practice, a consortium of five parvenu merchant families holds much of the practical power. Led by Silent Smile, matriarch of the Fallen Magnolia family, they control the criminal element in Salt-Founded Glory as well as having a stranglehold on the rice and silk markets. Silent Smile also has a stolen copy of Prince Laxhander's seal, which her sons and nephews use to smuggle exceptionally rare goods down the Sea-Greeting River and



out of An-Teng. Uplifting Snow is aware of the family's grasp of the market but not of its hidden activities.

What nobody knows is that Silent Smile — and her family — are lineal descendants of the royal family who were dispossessed by the Dragon-Blooded and that they are Yozi-worshippers, part of the Seven-Stranded Vine. Someday, they believe, the original royal family shall return to power, and with the disappearance of the Empress, that day may even be soon.

### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Lunar, Solar

Rooting out a group of Yozi-worshippers is a heroic and praiseworthy action. This would require discovering their activities, of course. Since the Fallen Magnolia family has been concealing its worship for centuries and has evaded suspicion more than once, its members are good at hiding what they do. However, a young man who recently married into the family, Blue Jade (from the Virtuous Camellia, another of the five merchant families), has just discovered the family's corruption and is trying to decide what to do about it. He may tell someone who can pass the information on to characters, or his corpse may turn up and excite suspicion, or investigations into the local criminals and their connections to the Falling Magnolia family may give rise to interesting leads.

Discovering the Seven-Stranded Vine and Silent Smile's secret doesn't end the problems. There are other branches of the previous royal family out there (Night Butterfly, for one) who are capable of breaking free from the cult to save themselves and who will certainly want revenge on the characters for what they have done. Dragon-Blooded characters may use the situation to exert pressure on the princes, in exchange for making sure that the old royalty stays dispossessed — or may see the potential in raising the old royalty to power once again and having them owe the Terrestrials a significant favor. Solars might expect that the old royalty would naturally support *them* and plan a coup with that in mind. And who knows what heroic mortals would feel their duty — or their advantage — to be?

The Sea-Greeting River continues from the city and forks. One of the forks rejoins the River of Queens, while the other continues to the sea, ending in a small

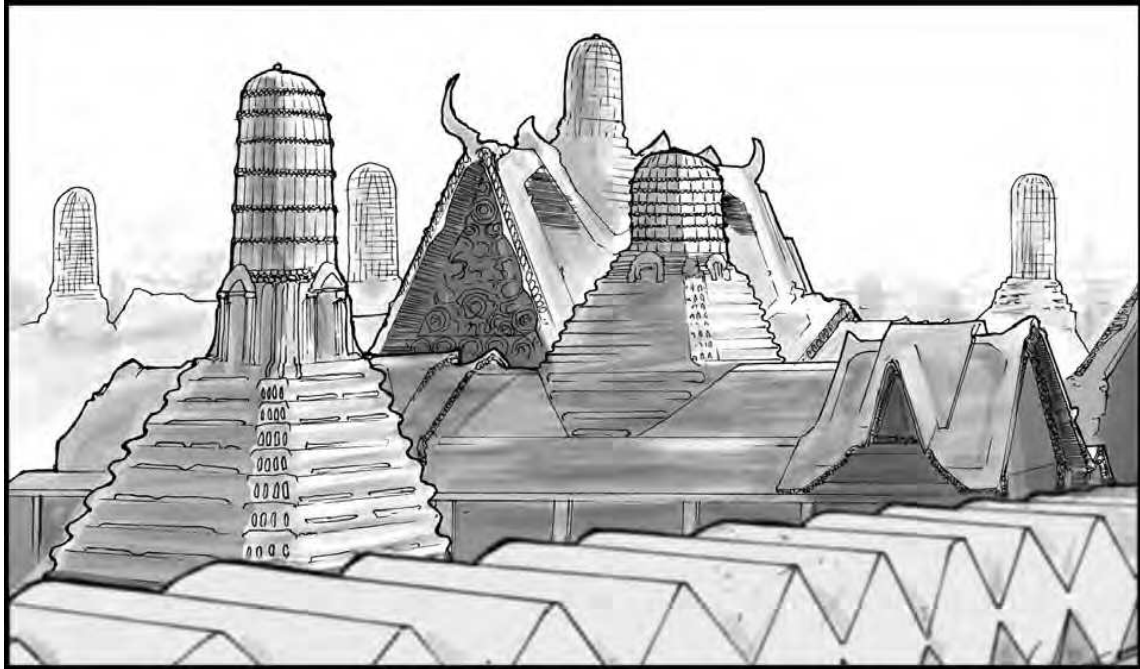
bay that houses the port of Northerly Repose. Traditionally, this port is used by the Prince of the Shore Lands for private voyages and trade ventures. In practice, Prince Laxhander finds it useless for any *truly* private business, as it is far too easy for any enemies of his to observe. Many of the Shadow Puppeteers live there, concealed among the general populace but within easy reach if the Shore Prince requires them.

### THE CITY OF THE STEEL LOTUS

The City of the Steel Lotus is the capital of An-Teng. Here, the Three Princes meet to discuss matters of state, and here, the Dragon-Blooded come to be entertained, and here, the riches of the kingdom flow in lavish display. The city was built after the Usurpation as a nexus for the new rulers and was, unusually, created as a city with roads rather than with canals, in deference to the wishes of the Terrestrial Exalted. The River of Queens flows beside it, allowing trade vessels and pleasure boats to come upstream from Dragon's Jaws and Salt-Founded Glory or downstream from the rest of An-Teng. Those desiring to explore or tour upriver can hire boats and guides at the docks. Foreigners who are not Dragon-Blooded will be charged a higher rate but have the option of working their passage upriver instead, traveling with the heavy cargo boats.

The City of the Steel Lotus has been shaped by the desires of visiting Dragon-Blooded, cultured like an orchid under glass. The Dragon-Blooded expect courtesans to attend them. Therefore, the Street of Sun-Kissed Flowers near the center of the city holds dozens of Houses of Courteous Attention, where a Terrestrial Exalted may be wined, dined and served by beautiful specimens of both genders. The most famous such house belongs to Jan of the Red Stone, a handsome man in his mid-50s who could still pass for a 20-year-old. A new House rising to prominence is owned by the beautiful dancer Dusk Caress but shelters several members of the Seven-Stranded Vine.

The Dragon-Blooded expect the finest food. Therefore, the Great Market near the river is supplied with food from all An-Teng and even delicacies from overseas. This area also serves as a nexus for the trade in items smuggled in by the Lintha Family or captured by the Family from other ships and then sold on a legal market, with provenances supplied by the very best forgers in An-Teng. Commissioner Denatis of the Righteous Urn family has been assigned to the Market District for the last five years and has the ulcers and gray hair to prove it. She reports directly to Judge Pan of the Noble Peony family, who has judicial responsibility for the whole city. Commissioner Denatis is renowned for her forthright elegance, her intelligent and precise judgments and her occasional habit of anonymously hiring foreign mercenaries to exact



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a bit of practical justice on criminals hiding in Dragon-Blooded entourages.

Elsewhere in the city, there are shops that provide silk, ivory, carved teak, gems and other luxury trade items. These appeal to the more patrician Dragon-Blooded visitors, who like to pick up examples of the “native crafts” as conversation pieces for when they return to the Realm. Generally speaking, forged goods and second-rate pieces are not fobbed off on the Dragon-Blooded, however foolish or spendthrift they may be, as the consequences (such as the death of the shopkeeper and the burning down of the shop) tend to be alarmingly wholesale. Other foreigners, however, purchase at their own risk and should remember that bargaining is expected.

At the precise center of the city is the Palace of Threefold Magnificence, where the princes meet for affairs of state. At the moment, it is occupied by Prince Laxhander of the Shore Lands and most of his family. The palace itself is a glorious creation of gold, teak, lapis and pearl, a combination of Realm design and traditional An-Teng craft. Prince Laxhander invites visiting Dragon-Blooded to dine there most evenings and has his own family attend to the Terrestrial Exalted or summons courtesans from the Street of Sun-Kissed Flowers. Set around the palace in places of honor are temples to the Golden Lord (attended by a staff of priests, priestesses and temple dancers), the Pale Mistress (totally empty) and an Immaculate monastery.

The ranking priest of the Golden Lord, Abbot Foulu, has a long-standing grudge against the Immaculate abbot, a Water-aspected Dragon-Blooded named

Santeris who was once of House Mnemon. Foulu believes that Santeris encourages the Shore Prince’s slavish devotion to the Terrestrial Exalted. In reality, Santeris dislikes the prince’s behavior, considers his regular guests to be wastrels who would be better off serving in a frontier legion and spends much of her time commanding a spy network that serves Immaculate (and ultimately Sidereal) interests throughout the Realm.

Ragara Soras Jor is the Satrap of An-Teng and, as such, is stationed in the City of the Steel Lotus, though there are imperial compounds all over An-Teng, and he travel between them regularly. Jor takes a very loose approach to governing the satrapy and is currently en-grossed in intrigues to improve his standing in the Thousand Scales, break the treaty with the Lintha pirates and increase House Ragara’s influence in An-Teng. It is possible that he is paying too much attention to those in positions of authority and too little to the grass-root peasantry, popular opinion and potential rebellion.

The city’s most luxurious housing, including those dwellings leased (or offered) to visiting Dragon-Blooded, lies between the Royal District and the Market District. Further out are the markets and shops and houses of the middle classes, merchants and scholars and craftsmen. Around the edge of the city, curving round from the landward side to the River of Queens, are the slums and alleyways where the poor live, where thieves lurk and cluster and plot and where those who have offended the Dragon-Blooded hide from their wrath.

Dragon-Blooded society inside the city is much concerned with itself and views the locals as relative barbarians



### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Dead, Heroic Mortal, Solar

If the Shore Prince were to publicly break with worship of the Golden Lord and the Pale Mistress, it would cause widespread public unrest through the Shore Lands and provide fertile ground for revolt. The easiest way to do this might be to convince him that full loyalty to the Dragons will be rewarded by Exaltation. Since Santeris herself will be deeply against it, it might be necessary to remove her or, at least, to incapacitate her. Certain members of the Prince of the Shore Lands' own family — such as his oldest daughter, White Osprey — are bitter enough at his current actions that they might subtly encourage him in order to justify assassinating him later. Abbot Foulu will react with great indignation and fury and is entirely predictable on that front. Whether characters want to encourage riots and upheaval or would prefer to stop someone else fomenting revolution, this is a potential flashpoint that could shake all of An-Teng.

when compared to the civilization of the Realm. Rich and powerful nobles and beautiful courtesans may be invited to Exalted parties or expected to host them but should be content with this evidence of attention from their betters. Those Dragon-Blooded with better manners or with interests in scholarship, native art and history have a higher chance of actually getting to know natives of An-Teng or of forging genuine alliances.

The local social lion is Tepet Denile, who is attempting to recruit allies to his family. His methods involve spending remaining Tepet funds entertaining other young Dragon-Blooded and then using drugs, information, blackmail and similar methods to force them into alliances or to extract promises of favors. Enough young idiots come to visit An-Teng that he's never short of prey. The Terrestrial with the greatest knowledge of An-Teng is Ledaal Catala Ceris, who has been assigned by her family to quietly analyze and report on the current situation in the country and serves in the satrap's office as chief liaison with the local powers that be. Her natural scholarly instincts make this task a pleasant one, and she is actually liked by several noble families, who consider her cover story of research into classical poetical forms to be perfectly reasonable. In total, perhaps 100 Dragon-Blooded can be found in the City of the Steel Lotus at any time, with about two dozen employed in the actual administration of the satrapy, but the actual Terrestrial Exalted population changes fre-

quently as families end long holidays and the Thousand Scales rotates personnel through duty assignments. Only a dozen or so are "old hands" in An-Teng who have been there for more than a few years.

### THE CITY OF DEAD FLOWERS

The City of Dead Flowers lies in the Shore Lands and was once the City of Flowers, the capital of An-Teng, renowned for its beauty and comparable even to lesser Solar Manses. Wide canals lay between the buildings of ivory and teak, and the boats that passed along them were decked with the same bright flowers that adorned every spire and roof. When the armies of the Dragon-Blooded crushed An-Teng, their warriors slew those who were still faithful to the Solars, and their mightiest sorcerers filled the canals of the city with salted earth, so that the flowers died on the vines as the corpses rotted below.

For a long time, the City of Dead Flowers was deserted, wisely feared as a haunt of the dead and a habitation for the wicked. Now, poverty and necessity have driven peasants to live in the broken houses and thieves and tomb robbers to scour the place for treasures of the First Age. At the center of the city, in the ancient Palace of the Lotus, dwells the Shatterer of the Way, a deathknight in service to the First and Forsaken Lion, who watches the city's shadowland slowly expand. Strange creatures writhe in the dark earth where the canals once lay, and dark flowers hang from the shattered roofs and hunger for blood. The Shatterer of the Way was once a partly trained Immaculate novice, and he yearns to share the truths that he has come to understand in service to the Malfeans. For the moment, the First and Forsaken Lion has ordered the deathknight to watch over the nascent shadowland and to protect it, rather than to seek to expand it aggressively. The First and Forsaken Lion knows that there is Yozi activity in and around An-Teng and does not wish to cross the Yozi — yet.

Only a fool could wander into the City of Dead Flowers without being aware of the danger, and only a fool or a hero would. Shrines to the Pale Mistress stand on its boundaries, in hopes that she will stay her hand and bring no further death to the once-living land. The peasants who live nearby watch their crops grow worse with each passing month, and some waylay strangers to offer them as blood sacrifices. Students of dark powers make pilgrimages to the City of Dead Flowers to beg for enlightenment and join the growing population. The Dragon-Blooded have not yet attempted to scour the city clean — whether through fear or because the ghosts of the place hunger for their blood or because some bargain has been struck, none can say. Traveling entertainers perform shadow plays and dances on the borders, in the hopes of satisfying the ghosts so that they will come no further.

**ADVENTURE SEED**

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Dead, Heroic Mortal, Solar

The regalia of the previous dynasty was left behind when the Dragon-Blooded slew the royalty and destroyed the city. These crowns and scepters could provide a valuable token of rulership to the current dynasty — or to anyone who wanted to replace it. The most important symbol of this regalia was the Seven Lotus Crown, a headband of orichalcum starred by seven jade lotuses, which was traditionally worn by the High Queen of the land. The ghosts inhabiting the palace have so far concealed it from the Shatterer of the Way, but they will be forced to reveal its hiding place in time. They would be willing to listen to characters who promised the restoration of the true royal line or vengeance upon the Dragon-Blooded or who invoked their ancient loyalty to the Solar Exalted.

**CHARACTER CONCEPTS FOR THE SHORE LANDS**

**Warrior:** Royal Guard, Young Noble, Agent of the Judiciary

**Holy Man:** Exorcist, Priest of the Golden Lord

**Savant:** Scholar, Tutor, Shadow Puppeteer

**Criminal:** Tomb Robber, Market Fence, Pickpocket

**Entertainer:** Dancer, Courtesan, Cook

**THE MIDDLE LANDS**

The Middle Lands feed An-Teng, house it and clothe it. They supply rice and vegetables and fruit for the population's hungry bellies, cotton and silk for their backs and learning for their spirits. Ruled by Prince Kiotaran of Upward View, a learned and noble prince who is more interested in astrology than politics, the land is surprisingly peaceful. Occasional marauding monsters or bandits rarely cause trouble for long, and the people of the land are too busy working for a living to have much time for conspiracies or rebellion — at least, so far.

Typical clothing in the Middle Lands is the same as in the Shore Lands, though men working in the fields often go naked above the waist in summer. The lower classes wear cotton or hemp, while nobles and merchants wear silk. Jewelry is of heavy silver, occasionally inlaid with gold, set with gems. Ivory is worn with the minimum of metal in its setting and only by adults. Pearls (ocean or freshwater) are considered a token of virility, and noserings on women indicate the birth of more than one child. Only royalty may wear jade.

From the borders of the Shore Lands to the edge of the Forest of Compassion, the land is thick and green in all but the very height of the dry season or the depth of

winter, and it's well supplied with water by the regular canals and rivers that branch out from the Queen of Rivers. Even the youngest child learns how to swim at an early age. Most travel is done along the canals or rivers, though there are certain pathways that have been beaten down by the passage of elephants through the centuries. If trade lapses in a particular area, or if the elephants do not visit, then the paths quickly become overgrown with weeds, grass and saplings.

Approximately halfway along the River of Queens, in the middle of the flatlands and the rice paddies, lies Prosperous Garden, the main city of the Middle Lands. Prosperous Garden is unabashedly a canal city, thick with greenery and dense with flowers, and it is considered a mark of distinction to cultivate one's own vegetables, to prepare them and to serve them to guests. There are a few other small towns in the flatlands, but none match its size. Many of the people of An-Teng live out their lives quietly in their villages and never leave them or never go further than the nearest tributary to sell their produce to a boat going downriver or to the estates of their lords for festivals.

**SHADOWLAND: THE LAKE OF****DROWNED IVORY**

During the Usurpation, one Solar destroyed himself in a fit of suicidal fury and despair, calling down fire from the heavens to smite himself and all those around him. His picked elephant cavalry died with him, both men and elephants, incinerated in the fires that scorched a deep hole in the earth and formed a shadowland. Now, there is a deep lake in that spot. It is not fed by any known rivers, and the locals would never consider using it to water their crops or animals. Strange things swim in the dark waters, and strange stars reflect in it at night.

Further south of Prosperous Garden, the River of Queens reaches the Forest of Compassion. At the border of the forest is the city of Adorned With Wisdom as a Sapphire, generally referred to (outside state documents and official speeches) as Sapphire. Sapphire holds the largest center of learning in An-Teng and is filled with adolescents and youths from across the principality, all determined to enjoy their time away from their families — and, possibly, to study. The architecture is baroque and time worn, dating back to before the Usurpation. Parts of the city are better kept than others, depending on the favor of previous princes or noble families. The subjects taught range from astronomy and astrology — currently in high favor, due to the Prince's interests — to poetry, history, theology, political economy and the game of Threshold.





Going south into the forest, it becomes harder to travel. One must use the elephant-beaten tracks or the river and its tributaries, and it is very easy to get lost in the thick bamboo, banyan, teak and other trees. Small monkeys inhabit the upper reaches of the trees, while tigers and pandas and deer and black bears prowl below. The peasants of these parts are insular, seldom leaving their villages except to take trade goods to and from the river or, occasionally, to buy supplies or take criminal cases to one of the few medium-size towns. The forest also conceals more than one Solar tomb or Manse, lost among the endless trees. The only secure method of navigation is to find a river and follow it upstream, which will inevitably bring the traveler to the River of Queens and, from there, to the foot of the mountains.

#### MANSE: THE FORTRESS UNVANQUISHABLE

This copper-towered fortress is hidden by bamboos and vines, and the river that flowed close to it has long since run dry. It was once the property of Daring Flame, a Dawn Caste who could shoot an arrow from the highest turret all the way to the foot of the mountains, but he was caught far from home by the Dragon-Blooded, slain and buried in an onyx tomb near where Sapphire now stands. The Fortress is guarded in his absence by automata forged from copper and ivory armed with bows and arrows and by a giant serpent spirit whom he befriended and who still watches over the place. The Manse is level 3, and its Hearthstone is a jewel of stability (see p. 126).

#### PROSPEROUS GARDEN

This canal city is set next to the River of Queens, but from a distance, it appears to be a wide collection of houses and bamboo groves, laid out around the central high-towered palace. Many of the city's foundations date back to before the Usurpation, but the upper parts of the buildings — and the recently expanded suburbs and farms nearby — are far more recent. It used to be traditional for there to be no farms within 10 miles of the city, out of respect to the Middle Prince's need for privacy. This innovation, among others, can be attributed to Prince Kiotaran's wife Golden Slipper, who hopes to remove certain aspects of An-Teng's trading from Dragon-Blooded influence.

The daily market is held on sampans anchored in the river, which can be reached by a selection of floating bridges or by small rowboat or by swimming. All wood going downstream from the Forest of Com-

passion beyond is taxed, according to the number of logs and type of wood. The Middle Prince's assessor, Red Bear, is an aggressive and inquisitive man who greatly enjoys his job and who has a good idea of all trade moving up and down the river, whether or not it's within his remit to tax.

At the center of the city is the royal palace. While it is largely built in the classical style, there are several newly added high towers, built to give the Middle Prince more scope for his astronomical observations. While the prince largely manages to balance polite deference to Dragon-Blooded visitors, the needs of his land and his wife's suggestions for expanding its trade potentials, astronomy and astrology are his truest loves, and he has a particular affection for his fourth son, Onyx Blade, who shares it. Unfortunately, Onyx Blade is also a member of the Seven-Stranded Vine, though he only knows of its Yozi-worshipping aspect and not of its connection with the previous royal family. Under guard in the Middle Prince's palace hang the Ancestor Sashes of the Ghost Generals, though the guard is purely ceremonial, as nobody would dare to steal them.

The temples of the Golden Lord and the Pale Mistress are well kept and funded, while the Immaculate temple is somewhat small and basic in comparison. Since this is not viewed as a particularly important city by the Order's superiors and since any Dragon-Blooded who come upriver are unlikely to be particularly interested in visiting an Immaculate temple, nobody has made an issue of it.

Visiting Dragon-Blooded are housed with local noble families. There is a formal roster dictating which family's duty this is. Volunteering to take a Terrestrial Exalted as a guest gets the family taken off the roster until the next time their name would come up. The appearance of polite, intelligent and pleasant Dragon-Blooded results in a storm of offers to have them as guests. The city's nobility is generally divided into the old nobility (scholars and politicians) and the new nobility (merchants — but rich merchants). Of the two groups, the second is prepared to fawn over any Dragon-Blooded to a far greater degree, but the first does it with much more elegance and style.

The city lacks a distinct "poor quarter," as it blends from middle-class houses and shops into the more recent farms and fields around the edges. Some of the more daring criminals can be found in the area around the docks or, at times, have been known to take refuge with poor farmers in return for cold hard cash. The constant flow of trade and boats upriver and downriver means that the population is always changing and that it is very easy to slip out of town quietly.



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### ADORNED WITH WISDOM AS A SAPPHIRE

This proud city is full of contrasts, with First Age buildings surrounded by cheap modern housing and post-Usurpation ruins serving as basements to more modern halls and temples. The city was built with roads and alleys rather than canals and has, over time, become a tangled maze of streets. Sapphire offers tutoring in a wide variety of subjects to anybody who can afford it — usually, in practice, the scions of nobility, the children of rich merchant families and professional courtesans, who are expected to be able to make intelligent conversation. The priesthood of the Golden Lord also sponsors a number of poor children, who are usually expected to later join the priesthood, and the princes occasionally pay for the teaching of the children of lower-ranking but faithful servants.

Some courses are given as general lectures to classes, and some are private instruction — either because the teacher prefers it or because a parent is paying for her child to have the privilege. Savants of particular subjects tend to congregate together, if only to disagree in greater comfort. Some buildings are “understood” to belong to the lecturers and students of a particular subject, while ownership of a particular room is passed on when its owner retires or dies.

Most of the old noble families own a small house in the city, in order to provide accommodations for any of their scions who are studying there. In the absence of their own children, they garner favors by allowing the

descendants of other nobles (or even parvenu merchants) to live there. Only the poorest students are reduced to working menial jobs in order to rent beggarly accommodation. The general ambience is cheerful. All the students recognize this as the one time in their lives when they are reasonably free of family expectations (other than to do well) and sibling interference, and the poorer pupils know this is their big chance to do well and rise in station. Many adult friendships or later marriages are founded at Sapphire.

Sadly, this license has its darker side. Not all students have the strength of will to avoid drugs or overmuch debauchery or debt, and newborn children are often left on the altar of the Pale Mistress to avoid a public scandal. Pockets of rebellion against the Dragon-Blooded form as the students realize the extent to which An-Teng is controlled, and the Seven-Stranded Vine itself has its headquarters in the city. The city’s potential has not gone unnoticed by the Immaculate Order, and the local temple houses at least one Sideral whose duty it is to gauge the prevailing mood and to defuse or remove any potential ringleaders.

Few Dragon-Blooded bother to visit Sapphire casually. Those who make their way this far upriver and choose to stay in the city are students or scholars themselves and do not expect the amenities that their brethren demand at the City of the Steel Lotus. As such, they do much to reconcile the students with the Dragon-Blooded as a race.



## ELEPHANTS

Elephants are commoner in the Forest of Compassion than on the flatlands, but they are an accepted part of life, trade and war in An-Teng. Herds of elephants are maintained by particular families and crossbred, from time to time, to prevent inbreeding. These families are usually in service to a particular noble, who provides food and shelter for the animals while they are not actually working and gets a percentage of the profits in return. The best known of these families is the Glorious White Triumph family, which has been honored by past Princes of the Middle Lands for its service.

Local farming families pool their gold to hire the elephants to transport their goods to the nearest river or to haul logs to wherever they are needed. White elephants are considered a particular blessing or omen from the gods, but all elephants are admired and cared for by the people of An-Teng. Their handlers try to keep them away from the Terrestrial Exalted, as the Dragon-Blooded are prone to wanting to ride them, kill them, wrestle with them or other pointless occupations.

In times of war, the elephants become a vital part of any defending force and spearhead devastating charges into the heart of the enemy army. Elephants are assembled from across the land, armored with carved wooden headpieces, blessed by the priests of the Golden Lord and ridden into battle by their handlers, whether male or female (one of the rare cases where women are expected to go into battle.) The charge is led by the Elephant-Riding Ghost Generals, who will be mounted on the strongest elephants in the group. White elephants do not go into battle, as it would be a very bad omen should a white elephant be killed. While the elephants can travel north or south, into the Shore Lands or the High Lands, they rarely do, as they dislike the climate and terrain and find the food less plentiful than in the Middle Lands.

## THE SEVEN-STRANDED VINE

There are darker things in An-Teng than the Pale Mistress and more vicious depravity than even the self-righteous younger Dragon-Blooded may claim to be stamping out. Two children of the previous royal family survived the Usurpation and its accompanying slaughter and founded an incestuous family line of Yozi-worshippers. Today, their descendants watch the growing chaos and scheme to increase it and dream of taking back what is rightfully theirs, of expunging the new royalty from the land and of driving the Dragon-Blooded into the sea, never to return to An-Teng. Not all of the royal family are initiated into Yozi-worship — only the most faithful and the most loyal or those whom the family's Yozi masters desire as disciples. Similarly, there are others in the Seven-Stranded Vine who are not of the royal family and do not even know it still exists, but simply serve the Yozi together with their fellow disciples. Hand in hand, twined into a dark network across the land, they work to take advantage of the current situation and to slake their thirsts in blood.

The cult is led by Night Butterfly, a silver-haired, one-eyed young scion of the royal family, who travels across the realm with a troupe of entertainers, working as a dancer. While he respects the authority of Silent Smile, who is his superior within the family, he is high priest of the Seven-Stranded Vine, and even she must bow to him on cult matters. There are whispers that the two have dueled with barbed knives more than once to settle some question of authority, behind closed doors at midnight. Night Butterfly is an expert at disguise and has a tongue smooth enough to sell snow to a Northerner. Many of the peasants recognize him as a man of noble blood and respect him. He has contacts throughout An-Teng, among the high-born, the low-born and the entertainers, the courtesans and the thieves. Few know what truly moves him and whether or not he is sincere in his loyalty to the Yozi.

The cult gives its worship to She Who Lives in Her Name and adores her unending flames. Cultists work to reinforce the stratified, family-bound nature of An-Teng, where every citizen knows his place and serves in it loyally, with the ancient royalty restored. When revolution does come to the land, the people will rise in unison to restore the proper order of nature and cast out the Dragon-Blooded. Details such as blood sacrifices, strange rituals at dark altars and so on should be left to the royalty and the nobility whose duty it is to intercede for the commoners.

The Seven-Stranded Vine is currently debating the rumors that the ancient Solars and Lunars have returned. Protocol dictates that powerful god-empowered beings should have a place above even the royalty of An-Teng, but practical Yozi-sharpened bitterness would rather have the Solars and Lunars far, far away.



**ADVENTURE SEED**

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Lunar, Solar

A group of young hotheaded Dragon-Blooded is about to visit Sapphire, determined to crush the seeds of rebellion and “teach them to respect the Princes of the Earth.” They’re far more likely to cause rebellion than quell it and will expect slavish deference during their visit. Will other Dragon-Blooded want to defuse things before there’s genuine revolt in the streets, or do they see it as their duty to put down these mortals with a firm hand? Do Solars want to spare the citizens or will they let the Dragon-Blooded provoke unrest and then salvage the situation and gain prestige? Perhaps Abyssals want to drive the situation into fullblown slaughter and see if a shadowland might result? And will the Seven-Stranded Vine take a hand in matters?

## THE DWELLING OF THE SERPENTS WHO WALK LIKE MEN

This small area is the relic of an ancient Lunar and her chosen race of servants, serpentine men and women who combined fertility, strength and an elegant scaly beauty. When their mother-goddess was slain, they retreated into their small enclave and fortified it against the Terrestrial Exalted, who thought them too insignificant to trouble with. When they later emerged into general An-Teng society, they remained a separate people, ruled by the obviously god-descended. As they lie on the border between the Middle Lands and the High Lands, and the mines and fields that they control are useful but not vital, they have remained an independent folk, though owing ultimate allegiance to the Prince of the Middle Lands.

The extreme fertility of the nobles of the kingdom causes them to live in single-sex households where same-sex relationships are the norm, engaging in marriages only for a single year at a time and strictly for purposes of reproduction. This inbreeding, of course, only enforces their nonhuman traits. They are, without exception, tall and slit-eyed, with long, thick hair, long nails and scales along their cheeks and the backs of their arms. The common folk, who have interbred with the peasants of the wider lands far more, display the odd attractive trace of scales or slit eyes, but are otherwise basically human. In general, the people of the enclave have endeavored to leave behind the barbarity and fierceness that their Lunar mother bred into them and have become very rigid and formal in consequence.

The enclave encompasses perhaps 50 square miles and is governed by Lord Shantsu, a cultured gentleman with perceptibly green skin. Few Dragon-Blooded have tried to visit the place, as it is out of the general way and lacks the slavish courtesy of such places as the City of the Steel Lotus. Guests will be received courteously, but they will be rated as nobles and housed with their own gender — and should remember that dueling is considered a proper way to avenge an insult or discourtesy. While the nobles of the enclave have missed some of the developments of An-Teng culture over the last few centuries, they preserve certain documents that date back to before the Usurpation.

**ADVENTURE SEED**

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Lunar, Solar

The possible First Age treasures hidden in the Dwelling of the Serpents Who Walk Like Men are too intriguing for the Exalted to ignore. But what’s *really* exacerbating the situation here is that, apparently, Sadana, Mother of Serpents, has returned — or so rumor has it — and is rallying her people to her side. Will Solars and Lunars want to encourage this, or do they plan to get a piece of the action or loot any relics before she can get her hands on them? Will Abyssals want to corrupt this returned Lunar or forge an alliance with her for their Deathlords? Will Dragon-Blooded want to investigate whether she might be an impostor or league themselves with the more civilized nobility of the enclave against their barbaric foremother? Will the Realm send in a team of assassins to dispose of this Anathema once and for all?

**THE THEOCRACY OF THE JADE-SOULED**

While all of An-Teng theoretically acknowledges the spiritual superiority of the Dragon-Blooded, very few do anything practical about it other than to pay the occasional visit to Immaculate temples when trying to cultivate the general favor of the gods. (Slavish deference and humble tribute are a tribute to the Dragon-Blooded’s physical and military superiority; the distinction is quite clear.) However, several noble families have banded together to declare themselves a theocracy that outright worships the Dragon-Blooded and prays for their intercession with the Dragons themselves. Their territory encompasses 75 square miles or so on the southeast border of the Middle Lands, including a sizeable portion of forest and a small portion of fertile croplands.

As this theocracy has only been in existence for 50 years or so, it is not, as yet, a major issue for either the Realm or the principality. The fact that it doesn’t control any





important mines or luxury foodstuffs means that the prince can afford to bide his time and wait for the theocracy to come to its senses. His wife is speeding the process by quietly directing trade away from the theocracy, so that its resources slowly dwindle. As the prince is afraid the Realm might take a direct assault on the place as an insult and the nobles have all refused to attend his court on specious grounds of illness, a waiting game seems the safest tack.

The matriarch of the theocracy is Slender Leaf, an elderly grandmother who rules her family firmly and who dreams of building a gold-roofed monastery for the Immaculate Order inside the theocracy's territory. The younger members of the family have no doubt of their beliefs. Then again, none of them have ever gone to Sapphire to study or left the theocracy for more than a few days, so they've had little chance to test them against reality or to meet any Dragon-Blooded. Recently, some of the young men have discovered the ruins of a Solar Manse (and later tomb) buried under the family temple. If they can contact some of the Dragon-Blooded, they intend to offer the site and the First Age relics to them, as proof of their devotion. This would not amuse the Prince of the Middle Lands, who would prefer to have first refusal — assuming he bothered to hand anything over at all.

#### MANSE: THE CHALCEDONY SILENCE

This Manse was excavated by Moran of Isinghall, an Eclipse Caste who grew so bitter at having to persuade others that he eventually built a dwelling for himself where nobody could ever raise their voice against him. A vengeful group of Dragon-Blooded slew him at Meru and buried his corpse in stone, then sealed the shattered place with lead and bone and threefold steel and jade. The Chalcedony Silence is a level 4 Earth-aspected Manse, with a gem of adamant skin Hearthstone (see *Exalted*, p. 339). Moran's bitterness and rising paranoia led to him stockpiling a number of First Age relics (mostly Artifact 2 or 3), but he died before he could use them, and the Terrestrial Exalted never realized that they were there.

#### CHARACTER CONCEPTS FOR THE MIDDLE LANDS

**Warrior:** Elephant Rider, Royal Guard, Walking Serpent Duelist

**Holy Man:** Priest of the Golden Lord, Seven-Stranded Vine Cultist, Jade Worshiper

**Savant:** Student, Tutor, Astronomer

**Criminal:** Smuggler, First Age Artifact Hunter, Crop Thief

**Entertainer:** Puppet Playwright, Courtesan, Temple Dancer

## THE HIGH LANDS

The High Lands are ruled by Prince Josei of Notable Genius, the oldest of the three cousins, who is referred to in conversation as the Prince of the High Lands or the High Prince. He is one of the less appeasement-minded of the family, though, admittedly, few Dragon-Blooded come as far as his region of An-Teng, and those who do tend to have a greater degree of courtesy — or common sense — than many of those who infest the Shore Lands. His wife, Dawnlit Snow, died last year under suspicious conditions (she fell down a flight of stairs while theoretically alone) that have yet to be elucidated to the High Prince's satisfaction, resulting in divisions in his court and trouble in his household. His eldest daughter, Midnight Pearl, has taken over the duties of running the household and is greatly admired by many for her quiet demeanor and ability to keep the peace.

#### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Dead, Heroic Mortal, Lunar, Solar

Dawnlit Snow was murdered by an agent of First And Forsaken Lion, who trapped her spirit and now has it imprisoned. This agent (a deathknight or a nemissary) will eventually use her as a hostage to blackmail the High Prince. Can heroic characters discover the truth of her death — that she was pursued down isolated passages by terrifying ghosts till she fell down the stairs and broke her neck? Can they rescue her? Would other Abyssals be interested in capturing her spirit and using it to extort their own favors from the High Prince — or, more subtly, releasing it while trusting that the prince will remember this “minor service”?

Typical clothing in the High Lands resembles that of the rest of An-Teng, though the colder climate means that fabrics are thicker and that embroidery or quilting is a fashion of the region. The lower classes wear cotton or hemp, while nobles, merchants and royal guards wear silk. Silver jewelry is universal, often set with onyx, carnelian or turquoise. Those who can afford it wear more exotic gems or ivory. To wear gold marks one as particularly faithful to the Golden Lord. Only royalty may wear jade.

The High Lands begin in the Forest of Compassion, and their boundary with the Middle Lands is rarely defined precisely. A number of villages dwell in tents and shift their encampments at different times of the year in order to avoid the tax collectors. Such villagers usually make a living by collecting rare orchids or exotic herbs and

selling them in the Shore Lands or in the City of the Steel Lotus itself. These nomads have contracts with local criminal gangs, who make sure that the goods and money travel safely in order to protect their own interests.

More stable villages, who don't object to paying taxes, do an excellent trade in wood, animal skins and parts and brightly colored birds that can be kept as pets. As their only real contact with other parts of An-Teng is through the few members of the village who go to the river to trade, many villages have changed little since before the Usurpation, and some even still discreetly honor the Unconquered Sun.

As the Forest of Compassion reaches the foothills of the Firepeaks, one comes to the mainspring of the River of Queens, where it bursts from the ground in Thousand Dragons Lake. A number of streams further up in the mountains feed the lake as well and permit convenient travel downstream from the higher peaks. This area of mingled forest and hilly ground is something of a halfway point in the High Lands. Contrary to the usual habit of siting the land's main temples in the capital, the main temples are placed around Thousand Dragons Lake, in respect for its undoubted magical powers and spiritual protectors. The fact that this means that the three temples — those of the Immaculate Dragons, the Golden Lord and the Pale Mistress — are all at a good distance from each other is viewed as yet another example of divine providence by local inhabitants.

### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Heroic Mortal, Lunar, Solar

Hidden at the bottom of the lake is a First Age Manse, Rushing Waters, still inhabited by its Lunar owner, Khadarys Shadow-Dancer, who survived the Usurpation due to hiding very, very thoroughly indeed. She dwells at the bottom of the lake with her freshwater shark-children and has not bothered to take an interest in events on the surface for a century or so. Before then, her occasional appearances were assumed to be manifestations of the Pale Mistress, and word never reached the Dragon-Blooded.

Khadarys is a First Age Lunar who is unaware of the alliances between other Lunars, the current state of the world, the resurgence of the Solars, the arrival of the Abyssals and many other recent occurrences. Assuming that characters can divine her existence (from local legends or ancient texts) and contact her, and manage to bypass her extreme paranoia, she could be an invaluable ally. Of course, the Exalt who manages to contact her first will largely establish her viewpoint on current events...

Several villages stationed around the lake do an excellent business in hosting traders, facilitating trade and assisting smuggling. The largest of these villages, Abundance, is at the mouth of the River of Queens and hosts the High Prince's tax collectors, who take a small but noticeable levy on all trade passing in either direction. The head of the Virtuous Assessors, Russet Leaf, is widely known to be corrupt, but is privately in the pay of the High Prince's daughter, Midnight Pearl, and passes much interesting information on to her.

In the High Lands, trade with the rest of An-Teng has been continuing relatively smoothly for centuries — enough so that, while most villages produce the bare necessities of life, they are more interested in producing luxuries for trade elsewhere. Silver production is considered a necessity, as silver is widely believed to be a charm against evil spirits, and both genders wear heavy silver necklaces and bracelets and carry small silver boxes to hold their current portions of hashish or betel nut.

Among the luxuries produced are silk, gems, hashish (a by-product of the hemp plants that supply much of the fabric for the region's clothing), spices, tea and sugar. The best of the spice-growing regions are in the lower parts of the High Lands, on the edge of the Forest of Compassion and around Thousand Dragons Lake. The betel-nut forest owned by the Blood-Tooth family is particularly famous and has caused most of the peasants in the region to have permanently red-stained teeth from sampling the product.

The largest stream feeding Thousand Dragons Lake is Plum Nectar Spring, which winds upward through foothills and lesser mountains to Jade Plum Citadel, the capital of the Prince of the High Lands. Travel downstream is easy enough, but travel upstream generally involves being towed by oxen, with portaging around the waterfalls in either direction. The terrain climbs steadily, with fields laid out on the slopes of the lower hills and groves of fruit trees and spice trees from place to place. There are few true towns in the High Lands. Barring Jade Plum Citadel itself and a couple of large villages that are notable as centers of trade rather than centers of culture, a network of small villages sprawls across the High Lands, linked by hill roads, rivers and paths wide enough for two oxen and a single cart.

Higher in the mountains, the people grow more austere and more religiously minded — living in the shadow of the Pinnacle of Mercy and in the knowledge of a present god does much for faith and humility, and the widespread use of hashish encourages a calm acceptance of life. It is extremely difficult to annoy a peasant of these mountains. Even insulting one of the princes or demanding humiliating service will only earn one a pleasant smile and a helpful offer of hashish, religious consolation or shelter for the night.





### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Lunar, Solar

The legend is true. a mighty dragon of the First Age lies imprisoned beneath the mountain known as Grandfather. Goukaen, a silver-scaled Lesser Elemental Dragon of Earth, refused the invitation of a Dawn Caste Solar to take a human form and to keep him company in various ways. The Solar, Daring Flame, was offended and called upon other Solars to assist him in entombing Goukaen for as long as their rule should last, as long as light should touch the mountain and until Daring Flame's own bow and arrows should be broken in token of his forgiveness.

Once the legend has been ascertained, it will strike characters that the first has already come to pass, the second can doubtless be arranged and the third requires only the bow and arrows (of which there are various specimens in Daring Flame's Manse, the Fortress Unvanquishable, somewhere in the Middle Lands). Doing all this will break the binding and release a First Age dragon with no particular love for the Solar Exalted. Goukaen will owe a favor to the person who or the group that released him and will not attack them on the spot. He is not unreasonable — but he is very, very angry.

While there is the occasional danger from wild animals — giant eagles, mountain leopards, huge venomous butterflies that stray from their secret valley, wild colonies of mandrills — the two truest dangers that haunt the mountains are bandits and the outrunners of the Thousand. Groups of bandits occasionally form from misbegotten, foreigners, the insane, the young and peasants driven to desperation by crop failure. They either haunt the trade routes, robbing prosperous and poorly defended merchants or descend on small villages, slaying every peasant who will not join them and looting the place. Prince Josei's usual response to bandits is to gather a force composed of his own guard, together with scions of nobility who wish to demonstrate their dedication to throne and country and send them out to scour the mountains. Being sent on a job of this sort in winter is proof of royal disfavor.

The outposts of the Thousand are a more overshadowing threat. While the First and Forsaken Lion has not yet chosen to turn the full focus of his Abyssal attention upon An-Teng, certain mountains within the Firepeaks range seethe with his troops as a corpse does with maggots. Prince Josei's guards give such potential shadowlands a wide berth, and Prince Josei himself ponders how to resolve the matter. Inviting the Dragon-Blooded to drive out the Abyssal interlopers is one solution, but he would rather not have the Dragon-Blooded in his kingdom — and, besides, with matters as they are, it looks as if the Dragon-Blooded would lose.

Mines are scattered throughout the High Lands, producing gems such as sapphires, rubies, diamonds and



topazes and also iron, gold, silver and rare jade. Silver mines are very common — while it isn't quite true that you can barely dig a hole without hitting a silver vein, there is enough silver in the High Lands to let even the poorest peasant wear an earring or a bangle for luck. Most mines are technically owned by a noble family, which pays the nearby peasants to work the mine. Mining is usually a task for men and boys, while women and girls tend the fields and domestic animals — and all plot ways to smuggle out valuable stones from under the noses of the noble family's guards.

A Fair Folk court, very like the Realm's Mountain Folk, owns gold and cinnabar mines directly behind Jade Plum Citadel. The nobles of the court and its ruler, Duke Anedys, swear direct allegiance to the Prince of the High Lands and rarely interact with other nobles, let alone peasants. Their work in gold and the mercury they mine are major trade assets to the High Lands. Much of it is shipped downriver, though a tithe is always given to the Golden Lord, who is credited with having personally tamed their wildness in the distant past.

### THE PINNACLE OF MERCY

As is often the case with the dwellings of gods, few can give a coherent account of the mansion of the Golden Lord. Those who climb the steep snowy slopes, a journey that tests determination and patience as much as it does physical strength, may pass the various tests on the way (wild animal attacks, bridges of ice, spirits warning them to turn back if they are not pure of heart) and come to the high ivory gates of the Golden Lord's house. These gates, forged from the tusks of the mother and father of the Golden Lord's own war elephant, Mighty-In-Battle, shine with a light that can be seen from leagues away. Within the Golden Lord's hall, all is gold and ivory save for the humble visitor herself, and she should fall to her knees and make her plea in respectful honesty. Whether or not her plea is answered, she — or her corpse — will then find herself in the Golden Lord's temple in Jade Plum Citadel.

### JADE PLUM CITADEL

Jade Plum Citadel is set among the mountains like a gem, its onyx-capped walls flashing darkly in the dawn and sunset light. The pre-Usurpation royal family raised it in order to defend the High Lands from intruders to the south and east and made it large enough to hold all the folk of the nearby villages within its walls. These days, Jade Plum Citadel is a thriving trade town as well as a

fortress, but the walls are still maintained, and the secret underground passageways that run beneath the mountains are kept clear and functional.

The buildings within the citadel — even the royal palace — are noticeably less extravagant (or even decadent) than those elsewhere in An-Teng. The largest building in the citadel is actually the temple of the Golden Lord, in homage to the nearby Pinnacle of Mercy, though the royal palace runs it a close second. The Pale Mistress gets a small onyx-and-teak shack, which is repaired if it seems on the point of falling down.

The noble mansions around the palace and temples are tall buildings that cluster together to save space. Owning a garden is luxury, here, and it is far more common to have a small glass-domed room where the elders of the family can culture orchids. Of course, the High Prince's palace has its own garden, and the Masks That Command The Animals hang on the palace walls, ready for use in case of attack.

The markets of Jade Plum Citadel are held inside an ancient group of buildings at the north of the city, near the gates, and spill out into the nearby streets and alleyways. They seethe with activity, and a visitor can buy furs, wool, hemp, cotton, spices, gems, embroidery, carved ivory, hashish, orchids, singing birds, weighted dice, salted fish and rare fruits from the Shore Lands. Beggars, spendthrifts and the homeless lurk there, hoping to find a job with traders going downriver, so that they can try their fortune in other parts of An-Teng. The city guards allow them to pester the merchants (unless bribed otherwise), as it is held to be a virtuous action to allow the poor to seek employment.

Visiting Dragon-Blooded are rare. It is very unusual for casual travelers to journey this far into An-Teng, and for those who do, there are always noble families willing to gain a rebate on the year's taxes by housing them and catering to their needs. While the popular attitude toward them is less slavish than in the Shore Lands, it is not actively bitter. However, several recent "hunting parties" of young sworn brotherhoods that expected proper respect and flattering attention have not helped matters. As matters stand, Prince Josei is considering how best to hide some of the region's more profitable gem mines from future Dragon-Blooded attention.

### THE DOMAIN OF THE SILVER-CROWNED

This region is dark, barren and windswept, but few realize that it nurtures a shadowland at its core. The noble family who rules it was given sole dominion over this piece of land by the Dragon-Blooded during the Usurpation, under the condition that it watch for Solar infiltration from the Lap. The domain, a long strip of land, has become a militaristic region that trades purely for the necessities of life and one where the only jewelry is steel. In memory of the land's first





ruler, Lady Ivory Cup, all adults dye their hair white on reaching adulthood and go through ferocious (and largely arbitrary) trials to determine whether they will remain faithful or will eventually betray the land. Those who are judged faithless have their throats cut, and their bodies are buried beneath a thicket of thorn trees around the main village.

The constant stream of deaths, barely counterbalanced by a high birth rate and by the fact that no casual wanderers are ever allowed to leave the land (they might, after all, be Solar spies) has cultured a shadowland, and ghosts whisper around the village walls by night. Young people of the land, both men and women, serve as guards or work in the iron mine or dig the dry fields until they are old and bent. The First and Forsaken Lion is aware of the place and may use it as a beachhead should he decide to take An-Teng.

### CHARACTER CONCEPTS FOR THE HIGH LANDS

**Warrior:** Hill-Bandit Officer, Woodchopper, Village Strongman

**Holy Man:** Enlightened Weaver, Forest Holy Man, Wandering Immaculate

**Savant:** Amateur Savant, Peddler/Scavenger, Disgraced Student Living in the Hills, Village Wise Man

**Criminal:** Hill Bandit, Llama Rustler, Nomadic Peasant, Poacher

**Entertainer:** Bird-Seller, Performer for Mining Gangs, Village Storyteller

## THE RETURN OF THE EXALTED

So, will the citizens of An-Teng be delighted to see their former rulers again, garlanding them with lotus blossoms and parading them through the streets? It's an interesting question. Like it or not, the land has come to an accommodation with the Dragon-Blooded, and the current situation is relatively stable. A lot of peasants wouldn't care one way or another about who's at the top. So, they've been conquered by someone else and the entire royal family was slaughtered and replaced? A great tragedy, but that's how things go.

Of course, there are nobles and peasants alike who bitterly regret the Usurpation and would greet revealed Solars or Lunars with awe and joy. There are also ordinary folk and royalty who have grown up to believe in Immaculate dogma, even if it doesn't have quite the weight of that of the Golden Lord or the Pale Mistress, and who will view returned Celestial Exalted with a degree of suspicion, remembering how An-Teng was put to fire and sword. As with many nations outside the Realm itself, people react on a case-by-case basis and will be much more inclined to admire and respect a Solar who is noble and generous, who abides by local customs and who doesn't get them into trouble with the current Terrestrial occupation.

If the Celestial Exalted can discover and restore the old royal family, place a High Queen in her proper rank and end the Dragon-Blooded occupation, that would resolve a great many problems. Both mortals and spirits alike would rejoice to see the land restored, apart from certain collaborators, merchants and nobles who have won status and wealth from the Dragon-Blooded. It would be easy, under those circumstances, for Solars and Lunars to resume their place at the top of the status pole. On the other hand, what's left of the royal family are affiliated with Yozi-worship, disposing of the Dragon-Blooded might involve full-scale military campaigns across the principality, and a lot of An-Teng's economy is now based on supplying luxury service and necessary foodstuffs to the Realm. Weaning the land into relative freedom (or proper allegiance) and self-sufficiency won't be easy. There will be riots, social disorder and possible famine and plagues as well.

However, in practical terms, An-Teng offers a great deal of benefits to the Celestial Exalted. There are hidden and ruined Manses to be rediscovered and rebuilt, fragmented once-Lunar tribes that can be rallied, a nation suffering under the yoke of the Dragon-Blooded that can be gloriously liberated and a fertile kingdom that could feed armies. It might even be seen as too useful an asset to be left in the hands of the Dragon-Blooded. In which case, can the Celestial Exalted afford to leave it alone?

## CRUSADERS OF THE MACHINE GOD

What if Autochthonia's invasion had moved through Creation in a slightly different direction? In **Time of Tumult**, the canonical timeline hypothesizes that the Locust Crusaders ravage Gem and the Lap. Should the Storyteller wish, they might instead turn north and invade An-Teng.

The Locust Crusaders would find travel north from the Silent Crescent comparatively easy and would begin by scouting the area. Several hillside villages simply vanish (the inhabitants removed for investigation and interrogation), but this would be put down to bandit activity or possibly Thousand work. The First and Forsaken Lion draws back his forces at this point, to observe events. Later in the year, a force of 4,000 Autochthonians, led by *Excessively Righteous Blossom*, arrives at Jade Plum Citadel and demands Prince Josei's surrender.

The local imperial garrison reports the situation to Shuri the Scarlet before engaging the enemy and, by taking advantage of the local terrain, manages to force a defeat on *Blossom* and his forces. Several hundred captives are taken and shipped downriver to the Shore Lands for personal investigation by Shuri.

Several months later, 30,000 more Locust Crusaders arrive, with *Unhesitatingly Loyal Weapon* and five more Alchemicals. Prince Josei, the royal family and most of the nobility flee through the hidden passages under Jade Plum Citadel, leaving the city and peasantry to the mercies of the Locust Crusaders. The local Realm garrison retreats downriver. Nobility and peasants alike fade into the mountains, retreating to distant villages, or head downriver in a growing wave of refugees. The High Prince issues the Masks That Command the Animals to loyal captains and beseeches the spirits of the land for aid.

*Weapon* and her troops dig in, fortifying Jade Plum Citadel to suit their needs, and arrange for supply lines back to their base. They take advantage of the mines, shipping materials back to the Gate, but find that, without the constant flow of trade and without supplies from outlying villages, they are running low on food.

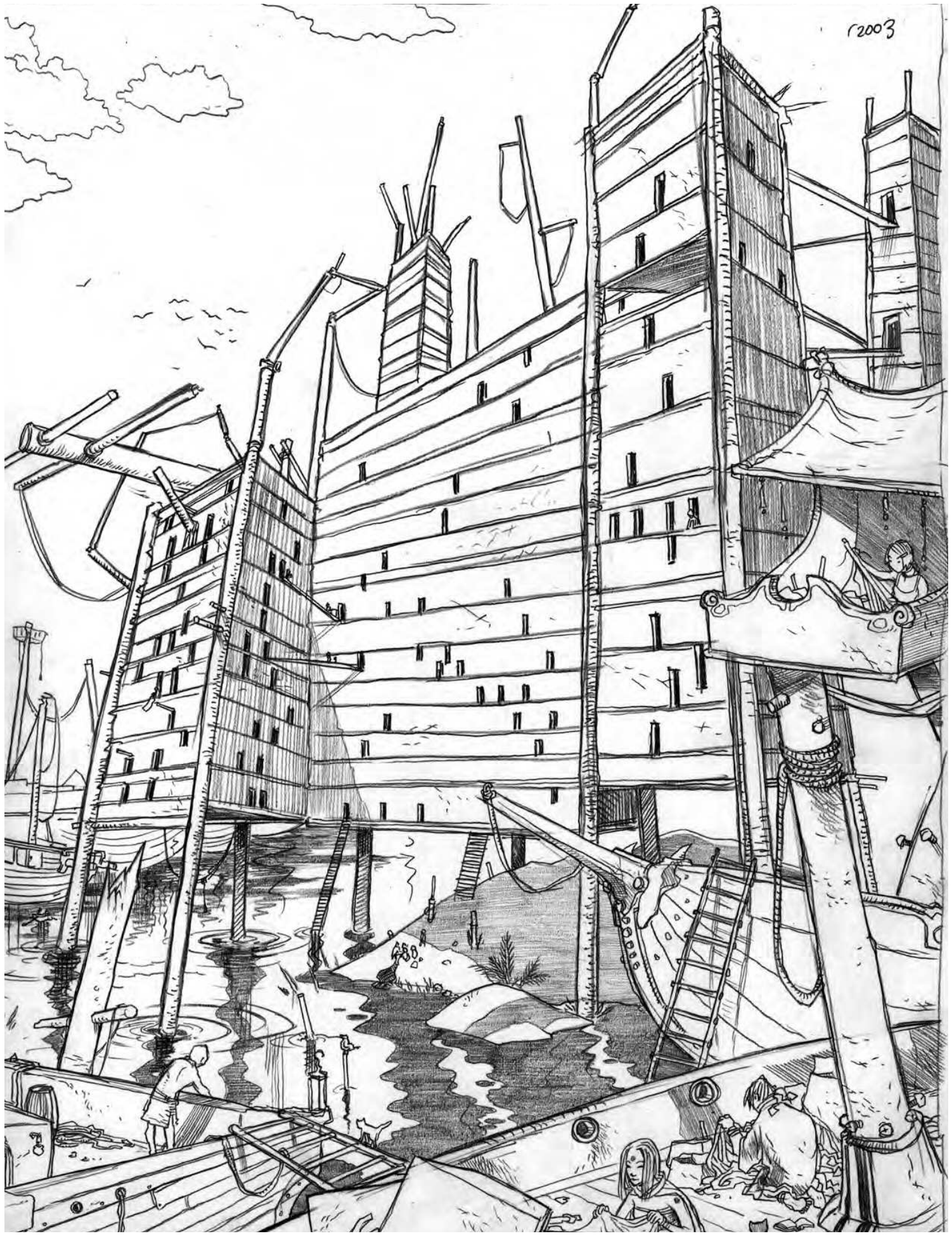
Shuri puts in an appeal for imperial reinforcements and demands local conscripts. Realm troops mass in the Shore Lands. Imperial forces also move to garrison the Lap and Gem, in case Autochthonian attention should turn that way. Meanwhile, in the High Lands, *Weapon* begins to march north with 25,000 crusaders into the Middle Lands, supplying themselves from the land as they travel.

The Middle Lands become a battleground. Sapphire and Prosperous Garden empty, and the inhabitants flee into the countryside for refuge. The Pale Mistress is seen walking across the land, and disease strikes the crusaders. Trade shifts to the small side canals rather than the River of Queens. The Prince of the Middle Lands issues the Sashes of the Ghost Generals, and elephants are gathered from across the land for war. The Locust army follows the River of Queens due north but suffers losses of perhaps 5,000 from attrition and disease en route, as local spirits rise up against the invaders and the peasants nibble away at scouting parties, food-collecting troops and anybody who gets out of sight of the main column.


Near the border of the Shore Lands, Shuri arrays the imperial forces for battle. By now, he commands several other Dragon-Blooded (including sorcerers) and 10,000 Realm troops and is backed by An-Teng's elephant cavalry and a force of several thousand armed peasants.

Events could go in several possible directions from this juncture. Imperial forces could crush the crusaders; the crusaders could crush the Realm forces; both sides could be severely damaged, to the extent that An-Teng guerilla tactics force the crusaders to retreat, whittling down their numbers as they do but also allowing the Three Princes to rebel against the reduced Realm presence. Matters are left for the Storyteller to decide.









## CHAPTER TWO THE LINTHA FAMILY



When they dare, the peoples of the West speak of the Lintha Family and its island home of Bluehaven only in hushed tones, for one never knows whether or not unfriendly ears will hear and mark the foolish orator for death or worse. Though they have existed since time immemorial, few outside of Bluehaven know for sure to what degree Lintha power extends. Some believe that they are little more than savages, devouring the unwary sailors and merchants who cross their path, taking what valuable plunder they can find back to legendary trophy towers in Bluehaven and selling what they may to the unscrupulous folk scattered throughout the Southwestern islands. Others note the Lintha's great age and

reason that they cannot have existed for so long as a mere horde of savages, theorizing that some great power must be behind them. Those who have incurred the wrath of the Lintha tell no gleeful tales. Such unfortunates, assuming they still have their tongues, describe horrors enough to keep the curious and the foolhardy far away from the shipping lanes of the Western Ocean and ever wary of encountering the villains found therein.

Most sailors in the West know of the familiar black and silver banners the Lintha ships fly, and when their lookouts spy a fleet that “sails without sails,” only the bravest make a stand. Most would rather hand over their goods and cut their losses than to risk slavery or death.



When the great beasts that draw the Lintha ships lurch into view, the prudent sailor always lays down his arms. Some already have their cargoes on deck awaiting the transfer to the pirates' holds.

The Lintha have a hierarchical society, with the eldest holding the most power and respect. Women of great age, in particular, hold a special place in Lintha society, being the prime decision makers and judges, while men usually achieve their chief honors in their middling years as sea captains and the primary breadwinners of their septs.

Most anyone with a useful skill can find rich rewards by throwing their lot in with the Lintha, though the Lintha do not suffer anyone to leave their service. Some stories tell of desperate men who fled across oceans to escape their grip but came to bitter ends all the same. Some tell even more frightening tales of innocents taken from their beds by night and spirited off to secret islands, learning only moons later that they have been taken captive by the Lintha as ransom for the unfortunate's husband's or brother's continued servitude.

According to Lintha tradition, trueblood Lintha are those God-Blooded descended from the ancient line of Kimberry, the Sea That Marched Against the Flame or, as the Lintha refer to her, the Great Mother. The line is very old, dating back to before the Solar Exalted destroyed the Primordials, when that Yozi Princess was free to walk through Creation. Long ago, the Lintha were

once a race of noble and mighty sea princes, ruling over a vast, long forgotten nation. But the Lintha bloodline has been so diluted over the centuries, and the true histories lost in the intervening centuries, that the Lintha possess only a fraction of the power and knowledge they once had. Some Lintha pay no heed to their presumed illustrious heritage, while others take it upon themselves to assert their eminence and reclaim the power their bloodline once held.

Trueblood Lintha prevail over initiated Lintha in all things — even high-ranking initiates must obey the dictates of the youngest and most ignoble trueblood. Tradition dictates that only trueblood Lintha be considered Lintha in the strictest sense. Lintha elders consider any dilution of the Lintha blood an obscenity. Although tolerated grudgingly, the Lintha septs do everything they can to keep their bloodlines pure, resulting in eugenic programs of varied effectiveness.

Lintha typically have glistening green skin and thick, frost-white hair that they typically either shear off or perfume with various sweet-smelling spiced unguents. They have unnaturally long and lean frames, especially the arms and legs, with high, flat, thin shoulders. Their joints protrude unnaturally, and they have extraordinarily long faces, drawn downward with long, cleft chins and high cheekbones. Most Lintha have rows of gills in the cheeks, though not all. Some Lintha have more or less god blood than others, however, resulting in a panoply of



variance, with some Lintha appearing almost human, others almost monstrous.

The Lintha revel in the fineries they pinch. All about Bluehaven, one can find Lintha men and women adorned in the finest silks and other rare materials. Most of this garb is of a decidedly delicate cut, with exquisite gloves of lace and leather and strings of jewels and pearls hanging about the Lintha's necks and from rows of rings set in their foreheads and gills (or where gills should be). Foundlings and other initiates often ape this style as a gesture of loyalty, sometimes with obnoxious results.

Lintha are typically long lived, with lives persisting for 300 years or longer. The longest lived Lintha, Bowni Tan-Hair, lived for 396 years and died by her own hand. In recent years, most Lintha seem to meet their ends by violent means, either at sea or through some tragic intrigue in Bluehaven itself, with sailors having the shortest lifespan.

Lintha who make their way in the outside world are castrated to prevent the dilution of the Lintha blood. Initiates are castrated to prevent them from polluting the Lintha bloodlines through the birth of halfbloods within Bluehaven. There is a very real dichotomy in the Lintha Family — the inner circle, being the trueblood Lintha, and the outer circle, being the initiates — though the inner circle downplays this as much as possible. Where possible, the inner circle makes it seem as if the outer circle is sharing in its traditions and its power when, really, the outer circle exists only for the sake of the inner circle's might.

## ANCIENT HISTORY

The Lintha of old had been mighty. Before the gods usurped the Primordials, the Lintha ruled a vast continent. The splendor they produced was without peer, and their works promised to endure for all time. Their patron, Kimberry, the Sea That Marched Against the Flame, whom they called their Great Mother, looked upon the Lintha kindly and taught them to construct synthetic men to send off to war and weapons of the greatest potency to secure their supremacy. Periodically, she rose up from the sea and bore the offspring of a favorite Lintha champion. Even the Dragon Kings could not conquer them, for their home, Lintha Ng Oroo, an island-child of the Great Mother, was ever devious in keeping her Lintha brothers and sisters safe.

But the Exalted rose up against the Lords of all Creation and struck them down, casting those Primordials who were not slain, the Lintha's Great Mother included, into Malfeas, a realm of shame made from the very bones of the Yozi Malfeas. In the midst of the tumult, as the world's very seams came undone, the world of the Lintha was torn asunder. Wars of limitless

duration roiled across the land, and elemental chaos swept over the limits of Creation, as the rage and the fury of nature took the Lintha kingdom and scattered it across the sea, tens of thousands meeting their doom without even firm earth to stand upon. Those that fell upon land were taken off as slaves or slain in the wars of men. In an instant, the great civilization of the Lintha was no more. All that remained was Lintha Ng Oroo, now a tiny island herself near death and mad with grief, whose tears melted in with the sea.

Unlike present-day Lintha, the Lintha of old were unusually tall and graceful, with bright green skin and piercing crimson eyes. They had no gills like modern Lintha, though they did pass their long faces and their appreciation for facial jewelry on to their descendants. Centuries of interbreeding with mortals has corrupted their once-noble visage, though certain behavioral traits, such as the Lintha's famous cruelty and sense of superiority, have remained intact.

## REMNANTS OF THE MIGHTY

But the Lintha people were not completely destroyed. A few dozen lived on. Some were enslaved, some lived as kings, and as time wore on and the days turned into centuries, all memory of what their people had once been was lost.

It was not until hundreds of years later that some descendants of the original Lintha came to realize their origins and sought to reclaim their heritage. The names of a few of these survive into the present age and are thought of as great Lintha heroes: Rat Scurdeon, a fearless and cruel pirate; Sirji Tan, a princess of a forgotten Southern nation; and Kan Pol the Elder, a scholar who scoured the West in search of Lintha history. Together, they had many adventures aboard their ship, the *Skalleng*, which have been recounted in the writings of Kan Pol the Elder. They also made many enemies, especially when their small band proclaimed their goals for all to hear: to reinvent the Lintha nation and claim the West as their rightful domain.

Few Western kings were delighted, or even impressed, at the news. Soon, several bounties were offered for the heads of the *Skalleng's* crew. And in time, the crew was captured. But the Lintha were crafty and persuasive with their captors. Rat Scurdeon convinced the admiral responsible for their capture that the Lintha were protected by powerful gods who would rise up against any who dishonorably slew them. The admiral relented, but he feared the result of a trial by single combat, which the Lintha demanded. He had them tied to the deck of the *Skalleng* and given to the waves without provisions, believing that the sea would be the end of them.





## THE LINTHA ARRIVE HOME

Only a few of the Lintha survived the voyage. For days the Lintha were subject to torrential rains by night and punishing, unendurable rays of the sun by day, able to see only the stars and the clouds in the sky, with the wind and the waves alone claiming their fate. Half their number had already perished of thirst when they ran aground. Through desperation upon witnessing the death throes and wretched cries and sicknesses of those around her, Sirji Tan, near death herself, managed to free herself from her bonds. She looked out to see what sort of land their ship had landed upon. Instead, she saw nothing but blue grasses and clusters of tall trees growing out of the sea.

Their hearts sank once more. The shallows had caused several ruptures in the hull of their ship, which they had neither the supplies nor the tools to repair. Moreover, the wild grasses growing in the sea were hideous to the palette and caused those who ate of it severe illness, which brought about the death of another Lintha. The trees bore fruit, but they were too far away to reach, with no lifeboat and hungry, misshapen sharks waiting just below the surface. Despite their freedom from captivity, it was obvious that they would all soon starve to death. They looked in dread toward the corpses, but they had already begun to rot and had been pecked by the massive egrets and quetzals into an unrecognizable bloody mélange.

It was not long before more perished, however. The few survivors ate of the dead. They found little nourishment in the stringy, gangrenous flesh, but it was enough to survive. As time wore on, the days grew hotter, and the crew could do little but hide below deck. Kan Pol tried his luck at catching fish, but he had no proper tackle and could not approach the surface of the water for the vicious sharks. In desperation, one crewman lost his will and quaffed seawater until he could drink no more. He was dead before the next sunrise.

One day, when it seemed that death would soon take them all, Rat Scurdeon spied several ships in the distance. The remaining Lintha signaled the ships. They cried for joy as the vessels approached, but their delight soon turned to despair as Rat Scurdeon recognized their banners those of the Black Freighters. Slave ships.

The Lintha readied themselves for a final, desperate fight as the slavers launched lifeboats full of armed men to capture them. The boats made it only a few hundred yards before a great swell of seawater toppled them, sending the men within to their deaths in the tangle of seaweed and sharks. The cause of the enormous swell slowly rose out of the sea and into view. An island, the Lintha's sister Lintha Ng Oroo, topped the surface. Trees and hills and fields of grasses surged out

of the ocean, scattering the Black Freighters and their crews into the sea.

The Lintha did not at first recognize Lintha Ng Oroo, but the Lintha's strong ancestral memory led them to trust her when she spoke, her voice emerging from the cave set into a great rock at the center of the island. She bade them look upon her five fertile hills that would sustain them, inexhaustible in their fecundity, bringing forth milking she-goats and stags. Thickets of trees, all of strong timber, could be cut without end, and never would the trees be depleted. Fresh water overflowed from streams and bubbled up into tiny lakes at their command. They rejoiced as quetzals brought them fishes and gourds of fresh water, which they ate and drank ravenously.

"Our Great Mother greets you," Lintha Ng Oroo said, "for she has heard your silent prayers and honors the children of her blood. You were, each of you, destined to join the dead, but you shall, instead, live to spread her glory and shall pay her in tribute for as long as there are days and as long as there is light."

## AWAKENING

Lintha Ng Oroo souged and strained as she slowly drifted West. In time, she brought the survivors to an alcazar barely visible beneath the waves, its towers and battlements just breaking the surface. A green-skinned man, blind and bearded, emerged from a tower stair, followed by a rusted and tarnished automaton. The automaton led the man to the edge of the tower, lifted him up in powerful arms and walked across the surface of the water toward Lintha Ng Oroo.

"This is the place of the Lintha of old," Lintha Ng Oroo said. "T'foor Na, the Place of the Stonehearted, mortals once called it. The Lintha knew it as the Blue City."

Once, the Blue City had spanned several islands and was the finest city in all the West. It is destroyed now, sunk beneath the waves for all time. The blind man who approached them was called the Warder of the Blue City, the ghost who kept order among the Lintha dead there. The automaton at his side was the Truthteller, whose eyes could read the ancestral memories of the Lintha. When the two reached Lintha Ng Oroo, the automaton surveyed the faces of the survivors, and the blind man wept, for the Truthteller saw the pain and suffering the Lintha had endured at the hands of the servants of the Unconquered Sun and wordlessly communicated it to the ghost.

The automaton stepped forward and looked into the eyes of each of them. Euphonious notes and resonances issued from the metal creature, and a deep frown formed on the old man's face.

“You have each of you sinned against the Great Mother,” the Warder of the Blue City said. “I see cutting of kinflesh and blood drinking. I see sister eating the roasted heart of brother. You have sinned against the Mother and shall now ever have the taste for the kinflesh you have feasted upon.”

The Warder of the Blue City looked to Lintha Ng Oroo with disappointment and anger, and she knew that she was doomed. “Go from this place,” the man said. “Go back to your tangled sea, and serve the Great Mother while you can, for there is a curse on your blood that cannot be lifted.”

## THE FOUNDING OF BLUEHAVEN

Lintha Ng Oroo returned to the sargasso sea, a place far from civilization, once holy to the Lintha, where the sacred blood might be cleansed with water and time, away from the temptations and distractions of the world. But the new Lintha could not be cowed by shame. In time, they even took pride in the sacrifice they made of their kin. The Lintha also retained their desire to wreak vengeance and domination over the realms of mortals and developed several successful plans to dominate their neighbors through trickery, piracy and savagery. Their home remained impenetrable to their enemies and proved to be a great haven from any whom would oppose them. Bluehaven.

Over the centuries, the Lintha produced many offspring by coupling with mortals, for children could be borne of two Lintha parents but rarely. Thousands of “halfblooded” Lintha soon walked Lintha Ng Oroo’s shores, and several new districts were built, constructed of the ships of defeated invaders connected with planks and covered passages. Hundreds of these broken ships soon collected in the sargasso sea surrounding Bluehaven, which, in time, formed a freeform labyrinth around part of the city: just one more obstacle for would-be conquerors.

## THE SECOND AGE

Following the devastation at the end of the First Age, the sea-trading networks of the Lintha became part of a much larger commercial universe. Where once they traded mostly in slaves, the Lintha now had the opportunity to fill the market vacuum for stimulants, narcotics, soporifics and vision-producing plants, beverages and other preparations. They raided villages and settlements suffering from the global plight and sold the stolen foodstuffs to the highest bidder. Within 20 years, the Lintha controlled a sizable percentage of the West’s wealth, and all the signs indicated that their growth would not halt. Expanding their target to purveyors of food and supplies, the Lintha quickly became the only source for such things for a large number of people.

## KAN POL THE YOUNGER

A poet, a historian and the architect of Lintha philosophy, Kan Pol the Younger was a mere halfblood, the child of Lintha Ba’ar, a ship’s mate, and an unnamed commoner. Ba’ar gave his son the name of the great Lintha historian of old, which would prove prophetic. Kan Pol the Younger lived through the Contagion and went on to become the greatest and most influential Lintha thinker of the age.

Kan Pol understood the curse upon the Lintha people and wrote extensively on the subject. “A curse of the blood,” the Warder of the Blue City of old had said, and that was exactly what it turned out to be. The blood of the Lintha was thin and would grow ever thinner. Lintha women bore children with grave difficulty, often perishing in the process, and they could enjoy this dangerous procreation only when their menfolk could supply a potent enough seed, which was all too rare. During Kan Pol’s lifetime, men took multiple wives and women shared their husbands, a tradition that continues, in the hopes that more progeny might come of the practice. Kan Pol the Younger wrote satires mocking the failed attempts to subvert the fate handed down to them and, to the shock and surprise of all, castrated himself. Many of his admirers followed suit.

As he grew older, Kan Pol’s conservatism became more and more strict and was evident in his writings. He decried the overwhelming number of Lintha halfbloods living amongst them, claiming that those who seek their pleasure with mortals only add water to diluted blood. Younger Lintha, given Kan Pol’s own origins, saw these writings as hypocritical and issued threats of violence toward the old philosopher. One evening, a raucous mob cut out his tongue, which led to his death, as healers could not adequately halt his bleeding. He was 135 years old.

With the current conservative vogue, Kan Pol the Younger and his works are more popular than ever. His magnum opus, *The Book of the Utz Semivir*, can be found on most bookshelves in Bluehaven. Many Lintha can quote it extensively from memory.

However, the Lintha had, of late, thought to stop and take stock of what their society had become and where it was headed. There had been no influential orator or philosopher for decades, though they had





their share of pseudointellectual fads, and the works of Kan Pol the Younger, the Lintha philosopher par excellence, were seen as defeatist and trite and certainly ill-fitting to the grandeur and power of the Lintha. They had taken their blood weakness and, by coupling with mortals, had turned it into strength. Now, they were many and mighty. Their curse remained, but was it a curse at all? After all, the Lintha flourished. If they choose to honor their fallen by partaking of their flesh, are they not still honorable creatures, whether they relish the flavor or not?

A single curious occurrence purged the Lintha mind of such inner turmoil.

The Lintha lookouts spied something in the distance and gathered around as rafts of human skeletons collected in the sargasso sea, an ill omen by anyone's reckoning. The rafts held the Wyld-infected remains of young and old, the bones picked clean and scorched and mangled into inhuman shapes. On closer inspection they found that the rafts themselves were of the same bones. It looked as if the human frames grew out of the rafts like foliage. Five thousand of them clogged the sargasso, halting anyone attempting to pass into or out of Bluehaven. After several days of increasing numbers appearing mired in seagrass and wedged between trees and dead ships, the rafts choked the bay.

All of Bluehaven stood staring out into the bay at this marvel, some filled the docks, others the shore, and

still others collected in the ships surrounding the island. And then all at once, as the Lintha let out a collective gasp, the long-dead skeletons sunk to the bottom of the bay, leaving only one slowly rising and falling with the sea. One blue-skinned and blind old man who called out to the Lintha. He told them that the Lintha dead had honored them with their presence and now demand fitting places to rest.

Within weeks, the Lintha had constructed a vast cul de sac in the surrounding labyrinth of ships. It was called the Coffin Vurjawna, the Lintha home of the dead. The Lintha rejoiced, considering the presence of their fallen ancestors the most potent blessing that they could hope for.

### THE COMING OF DUKANTHA

Three hundred and fifty years ago, a child named Dukantha came into the world. He was cruel and ingenious from an early age and was a great success in the eyes of his sept, the Ng Hut, for its members saw in him what their sept had lacked in recent times: ambition, alertness, sensitivity and a truly curious and keen mind. Even when still a youth Dukantha developed a deep fascination with the occult and with the ancient history of the Lintha, enthralled with stories of the destruction in the wake of the Usurpation.

Dukantha went to the Oroo Cave and spoke with Lintha Ng Oroo in a secret language. It was thought,



only half-jokingly, that he had fallen in love with her, as he took little romantic interest in anyone else. He spent the remainder of his time at home closeted in his study with ancient tomes and charts. While other youths began to prepare for a career at sea, he shunned such things as base and unworthy of a true Lintha. He took his fellow to task for their obsession with mortal things, enjoining them to instead form a navy to sail over the seas to the Realm and take the Blessed Isle through force of arms and, thereafter, dominate the world.

It was not until a few years passed that he changed his convictions on the matter. After succumbing to his family's wishes and setting out to sea (and proving a competent sailor in his own right), he saw the dominance that the Lintha had achieved through mere piracy and treachery and conspiracy. He later wrote to his father, "The Lintha are too few and have such weak procreative power that to send armies of our people to die in battle is akin to martyrdom for a cause that cannot be won. Why engage in such an enterprise when mortals to the last one freely do the bidding of anyone who provides them with enough coin? Our fathers have done well in dominating the shipping routes surrounding our domain and abroad, and I am proud to serve in their mold."

In his 16th year, Dukantha returned and visited the Oroo Cave to speak with Lintha Ng Oroo. But she did not speak. He stayed in the cave into the night enjoining her to answer his questions and eager to discuss his newfound opinions, but no answer came. He fell asleep on the rock there and was not seen again for one year.

Then, the rock cracked and opened up as a man rose out of the ground, born out of the womb of Lintha Ng Oroo. Dukantha met his fellow Lintha at the base of the rock and performed miracles for them. He commanded a feast and told them of Lintha Ng Oroo's crippled mind. "Our island sister dies," he said. "Prepare the feast for her passing as well as my rebirth."

During the feast, Dukantha explained where he had been for the past year and what had happened to him. "I have been visiting with the Great Mother," he said. A hush fell over all as he continued. "She has sent me back Exalted from the land of her exile to teach you what you have been eager to know these hundreds of years past since our fathers reclaimed the Lintha nation and forged our society anew. And so, I have returned. To teach you how to worship our Mother. To grant you gifts from our Mother that will make you ever mightier princes of the sea."

"We have, since time immemorial, compelled the spirits of the sea to drive forth our vessels instead of being bound as others to the winds' capricious whims. I bring with me the beasts of Malfeas, demons of immense proportions that will impel our ships across the sea like lightning and crush enemy ships like tinder."

"I shall give you guidance, and then, I shall leave you for a time. Ignore my words at your own peril, for my words are the words of our Great Mother of old, who has chosen you, her first children, as the harbingers of her return."

## RECENT EVENTS

With the Realm in decline and Creation in upheaval anew, the Lintha flourish. Wealth is everywhere, and only the most powerful have the means to keep it, and these rarely set their riches to sail. The Lintha have had their own rather small economic disappointments as well, but they have yet to experience true hardship.

Clashes with authorities and competitors have served only to challenge and strengthen the Lintha, as they have proven to be a most inventive and enterprising race, rising to whatever challenge offered them, though with a growing severity and sense of superiority. They have ever been cruel and proud, quick to slaughter, punish and humiliate their enemies. But of late, they have become bolder and more bloodthirsty, though without losing their characteristic brilliance.

## LINTHA NAMES

Each Lintha has a unique given name and a sept name, plus any attached honorable or pejorative titles. Informally, Lintha refer to one another by their given names, so long as there is goodwill and familiarity between them. Otherwise, especially if the conversants are of rival septs, the sept name alone is used. In formal situations, Lintha commonly refer to one another by the sept name followed by the given name.

For an outsider or foreigner to refer to an unfamiliar Lintha as anything but "Lintha" is a potential insult. Only friends and intimates may call a Lintha by her given name.

When addressed formally by important Lintha personages either in public or via written documents, a Lintha's name, which conform to the following formula, is used: *Lintha + sept + title + given name*. For example, a Lintha cousin of the Ixora sept with the given name of Juri would properly be referred to in formal situations as *Lintha Ixora Cousin Juri*.

If Juri were a halfblood, the title of *falong* would be placed after his sept name. For example: *Lintha Ixora falong Cousin Juri*.

If the Lintha has any special honors or titles, that title takes precedence, often even in conversation. Technically, for example, the *Lei Kiangi* would be called *Lei Kiangi Lintha Gajui Wari Fan*, though all refer to her simply as *Lei Kiangi*.





## THE LINTHA CHARACTER

Pride and honor are the backbone of Lintha society. The Lintha take pride very seriously and consider slights against nation, family or name to be unforgivable personal offenses, punishable by immediate violent retribution. Their manner in dealing with foreigners is aloof and superior, even in the face of mightier or craftier individuals, especially mortals. They have a deep regard for spirits of all kinds, however, especially water spirits and elementals. They fear only demonic forces and will almost always acquiesce to their infernal minions, for fear of offending their Great Mother.

The Lintha possess a different notion of honor than most. While their traditions of respect for one's superior in the family and in the society are familiar and understandable to most anyone in Creation, their ideas about honor as applied to foreigners demands a short explanation.

The Lintha have a double standard, especially when dealing with mortals who have no Lintha Family affiliation. Essentially, mortals disobeying any of a Lintha's commands can be considered to be in breach of the Lintha honor, even those who refuse to lie down and die like the dogs they are and instead choose to fight for their lives. Especially proud Lintha have even been known to lose their temper and howl in rage when victims do not perish after a single sword blow. Even adopted mortals may become the victim of a Lintha tantrum, though they may be protected if the family they belong to is of considerable reputation.

Nothing in the Lintha character or philosophy prohibit lies and treachery in dealing with foreigners, though, in the interests of good business, they usually reserve this facet of their character for serious rivals and those who make an enemy of Bluehaven.

The Lintha do not desire to dominate their neighbors with a violent sword. They have seen from afar how fleeting such power can be. The Realm, with all of its swords, strength and hordes of warriors, cannot even dominate the meager inhabitants of An-Teng, who are but mortal barbarians to the Lintha. The Lintha have learned the Realm's bitter lesson from its example. The sword is not a profitable convincer or instrument of dominion, the Lintha surmise, unless one can afford to for evermore garrison one's enemies. The Lintha realize that control over wealth and resources is much more effective.

"Many enemies can be bought," Kan Pol the Younger writes. "Some will even pay a great deal to join us. If an enemy refuses to be bought and will not join us, we shall debase him by taking his livelihood away at a moment of weakness. Eventually, the enemies will join together to oppose us but will find that their numbers and their strength are meaningless when they cannot find our

home. They can search the Western Ocean for years without success, and when they finally stumble upon Bluehaven, starving and weary with sickness, we will take their ships and feed their entrails to the sea. And then, we will find their masters and make them a sacrifice unto our Great Mother. We shall take their gold and debase their sons, pour filth over their homes and spell our name in the befouled soil of their nation, planting the seeds of our supremacy in the fear of all who knew them. In this way, the mortal nations of men shall fall under our sway."

### *The Book of the Utz Semivir*

*Behold. I am a dry tree. And in this, I am mighty. I drop no seed and bear no fruit. Yet, my progeny is great, my works, princely. My limbs break and burn with ease. But my kindred, abundant and opulent, destroy and bring doom to my foe.*

So begins *The Book of Utz Semivir*, Kan Pol the Younger's magnum opus on Lintha philosophy. The text is flawed, containing many leaps of logic and fallacies, but it is accepted nearly wholesale by most educated Lintha, who are willing to let sound reasoning slide for the sake of the book's more appealing conclusions. Some of the basic tenets are as follows:

*The Lintha race is divine.* The Great Mother passed her blood along to the Lintha so that they might do her good works. Other races are not so blessed and, thus, are inferior.

*The Lintha shall one day rule the kingdoms of men.* Such superiority cannot be denied. Yes, there are more powerful races than the Lintha, but these do not share in mortal blood, as the Lintha do. Hence, the Lintha are more fit to rule over mortals.

*The Lintha curse is no true curse, but a blessing.* The flesh of other races corrupts the Lintha, so it is indeed fitting that they should eat of their fallen, both to preserve their strength and to honor their race.

*The Lintha who willfully drops his seed in a mortal womb or who gratefully accepts mortal seed is no true Lintha.* This doctrine is very much in vogue in Bluehaven nowadays, with some going so far as to demand the death of offending Lintha based on this text.

## CANNIBALISM

The Lintha culture began with cannibalism, and it remains an important feature of their society. Contrary to the legends abounding about their culinary habits,





the Lintha tend to be particular about their diet and stick to the letter of the term's literal definition, relishing the flesh of other Lintha, usually those fallen in battle beside them. To consume fallen comrades honors them and increases the diner's strength and worthiness, if only in a symbolic sense. Lintha warriors also feast on powerful enemies who have been vanquished in combat, but these are almost never mere mortals, whom the Lintha believe are infinitely below them and not even worthy of being eaten. Especially powerful mortal chieftains may sometimes be an exception, as the Lintha may honor especially shrewd and crafty enemies by eating a piece of their heart but no more. To gorge oneself on such low meat as a mortal's is considered both uncouth and unhealthy. Indeed, Lintha tradition holds that the eating of mortal flesh to excess will render one a mortal oneself. On the seas, however, away from Bluehaven and in the wake of battle, Lintha sailors often disregard etiquette and partake of whatever they wish. Trueblood captains will most likely attempt to curb the base desires of their crew, while halfbloods or initiated captains may be more lenient.

The Lintha advocate cannibalism in their mortal initiates as well. Lintha tradition holds that mortal flesh is a fitting diet for other mortals. Many Lintha captains allow, encourage and, sometimes, require their mortal crews to follow their example and consume the flesh of their fallen comrades and mighty enemies, so long as those they devour are mortal themselves. At times, the Lintha reward worthy conduct or prowess in battle with a taste of a mighty enemy's blood.

Under no circumstance is it acceptable for someone not of Lintha blood to devour the flesh of a fallen Lintha. To do so is the gravest insult. Lintha witnessing such an affront will, as a rule, treat the offender as a mortal enemy.

When times are tough, especially at sea, and food is scarce, Lintha tradition holds that elder Lintha may kill and eat their juniors for the sake of their own survival. Being master seamen whose ships are, by their nature, rarely becalmed, the Lintha rarely have had official cause to make use of this custom.

### THE *Lei Kiangi* AND THE SEPTIAN COVENANT

The eldest Lintha grandmother, currently Wari Fan of the Gajui sept, is called the *Lei Kiangi*, who dominates all Lintha septs and settles all disputes among them. She has the power of life and death

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over all Lintha as well as non-Lintha foundlings, initiates and adoptees living in and out of Bluehaven.

The *Lei Kiangi* usually comes from one of the Lintha Greatsepts, as these three septs rarely suffer those of lesser septs to challenge their supremacy by living to a very great age.

The *Lei Kiangi* has the power, when in the interests of the Lintha people, to command any of the Lintha's pirate fleets or slave convoys, regardless of to which house they belong. Should Bluehaven fall under attack, all responsibility for the city's defenses fall to her. She may defer some responsibilities to members of the Septian Covenant, but in the end, all kudos and blame belong to her.

Despite their infamous and violent political meddling abroad, the Lintha have never sought to depose their own leader. Assassinations of rival septs leaders occur, at times all too frequently, but in over 1,000 years, no one has yet attempted a political coup in Bluehaven by slaying the *Lei Kiangi*. The *Lei Kiangi* has the blessing of Dukantha and, therefore, of the Lintha's Yozi Great Mother. To oppose her would not be merely treasonous, but would invite infernal retribution.

The elder grandmothers of each sept together comprise the Septian Covenant, which the *Lei Kiangi* may call upon for advice, proposals and guidance. As a body, it has no actual power, but it does have a modicum of influence and access to the *Lei Kiangi's* ear. The Septian Covenant meets twice per moon in private to discuss matters concerning the security and economy of Bluehaven.

### LINTHA GRANDPARENTS

At the head of each sept stands an elder grandmother, whose word is law in her sept. Grandfathers hold honorable positions as masters of trade, but Bluehaven is a matriarchal society at heart, a tradition that none question.

Elder grandmothers have responsibilities to the Septian Covenant and must be versed in all manner of Lintha tradition and history. The elder grandmother surrounds herself with her fellow sept grandmothers, who act as her advisors. The elder grandmother controls the wealth of her sept, with only the *Lei Kiangi* able to overrule her budgetary decisions. While the sept grandfathers may control all foreign business concerns, they must obtain the funds they require from the sept's vault or coffers, which requires the approval of the elder grandmother.

A grandmother represents and is responsible for a more or less discrete domestic unit, with as many fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts and cousins as she has given rise to and all initiates and foundlings that she and her progeny have managed to support financially

and hold under their dominion. Whenever there is a dispute between her charges, the grandmother holds the authority to decide the outcome. Whenever disputes emerge between the charges of different grandmothers of the same sept, the grandmothers seek the counsel of their elder, who has the authority to reconcile the situation however she sees fit. When problems develop among houses, the elder grandmothers of each concerned sept take the case to the *Lei Kiangi*, who renders her decision, usually with the aid of the other elders.

Because of the institutionalized bigamy of the Lintha traditions, grandmothers and grandfathers each have a different set of individuals they think of as progeny. While grandmothers reign over all of their natural descendants, grandfathers choose which of his various wives' progeny will be called his sons and daughters, with the most powerful and richest grandfathers having the largest stables of kin. Children may protest being chosen for affiliation with one grandfather or another, but the decision rests with the grandfathers, with the most influential grandfathers given power to overrule the choices of less influential ones. This can even occur after someone has served for years as the kin of one grandfather, only to be "selected" by another more prominent grandfather, effectively forcing the individual to change houses (though not necessarily loyalty).

### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Lunar, Sidereal, Solar

A prominent grandfather of the Haquen sept claims a familial relationship with a father who has adopted a powerful Exalted. The claim is found to have a certain amount of merit, but the truth is uncertain. The grandfather, who has fallen out of favor with the Cult of Dukantha, wishes to use the Exalted to subvert some of the members of the cult and makes no secret of the plan. Because the grandfather is acting within Lintha tradition, the Exalted must comply to his wishes or face the displeasure of the *Lei Kiangi*. As the controversy mounts, the Feast of Dukantha approaches. Dukantha himself may have to make the final decision, perhaps with his blade.

Grandfathers have authority over all business concerns outside of Bluehaven and are in charge of all of their sept's captains and fleet commanders. No elder grandfather distinction exists. Each grandfather reigns over both the blood and adopted kin who serve in his pirate fleet and his slave fleets. Some grandfathers trust their children more than others to act in their best

interests. Therefore, such a grandfather's progeny will likely make up the bulk of those serving him. A few micromanage their captains, demanding constant reports and rolls of bookkeeping records to be delivered regularly, but most simply develop plans and schemes with the fathers and captains beneath them and set them about their way, trusting that will act as true Lintha and not betray their kin. While the funds to support a fleet usually must be obtained from the elder grandmother, who evaluates the grandfathers' plans and issues the appropriate sum if their proposals are deemed worthy, most grandfathers have their own stashes of wealth and do not always bother to have their plans approved. A portion of whatever profits have been earned from a business endeavor must always be paid out to the family coffers, however.

### LINTHA FATHERS AND MOTHERS

Upon fathering two trueblood children, a worthy Lintha brother or uncle may be given the distinction of being named a father of his sept. A sister or aunt may be given the distinction of mother of her sept upon giving birth to two trueblood children. The sept's elder grandmother bestows the honor.

Once so named, most fathers may enter into the Cult of Dukantha and subject themselves to the required initiation rites, though membership is not strictly mandatory. Lintha fathers protect and manage their sept's overseas business interests. As such, fathers spend the greater part of the year outfitting fleets and traveling abroad, though some do remain in Bluehaven while their underlings do all of the work. Fathers typically receive a captainship of a vessel or a fleet, though traveling with their vessel or fleet is not always necessary — or even desired.

Lintha mothers maintain and oversee the domestic interests of their sept, including economic matters and the organization of community services. They also have the responsibility of carrying out punishments meted out to their sept's members by the sept's grandmother or the *Lei Kiangi*. With the permission of the sept's elder grandmother, a mother may set out to sea as a father might, though Lintha usually consider such work mean and beneath mothers.

### LINTHA BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Male trueblood Lintha are born brothers, and female truebloods are born sisters. Lintha children typically spend their childhood removed from their parents in one of several island schools. In these schools, children learn history, tradition and useful skills such as seamanship, bookkeeping, warfare and commerce. Before graduation, brothers and sisters commonly take on the responsibilities of child rearing for the mothers of

the sept, the protection of the sept and the disciplining of the very young.

Following graduation from an academy, brothers and sisters of Greatsepts enter into one or another profession, which will engage most of their life until they produce children themselves. Seamanship is the most honorable and exciting career, and many youths usually spend at least a few years at sea. Other brothers and sisters take on the responsibilities of trade matters under one of the sept's fathers.

Some brothers and sisters of lesser septs work for their own sept, typically being entrusted with sept trade matters, while others, due to economic realities, have little option other than to bond themselves to another sept. These usually serve one of the Greatsepts as servants, crewmen, messengers, dockmen or any other subordinate position.

After the birth of two trueblood children, a sister may, at the discretion of her sept's elder grandmother, be named a mother of her sept. As with fathers, the new mother is expected to join the Cult of Dukantha.

### LINTHA AUNTS AND UNCLES

Brother and sisters of merit willing to serve in distant locales become aunts and uncles, who function as the Family's eyes and ears abroad. They usually oversee a complement of cousins and report their charges' successes, failures, episodes of insubordination and any other news worth noting back to their superiors in Bluehaven by way of messenger. They also operate a clearinghouse of intelligence in their region and usually gain many contacts and matchless expertise in their area's geopolitics through bribery and by planting spies in strategic (though not necessarily powerful) political positions.

Due to the nature of the work they do, most aunts and uncles are initiates. Trueblood Lintha would certainly stand out in foreign lands and would find the recruiting and espionage implicit in the sept rank a trying and perhaps impossible business as a result. Lintha with more mundane features and characteristics, especially halfbloods, may find success as aunts and uncles.

Some aunts and uncles have been given their rank in the form of a demotion, as a punishment or exile, for crimes of lesser treachery. The Lintha elders watch these carefully and note their loyalty. After several years, an exile may be granted a promotion to her former sept rank. As implied above, this punishment is a particularly harsh one for truebloods, as they invariably find it difficult to perform their duties effectively, spending much of their time and resources safeguarding their identity and keeping out of sight.





### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Lunar, Sidereal, Solar

One of the characters has been recently promoted to the rank of aunt and must begin building a web of agents. Only some of the would-be agents are spies placed in the character's midst to test her. One of them, after being accepted as a cousin, incites trouble between the aunt and her compatriots, planting evidence suggesting a friend's treachery. Another spy attempts to steer her away from her oath to the Lintha, offering her wealth in exchange for secrets. The first spy eventually clashes with the second, with each offering evidence that the other is plotting against the aunt. One tries to blackmail the aunt into killing the other spy, revealing his affiliation with the Lintha but obviously trying to use the aunt for his own purposes. A third spy appears from Bluehaven with either death or reward for the aunt. In a shower of confusion, the aunt must decide who to trust, with her life or death hanging in the balance.

### COUSINS

Most Lintha initiates, those unable or unwilling to purchase a seat in the Family, begin at the bottom, as cousins. A cousin may not even be aware of her initiation, but that is how other Lintha will refer her to in the future. By performing some service for the Family and reaping some reward in recompense, an individual enters the Family, albeit tentatively. From this time on, she may be called upon by her Lintha contact, or any member of the Family, for further missions. The Lintha always treat their willing cousins equitably, even generously. Agents who refuse these missions find themselves the object of a comprehensive program of coercion.

The Lintha use cousins chiefly as low-level spies and as crews on their galleons, though one may also be given reconnaissance sorties, bodyguard details, assassination missions and instructions to foment political insurrection, among other missions, especially if that cousin shows promise. Cousins almost never receive invitations to live in Bluehaven, unless they have proven their loyalty without question and will soon be promoted. Lintha initiates only rarely advance beyond the rank of brother or sister in the Family. Once named a cousin, the Family scrutinizes a new initiate's life, noting her friends, family, possessions and loyalties.

A disobedient cousin does not lose her place in the Family. Even in death, one can never lose Family



standing. On the contrary, at first, the defiant initiate suffers not at all. Instead, the Family typically relocates a loved one to an island near Bluehaven. Depending on the offense, a cousin's entire family may be moved. If the cousin straightens out, her loved ones may be released in a few years. If defiance continues, horrors are visited upon the cousin's people. Typically, this involves some sort of ritual castration, a procedure the Lintha have mastered over several centuries in their own infernal rites. Spouses receive this penalty first, then children.

## INITIATION

Admission into the Lintha Family is easy, though it requires significant sacrifices, sometimes monetary, other times more personal. The power and wealth to be gained is worth the cost, provided one plays the Lintha's game by their rules. The following conditions must be met, whether the Lintha initiate is brought in an initiated cousin, is a foundling or is someone who has bought a place in the Lintha Family.

All initiated Lintha must take an oath, swearing fealty to the Lintha. This oath is consecrated by a priest of the Cult of Dukantha, one of which must be present at all initiations. The other persons necessary for a proper initiation are the sept sponsor and a child or other blood-kin hostage of the initiate's choosing.

Initiates wishing to advance their status within the Family must first serve until such a time as their worthiness and loyalty is without question. Before accepting the distinction, however, the aspiring Lintha must sacrifice one of her family, preferably a child, to the Lintha. The cult priest gelds the child and joins her to Lintha society as a foundling. If the new initiate ever betrays the Lintha, this child is made to suffer terribly both physically and spiritually, with cruel evidence of their torment sent to the betrayer (e.g., an entire hand being sent to the initiate as evidence that several fingers were cut off). The child will not be killed outright, though she will certainly be made aware of the cause of her suffering. If misbehavior continues, the initiate and the child learn the true nature of the oath given at initiation. Their souls, now bound to Dukantha and the Great Mother, can be delivered to Malfeas with a word from the cult's high priest, who will do so at the bidding of the initiate's sponsor should there be any cause to invoke infernal punishment. Should the initiate seek to make amends after her hostage has been sacrificed, the Lintha usually allow it, at least the first time, though another child must be set to them as a hostage.

Obviously, some people will be difficult to control despite the child collateral they offer. Either they do not care about the child's fate or are touched by some malady of the brain that affects their better judgment. The Lintha have no wish to deal with those that they

cannot control. If they make the rare mistake of initiating a person and their error is made apparent, the Lintha have no qualms about removing the problem quickly and easily.

All foreign initiates, male and female, who wish to enter Bluehaven or serve on a Lintha pirate or slave vessel, must undergo castration. Great favor may be gained by performing the operation oneself.

### THE PLAIN TRUTH ON CASTRATION

Much has been said about the Lintha's passion for removing their own and their servants' generative parts. Since this occurs in different instances and can seem a bit confusing, here are some general guidelines for dealing with this concept.

Officially, the aim of castration is to prevent the Lintha from spreading their seed abroad or bearing foreign, tainted children. The other goal is to prevent foreigners from impregnating Lintha women or seducing Lintha men. The practice occurs in other instances as well, such as when Lintha captains castrate their mortal crew, apparently for the sake of provoking cruelty or even, sometimes, for the act's own sake.

The actual operation must be performed by someone with Medicine ••• or higher to prevent complications. If someone with less skill performs the operation and the number of failures on the Medicine roll is greater than the number of successes, then the character being operated on takes lethal damage equal to the difference. Performing the operation on women has a difficulty of 4.

Lintha men and women who enter into careers that take them abroad typically undergo castration after fathering or giving birth to two children.

Lintha men and women who wish to enter the Cult of Dukantha are castrated after they have fathered or borne two children.

Foundlings and halfblooded or foreign adoptees are castrated before puberty, traditionally at age 10.

Foreign initiates who wish to live in Bluehaven, regardless of rank and whether or not they paid their way in or not are made to undergo castration.

Those buying a mother or father position must be castrated and must perform the operation themselves.





## BUYING INTO THE FAMILY

The rich are more than welcome to add their money to the Lintha coffers and vaults. But it takes more than money to buy the Lintha's trust. Granted, the more money offered, the more the Lintha will be inclined to take someone at their word, but other assurances are usually necessary. Entering the Family as a cousin is simple, and the requirement of handing over a hostage can be overlooked if the character has Resources •••, though the new cousin will never progress without a hostage. Entering as a brother or sister is more expensive, at Resources ••••, and still requires a hostage. Only the most wealthy can buy themselves the title of father or mother, requiring Resources •••••, plus a hostage.

Those buying a place in the Lintha Family commonly get a glimpse of Lintha society through their dealing as merchants, spies and sailors. Before the actual buying is done, the buyer must locate and gain the support of a Lintha of no less than mother or father status, who will serve as the buyer's sponsor and whose sept will reap the funds obtained through the transaction. Once the purchase is complete, the sept in question considers its new kin to be bonded to it.

Regardless of the amount of money offered, any non-Lintha wishing to live in Bluehaven must undergo castration. Those desiring a title of mother or father must perform the act themselves in a ritual overseen by the Cult of Dukantha.

What those buying themselves a Lintha title and possibly joining Lintha society are not likely to understand going into the deal is that, regardless of what title they have purchased, the Lintha will never, ever, treat them as equals. They will flatter the new initiates and use them for whatever resources and contacts they have and tell them whatever they need to hear, but the Lintha will never grant the initiates any real power. Such initiates usually end up dead of mysterious causes after a few years, when their money is gone and their contacts have dried up. The Lintha, as a culture, are deeply racist, but they hide it well for the sake of their own profit margins.

## STARTING AT THE BOTTOM

Those without piles of money to throw at the Lintha can still become a part of the Family, but they start out as cousins, with all of the requirements involved (see above). Such initiates have to have something to offer the Lintha, though not necessarily something tangible. If they have a knack for spying or forgery or any of a number of skills useful to a criminal organization, they will be welcomed with open arms. But there are requirements.

First of all, when a member of the Lintha Family first approaches a promising initiate, she never reveals that she is, herself, a Lintha. She merely makes her

## ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Lunar, Sidereal, Solar

A wounded and half-crazed initiated Lintha father approaches begging for assistance. He bought his way into the Lintha without realizing the consequences and is now on the run. The Lintha have taken his wealth and his family, but now, they demand his head. He offers what little he has left, a strange silvery sword set with a half-dozen Hearthstones, if they'll take him to Chiaroscuro as fast as possible. A fleet of Lintha have been dispatched to bring back the traitor's head, so time is of the essence. The sword is called the Sword of the Blue Hand, and it was stolen from the Lintha trophy towers, where it has been displayed in a place of honor for hundreds of years. When this is learned, the father raises his offer and promises to betray the secrets of the Family to the characters. All the while, the Lintha are hot on their trail.

offer and pays for the services rendered. Even then, she rarely reveals whom she works for, with only a simple indication that more work can be had, should the initiate so desire. At this point, whether the agent reveals it or not and whether the initiate wants it or not, the initiate is now a Lintha cousin. From now on, the Lintha will be watching.

Following a few successful missions, and perhaps after doing a number of unpaid "favors" for the Lintha agent, the agent offers the cousin a choice: Abide by the rules of Lintha society regarding initiates, or everyone the cousin knows—his family, friends and business associates—will suffer, one by one. And then, when there is no one left, they will make him a eunuch and sell him as a slave in a foreign land. When it comes down to it, the decision is not difficult, and the Lintha receive few refusals.

The Lintha watch ceaselessly, and they know who the initiated cousin's friends and family are and who he considers his favorites. The Lintha find the best and send the hostage back to Bluehaven. Then, they tell the cousin that his friend, loved one or otherwise is in their power but that good behavior on his part will reunite them in one year, at which time the hostage will be freed. The hostages are kept on a nearby island where the Lintha treat them amicably, with frequent visits from particularly friendly Lintha who do their best to make them comfortable and pump them for information. There have been many violent hostages, but the right amount

of gentle persuasion and tranquilizers makes even the most troublesome captives docile. Once they realize that escape is impossible and that, more often than not, the Lintha have given them a modicum of luxury in place of the squalor of their lives, most are content to await their freedom in comfort. Some have even become cousins themselves upon their release.

Occasionally, a new cousin will become so full of fear or so afflicted with a sense of righteousness that he will involve the authorities and attempt to entrap the Lintha agent. While efforts such as this have met with some degree of success and some agents certainly have been captured and executed, such actions have never led to any serious consequences for the Lintha and invariably end with exactly what the agent promised the new cousin should he prove untrustworthy: death and slavery.

### FOUNDLINGS

Outsiders and halfblood Lintha can only join the inner circle by being adopted by one of the three Greatsepts. Adoption usually occurs before the age of 10, and certain rituals must be performed before the sept's elders can sanction the adoption. Despite being technically a part of the sept, foundlings possess a lower status than truebloods. Many family members make no secret of their true feelings toward foundlings, considering them an uncouth or even obscene fixture in Bluehaven, a lamentable obfuscation of tradition that they endure with candid outrage. Some are more tolerant than others, but the unpopularity of adoption means that it is rarely practiced. Halfbloods born of Lintha women do not need to be formally adopted and may, in fact, pass for truebloods in some instances, avoiding the social stigma attached to their situation.

Only those trueblood Lintha of mother or father rank or above may adopt halfbloods or mortals. Before adoption can occur, the sept elder grandmother must examine the foundling for as long as she find necessary, which could be weeks or months, and finally give her permission. Once the adopting father or mother gains the permission of their elder grandmother, the first order of business is to castrate the foundling, whether it be male or female, in order to prevent the dissolution of the Lintha blood. The earlier this act is performed, the better, so that, as Kan Pol the Younger explains, "the passions never enter into generation, such that the gelding may be bred as a perfect minion without the treacherous leanings wont to erupt from the flame of carnal appetites."

After castration, which is usually performed with a hot razor or iron, the new foundling is named a Lintha brother or sister and recites the following oath: "I swear to endure torture, exile, fever, whip, block or hatchet

rather than give my secrets or loyalty to any but my brothers and sisters."

Foundlings cannot rise above the standing of brother or sister without the express permission of the *Lei Kiangi*.

### LINTHA SEPTS

Lintha society is divided into households known as septs. Most septs, even lesser ones, each pride themselves for having the purest blood and the most direct lineage from their divine ancestors. All of them have convoluted genealogies demonstrating their primacy, but few can be confirmed, with several septs claiming some of the same important personages from antiquity as their own. Each are named for their ancient founder and prime ancient ancestor.

Three Greatsepts dominate Lintha society: the Gajui, the Haquen and the Ng Hut. These are the wealthiest and most powerful. Five other septs exist, but none command the influence of the Greatsepts, with the smallest amounting to only a dozen or so members.

**Gajui:** The current ruling Greatsept, as the *Lei Kiangi* is of the Gajui Greatsept, the Gajui possess one quarter of the Lintha wealth and maintain 24 pirate fleets and seven slave fleets, in addition to sponsoring several independent ongoing piratical operations throughout the West on sea and on land. They themselves have a minor interest in swordplay, with a few of their ranks holding honorable places in the Sword Brotherhood, the preeminent martial union in Lintha society. Most Gajui remain in Bluehaven and attend to their family's economic interests through agents (mostly those of lesser septs under their employ). Paradoxically, they are the most cosmopolitan of all the houses, as they keep hidden pleasure palaces in distant lands and are willing to do business with anyone with enough gold. The Gajui have the most eccentric personal habits of any of the septs, being famous for sexual adventures of unheard of proportions and feasts of staggering indulgence. They also tend to be one of the most tolerant of the septs, and do not reject anyone as a friend or business partner based solely on his sept or politics, which probably, at least in part, accounts for their great wealth. Wari Fan is the current elder grandmother of the Gajui Greatsept and the *Lei Kiangi*. She has a reputation as a wise and shrewd thinker, as well as being a renowned poet and painter, and she takes frequent vacations to places west of Bluehaven, always returning with curious baubles.

**Haquen:** The chief rival of the Gajui throughout Lintha history, the Haquen possess a good deal of wealth and maintains seven piratical fleets predominantly manned with their own ranks. The Haquen founded the Sword Brotherhood, and they comprise its finest swordsmen. All Haquen must serve the Brotherhood in some capacity, and the Greatsept uses it to





maintain its martial supremacy and to keep tabs on rival septs, as the Brotherhood attracts many members from all sectors of Lintha society. The Haquen bitterly hate the Ng Hut Greatsept and will take any opportunity to sabotage its interests and vilify its members' characters clandestinely. The Haquen also lead the pack when it comes to fashion. Lintha elders say that if a Haquen brother decided to sport a fish between his legs one morning, the bay would be empty by noon. The Haquen have the best connections with foreign courts and, therefore, have the greatest access to some of the oddest and most outrageous trends in Creation, which they are eager to bring to Bluehaven. They eschew plain and rugged styles in favor of shocking, busy and delicate designs. Even their cruelest captains wear silk veils and dark, flowing scarves, which means that half of Bluehaven follows suit. The elder grandmother of the Haquen is Sarangkai, a surprisingly young-looking Lintha woman of almost 350 years. She still adorns herself in risqué finery and retains a menagerie of Lintha suitors. She has a staggering 84 husbands and shows no sign of halting her amorous pursuits.

**Ng Hut:** Historically, the Ng Hut have not gone in much for tradition, apart from the traditions they themselves originated. They have not been the keepers of great wealth or especially puissant businessmen, and the swordsmen of their Greatsept rarely advance beyond the third *kur*. For this reason, the sept's name once appeared only infrequently in histories and official records. That all changed 340 years ago, when Dukantha, the only son of an Ng Hut pirate, crossed into Malfeas and returned to Bluehaven Exalted. From then on, the Ng Hut have maintained their power and importance by dominating the Cult of Dukantha, which most Lintha eagerly seek to join. Consequently, most other septs step around the Ng Hut carefully for fear of ejection from the cult. The Ng Hut moved from the island portion of Bluehaven to an area they dubbed the Temple District when their island district partially sunk into the sea. Their departure caused many leaders of the other septs to criticize the Ng Hut's almost flagrant disregard for tradition, as the Greatsepts of the Lintha have ever dwelt in Bluehaven. The Ng Hut have sought to punish those offending septs by denying their members ranks in the cult. Ooloo is the current elder grandmother of the Ng Hut Greatsept. She has served as such for the past 70 years and has maintained a secret farm of Lintha children that she is breeding in an attempt to bring the Lintha race back to its former glory, a goal she pursues without regard for honor or ethics. Those who know of her obsessions consider her singularly mad and seek her replacement, which can only be effected by her death. Ooloo is the sister of Yrjow Han, the leader of the Cult of Dukantha.

## ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Lintha God-Blooded, Lunar, Sidereal, Solar

Dukantha declares that a great contest be held in tribute to the Great Mother to determine the most able Lintha champion. To decide this, several events ensue: duels, races (both on foot and at sea), tests of skill and decision-making trials. In the end, one true champion will stand alone. Or will there be one at all? Several attempts have been made on the life of the current favorite to win, Sennong Witali, affecting the performance of other worthy contestants. All of this is driving the bookies crazy and prompting many to demand their bets back. Someone has to get to the bottom of it. Surely Dukantha himself would appreciate seeing these miscreants brought to justice. Wouldn't he? Or is it possible that he himself is behind the havoc?

## MINOR LINTHA SEPTS

The remaining septs are generally not members of the ruling class, though they do keep in contact with the Greatsepts through the Septian Covenant and the Cult of Dukantha. They all tend to serve as scapegoats for the foibles and failures of the Greatsepts and are expected to accept blame for various ineptitudes with grace.

**Sennong:** The most ambitious, some would say most insolent, of the lesser Lintha septs, the Sennong keep their secrets well and have covertly amassed a great deal of wealth. They have managed to gain control of several An-Teng trading interests, fleecing the princes and then sending armed fleets to reclaim the goods from the buyer. While they realize that this approach will not be effective in the long run, the technique has made them immensely wealthy in a very short time, and the temptation to continue things as they are is difficult to resist. Their new wealth has allowed them the freedom to expand their interests and invest heavily in more lucrative concerns that, once underway, will allow their sept to increase its standing in Lintha society and perhaps vie for Greatsept standing. Because much of their wealth has been gained secretly, the Sennong have not been able to flaunt their affluence and, thus, increase their status among the other septs. The outcaste Sister Nur-Atihka and her father are in the process of legitimizing Sennong affluence by developing a trade network in Chiaroscuro, a project the Gajui Greatsept has recently abandoned, which, if successful, will prove to be one of the most profitable business



concerns in Lintha history. This will not be an easy task, because the Chiaroscuran navy is wise to many of the Lintha's signature methods and is intent on ridding the region of their influence. In addition, it is at a vast remove from Bluehaven, and the Lintha cannot rely on the vast indirect power of their Family. The Sennong elder grandmother is named Fia-Eng.

**Ixora:** Once great, now disgraced for all time, the Ixora still hold their heads high, though only a few other septs will even mention their name, let alone deign to notice even their shadows. Even the *Lei Kiangi* balks at the mention of any of their lot. Their coffers are empty, their ships are burned, and their elders are confined to their homes. Even the Ixora dead hang their heads in shame. For the past 30 years, ever since the tragic Borog-Na Conspiracy, in which several Ixora elders and their minions connived to overturn many of the most lucrative business interests of the Haquen Greatsept and claim them for their own sept, the Ixora have lived in ignominy. As the histories read, the endeavor failed miserably and led to the slaughter of Borog-Na, the Ixora sept's eldest grandfather at the time, as well as his sons and all of their underlings, mortal and otherwise. The *Lei Kiangi* seized their assets and cursed their sept, forbidding it to maintain any fleet or armed force. They are not welcome in the Septian Covenant (even though Lintha law technically supports their presence) or the Cult of Dukantha, nor have they any members in the Sword Brotherhood. No other septs will form alliances of marriage or business with them, and several have called to dissolve their sept completely. Recently, however, one of their number, Suliko-Pa, has emerged as a Dragon-Blood outcaste, which may turn the tide for the Ixora, for, according to the law, all outcastes must be admitted into the Cult of Dukantha and trained in sorcery. Some in the Septian Covenant have cried treachery, however, since no Ixora has ever been known to carry the blood of the Dragons in her veins. The cult's elders still debate the issue. The Ixora elder grandmother, Trlosi, has not appeared in public in over 10 years.

**Angsana:** Traditional and proper to a fault, the Angsana spare no opportunity to criticize members of the other septs for even the slightest fault or the most miniscule slip of decorum. While the *Lei Kiangi* appreciates their staunch dedication to Lintha custom, few other septs welcome their observations. As the record keepers and historians of the Lintha, all official accounts of events are filtered through the Angsana's critical sensibilities. Despite their proclivity for criticism, the Angsana also have a reputation for being ever fair and accurate in their assessments, their various written histories being some of the most accurate accounts to be found anywhere in Creation. Some septs have sought to

### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Lintha, Lunar, Sidereal, Solar

Suliko-Pa has learned the truth of the Borog-Na Conspiracy, and her sept's fate hangs in the balance. The proof, unfortunately, can only be found in the Lap, where Borog-Na is alive and well. Suliko-Pa claims that the Ixora grandfather himself had his kin slaughtered at the behest of one of the Greatsept grandmothers, who promised him wealth and luxury for the rest of his days. Certain parties, of course, do not want the truth to come out at all and will try their best to frighten anyone delving too deep into the mystery. Those seeking Borog-Na himself court the vengeance of the best and brightest of the Lintha. Success could tear Lintha society apart.

bribe the Angsana, wishing to include their ancestors among the rolls of the honorable heroes of old or to change accounts of important events to include some unverified heroic (or treacherous) act. To the best of anyone's knowledge, these attempts have never been entertained, resulting in a certain resentment of the Angsana sept, especially among the more powerful septs, who fault the Angsana for not producing as much wealth as other septs of their size. While it is true that the Angsana do not have as many business concerns as others, they do command four pirate fleets and do well financially. They do not truck in slavery, however. Their elder grandmother, Junni Oinn, finds dealing in slaves expensive and distasteful and prohibits her house from being involved.

**Dewantara:** The Dewantara believe they have been cursed, for only rarely do they produce offspring. Try as they might, only two children have been born to their sept in the last century, and only a little over a dozen total individuals dwell in their small array of residences. It has been thus for as long as anyone can remember, for their sept has never been great. The Dewantara have had neither any great champion nor do any occasions of dishonor emerge in all their long history. While they have ever been active in piracy, they have never excelled at trading, perhaps due to their small numbers. Other septs do not hate them, nor do they have any particular love for the Dewantara. Their elder grandmother, Suwar, has the respect of the Septian Covenant and has been known to offer bold advice at times but never in any instance where much glory is to be gained. No one expects treachery or heroics from their lot, and it seems their tide will never turn.





**Dara-Said:** A longstanding rumor holds that those of the Dara-Said sept are not true Lintha, that their blood is so thin and their line so weak that the Lintha soul has left them mere mortals and that their continuance in Bluehaven is a mockery of tradition. Indeed, they have none of the traditional Lintha features and seem to all appearances to be ordinary mortals. They seem to have very little good business sense and have been known to relish the taste of base mortal flesh. Other rumors abound that they have a similar fondness for Lintha flesh as well. They do excel at cruelty and are rightly lauded for their ferocity in battle, but it is thought to be an uncouth wildness and not in keeping with the true Lintha spirit, which is savage, yet controlled and unemotional. The Dara-Said sept controls three fleets of pirate ships and five fleets of slavers, though their profits are either woefully miscalculated or spent with deplorable abandon and with little to show for it. The Dara-Said elder grandmother, Karatull, is a belligerent and uninviting dwarf with a quick tongue and a haughty manner.

## LINTHA TRADITIONS OF MARRIAGE, SEX AND REPRODUCTION

Because tradition stresses the importance of preserving the Lintha bloodline, elders do everything they can to prohibit the younger generations from producing children of mixed blood. Marriages with non-Lintha are almost universally forbidden. Tradition recognizes that halfbloods are an inevitability, so these impure children undergo castration before maturity so that they cannot further contaminate the bloodline. The same practice is used for foundlings and even adopted adults with no Lintha blood who are admitted to Bluehaven.

The Lintha rarely have monogamous relationships until their elder years. While some do indeed remain intimate with only one partner throughout most of their lives, most Lintha keep more than one spouse. Divorces are not common, but late in life, many Lintha pair off into monogamous couples, with little contact with other spouses, who either pair off with one of *their* other spouses or spend their days in solitude.

The Lintha are not a lusty people insofar as sex is concerned, at least not among outsiders. Sex with any non-Lintha is cause for shame, ridicule and discipline and could even result in serious, long-term repercussions, such as exile or castration. Ironically, the Lintha are at their greatest fecundity when sexually paired with ordinary mortals.

Lintha do not, as a rule, cast out halfblooded children, though halfbloods forever carry the pejorative title of *falong* following their sept name, so that all will know their questionable heritage. These children are castrated when in their youth before puberty sets in. Only through

special mandate of the *Lei Kiangi* can the title of *falong* be permanently revoked.

While it is noble for the Lintha to have a large number of naturally born trueblood children, parents receive no ill favor from their elders or peers should they adopt children as well, so long as they are properly indoctrinated.

Lintha typically marry within their own sept, though inter-sept marriages do occur, though usually for political reasons rather than for love. Inter-sept marriages require the permission of each partner's elder grandmother, to whom each partner must pledge fealty. Children of such matches are considered members of the mother's sept, as determining the father in Lintha domestic situations usually proves problematic.

### BONDING TO ANOTHER SEPT

Lintha cast out from their septs or those of meager septs may pledge themselves or their children to join another sept for a set fee. Usually, only Greatsepts employ the bonded, though other lesser septs do so under special circumstances (though there is little honor in being bonded to a destitute sept). Bonding entails no dishonor per se, and in some cases, it may actually bring prestige to the bonded and their sept. Usually, only brothers and sisters seek to be bonded, with their original septs buying them out of bond upon any promotion to a higher rank.

## LINTHA PIRACY AND COMMERCE

The Lintha build nothing of use, and they create no beautiful things. Everything they own, everything they sell, they have taken or traded or bought. Their only industry is theft. Servants exist to see to the Lintha's material needs and are paid handsomely.

Piracy is the Lintha's main interest. It is how they dominate their neighbors and assert their own sense of superiority over the rest of the West. In the past few hundred years, they have transformed their brutal past piratical methods into a formula of profound success. Their secret? Most Lintha pirate fleets are trading vessels in their own right, and their captains need make no excuses when Realm forces or other authorities find them traveling the shipping lanes. They have all the right papers, have sponsorship from all the right authorities (all Family members, of course) and have given their vessels the appropriate sails to make it appear as though the ship sails under the power of the wind, at least from a distance. Though most are wise to be ever cautious in the shipping lanes, bona fide merchant vessels only

know for sure that the approaching ship is a threat when it is too late to escape.

Other Lintha captains make no such attempts at trickery. They hoist no sail, and the monstrous beasts drawing their ships swim with their heads above the waves in plain view, inciting terror in all who mark their approach. Ruthless butchery is the manner in which these pirates claim their spoils, dismembering their victims and offering the entrails to the sea. They often hold feasts aboard their captured vessels, wherein the boldest pirates devour the flesh of their still-living victims, cutting off and slowly roasting whole limbs one by one as the dismembered victims watch, bleeding to death.

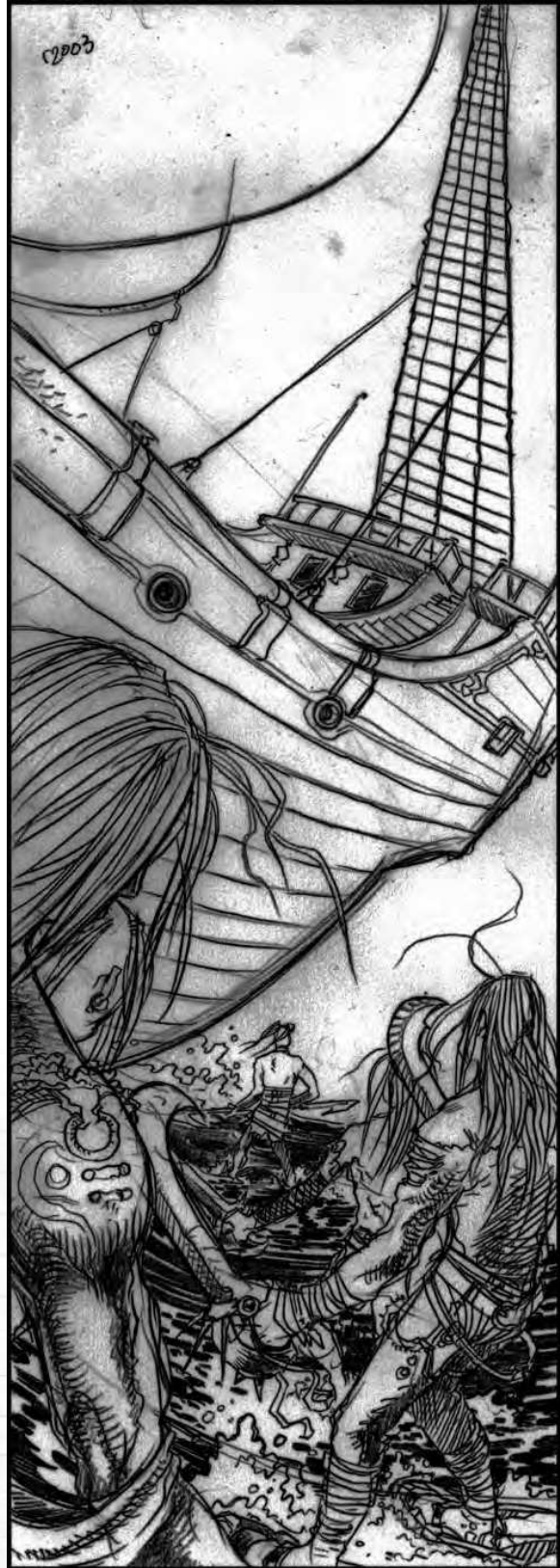
Certain Lintha captains simply bribe the crews of the ships they come across to hand over their cargoes. Sometimes, this approach requires some gentle persuasion as well, but it meets with a modicum of success and is a favorite first effort of many Lintha captains. Should the persuasion fail and the crew refuse the bribe, the Lintha crew emerge from below deck and take the cargo, the crew and the ship. The cargo is valued and sold, the crew is put in chains and auctioned in slave markets, and the ship, if a worthy vessel, becomes a part of the Lintha fleet.

When attacking, the Lintha wear watershoes, unique footwear made of zeelwook bark and the wax boiled off of sharkskin flesh that allow them to walk on the water (see page 126 for greater detail on watershoes). This advantage allows the pirates to approach enemy vessels en masse and use their unique hooked swords to scramble up the sides of ships quickly and easily, often such that the enemy is so surprised that the battle quickly ends.

Lintha ships are longer, sleeker and of more stalwart construction than most vessels in Creation. Because they have been able to maintain First Age ships and study the technology that went into their construction, the Lintha have been able to model their designs after ships that have been seen but rarely in over a millennium. Instead of relying on unpredictable and fickle winds that keep ordinary vessels restricted to harbors for months at a time, most Lintha ships are drawn by tremendous sea beasts of varying descriptions or otherwise powered by potent water spirits.

While the Lintha will use whatever ships they can get their hands on, they do have a number of these signature vessels unique to them that use these First Age designs. They also possess at least four genuine First Age ships in very good condition, though most of the armaments on those ships no longer function.

Vessel captains must be at least of brother or sister rank and usually have served aboard a pirate fleet or slaver for 10 years or more.



Lintha



## LINTHA PIRATE FLEETS

Numbering over 500 vessels, the Lintha pirate fleets are the main source of Lintha wealth. The Lintha often masquerade their ships as trading vessels, but they possess enough crew and weapons that they can easily launch an attack even when they are outnumbered by a target argosy.

Most raiders prefer to operate from either a single ship or a small fleet of no more than four or five vessels. Sometimes, if the cargo is considerable, captains may combine their efforts, but this is rare.

## SLAVERY

Most Lintha consider slavery uncouth, but good business. While they keep no slaves themselves (the Lintha pay all of their servants generously to maintain their loyalty), abducting entire villages wholesale and selling them thousands of miles away to ruthless masters poses the Lintha no moral dilemma. Slaves are nothing but lucrative commodities for the Lintha, who consider the holding of slaves an unpleasant and unreliable means of getting things done. The money is good, they reason, and most mortals hardly merit better treatment. They just don't see why anyone with a security risk, such as themselves, would ever employ such servants. Because of this, the Lintha do not conduct the trading of slaves in Bluehaven. They either deliver slaves personally to the buyer or conduct slave auctions on the nearby island of Boonsong Cay.

## THE SLAVE CONVOYS

The scourge of the coast, the Lintha slave convoys scour the western seaboard of An-Teng in search of fresh additions to their lucrative slave trade. Armed to the teeth and legendary in their ruthlessness, the Lintha slavers are huge, black ships with immense below-draft cargo space and an armed crew to both keep captives in line and repel attackers. Most of the ships in these convoys are powered by immense waterwheel paddles turned by the enslaved, though others get their locomotion from water elementals of one stripe or another whom the Lintha have either enslaved or cut a deal with.

The Lintha control dozens of slave convoys, with 16 or more ships each. The Gajui sept controls 18 convoys and devotes a large amount of resources and attention to their upkeep. These days, the price of food and luxuries tends to vary from day to day and from place to place, while the value of human labor remains at a premium.

To discard unwanted or "sick" slaves, the Lintha tie rocks to one end of a chain to which they manacle these unwanted captives, and the whole group is thrown overboard where sharks and other creatures make short work of their flesh.

## NOTABLE PIRATE FLEET VESSELS

**The *Prince Desolation*:** The greatest of the First Age vessels the Lintha possess, the *Prince Desolation* has as its captain possibly the Lintha's greatest and most controversial living champion, Lintha Ronkevool, a halfblood outcaste of the Haquen sept. This ship is unbelievably massive and drawn along by a demonic black sea worm. It is the pride of the Haquen sept, who cheer and host parades in its honor when it returns to Bluehaven with its plunder.

**The *Virgin's Spree*:** The *Virgin's Spree* is a ship crewed by God-Blooded orphans and hostage children whose fathers and mothers are either dead or serve no further use. The ship is much feared throughout the West, and its crew even thought of among some of the Lintha as extraordinarily cruel, at least for being so young. They are mostly remorseless cannibals who eat mortal flesh for the scrummy taste, not as ritual or as a means to ape their betters. As the children grow up, they join other crews, assuming they live through the ordeal, especially as the meek are typically devoured themselves. The *Virgin's Spree's* captain is named Lintha Roojag Ritha, a 14-year-old orphan brother of the Angsana sept and self-castrate. His cruelty is already legendary throughout the West and his crew, called "the Children of the Dead," is loyal to a fault. Roojag Ritha has no mother or father or grandparents, as all died in various ways, some natural, some treacherous. Because of their staunch adherence to tradition, which enjoins against adoption, none of the Angsana would take him in. He was, therefore, given to Cult of Dukantha, which initiated him as they would a foundling, though he was made to perform the ritual himself. The *Virgin's Spree* is a cult concern, with all of the resulting profits going to it.

**The *Tumult's Prowl*:** Commanded by Mnalilf Nganto, a pelagotherop, power-questing Lunar Exalted, the Host Pwoona, or "Beast Fleet," as it is more commonly known, operates almost independently. The fleet is made up of Lunar Exalted and their beastman minions. The Host Pwoona's flagship, *The Tumult's Prowl*, is a Wyld-infested galleon crewed by similarly Wyld-addicted and mutated beastmen. All of the Beast Fleet's ships are pulled by indescribable Wyld-infected creatures that defy simple classification.

### NOTABLE SLAVE CONVOYS

**The Gatang Company:** Both businesslike and extravagant, the Gatang Company's masters welcome visitors aboard their ships and invite them to join in their floating pleasure fêtes, which consist of all manner of sensual pleasures, from the rarest and most expensive proscribed foods and drugs imaginable to the most peculiar sexual displays to be seen at sea. The company's flagship, the *Jolly Conclude*, hosts the largest of these bashes, led by Captain Trjinn Boroo, a great, fat walrus of a Lintha trueblood from the Gajui Greatsept who walks about on crutches to support his own incredible mass.

**The Huntress** A Dara-Said vessel that also engages in piracy when its slaving speculations fall through, the *Huntress* is the last remaining ship of the Seelikong Fleet, which was burned at the mouth of Chiaroscuro's bay. The *Huntress*' hull is scorched and stained as a constant reminder of its durability and the persistence of its crew. Jolwe-Na Red Hair captains the ship and has such a ferocious reputation that no other Dara-Said vessels dared place themselves under his command when the Seelikong was destroyed. Since then, Red Hair has carried on the Seelikong legacy alone with his faultlessly loyal crew. He has even dared to return the *Huntress* to Chiaroscuro to taunt its naval forces and continues to conduct business as usual there when he calls.

**The Kolpongena Company:** Captain Guputo of the *Eunuch Dancer* castrates his crew. Out of devotion to Dukantha, he performed the operation on himself. And now, he extends the practice to his crew, believing that such surgery will give rise to such perfect cruelty that his flagship, the *Eunuch Dancer*, will never be taken by an enemy and that it shall be remembered for all time. Guputo, a curiously short and emaciated Lintha of the Sennong sept, refers to himself proudly as "the Emperor of the Slave Trade" and may, in fact, deserve the title. Since taking command of the Kolpongena Company (whose remaining five ships have begun adopting his castration program as well), Guputo has brought in an extraordinary amount of wealth for his sept. A wealthy Sennong father, Guputo has recently requisitioned another entire fleet and seeks to repeat his business model many times over for the glory of the Sennong and himself.

## THE CULT OF DUKANTHA

The Cult of Dukantha is the source of Lintha maritime supremacy. It is through Dukantha that the Lintha have such remarkable modes of transport, with demonic beasts drawing many of their ships and water spirits powering the more maneuverable of them. Dukantha has taught the Lintha to bind and tame these demons and spirits. Appearing once per year in Creation, Dukantha acts as the Lintha's intermediary with Kimberry, the Sea That Marched Against the Flame, delivering prayers and offerings to their Great Mother Yozi. When he appears in Bluehaven, Dukantha grants boons to the Lintha in accordance with how deserving they have been judged to be in the previous year and the quality of their offerings and sacrifices. Almost all Lintha serve the Cult of Dukantha in some measure, and as far as the cult is concerned, membership is mandatory, with few exceptions. To be excluded from the cult is almost akin to exile, as it cuts an individual off from the main wellspring of power at the Lintha's command. One might be able to rely on wealth alone in one's piratical endeavors and, thus, retain an honorable position in the Lintha Family, but cult support makes matters much easier and much more honorable. Some of the most profitable Lintha piratical undertakings were later dedicated to Dukantha and the treasure sanctified by Dukantha's priests.

Because of its desire for powerful sorcerers, the cult automatically inducts Lintha Dragon-Blooded outcastes following their Exaltation, making them priests and setting about their training. Usually, the newly Exalted outcaste is young and pliable enough after her exaltation that she accepts the lot offered her in the cult and revels in the secrets the cult teaches her. Some outcastes have refused in the past and thereby gained the enmity of the cult.

### LINTHA OUTCASTES

The Lintha blood is impure because, at one time in their history, a period of abandon and recklessness, they interbred with all of the races of Creation. Thus, the Dragon-Blood entered into the Lintha race. Because of this, the Lintha see periodic Exaltations, which they consider blessings from their Great Mother.

Because they have both God-Blood and a Terrestrial Exaltation, outcaste Lintha priests are the most powerful individuals in Bluehaven and, at times, defy the dictates of their superiors out of an arrogance common to their lot. Several Lintha critics see this as a characteristic unworthy of the Lintha, though most have remained strangely silent on the issue.





A high priest, always a grandfather of the Ng Hut sept, leads the cult, with several other grandfathers and grandmothers serving as aides, advisors and ritualists. These aides may belong to other septs, at the pleasure of the high priest and Dukantha himself, who must approve of all those allowed to enter the temple's inner sanctum. It is written that the high priest must be of the purest Lintha blood, and therefore, no outcaste may ever be named to this position.

The current high priest is named Yrjow Han. Kimberry, the Sea That Marched Against the Flame speaks to Yrjow Han in dreams when he sleeps in Oroo Cave. These dreams reveal instructions and secret news from Malfeas, which the High Priest only partially understands. The Great Mother speaks in visions, never in words, revealing phantoms of a coming slaughter, for which the Lintha must prepare themselves. The High Priest interprets these visions as proof that the Lintha are the Great Mother's foot soldiers in Creation.

Lintha fathers and mothers are eligible to be initiated into the Cult of Dukantha. Initiation requires ritual castration and an oath of fealty to Dukantha and the Great Mother. Membership is not mandatory for all fathers and mothers, but refusal to enter is seen as mark of poor citizenship. Members have the benefit of a broad social union and all the allies and business contacts that entails. Indeed, as a whole, cult members have been far more successful at business than those who refused membership. Refusal to join has its own advantages, however, especially after one's sons perish at sea.

Once initiated, and with their peccant parts sacrificed to the Great Mother, members also enjoy access to the Great Mother herself. Once per moon, The cult's priests gather at the Oroo Cave and chant the Song of the Lintha, which allows them to converse with the Great Mother. Each member of the cult may issue one question, prayer or request to the priests per year, which will be presented on her behalf.

Should Bluehaven ever find itself under attack by an enemy who has traversed the approaches and crushed the Lintha defenses, the cult's priests may pray to Dukantha and beg his intervention. As no force has ever seriously threatened Bluehaven, this has not been necessary. However, Dukantha does hear his priest's prayers and likely would intervene if Bluehaven faced imminent doom, emerging from the Oroo Cave with the passion and vengeance of Malfeas in his eyes.

### THE FEAST OF DUKANTHA

The seas run red, and the sky is suddenly calm. Strange music fills the air, and all manner of spirits visit the shores. Even the dead sail out into the bay in tribute as Dukantha walks among his people once again, blessing the loyal servants of his cult and granting tiny gifts to the worthy.

### OTHER GODS

The Lintha are not fools. They recognize and venerate other gods, especially those of the sea and perform the rituals dear to them without question. To do otherwise would invite disaster. This reverence can sometimes be expensive and inconvenient, as the Lintha travel extensively throughout the West and must pay homage to many foreign gods, but their willingness to yield such respect to foreign divinities has paid off to a considerable degree. Powerful spirits almost never wage war or seek to expel the Lintha's ships from their domains.

The Feast of Dukantha occurs once per year and lasts for five days. In that time, Bluehaven sees celebrations and sacrifices, great boons and terrible pain, with Dukantha at the head of it all. For these five days, the Lintha suspend business, and all Family members return home.

The festival begins as Dukantha emerges from the Oroo Cave at the appointed time and accepts the sacrifices of each sept, first the Greatsepts, then the lesser septs. The Greatsepts offer 100 freshly slain mortals, jade dust and a benefaction representative of their accomplishments in the past year. Every year, the three Greatsepts attempt to outdo one another with this latter gift. The lesser septs also offer the best gift they can, but little is expected of them. Occasionally, Dukantha will shock everyone by choosing a simple benefaction from one of the lowest septs as his favorite. The presenter of the favored gift, usually a young brother, always male, gains the title of Lord Eunuch, who leads the remaining festival events.

Festival events include what one might expect from a grand celebration. Games, parades, mock battles, demonstrations of arms, tales, sermons, fabulous meals, ornate decorations, costumes, songs, honored guests, marvelous displays of sexual excess, contests, hunts and ritual slaughters all have their allotted times and attract enthusiastic crowds.

On the final day, the Lord Eunuch earns his title. He is shorn of his peccant parts, which Dukantha devours, and is left to bleed to death on the Temple altar. Upon Dukantha's departure, the cult priests parade the Lord Eunuch's naked corpse through all the districts of Bluehaven, blessing the streets and tiny passages along the way with daubs of sacrificial blood. The priests finally deposit the remains in one of the dead vessels in the Coffin Vurjawna, the waterborne Lintha graveyard.

After every Festival of Dukantha, Lintha Ng Oroo sinks a little further into the ocean.



## THE SWORD BROTHERHOOD

Members of the Sword Brotherhood train with the auhzian, a hooked razor sharp sword without a soft hilt covering. The hilt, pommel and hand guard all feature pointed blades that can be used to stab and cut. The main blade is straight except for the tip, which curves backward into a wide, serrated hook. This hook is used for disarming and for scrambling up the sides of enemy ships with ease. The sword's numerous sharp points make it difficult to defend against. The auhzian is found in several sizes, from that of a lengthy dagger to extraordinarily long swords up to five feet in length. Many Lintha swordsmen have trained to fight with an auhzian in each hand.

Because the Lintha have no smiths of their own, the Brotherhood hires professional foreign smiths to fashion its blades for it, always finding the best craftsmen and paying them well for their efforts. Almost to a fault, the auhzian blades are of very high quality. There are even a few rare extant blades containing jade or orichalcum, which the Brotherhood's outcastes and elders possess.

There are five ranks of the Sword Brotherhood, represented by an indicator of a member's caliber of auhzian mastery called a *kur*. Newly initiated members begin at the fifth *kur*, while the highest ranking master (determined by single combat) alone makes up the first *kur*. The current first *kur*, Tow-Ang, the Saint of the Blade, has retired to the tiny island of Eight Lupo, less than a mile from the Island Gamelan of the Vergoo Tufang. There, he conducts his exercises alone to the music of the Yun giants, for none in the Brotherhood can teach him anything further.

Auhzian technique combines agile swordplay with various dirty fighting styles and fancy, somewhat showy hand-to-hand moves, with an emphasis on quick, brutal, crippling moves that defy the expectations of an opponent, rendering her broken and humiliated. In short, the rest of Creation recognizes no honor in auhzian, though the Lintha would, of course, beg to differ.

Sword Brotherhood members commonly challenge one another to settle personal disputes, but the most common challenges are made merely as sport, a means for the duelists to gain honor and advancement. It is only through challenges that a member of the Sword Brotherhood can advance in rank. She does this by besting enough members of the higher *kur* to the satisfaction of the Brotherhood's masters, currently the three second *kur* swordsmen, which may take years.





## ALLIANCES AND RIVALRIES

**The Guild:** Even though the Guild is a chief business rival, the Lintha have signed pacts guaranteeing security for the Guild's ships and their cargo, promising not to loot its ships or to slaughter their crews. While these pacts have been celebrated by the Guild as major victories for trade in the West, they mean little to the Lintha, who do manage to let the larger, more powerful Guild flotillas pass by unmolested, but do not balk at setting their pirate fleets upon smaller vessels with little chance to escape or those sailing through ill-advised shipping lanes. The Lintha septs are always delighted to renew these agreements, for the Guild pay handsomely for them. Though the Guild obviously knows that the Lintha are less than trustworthy, signing such agreements with the Lintha is cheaper than combating their every attempt to fleece it.

**The Water Fleet:** The Realm's chief naval force in the West, the Water Fleet has been troublesome for the Lintha, for they are not accustomed to fighting those so well equipped and, in the case of the Dragon-Blooded officers, well-organized and potent. Several Lintha fleets have been destroyed recently in ways that may rival the Lintha in cruelty and have earned the Lintha's grudging respect. On several occasions, the Water Fleet has launched campaigns to find and destroy Bluehaven, but to date, all such attempts have failed. Even though the Lintha are aware that the Realm is in decline, they have no great desire to attract the attention of thousands of Dragon-Blooded. Therefore, the Lintha do not travel very far into the Northern shipping lanes unless the potential profits are too worthwhile to ignore. The Realm's intelligence on the Lintha is less than precise, however, originating mostly from rumors and untrustworthy spies perhaps in the employ of Lintha themselves. As a result, many of the Water Fleet's attempts to curtail Lintha activities have ended in failure.

**Chiaroscuro's Navy:** Less of a threat than the Water Fleet, Chiaroscuro's navy still imperils Lintha's interests in that region of Creation, as the Lintha presence is quite small. Several of Chiaroscuro's admirals have sworn to eradicate the Lintha from their harbors and have been found to reject bribes of all kinds. Several cousins, uncles and aunts have been arrested and convicted in the last few years, rendering the Lintha presence even more tenuous. While the Gajui sept has resolved to cut its losses and move its interests elsewhere, one of the lesser septs, the Sennong, has moved forward to fill the gap. That sept has launched the pirate fleet of its favorite daughter, the outcaste Nur-Atihka, who has heroically looted several Chiaroscuro trading interests and thwarted the efforts of its naval forces.

**The Coral Pirates:** The chief rival of the Lintha, the Coral Pirates have numbers and skill on their side but

not ruthlessness. The Lintha scoff at Coral Pirates' supposed business savvy. When a merchant waves one of their letters at a Lintha captain, the captain takes the letter and the ship's cargo and throws the crew into the sea, leaving the merchant alone and adrift and just alive enough to ponder the true value of the Coral Pirates' letters of marque.

**The Stone Society:** The Lintha have cultivated an amicable relationship with the Stone Society, those Lunar Exalted who conduct their own piracy and trade in the West. These Lunars supply the Lintha with spoils and rare collectibles in exchange for weapons and supplies.

**The Lintha Dead:** When powerful enemies deign to attack Bluehaven, or even nearby Lintha ships, the departed Lintha ancestors sail out of the Coffin Vurjawna to meet them. They sail on First Age ships and use weapons that have not been seen for more than an Age.

**Lord Verethine, Vodonik King:** An oddly tolerant vodonik, at least to all appearances, Verethine hold an elemental water court in his palace beneath the waves very near Bluehaven. In exchange for his "protection" (which amounts to patrolling brine curs and other water elementals loyal to him), the Lintha provide him with live humans for his famous hunts.

### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Dragon-Blooded, Heroic Mortal, Lintha God-Blood, Lunar, Sidereal, Solar

Lord Verethine is sick of the Lintha and has cancelled his agreements, instructing his minions to destroy Bluehaven and remove their treasures to his court. Is this war? Or does Verethine want to renegotiate their treaty? Someone will have to petition him for answers in person. In the meantime, Bluehaven is under siege and, every second, comes closer to falling. Verethine is willing to talk, but asks for more than anyone can give him: the Heart of the Sea, a giant legendary gem written of in ancient stories that Verethine insists is held in one of Bluehaven's trophy towers. No amount of convincing will sway him, and his terms stand. Where to find this treasure of myth? Could Verethine's information be correct? Only by exploring the trophy towers can one be sure, and the *Lei Kiangi* has forbidden it, even in the face of war and destruction. The Heart of the Sea is there, but can the characters avert both the Lintha and Verethine's armies to deliver it? And when all is said and done, will the *Lei Kiangi* forgive their disobedience?



## CHARACTER CONCEPTS FOR BLUEHAVEN

**Warrior:** Sword Brotherhood *Kur***Holy Man:** Priest of Dukantha**Savant:** Historian of the Angsana Sept**Criminal:** Pirate Fleet Captain**Entertainer:** Sea-Tale Spinner

## CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

The following represent what various levels of different Backgrounds may mean when it is taken relating to the Lintha Family.

## ALLIES

- x None. Your character has scarcely heard of the Lintha, and if she knows anyone involved, she's not aware of it.
- One Lintha cousin ally in the process of initiation.
- One sister or brother ally or two cousins.
- Two uncles or aunts allies, one trueblood mother or father or more than one lower-ranking Lintha.
- One grandmother or grandfather ally or more than one lower-ranking Lintha.
- One sept elder ally or more than one lower-ranking Lintha.

## BACKING

- x None. Your character has no affiliation with the Lintha.
- An initiated cousin living outside Bluehaven.
- An adopted brother or sister with some access to Bluehaven when invited.
- An adopted uncle who has risen through the ranks, with authority over one to three cousins.
- An adopted father or mother with command over a Lintha pirate fleet or slaver.
- An honored adopted father or mother with command over a fleet.

## CONTACTS

Lintha contacts should be treated with care, as they will frequently be untrustworthy even if they do at times provide useful information. For game purposes, minor contacts are equivalent to cousins, sisters, brothers, aunts and uncles, and major contacts are equivalent to fathers, mothers and grandparents.

## BLUEHAVEN

The floating city of Bluehaven is a wracked skeleton of dead, toppled ships, tightly bound together by a masterful and bewildering latticework of skiffs and boardwalks built up around a solid isle of firm earth. The island's name is Lintha Ng Oroo, the sister island of the Lintha. She yet lives, speaking rarely and breathing through a great cave on her only remaining hillock, itself half underwater. Lintha Ng Oroo bleeds with the new moon, her fissures and seams rupturing day by day, her blood and ichor spilling into the sea. All Lintha folk dread the day when she shall finally perish.

At any given time anywhere from 4,000 to 10,000 people dwell in Bluehaven. With people coming and going at all times, none can say how many people truly call this place home. During special celebrations, such as the Feast of Dukantha, Bluehaven is bustling and lively, with throngs spilling out into the docked ships. At quieter times, the city's planks and alleys are as empty as the night, with only the splashing of waves or the frequent pounding rain to break the silence.

## THE APPROACHES

Entering Bluehaven is impossible for those who do not know the secret ways through the sargasso and how to overcome the many difficulties posed to those who seek admittance without an invitation. Wyld-infused waters and haunted ship-graves comprise only a few of the dangers in the sea surrounding Bluehaven, and the possibility of running aground always looms for the unwary captain, as the only path through the sargasso is not only narrow and shallow, but its very position fluctuates. Only Lintha captains know how to use encoded charts, the stars, the wind patterns and the calendar to divine the present location of Bluehaven, and only the most skillful and highly trained Lintha pilots have the expertise to pass through the approaches without mishap.

## NAVIGATING THE APPROACHES

Entering Bluehaven by sea is difficult even for most Lintha pilots. Those who have been sufficiently trained to navigate the approaches do so at difficulty 3. Those untrained make the attempt at difficulty 7 and receive a penalty to their dice pools equal to 5 minus the number of dots in their Sail Ability.





## THE TURNING SEA

Apart from the historical fittingness of the appellation, Bluehaven gets its name from the Turning Sea, as the blue sea grasses growing there give the sea an eerie blue hue. These grasses, though fresh-smelling and innocent-looking, are fatally poisonous. Clusters of tall trees also grow in the shallow water, with poisonous and monstrous looking fruit. Giant bamboo stalks form unusual and unsettling images that rise from the surface in human and feral shapes. Dead ships, run aground in sargasso's tangle and left behind, litter the sea, sometimes forming walls of watercraft stretching for hundreds of feet. The sea appears to undulate in two directions at once, the water rolling in one direction and the blue grasses waving in the wind like another sea taking a different route. Foreigners view the sight with wonder.

The sea is not always blue, however, and the ocean air is not always so fresh and invigorating. At times, when the island bleeds and the twin canals spill the offal into the sea, the Turning Sea becomes blood red for miles, a condition lasting several days. At such times, non-Lintha receive a penalty of one die to all dice pools, due to the foul and putrid air rising off the sea.

The largest area of navigable water on the Turning Sea, Bluehaven's bay always holds dozens, at times hundreds, of ships. At least 20 pirate ships patrol the bay at all times and check each ship that enters, escorting those that belong to the docks. Though intruders almost never have the skill to navigate the approaches, a few have succeeded in making it as far as the bay, only to be slaughtered as they entered.

The water here is deep and calm and free of water grasses and trees. As one's boat sits still in the bay, the island and the ships and the sargasso sea without turn slowly, as if on an axis.

## THE COFFIN VURJAWNA:

### THE GRAVEYARD OF SHIPS

Stange currents lead the unwary sailor lucky enough to navigate the approaches into the Coffin Vurjawna, a cul de sac of dead ships haunted by their bitter crews, waiting for living souls to torment. This place is a tiny shadowland, where the Lintha lay their dead to rest in the broken, once-majestic ships, adding more broken craft as needed. The waves roll quietly here, and pale eyes stare down from the skeleton crewmen, frozen in action. A rotting stench grows more and more overwhelming as one sails closer and closer toward the dead end. Those who sail all the way in run aground and can escape only with great effort.

Those attempting to leave the Coffin Vurjawna without honoring the fallen with at least prayers (though they prefer rich foods and fabulous treasures to be deliv-

ered to their decks) earn their enmity. Those not of Lintha blood going aboard the ships, or doing violence to the site in any way, face the wrath of the Lintha dead, whose actions are at least commensurate with the insult, but usually exceed it.

## THE PUZZLE OF SHIPS

Several hundred ships, now out of official use, have been nailed, moored, clamped and otherwise fixed to one another and bridged together by wide planks fitted with railings, canopies and occasional lamps. The entire edifice floats around the inner isle in a roughly ovoid shape, slowly turning with the inner island, to which it is moored.

One sept or another controls different areas of the puzzle, as several septs have had to move their dwellings to the ships when their homes on the island sank beneath the sea. Many areas have specific functions, however, and all Lintha and their guests are welcome to do business.

## THE DISTRICT OF RICHES

A wide area spanning 75 ships and surrounded by a high, reinforced wall makes up the District of Riches, the preeminent clearing house for the most expensive plunder brought in by the pirate fleets. Every day, new treasures can be found, and sept elders typically appear daily to examine the day's take, loathe to let other houses claim the finest and most fashionable trinkets. Elite goods such as rare spices and fabrics, all worthy of princes, can also be found, along with privileged traders eager to sell the merchandise abroad for 10 times the asking price.

A company of 100 armed men guards the District of Riches. They do not allow anyone to pass into the district without the proper credentials or without paying the exorbitant entrance fee, nor do they brook any violence or larceny. Because the trophy towers sit in the heart of this district, the armed guards have been given a mandate to slay any serious troublemakers, whether they be Lintha or not. There have been incidents where mortal guests somehow wandered into the district undetected, and a few where these mortals thought to steal some object or other from the trophy towers, but none have been successful. Thieves fleeing the district have been caught in the shallows while making their escape or cut down by the offended Lintha dead.

## THE TROPHY TOWERS

At the heart of the District of Riches, the two Lintha trophy towers rise up out of a base consisting of dozens of run-aground ships and loom 200 feet above the sea. Green jade gorilla-lions as large as houses sit at the tall iron gates, and 50 armed Lintha swordsmen await within



each, always on duty. The upper levels of the towers themselves are filled with all manner of prized treasures, so valuable that they cannot be sold at any price and sources of endless pride for the Lintha people. After a millennia of piracy, the Lintha themselves likely do not know all that they have plundered or what the significance of any one object, buried in some cask on the upper levels of the towers, might truly be. The more exotic items they are known to possess include an unrefined chunk of starmetal the size of an infant, a First Age machine of unknown purpose that groans and wheezes seemingly at random and a crown of solid jade encrusted with diamonds and gold, the last treasure of a dead king of the First Age.

The Lintha sept vaults take up the lower levels, filled with riches beyond imagining. Each sept has its own vault. The three Greatsepts have their vaults in one tower, while the other five septs have theirs in the other. While no sept keeps the totality of its wealth in these vaults (as many of them are richer or poorer than they would have rival septs know), a good portion is stored here. Whenever the *Lei Kiangi* requires funds to support some great enterprise on behalf of the Lintha people, she draws the coin necessary to complete it from a sept's coffers, deciding on her own which sept will contribute what amount. No Lintha would dream of looting the towers, and assuming the thief is not immediately put to

the sword, any foreigner caught attempting to do so would earn the enmity of everyone in Bluehaven, regardless of what excuses the thief may offer.

No one sept has precedence over the towers, and no one may enter without the express permission of the *Lei Kiangi* and an armed escort. These guards are unquestionably loyal and cannot be bribed.

### THE COMMONS

The grandest markets in the West hosting the greatest spoils can be found on the decks of the Commons. All with money to spend are welcome in the Commons, which spans 150 ships square and five decks deep and sometimes spills over into the docks as well. It is truly said that anything one might conceivably need may be found in the Lintha Commons, a grand bazaar of foods, crafts, weapons, medicines, gear, exotic animals and anything else one might desire, all available for reasonable prices for those who know their way around the bargaining table.

The Commons is also a dangerous place. Almost all violent crimes in Bluehaven occur here. Armed escorts and guides are available at a price and, in some cases, are quite advisable, given that some vendors set up their wares in dark corners on secluded half-decks where thieves lie in wait for unsuspecting foreigners.



The Commons also serves as a gathering place for many of the lesser septs and the Greatsept youth, especially at the many cafes offering uncommon foreign fare at fairly reasonable prices.

### ENTERING BLUEHAVEN

Lintha, of course, have little trouble coming and going to and from Bluehaven. But what of foreigners with business there? It should come as no surprise that it is no simple business to secure passage. Some Lintha captains will outright refuse, while others will demand impossible sums to transport unknown foreigners to their hidden home. Still other captains may be more receptive, especially if one or more of the characters can offer favors or valuable information. Stowing away on Lintha vessels bound for Bluehaven is possible but presents other problems, as illustrated below. All foreign passengers headed for Bluehaven are treated like prisoners. They are blindfolded and bound until their destination is reached to keep Bluehaven's location a secret.

Once arriving in Bluehaven, foreigners may only enter the Commons unaccompanied. If found elsewhere without an escort, a swift death is the likely punishment if a truly astounding explanation isn't immediately forthcoming.

Leaving Bluehaven can be as difficult as entering it. For the right price, passage can be obtained on many of the docked ships, though the passengers will be expected to take on menial duties as well (unless the price is better than right). Such captains will rarely take their ships out of their way for the sake of passengers and will usually refuse to alter their plans to deliver individuals to a specific destination not on the itinerary.

### THE DOCKS

Fifty feet wide and extending into the bay 1,000 feet, the docks are always a bustle of activity, with goods being loaded and unloaded at all times. Anywhere from 100 to 500 ships can be found docked here.

Passage can be obtained here by dealing with captains directly, if they can be spotted. Lintha crews are a famously rough, close-minded lot and, generally, do not take well to the presence of foreigners on their docks. Consequently, this place is a dangerous one for foreigners to spend very much time in. More than a few have been "accidentally" thrown to the sharks.

### THE GARDENS OF TORJAWA PARA-PULEI

The Gardens of Torjawa Para-Pulei house some of the rarest, oddest, most fatal and most beautiful flora from a hundred Western lands. Taking up three large, refashioned labyrinthine vessels, these gardens are a source of pride and accomplishment for the Lintha, for the rare and expensive plants all come from places in which the Lintha have planted their own influence.

### THE TEMPLE PACKET

One of the largest of the First Age ships, though one defunct these last 700 years, the Temple Packet houses all of the ritual finery and accoutrements of worship for the Cult of Dukantha. The Temple Packet is not a part of any particular district, ostensibly a power until itself with no familial considerations, although the Ng Hut consider the area a part of their own Temple District.

The vast ceremonial hall has a 20-foot-high ceiling and ritual ornamentation of blue jade and gold. A wide, slate-topped and blood-stained alter stands elevated at the far end of the chamber faced by a large brazier full of smoldering bones. The room can comfortably hold 100 people.

The cult's library holds thousands of texts of religious, ritual and historical importance, some dating back to the First Age, all in an impressive state of preservation. Thirteen librarian-priests govern the library, doing their best to ensure that no books leave the Temple Packet.

The priest's quarters are located on the lower decks, where privacy and quiet reign. The rooms are large and sumptuous, all richly carpeted and hung with expensive tapestries as well as holding beds, desks and other furnishings of the highest quality. The High Priest's quarters and the inner sanctum share the bottom level of the Temple Packet.

The inner sanctum is full of ritual paraphernalia, occult items and texts better kept out of the hands of the curious who have not been initiated into the cult's favored circles. Those trusted acolytes who have the favor of the High Priest and the acumen to understand such things may be granted access if they present a satisfactory explanation for their interest.

### LINTHA NG OROO, THE FLOATING ISLAND

Long ago, the island called Lintha Ng Oroo was wide and circular with high hillocks and endless trees. The hills and trees have long ago sunk into the sea, however, and all that remains is a dying, bleeding land, oblong and crescent-shaped. In the aftermath of the Great Contagion, when the Fair Folk ravaged Creation and mortal men lost their lives like so many leaves

dropping from trees, Lintha Ng Oroo became infected by Wyld energies that pierced her with a thousand poisonous curses and left her bleeding and near death. Her cryptic viscera spilled, and in time, her mind was left irreparably wounded, as the Lintha noted her curious silence. Now, she speaks only in discordances and only when she is in the most pain. Every year, Lintha Ng Oroo sinks a little deeper into the sea.

The Wyld remains and continues to infect the island and its inhabitants, producing gills and sometimes fins on truebloods and even stranger anomalies on mortals who stay in Bluehaven for too long. Because the Wyld remains in Bluehaven in such force, various Fair Folk pay periodic visits.

The island itself is concave on the top and bottom, so that the puzzle of ships sits practically flush with the island, ramps leading from the ships and meeting the streets of the island almost seamlessly.

### THE TWIN CANALS

Two narrow canals run through the island, with several bridges traversing their width. On normal days, seawater flows through the canals, but roughly once per moon, Lintha Ng Oroo bleeds, and dark blood seeps out of the land and into the canals, where it flows out into the sea.

Due to the Wyld energies rife throughout the area, the canals appear to the observer to have no inlet. At each of the four places where the canals meet the sea, the water flows out into the ocean, doing so with such force that craft small enough to enter the canals are pushed back by the current. The water is fresh, and seems to have no source. Where the canals meet, the waters are still.

### OROO HILL

At night, soft wails and laments emerge from Oroo Hill. Most cannot hear—or do not wish to. At times, she speaks, but her words have no meaning, her voice filling the air powerfully and with fearful authority, but in a mad language only she understands. The Cult of Dukantha has spent centuries attempting to decipher her periodic ramblings, but has met with no success other than to surmise the obvious conclusion: the Lintha's sister island is mad and slowly perishing.

A four-foot-high, two-foot-wide crevice, called the Mouth of Oroo, leads to a small cave, around which the religious life of the Lintha centers. Dukantha first emerged Exalted here, rising up out of the stone and leaving behind a black cavity, which serves as his pathway into and out of Malfeas (though mad Lintha wishing to see Malfeas for themselves have found disappointment upon leaping into the pit and finding only seawater and darkness). Dukantha's feast begins and ends here, and weekly rituals of sacrifice have their

culmination with acolytes distributing their forfeitures into the dark crevice.

### THE TWO GREAT DISTRICTS

The Gajui and Haquen Greatsepts occupy the two largest areas of Lintha Ng Oroo.

Giant spires and massive, colorful structures greet those entering the Gajui District through the Sea Lion Gate, a pearl-and-jade arch set into a 30-foot-high white-and-azure marble wall that surrounds the entire district. The 25 acres of opulence and privilege within the walls are off limits to everyone but the Gajui and that Greatsept's own honored guests.

A mere 70 feet from the Sea Lion Gate stands the entrance to the Haquen District, a gleaming white quarter with stone buildings and an enormous square edifice housing the academies of the Sword Brotherhood. The 19 acres of this district are surprisingly Spartan, with only the residents themselves and their garish and tawdry fashions standing out among the bleached stones.

Both districts stand in stark contrast to the lives of bloodshed and cruelty most of their residents engage in every day. They serve to underline the dichotomy of the Lintha—the fierce and bloodthirsty pirate and the refined, cultivated noble.

### METEOROLOGY

Unbearably hot during dry days, with frequent cooling rains, and chilly, though bearable at night, with cold showers, Bluehaven seems to have an average climate for its part of the world.

The rains barely cease for long in Bluehaven. The Wyld energies infusing the area make the rain a trivial concern, however. Sometimes, in fact, the rain is not water at all, but tiny black crystals broken off from the canopy of the night sky, or dry, red sand that comes together to form strange crustaceans in the sea.

Just to the south lies the Wyld Typhoon Belt, which even the Lintha avoid when it is active. No one has ever returned from excursions leading through its storms.

### WILDLIFE

The shrinking island portion of Bluehaven has little space for animals to live. The ancient hillocks that once rose so high and accommodated deer and sheep have diminished with the island's ill health. Only one hill of 30 feet remains, the Mouth of Lintha Ng Oroo, from which only occasional creaks and keens emerge. Few trees remain, and no natural animals dwell there apart from the quetzals and egrets, who now make their nests in attics and in abandoned sections of ships, and the black mibini parrots dwelling in Oroo Cave. The only other animals to be found in any great numbers on the island are the scrawny





red-and-blue lizards that infest some of the dwellings and warehouses.

Sharks and brine curs can all be found in great abundance in the bay, as well as all manner of saltwater fishes. In the shallows, giant snakes and poisonous sea toads threaten those daring to leave their vessels.

## THE LINTHA DEAD

The Coffin Vurjawna is only a gateway to a much more populous realm, the Underworld kingdom of Dis, where the Lintha rule in a ghostly imitation of their former glory. As with many things in the Underworld, the ghosts of the Lintha are far more glorious than their living descendents, for the Lintha wield their power far more openly in the anarchic Underworld than against the openly wielded might of the living Scarlet Dynasty. As in the land of the living, the true rulers of Dis are the trueblood Lintha. Unlike in the land of the living, there is no pretense of equality. Every nation in the Underworld is ruled by its caste of ancient kings and nobles, and Dis is no different. Those who come to Dis as sworn members of the Family are treated little differently than lost souls snatched from the black waves of the Western Underworld.

## THE CITY ON THE MOUNTAIN

The dwelling of the Lintha dead is the great island-city of Dis, a mountain city built to ape the glory of Lintha Ng Oroo but in all ways less. The graceful harts and hinds of the Underworld graze on black grass among artfully crafted brass bushes, and everywhere ten thousand hands turn themselves to recreating the glory that was the Lintha capital in the First Age. Though no Lintha survive who were ghosts in the time before the Usurpation of the Primordials, the old dead set down vast and meticulous records of their memories. Though the city of Dis does not directly copy the layout of Lintha Ng Oroo's many-splendored palaces (for such would, it is thought, be blasphemous to the original glory of that place), it in all ways seeks to replicate the feel of that place's funeral architecture at the Lintha's apogee.

The efforts of the Lintha dead are not in vain, and their great island city is almost as splendid as Stygia, though it lacks the endless variation of that place, instead spreading high-spired, narrow-windowed palace-crypts across the island of Dis, from its great central mountain to its rocky bays and inlets. It is not known how an island came to be that so resembles the youthful shape of Lintha Ng Oroo. Some among the dead speculate that the living island was once merely inert rock and that the Lintha built their palaces on the Underworld shadow of the original place. Others claim the

Lintha or the Lintha dead called it up proudly from the depths of the Labyrinth through a dark and terrible ritual. The truth of the matter remains a matter of speculation — in death, as in life, the Lintha are protective of their home. None may study its roots save the ghosts of the trueblooded, and they do not reveal the secrets of their sister's effigy.

## THE ENDLESS PATROL

The foremost strength of the Lintha dead lies in their endless patrol for the newly deceased. While the Lintha among the living are selective in their induction, the Lintha dead live in memories of a kingdom, and not a pirate band. Their ghost-catchers, called ferrymen, follow behind the ships of the living in their tiny coracles and patrol the rocky coasts as well. They meet the Western dead and guide them back to Dis, where they are taken as subjects of the Lintha.

This practice is not slavery per se, for the Lintha will not keep slaves in their own city. It is much more like life elsewhere in the Underworld, though the Lintha are, of course, rather harsh overlords. Those who can afford the expensive tolls and duties may flee to elsewhere in the Underworld, but few do. Few and poorly fed are the pyres to the dead elsewhere in the West, but the Lintha offer great wealth to the ghosts of their ancestors. The devout worship of the memories and histories of the family by the living and the dead alike among the Lintha grants Dis the same aura as other great Underworld metropoli — effectively providing Underworld Cult • to all long-term inhabitants. Indeed, for every soul that flees Dis, 10 more flock to its shores, hungry and destitute. They are without offerings or prayers from the living and come to throng the gaudy streets and feed the reputation of the Lintha dead. It is for this reason that the Lintha pursue the new dead as avidly as the living Lintha pursue treasures.

## THE GREAT ENMITY

Dis, like few other places in the Underworld, seems willing to offer direct resistance to the plans of the Deathlords. Though the sorcerer lords of the dead now stand behind most of the Underworlds' thrones, the Lintha seem to deflect the attentions of the Silver Prince and have even dared to challenge his forces in skirmishes upon the seas of the dead. Elite skirmishers descend regularly into the Labyrinth through the many openings in the city's central mountain to destroy nephwrack temples or staging areas that have pushed too close to the city. Likewise, miners openly brave the tunnels and bring forth black wonders.

The reason for this open defiance is, of course, the Cult of the Great Mother. Just as the living Lintha

represent one of the few strong instruments available to the Primordials among the living, their ghosts are likewise one of the few conduits from the Demon Realm to the Underworld.

As the embassy of the Demon Princes to the Malfeans, Dis enjoys a situation of great privilege. Though the Malfeans do not directly control the Deathlords, they have made it known in the most certain of terms that they treasure the city and that its destruction is not desired at this time. As a result, the Lintha contend directly with the Deathlords on more even footing. Even if the Silver Prince himself came to Dis, it is likely that Dukantha would come forth to oppose him and protect the interests of the Demon Princes.

At least, that is what elders of Dis, and perhaps the Deathlords, believe. The truth of the matter is unknown, and Dukantha has hardly sworn himself to the city's defense. If the Bodhissatva Anointed by Dark Water loses his temper and razes the city in a flash of wrath, it will not matter to the obliterated ruins if the Neverborn strike him down in turn.

For more information on ghosts and the Underworld, see **Exalted: The Abyssals**.

#### ADVENTURE SEED

**Target Character Type:** Abyssal, Heroic Dead, Sidereal, Solar

In the depths of the most terrible midnight storm, 50 chests of gold and ivory traveled up from beneath the deepest mines of Dis on the backs of shades and were loaded onto the deck of Dukantha's waiting warship. This thing the elders of Dis know of, but it is a closely guarded secret, and they know not of its significance. Likewise, though neither the Deathlords nor the Lintha know it, Dis was the conduit through which the recipe for corrupting the Solar Exaltation passed from the Demon Realm to the dead.

There are individuals in Dis and among the nephwracks who can reveal this information to those persuasive enough to convince them. Uncovering the logistics of this operation would be an incredible boon for a variety of different groups. Anyone seeking to understand the appearance of the Abyssals has an interest, as do those curious about the fate of the 50 Solar Essences given to the Demon Princes or about the doings of the Deathlords, the Neverborn and the Yozis in general.

## SURROUNDING ISLANDS OF NOTE

Bluehaven floats and moves about the region in an almost inscrutable pattern carrying it over 100 miles in a single month. The stars and the currents of the sea control its path, and hence, it is difficult for anyone but Lintha captains and savants to know where the city will be located at any particular time. As a result, Bluehaven has different neighbors depending on the time of year, with some islands coming into view several times per month, while others appear on the horizon but once or twice per year.

### BOONSONG CAY

Colonies of pygmy slaves inhabit this island group, a series of jungle isles visited by Bluehaven several times per month on a fairly predictable basis. Slaves are dumped there by slavers until they can locate buyers so that they can go off on further piratical missions. The place contains a melange of tribes, mostly from south of An Teng, and more civilized people who more often than not end up being eaten by the other captives on the island before the slave ships return to fetch them. Several slave lords keep residences on some of the islands, but not much effort is put into maintaining order beyond keeping the captives corralled in places where they cannot cause much trouble.

Because the slaves are not fed and very little food can be found on the islands themselves unless the captives can catch birds or fish, most slaves have little will to resist a second capture by slavers. At times, some have attempted to organize revolts or escapes, but these have met with universal failure, probably because the slavers make a point of putting members of rival tribes on the same island, ensuring against prisoner solidarity.

### ISLAND GAMELAN OF THE VERGOO TUFANG

Inhabited by the Yun giants, twin brothers who mark time mysteriously, some would say randomly, with the playing of music with their tremendous bronze gamelan, a collection of instruments so large that they occupy half the island. Several times a year, including three days during the Feast of Dukantha, the Island Gamelan of the Vergoo Tufang is visible from Bluehaven.

The island itself is rather small, a mere six miles in breadth. The Yun giants dwell in a cave at the foot of a dormant volcano. On the other side of the island, in a small village of primitive huts and pits, lives a tribe of men known as the Feathered Men, who worship the giants and treat visitors with quiet disdain.

The Yun giants are not warriors and have little interest in battle. Yet, they will not recoil from an obvious threat and have been known to throw intoler-





able visitors the distance of several miles out to sea. It is said that they guard something of immeasurable power trapped within the volcano, which their music serves to becalm.

None know why the Yun giants choose to play when they do, but their music seems to oddly coincide with events of great celestial consequence, and after the recent eclipse, their notes were heard sporadically throughout the West. For miles and miles around, sometimes as far away as the coast of An-Teng, the music can be heard. Many native societies have their own explanations for the strange music. The Lintha, however, can see the giants from their own island and visit the brothers from time to time, bringing them gifts and tribute.

### BLACK KUNG ISLAND

The Lintha tell a chilling tale of this island, which appears on the Lintha's horizon only once per decade.

During the last Age, Prince Geng, the son of a powerful tyrant, shipwrecked on the Black Kung. Making his way up the beach with his retinue, he spied a small hill containing one lone crooked tree silhouetted in the moonlight. As it was growing dark and his men were weary from the trudge ashore, he thought to wait until morning to investigate the distant hill. He slept through the night and woke to find half of his company of men gone.

Asking what had happened to his retinue, his lieutenant cried, "Did you not hear, my lord? A great wind descended from the heavens and carried your men away. They called out for your aid, but you never budged. We six are all that remain, and we are all of us famished. We have been searching high and low for fowl or berries or even base roots, but there are none. This is a dead land you have led us to, my lord. The gods are certainly against our survival."

The prince said unto his men, "Come. We will walk to the hill beyond. Surely the tree there will bear some fruit. The gods cannot be so angered by us that they will deny our survival. Our present plight alone should be punishment for our offenses, whatever they might be."

And so, the prince and his men mounted the hill. As they crested the top, they spotted a black bird, like no other bird they had ever seen, with a green face and large eyes shining like polished mirrors. Azure and bright-yellow feathers spread wide as the bird perched upon the crooked tree. The prince's lieutenant lost no time in firing a poison-daubed arrow at the bird, which dropped at the foot of the tree. The prince congratulated his lieutenant and, believing there must be more of the beasts in



the vicinity, sent his men away to hunt them down so that they all might eat.

Alone on the hill, the prince looked up into the boughs of the tree. No leaves graced its branches, but a single fruit, a small, yellow apricot, hung from the highest branch. Remembering the days of his youth and the walnut trees he would climb, vexing his father's maester, he clambered up the tree and seized the fruit. Without pausing even to descend the tree, he bit into the succulent fruit, which was sweeter and more luscious than any food he had ever eaten. He devoured the rest of the fruit, and his hunger was sated.

He stepped down from the tree and, feeling suddenly weary, propped himself against the tree and slept soundly until the return of his men, whose victory song he heard approaching. They mounted the hill, each one them bearing some odd fowl or fish. When his lieutenant caught sight of the prince resting under the tree he rushed toward him, sword in hand raised to strike.

At once, Prince Geng took flight on azure and yellow wings.

The men below fired their arrows at the great bird, the size of a man, but they could not hit their mark. As the bird turned in the sky and poised to attack, the prince's lieutenant cried, "Draw your swords, men. This beast must have slain our master. Look how it has grown beyond even the largest of its kind."

But the men were not fast enough and could not match the bird's ferocity. He tore the men to shreds and fed upon their eyes, letting their remains rot at the foot of the crooked tree. He later alighted down to the shore, wondering whatever could have set his men upon him, what could have driven them to madness. Looking into the water, at his reflection in the waves, he glimpsed a green face, a beak long and pointed and stained with blood and twin tusks emerging from each side of his mouth. His empty eyes shone like mirrors in the moonlight.

## THE UNREACHABLE ISLAND OF THE MATRON KINGS

This island nation, glimpsed only rarely on Bluehaven's horizon (no more than once per year), is inhabited solely by women and surrounded by water so thin and light that approaching vessels sink to their doom as the island itself recedes into the sudden mists.

No one has ever made a landing on the island but for those deposited there by aberrant Wyld storms, and few of those have returned to tell their tale

Those returning tell of tall, silverweave-haired women who catch sunlight on their tongues and propagate their race by sleeping so that the South wind kisses their bare breasts. Men finding themselves shipwrecked upon the Unreachable Island receive little assistance in repairing their hulls, as the women dwelling there have little interest in sailing — or anything else as far as anyone can divine — living lives of empty abandon. If threatened, they respond only with confusion and refuse to concede to demands. If wooed, they appear flattered, as if they have received such attentions many times before, but do not respond to sexual advances.

One woman, who seems to have been pregnant for centuries, stands taller and wiser than the rest. She explains that she was long ago left behind by her husband, who had gone off on a journey promising to return in one year. That year went slowly and she spent every day in sorrow, but every morning, she returned to the shore to watch for her husband's return. When the year finally came to an end, no husband appeared, but she found she was with child.

The pregnant woman learned to her dismay that her husband had fallen in love with a witch in a distant land, that he had been unfaithful and that he had fathered a child with her. After the child, a son, was born, the witch turned her husband into stone as a lesson in infidelity. She claims that her heart as well became stone in that moment and that, when she is healed, her husband shall spring forth from her loins. She has made the other women — her wet nurses and maidens — from mud. They have no proper dwellings, but sleep under the night sky on giant lilies in a lagoon at the island's center.

All of the women are simulacra, created and set in motion by brilliant savants at the end of the First Age and given to the monarch of the island as amusements, claiming they could outperform any of his favorite concubines.

But the Wyld came and changed the women, rendering them partially alive, crude amalgams of automaton and mortal. When the Wyld storm had passed, the king and his concubines had gone and one of the women appeared to be pregnant. The story she tells is true, but it is not the story of her husband, but of a sailor who fell in love with her but was frightened away when she failed to deliver her child after several years.





# CHAPTER THREE GODS AND MONSTERS

神と魔

This chapter provides statistics for many of the creatures and individuals featured elsewhere in this book. In many cases, such as with the Lintha Family, it was impossible to provide statistics for everyone in question. Where possible, we have provided statistics on the individuals most likely come into conflict with any given group of heroes, regardless of the origin.

## AN-TENG

An-Teng is one of the Realm's most idolatrous tributaries as well as one of its most enthusiastic collaborators. As with most locations in the Threshold, magical activity abounds in the principality of An-Teng. What follow below are write-ups for some of the more prominent Exalts and supernatural beings of An-Teng.

## GODS OF AN-TENG

The people of An-Teng worship many spirits, from venerable ancestors and simple hearth gods to the radiant Golden Lord and his dark sister, the Pale Mistress. With the disappearance of the Empress of the Realm and the subsequent weakening of the Immaculate Order, many of the gods of An-Teng have moved to regain worship and offerings they have long been denied. As in all corners of Creation, the small gods of An-Teng can be capricious and even dangerous, particularly to those who fail to grant them the respect their divine status demands.

### THE GOLDEN LORD

**Description:** The Golden Lord is the patron of the people of An-Teng and the orderly society in which they live. It is in the Golden Lord that the people of An-Teng trust, for his power and wisdom provide stability in these times of uncertainty. Peasants honor him by acting justly to one another and serving their lords dutifully. In turn, the rulers of An-Teng honor him by treating their subjects with compassion and firmness. The intricate, deep-rooted social customs of An-Teng are very much prayers and offerings to the Golden Lord, for it is in an orderly society that life and peace flourish.

The Golden Lord sits atop the Pinnacle of Mercy in the High Lands, overseeing the Three Princes of An-Teng and their courts. While he rarely intercedes in their affairs, the Golden Lord acts as a divine advisor. Few rulers throughout An-Teng's history have ignored his advice, however, for grave consequences always follow such failures. Whether the Golden Lord foresees such calamities and merely wishes to avert them through his advice or causes them as a punishment is unknown. The truth likely includes both.

Petitioners may come to the seat of the Golden Lord in search of aid. In most instances, this involves a dispute for which there seems no compromise or an act of injustice that mortal courts cannot rectify. While citizens of An-Teng are the most common such pilgrims to the Pinnacle of Mercy, any who love justice and order and possess no untruths in their hearts may come before the Golden Lord. The Golden Lord hears all such requests, and in almost all cases, his judgment is swift and fair. So renowned is the Golden Lord's sense of justice that even other greater gods of humanity have come before him to seek his council and resolve disputes. If the cause of the petitioner is just, the Golden Lord will aid through answering difficult questions, giving out long lost secrets or even granting weapons and other artifacts to the petitioner. Few have ever managed to fool the Golden Lord into serving an unjust cause, and those who have knew great pain and terror before they finally met their ends at the Golden Lord's hand. In very rare



instances, however, the Golden Lord declines to pass judgment. This occurs only when greater powers than he, including in some cases the Solar Exalted, come in search of answers to questions that the Golden Lord considers beyond his "jurisdiction." When this occurs, the Golden Lord offers advice but will pass no judgment.

Only a direct threat against An-Teng or Creation itself will rouse the Golden Lord from his throne at the Pinnacle of Mercy. Should he be moved to act, however, the Golden Lord knows no fear and allows no force to keep him from his mission. In such an event, he rides into battle on the back of Mighty-In-Battle, the Elephant Avatar, who has long served as a friend and companion to the Golden Lord. The Golden Lord wields a sword of brilliant white light, the touch of which strips enemies of the will to fight, and a golden shield shaped in the likeness of the sun through which no attack can pass. The Golden Lord sees all truths and cannot be ambushed or tricked in combat.

The Golden Lord serves the Unconquered Sun and is, indeed, one of his most powerful lieutenants. While he loves and cares for the people of An-Teng, the Golden Lord has resided atop the Pinnacle of Mercy since long before An-Teng came to be. Since the dawn of Creation, he has been judge of and arbiter between the Solar Exalted, employing his vast wisdom and unwavering conviction to mete out justice and to resolve disputes among those touched by the Unconquered Sun. With the return of the Solar Exalted, the Golden Lord's mission has renewed, and his attention is diverted more often from the matters of An-Teng. Solar Exalted in need of his council or subject to his judgment, whether they are aware of the fact or not, will be drawn to the Pinnacle of Mercy to stand before the Golden Lord.

When seen upon his throne at the Pinnacle of Mercy, the Golden Lord appears as an unnaturally tall and healthy An-Teng man of middle years, dressed in

robes of gold thread and holding a scepter (after which the scepters of the Three Princes are fashioned). When he is roused to war, the Golden Lord stands as tall as the trees, and his visage become ageless and mighty. In this form, he wears bamboo armor lacquered in gold and a helmet in the likeness of his Elephant Avatar mount.

**Sanctum:** The Pinnacle of Mercy is a massive temple atop the highest mountain in An-Teng. It is guarded by celestial lions (see **Games of Divinity**, p. 33) and served by the priesthood of An-Teng. There are hundreds of rooms for prayer and meditation within its halls, many more than even its grand size would permit: The First Age Solars who built the Pinnacle of Mercy burrowed deeply into the mountain itself. None who enter the Pinnacle of Mercy may raise a hand or weapon in anger or commit any act of violence.

**Nature:** Judge

**Attributes:** Strength 12, Dexterity 10, Stamina 10, Charisma 7, Manipulation 8, Appearance 6, Perception 7, Intelligence 6, Wits 6

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

**Abilities:** Archery 5, Athletics 6, Awareness 6, Brawl 8, Bureaucracy 8 (Law +2), Dodge 6, Endurance 5, Investigation 7, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Barbarian Tongues, Firetongue, High Realm, Riverspeak, Seatongue) 5, Lore 6 (An-Teng +2), Medicine 5, Melee 7, Occult 5, Presence 8, Resistance 5, Ride 6 (Elephant +2), Sail 5, Socialize 6

**Backgrounds:** Allies 5, Cult 4, Followers 5, Influence 4

**Charms:** All listed Charms

**Cost To Materialize:** 75

**Base Initiative:** 16

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 16 Accuracy 18 Damage 12B Defense 18

Kick: Speed 13 Accuracy 17 Damage 14B Defense 17

Radiant Blade: Speed 18 Accuracy 20 Damage 30L\* Defense 20

The Bow of Mercy: Speed 16 Accuracy 18 Damage 28L (Rate 3, Range Unlimited)\*\*

\* The player of any opponent struck by the Golden Lord's sword must immediately make a Willpower check against a difficulty equal to half the number of health levels sustained from the hit. Failure means that the character has been drained of the will to fight and will lay down her arms. The character is not compelled to obey or to serve the Golden Lord in any way, but she cannot attack or otherwise try to harm the Golden Lord or those under the god's direct command.

\*\* The Bow of Mercy fires arrows of pure sunlight, which appear as the Golden Lord draws the string. In addition, the bow can strike any target, anywhere, of which the Golden Lord is directly aware. This awareness can come

via sight, a Charm or an artifact. There are no penalties for striking a target at any distance for the Golden Lord.

**Dodge Pool:** 16 **Soak:** 55L/60B (Splendid golden armor, 50L/50B)

**Willpower:** 9 **Health Levels:** -0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Essence:** 8 **Essence Pool:** 145

**Other Notes:** The golden shield is supreme armor, and few attacks will ever harm the Golden Lord. A character can attempt to bypass the shield (and, therefore, its amazing soak rating) in order to directly strike the god. Doing so increases the difficulty of the attack roll by 12.

## THE PALE MISTRESS

**Description:** Chaos. Disease. Lies. Unquiet death.

The Pale Mistress is all things the Golden Lord is not, a shadow cast by his brilliance that lives ever in the fringes of the minds of the people of An-Teng. She is the Devourer and the Destroyer. She is drought and flood, famine and gluttony. The Pale Mistress lives in the hearts and minds of murders, thieves and rebels, no matter what their station in life. She is the serpent that gnaws at the roots of the Tree of Life. She is the wind and rain that beats against the walls of order, threatening to turn the smallest crack into a fissure that collapses it all.

The Pale Mistress is a terrestrial deity, a member of Luna's court charged with providing An-Teng with pain and hardship. She is at the same time the mistress of and a product of the fear, uncertainty and failings of An-Teng's people. Whereas the Golden Lord may, on occasion, walk in other parts of Creation, the Pale Mistress in inexorably tied to An-Teng and shall ever be.

The people of An-Teng do not worship the Pale Mistress — they fear her. The shrines seen at crossroads and in the desolate places where people once lived implore her to walk alone and to stay far from the villages and farmsteads of An-Teng. In their hearts, the people of An-Teng know that the Pale Mistress is a goddess and that the entropy she embodies is as necessary as the Golden Lord's justice and compassion. But this understanding is cold comfort to the noble who finds himself at the end of an envious peasant's knife or the priest who finds himself wasting away from leprosy as a reward for his mercies.

The Pale Mistress walks the shores of An-Teng. The rare few who would chance petitioning her can find her there by the light of the moon. She is a massive, grotesque creature, standing 30 feet tall with white hair matted to her face hiding all but her fanged, drooling mouth. Her breasts dangle nearly to the ground, as do her clawed hands. When it pleases her, however, she takes the form of an old, toothless crone, a young blind woman of remarkable beauty or a wounded and sickly dog.





Regardless of her form, she always possesses her stark white hair. Because of this, white hair is seen as a particularly ill omen among the people of An-Teng.

The Pale Mistress may be called upon only to destroy. Jilted lovers sometimes pray for horrible diseases to befall the objects of their affection or their romantic rivals, while ambitious bureaucrats seek sudden openings in the ladder of success through sickness and accident. The Pale Mistress' role as Devourer applies to both the living and the dead, prompting some to call upon her to defend them against dark and hungry spirits. When it pleases her, she appears in her monstrous form and tears the ghosts to pieces, devouring them with malicious glee. What benefit she gains from devouring the dead is unknown, though the priests of the Golden Lord teach that souls so devoured are forever locked away from continual reincarnation.

However she may aid those who dare to call upon her, the Pale Mistress always exacts the same price: disorder. There is no bargaining with the Pale Mistress. To summon her is to invite disease, death, chaos and worse into your home, your village or your nation. Like all dark gods, she is worshiped outright by some few cults who seek to gain her favor through enacting like troubles upon their neighbors. The Pale Mistress rarely acknowledges such groups, for good or ill. When such parishioners die, however, they become the *kaleyi*, the Hungry Dancers, who swarm about her feet as she spreads terror in An-Teng.

Should the Pale Mistress be forced into physical confrontation, she assumes her monstrous form. Her claws can rend even orichalcum, and her strength is beyond measure. More so, she knows neither fear nor pity and seeks the most painful and terrifying deaths for those that oppose her. She is not fool, however, and will dematerialize in the rare event that she is bested in combat. Any who manage to do so will learn soon enough that it would have been better to die, for the Pale Mistress will haunt them and their loved ones forever, bringing despair and pain to the "victor" but never allowing him to succumb to death.

**Sanctum:** The Pale Mistress makes her sanctum in the sea caves on the shore of An-Teng. There she hides from the light of day and the view of the Golden Lord. The cave network stretches and winds the entire length of the An-Teng coast and is home to her *kaleyi* and other spirits of pain and death. The remains of her victims litter the floor of the caves in heaps but will rise as walking dead (see the entry for common zombies in the *Exalted* rulebook, p. 299) to attack trespassers.

**Nature:** Critic

**Attributes:** Strength 9, Dexterity 8, Stamina 12, Charisma 6, Manipulation 6, Appearance 0, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 5, Awareness 6, Brawl 8, Dodge 4, Endurance 4, Investigation 5, Larceny 5, Lore 7, Occult 7, Performance 6, Presence 6, Resistance 5, Stealth 6, Survival 7

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 4, Cult 5, Followers 5, Influence 3  
**Charms:** All listed Charms

**Cost To Materialize:** 60

**Base Initiative:** 14

**Attack:**

Bite: Speed 14 Accuracy 16 Damage 24L Defense 14

Claw Rend: Speed 16 Accuracy 18 Damage 18L Defense 16

**Dodge Pool:** 12    **Soak:** 26L/32B (Hide, 20L/20B)

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

**Essence:** 7    **Essence Pool:** 118

**Other Notes:** Those rare few that survive a bite from the Pale Mistress find themselves infected with a horrid disease. The wound itself does not heal naturally: Only magic of the Solar Circle or the powers of gods with an Essence rating higher than that of the Pale Mistress can heal damage caused by the bite of the Pale Mistress. This applies to mortals and all Exalted save Lunars, who may regenerate the damage from the bite normally.

Left untreated, such a wound will begin to fester within a few hours. Every day following the attack, the wound becomes worse, and the victim loses another lethal

health level. When the total damage from the bite and the additional health levels afterward are enough to kill the character, the victim dies — but rises almost instantaneously thereafter as a *kaleyi*. Only a shred of what the victim once was remains, and it is buried under pain, hatred and subservience to the Pale Mistress. A character so afflicted may be saved by the intervention of the Golden Lord, but he is otherwise forever lost. This effect applies to the Exalted as well as to mortal targets.

### Kaleyi

**Description:** These tortured ghouls are the shattered remains of mortals who have promised themselves to the Pale Mistress in return for wealth, power, love or other boons. Whether they ever received their desires



before being taken by the Pale Mistress is unknown and of little consequence. Once the Pale Mistress takes such a worshiper, usually through a wasting disease accompanied by madness, the worshiper no longer cares for those things it desired so in life. Bestial and seemingly without conscience or even speech, the *kaleyi* serve the Pale Mistress with unbending loyalty.

The *kaleyi* appear much as they did in life, but they have become grotesque mockeries of their former selves. Their flesh has long shriveled to their bones, and their bodies are bent and twisted giving them a hunchbacked appearance. Always unkempt and dressed in rags, they are sometimes mistaken for lepers and other untouchables. Up close, however, their true natures become obvious. Their bodies have become like those of monkeys. The *kaleyi* file their teeth to points and let their nails grow long and hard. Their eyes are empty and sightless, though their sense of smell is keen like that of a shark. They do not speak, but grunt and howl like beasts, and injury and pain only serves to enrage them.

*Kaleyi* appear sometimes without the Pale Mistress, hunting for food among the foolish and lonely. They travel in bands ranging from a half-dozen to twenty or more. Larger bands can wipe out an entire village with a night of ravenous gluttony. When accompanying the Pale Mistress, the *kaleyi* are much more subdued. Then, the monkey-beasts circle around her ankles like whipped dogs, dancing to the music of the invisible iron gongs until she orders them to kill, break or burn.

The *kaleyi* cannot stand the light of the sun or the holy rites of the Golden Lord. If the *kaleyi* come in contact with daylight, they become as brittle as dried leaves and can be destroyed with a single stroke. No *kaleyi*, even under the direct order of the Pale Mistress, can enter hallowed ground or cross a line made by sacramental oils. These limits apply only to the rites and sacraments of the priests and priestesses of the Golden Lord.

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

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Endurance 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3

**Base Initiative:** 6

**Attack:**

Claw: Speed 8 Accuracy 8 Damage 6L Defense 8

**Dodge Pool:** 6      **Soak:** 4L (Leathery hide, 2L)

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

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** *Kaleyi* take no damage from bashing attacks, as they are already the broken remnants of mortals. Their claws extrude a poison that causes infection: Wounds caused by the *kaleyi*'s claws take twice as long to heal as normal. The *kaleyi* can “see” even in perfect darkness and can track prey by scent. *Kaleyi* are always extras.

### FAO BAAW, GOD OF BROKEN WATER

**Description:** In An-Teng, as in all places, water is life. When the rains come, the water seeps into the earth, where it is stored and protected until industrious men dig wells to retrieve it. Well water is a reward for ingenuity and hard work, and a well promotes community by asking all in a village to share water between them. By digging a well, however, men break the seal of protection granted by the earth, and the water can be tainted. In war, armies pollute the wells of their enemies, stealing from them the assurance of life. Even in times of harmony, the subversive, such as the cultists of the Pale Mistress, can desecrate a well with something as small as the festering corpse of a rat or bird. In time, these tainted





wells will heal and the people will again have fresh water to sustain them.

Fao Baaw is the spirit of wells, specifically those wells that have been tainted and can only be cleansed through time. Of an indeterminate gender, Fao Baaw appears as a tall figure dressed in a plain white robe, with long dark hair hanging over its face. Fao Baaw sits near wells and other small bodies of standing water, such as ponds, that have been polluted or desecrated, playing on a flute. The ghostly music can be heard for miles, warning locals that there is tainted water nearby. The song is always the same, slow and sad, and wise elders listen for it on the wind.

Fao Baaw does not clean the water or keep those who do not heed the its warning from drinking of the water. Merely a guardian, Fao Baaw protects the tainted well or pond from further desecration. Anyone attempting to pollute the water of a well guarded by Fao Baaw will find himself enchanted by the music of the god's flute. The enchantment compels the would-be polluter to tumble into the well and drown. Powerful opponents, such as Exalted and greater spirits, are often strong enough of will to resist the lure of the god's flute. Against these enemies of the well, Fao Baaw flies into a rage and bludgeons them to death with his flute.

Fao Baaw loves and protects pregnant women, perhaps because the water in which the unborn swim is, in a way, like the water held beneath the earth. Pregnant women may invoke the god's favor by sprinkling salt, which the people of An-Teng consider a cleansing element, into a well that has been polluted. Fao Baaw blesses the women, easing the pains of their pregnancy and labor, and protects the unborn child from stillbirth and miscarriage. In the event that a pregnant woman is physically assaulted in the god's

presence, Fao Baaw will use his flute, in either mouth or hand, to kill the attackers.

**Sanctum:** Fao Baaw's sanctum is a lonely well in the plains of the Middle Lands. The well leads down to an underground stream of brown, noxious water: All the pollutants in all the water of all the wells in An-Teng flows through Fao Baaw's sanctum. Fao Baaw has neither servants nor parishioners and can rarely be found within his sanctum. If there, the god sits atop the well playing a lamentation to the unclean waters of An-Teng.

**Nature:** Caregiver

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

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 3, Awareness 6, Craft (Dowsing) 4, Dodge 4, Endurance 3, Investigation 4, Lore 4, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 4, Melee 4 (Flute +2), Occult 5, Performance 6, Presence 4, Resistance 4, Socialize 4, Stealth 6

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Cult 3, Influence 3

**Charms:** All listed Charms

**Cost To Materialize:** 50

**Base Initiative:** 8

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 8 Accuracy 9 Damage 5B Defense 9

Kick: Speed 5 Accuracy 8 Damage 7B Defense 8

Flute (as a melee weapon): Speed 12 Accuracy 12 Damage 16L\* Defense 12

\* When used as a weapon in hand, the flute ignores a number of points of lethal soak equal to the wielder's Essence score (in Fao Baaw's case, 6).

**Dodge Pool:** 8      **Soak:** 15L/20B (Spirit robes, 12L/16B)

**Willpower:** 9      **Health Levels:** -0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Essence:** 6      **Essence Pool:** 107

**Other Notes:** Fao Baaw's flute, when used as an instrument, adds five dice to the god's dice pools when using spirit Charms such as Geas and Soul Rapt that allow the god to command mortals and other lesser beings. The flute can be stolen from Fao Baaw, but the god will be alternatively melancholy and enraged until he finds the instrument. Returning the flute to him should it be lost (and the one returning it did not steal it in the first place) is a sure way to gain the god's favor. Those that gain Fao Baaw's favor in this way receive a special blessing from the god in the form of a simple wooden drinking bowl. The bowl cleanses any water with which it is filled of pollutants, even sea water. While the bowl is not large enough to create vast amounts of fresh water, four or five people could survive indefinitely with it so long as they had water to cleanse and then drink.



## CREATURES AND SPIRITS OF THE HIGH LANDS

The High Lands suffered relatively few of the calamities that befell An-Teng after the Usurpation, due largely to its geographical isolation. While much of An-Teng's ancient culture managed to root itself in the mountains and remain largely unchanged over thousands of years, so too did many of the creatures and spirits of An-Teng. Most notable among the venerable inhabitants of the High lands are Fair Folk that are in many ways similar to the Mountain Folk of the Realm. Other things live among the high forests and desolate slopes, however, things with less interest in indulging mortals and their desires than these Fey.

### THE BANGI CRAWLER AND THE BANGI-FLY

**Description:** Before the High Lands give way to barren mountainsides, the thick forests of the Middle Lands crawl up the mountain faces. Having never been cut for fields or timber, the forests of the High Lands are sprawling, dense and teeming with strange life. Among the strangest, and most dangerous, denizens of the high forests are the bangi crawlers.

The bangi crawlers nest among the sundari trees, great mangroves stretching hundreds of feet into the air and covering much of the so-called Lower High Lands. Their dark-green, segmented bodies, as long as a man is tall, allow the bangi crawlers to blend into the branches and leaves of the sundari trees. Despite their size and girth, the bangi crawlers are surprisingly fast, moving on hundreds of hair-like legs on the underside of their bodies. Bright spots looking much like eyes appear on the back side of the bangi crawlers. These spots are designed to attract prey, such as the predatory tree striders (arboreal relatives of the claw strider detailed in *Creatures of the Wyld*, p. 31). The last segment of a bangi crawler's body is, in truth, a poison sack. When a predator bites into the bangi crawler, it gets a mouthful of venomous tissue that quickly disables all but the hardest of the forest's predators. The bite of the bangi crawler is also venomous, though it lacks fangs to deliver the poison: The creature's saliva itself is venomous and can, albeit slowly, enter the victim's blood through the skin.

The toxic nature of the bangi crawler is due entirely to its diet. Bangi crawlers subsist solely on the flowers of the bangi vine, a parasitic creeper that infests the high forests. The flowers of the bangi vine are gold in color, the same color as the bangi crawler's "eye



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spots," with five broad petals and a bulbous center. In their natural state, the flowers can make a grown man ill or kill a small child if ingested. Once their poison passes through a bangi crawler's digestive system, it becomes a deadly venom.

The bangi crawler is the larval stage of one of the High Lands' most beautiful creatures and most ravenous predators, the bangi-fly. The creatures that the bangi crawler kills are not prey in the traditional sense: As stated, the bangi crawler eats only the flowers of the bangi vine. Instead, when a bangi crawler has grown mature and is ready to undergo metamorphosis into a bangi-fly, it waits until a large predator attacks it and is disabled by its venom. Once this has occurred, the bangi crawler swallows the creature whole. While it begins to digest the unfortunate victim, its outer skin becomes rigid and its hair-like legs root into the sundari tree in which it lives. The resulting cocoon is a dark-brown shell that blends perfectly with the trunk of the sundari tree.

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For a month, the bangi crawler uses its victim as raw materials in its metamorphosis. At the end of that time, the cocoon breaks open, and the bangi-fly emerges. The bangi-fly is four feet long and has a wingspan of seven feet. While its body is the same dark green of the sundari foliage that the bangi crawler was, its wings are a brilliant array of colors and patterns. The people of An-Teng say that a person who stares deeply into the wings of the bangi-fly for a long time (provided he is not devoured by the predator) will see a painting of his future.

Newly emerged bangi-flies are extremely dangerous, for they must immediately gorge themselves in order to replace the energy lost during transformation. They will

attack any creature large enough to be noticed, though they will not eat bangi crawlers or other bangi-flies. Bangi-flies possess powerful mandibles and are just as toxic as their larval counterparts. Bangi-flies live for over a decade, during which time they mate annually and stalk the mountain forests in search of prey.

### GOUKAEN, LESSER ELEMENTAL

#### DRAGON OF EARTH

**Description:** In the deep roots of the mountain known as Grandfather, Goukaen waits. The elemental dragon was entombed there in the First Age by the Solar named Daring Flame for the crime of rejecting

#### BANGI CRAWLER AND BANGI-FLY

Name	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will.	Health Lvl's	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg Bite: 4/6/2L*	Dodge/Soak	Abilities
Bangi Crawler	4/3/4	4	-0x2/-1x2/ -2x2/-4/1		3/6L/8B	Athletics 2 (Climb +2), Awareness 3, Brawl2(Bite+1), Endurance 2, Resistance 2, Stealth 5
Bangi-fly	3/4/4	4	-1/-1x2/ -2x2/-4/1	Bite: 6/8/5L*	6/5L/6B	Athletics 3 (Fly +2), Awareness 4, Brawl2(Bite+2), Endurance 2, Resistance 2, Stealth 4

\* Both the bangi crawler and bangi-fly deliver venom through their bites. The Stamina + Resistance difficulty is 4. Success indicates 4B damage, while failure indicated 4B damage and the victim is paralyzed for a number of minutes equal to the health levels actually sustained from the poison. During this time, a bangi crawler begins to swallow its prey, which takes a total of two turns for small animals and four turns for human-sized animals. The bangi crawler will not swallow larger creatures. If a victim of the bangi-fly is immobilized by its venom, the creature continues to attack, devouring the victim on the spot. If another opponent attacks the bangi-fly, it will attempt to flee with its prey. The bangi-fly can fly at twice the normal rate for walking based on its Dexterity.

#### BANGI-FLY MARKINGS

The folk tales surrounding the brilliant wings of the bangi-fly are indeed true. If a character spends three turns concentrating on the wings of a resting bangi-fly and spends a temporary point of Willpower, his player may make a Perception roll. Success indicates that the character sees an image of the future among the swirls of color. How immediate and how specific the image is depends on the number of successes rolled. One success reveals a very vague impression with an indeterminate time period, such as an image of battle in which the character is involved with no clear opponent. Two successes sharpens the image to be more specific, though the timing is still unclear: In the previous example, the enemy might be clear but the location of the battle would remain unknown. With three successes, the image includes hints as to when the event is to occur, such as a rising or setting sun, or perhaps indications of season, such as snow or autumn foliage. Four successes provides specific clues, dependant upon the event in question, that allow the character to determine the location and time of the event within a week and a few miles. With five or more successes, the image is perfectly clear, and all participants, its exact location and the very hour of the day of the event are known.



the Chosen of the Sun as a confidant and companion. Even as Daring Flame and his allies closed the mountain around Goukaen, the Solar cursed the dragon to be so imprisoned until the Solars' rule was no more, until the light of the Unconquered Sun no longer touched the mountain and until Daring Flame's own bow and arrows were sundered. Enraged, Goukaen tore at the walls of the prison. While he managed to clear a wider cavern and create a substantial pile of rubble, he found there was no escaping the Solar's prison save to await the day that Daring Flame's prophecy came to pass. So, Goukaen began his long wait, neither sleeping nor moving, the only sound his whispered rage.

But the earth speaks, and there are those in Creation that can hear it, even if they do not understand what they hear. The legend of Goukaen and the prophecy of Daring Flame spread, crawling into the ears of wise women, the prophecies of holy men and the divinations of seers. Occasionally, even Earth-aspected Dragon-Blooded not so distracted by their holiday as to ignore the message hear the words of Goukaen. And some few have spoken back, muttering in their sleep or seeking a reward should the dragon ever be freed. In time, Goukaen came to understand what had transpired since his incarceration: the Usurpation, the Contagion, the founding of the Realm and even the disappearance of the Empress. It is time, he realizes, to act, before the Solars retake the world or the Deathlords bury it in oblivion or the Fair Folk devour it with chaos.

Goukaen's plan is simple: disseminate the true prophecy of his release through those unwitting pawns who can hear his rumblings beneath the mountain, embellishing the tale with promises of great riches within his lair and similar tales. While most will fail and die horribly in so doing, Goukaen knows someone — perhaps a Solar Circle seeking information about the First Age or perhaps a group of young Dynasts seeking glory and adventure — will free him. When loosed, he will rise up with all the fury the ages of imprisonment have created in him, fury he will unleash upon the Solar Exalted, the Dragon-Blooded and An-Teng itself.

Before his imprisonment, Goukaen was the guardian of the mountains of An-Teng and all the elementals that dwelled there. After he is freed and has had his fill of revenge, he will return to that duty. Such a powerful being unleashed in An-Teng will surely upset the balance of things, especially considering how far the Celestial Order has decayed and how little control the spirit courts have over individual spirits. His reappearance will attract the attention of not only the gods and spirits of An-Teng, but also the powerful Exalted remaining in the land, including Sadana, the Lunar Mother of Serpents, and the deathknight known as the Shatterer of the Way.

Though enraged, Goukaen will not immediately turn his wrath upon those who released him. In fact, Goukaen will owe a debt to these individuals, and while the dragon cannot be easily coerced into taking actions against his nature, he will keep to his promise and reward his saviors to the best of his ability. He knows much of the Old Realm and the First Age, including where many treasures from that time are buried, for the earth sings of such power held within it.

**Nature:** Survivor

**Attributes:** Strength 10, Dexterity 4, Stamina 12, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 6, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

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

**Abilities:** Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Brawl 5 (In Dragon Form +3), Craft (Sculpture) 4 (Working With Claws +3), Dodge 3, Endurance 6, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Flametongue, High Holy Speech, High Realm, Seatongue) 4, Occult 5, Performance 4, Presence 5, Resistance 6, Socialize 4, Stealth 2

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2/5\*, Followers 2/5\*, Influence 2/5\*, Manse 4\*\*, Resources 5

\* The number following the slash is the rating at which Goukaen will have the Background upon reasserting himself in the local spirit courts. While entombed, Goukaen can communicate to a small degree with a very few number of allies and followers.

\*\* The cavern in which Goukaen is held is a level 5 Earth-aspected Demesne. Following his release and given





time, Goukaen can convert it into a Manse and grow a gem of adamant skin (see the **Exalted** rulebook, p. 339).

**Charms:** All listed Charms

**Elemental Powers:** Coarse Skin, Dragon's Suspire, Element's Domain, Mobility, Rejuvenation

**Cost To Materialize:** 75

**Base Initiative:** 8

**Attack:**

Bite: Speed 5 Accuracy 12 Damage 15L Defense 12\*

Claw: Speed 8 Accuracy 13 Damage 13L Defense 13\*

Debris Storm: Speed 14 Accuracy 10 Damage 24L\*\*

\* Goukaen may make one bite attack and two claw attacks without splitting his dice pool.

\*\* Goukaen, if he spends a turn swallowing rock and stone, may, on the following turn, belch forth a storm of debris. This debris strikes all targets in a cone 80 feet long and 40 feet wide, beginning at Goukaen's mouth. The attack can be dodged but not blocked. Make one attack roll, and apply it to all targets. Goukaen may perform this feat only once every three turns.

**Dodge Pool:** 7      **Soak:** 16L/32B (Dragon hide, 10L/20B)

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

**Essence:** 6      **Essence Pool:** 112

**Other Notes:** During his imprisonment, Goukaen's political influence has waned, and he now has few allies. However, he is able to summon the aid of mercury ants (see **Games of Divinity**, p. 76) that dwell deep in the earth near to his prison. Upon his release, other earth elementals will flock to his banner, as will a number of mortals and Earth-aspected Dragon-Blooded with whom he has been communicating.

## TREE STRIDER

**Description:** The tree strider is a smaller, tree-dwelling version of the common claw strider. Smaller than the claw strider, the tree strider is only about four feet high at the shoulder and only about 12 feet long from snout to tail tip. However, tree striders are well adapted to the mountainous forests of the High Land and make up a critical part of the complex sundari mangrove forest ecology of the area, where they are the largest non-supernatural predator.

The tree strider's gripping claws and powerful leg muscles allow it to hurtle through the trees at breakneck speed. Males sport beautiful arrays of scarlet and iridescent plumage used in their mating displays. In addition, they hunt in smaller groups, typically lone males or a male and several mated females. Like the larger claw strider, they attack using their sharp claws and ferocious bite. Tree striders are not generally man-eaters, but the animals will attack weak, young or sleeping humans.

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 5 (Brachiation +3), Awareness 3 (Sharp Sight +1, Spot Ambush +1, Track +1), Brawl 3 (Bite +1, Claw +1), Dodge 4, Endurance 1, Presence 2 (Intimidation +2), Resistance 2, Stealth 3 (Ambush +2, Hide in Plain Sight +1)

**Base Initiative:** 9

**Attack:**

Bite: Speed 8 Accuracy 7 Damage 6L Defense 7

Claw: Speed 9 Accuracy 9 Damage 4L Defense 8

**Dodge Pool:** 9      **Soak:** 5L/9B (Tough leathery skin, 2L/3B)

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

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Unlike claw striders, tree striders are too small for a normal mortal man to ride. They can be tamed as hunting beasts, but they cannot serve as mounts.

## CREATURES AND SPIRITS

### OF THE MIDDLE LANDS

The Middle Lands once contained the great estates of the Solar Exalted. Since the end of the First Age, the Forest of Compassion, little more than a grand grove given as a wedding gift by one Solar's Lunar spouse, has spread to encompass the southern half of An-Teng. It is not as desolate or primal as the high forests, but the Forest of Compassion remains largely unsettled despite the presence of hunters, trappers and loggers. The fertile fields north of the Forest of Compassion are more thickly settled, but even there, beings older than An-Teng itself still walk.

### WALKER AMONG THE TREES

**Description:** The walkers among the trees are the sadness of An-Teng. They are born of the greatest loss, great spirits of life created by small deaths. The walkers grow from the earth of the graves of miscarried children. The people of An-Teng believe that miscarriage occurs when the Pale Mistress becomes jealous of the love between a mother and her unborn child. The Pale Mistress whispers disease into the ears of pregnant women while they sleep, infecting the unborn children with a wasting sickness. To stave off the Pale Mistress, pregnant women in An-Teng often sleep with silk scented with holy oils stuffed in their ears.

When this precaution fails, the women bring the bodies of their stillborn children to the Forest of Compassion. The children are laid to rest at the feet of great bamboo trees in unmarked graves to prevent the Pale Mistress from finding the children and devouring their innocent souls. If a seed falls from the tree above and takes root in the grave soil in the first lunar month after

the burial, a walker among the trees will sprout from the earth on the next moonless night.

The walkers among the trees are gigantic manlike figure made of living bamboo. They stand 50 feet tall, with beards and hair of bamboo shoots. Possessed of the spirit of the child from whose grave it was born, a walker feels a deep longing and love for the mother of that child. The walker will migrate to the part of the Forest of Compassion closest to the village where its “mother” dwells. During the day, the walker masquerades as just another bamboo grove. During the night hours, however, the walker will emerge from the forest and watch over its mother. Only a child spiritually, a walker does not understand the many complexities of adult mortal life and may misinterpret any number of

events as an attack against its “mother”: an argument between husband and wife, a tax collector taking tribute from the family or a visit by people unknown to the walker. A walker may become jealous if its “mother” has a family aside from itself and will lash out at those it feels are “stealing” its mother away. Children in An-Teng’s whose mothers suffered a miscarriage are cautioned against going out alone at night or into the Forest of Compassion, lest disaster befall them at the hands of a walker among the trees.

The great footprints left behind by a walker among the trees when it first moves from its birth grave to its new location close to its “mother” are infused with the same magic that brought it to life. A woman who steps into a footprint invariably becomes pregnant the next



### ONE WITH THE WOOD

**Cost:** 3 motes

The walker may attune itself to the forest, feeling every living thing that crawls along the ground or perches in the trees. For the duration of the scene, the walker is able to locate and identify any living creature or materialized spirit in the forest. It cannot identify specific creatures, but knows what kind of animal or spirit it is and knows, in general terms, how powerful the creature is. Individuals with whom the creature has met, as well as the walker’s “mother,” are known to the walker when it uses this ability. Dematerialized spirits and ghosts are invisible to the walker, but corporeal undead, such as zombies, are perceived as a void in the spot in the forest where they are found. When using this ability, the walker is a supernatural tracker (see “Tracking and Evasion” on p. 245 of the **Exalted** rulebook).

### ROOTS RUN DEEP

**Cost:** 10 motes

To use this ability, the walker must remain stationary, though it may physically act and attack enemies within its reach (approximately 20 feet). When the walker invokes Roots Run Deep, its feet join with the earth, and roots burrow down into the earth. These roots travel unhindered through the earth for a range of up to 20 yards but are blocked by ledges or water. Any structure within range is subject to attack by the roots, which pull at the stones and grow into the cracks. Such a structure suffers 10 dice of structural damage each turn it is attacked in such a way. Angry walkers, those jilted by their “mothers” or whose “mothers” have been attacked and killed, have been known to destroy entire settlements in this way. This ability lasts for a single scene.

### TREE FORTITUDE

**Cost:** 3 motes

By invoking this power, the walker among the trees is able to soak lethal damage with its bashing soak rating. The effect lasts a single turn, though it can be automatically reactivating on the walker’s next turn, during which the walker’s already oak-hard bark becomes even more solid and stiff. When using this power, the walker’s Dexterity drops to 2.

### WOODLAND STRIDE

**Cost:** 6 motes

Despite their massive size, walkers among the trees move easily and quietly through the wood. Upon activating this power, a walker makes no sound for one scene. Moreover, the walker does not need to move trees aside or even rustle the underbrush to move, making it nearly impossible to track its movements by watching for such disturbances: Add 3 to the difficulty of any attempt to track the walker (see “Tracking and Evasion” on p. 245 of the **Exalted** rulebook). The walker is not invisible to the naked eye, however, and anyone within a short distance of the walker will see it.



time she has intercourse with a man. The child that is born is human, but he will grow up jealous of his father and siblings and possess a secret hunger for human flesh. These children, once grown, often find their way into the cults of the Pale Mistress and inevitably become one of the *kaleyi*.

The walkers among the trees are small gods in the local forest court. They originally came to be during the Usurpation, when a Solar lady, pregnant with her Lunar husband's child, fled her Dragon-Blooded assassins and hid in the Forest of Compassion. Though she managed to escape the initial attack, the poisons in her evening meal forced her to miscarry. She wept for three nights at the shallow grave of her child, and the spirits of the forest were so moved by her grief that the walkers were born. Since then, the walkers among the trees have served as guardians of mothers-to-be, a gift of bereavement from the forest court to those who have suffered the ultimate loss.

A walker among the trees cannot be killed by normal means. Even if chopped to pieces or burnt to cinders, the walker will rise again from the grave that spawned it on the next moonless night. Only a ritual performed by a priestess of the Golden Lord sanctifying the grave of the miscarried child can prevent the walker from rising again.

**Attributes:** Strength 12, Dexterity 4, Stamina 18, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1, Perception 6, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Presence 2, Resistance 5, Survival 4, Thrown 3

**Backgrounds:** None

**Suggested Charms:** Camouflage, Dematerialize, Landscape Travel, Stillness, Tracking

**Elemental Powers:** One With the Wood, Roots Run Deep, Tree Fortitude, Woodland Stride

**Cost To Dematerialize:** 20

**Base Initiative:** 6

**Attack:**

Smash: Speed 6 Accuracy 6 Damage 12B Defense 6

Thrown Boulder: Speed 6 Accuracy 7 Damage 16L (Rate 1, Range 100)

**Dodge Pool:** 4      **Soak:** 16L/30B (Barkhide, 10L/12B)

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

**Essence:** 2

**Essence Pool:** 67

**Other Notes:** None

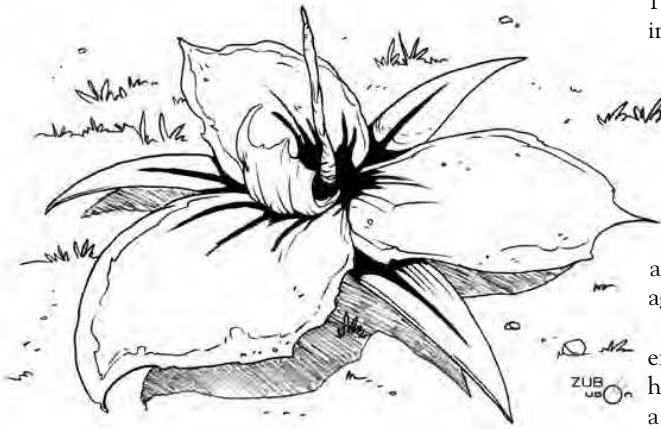
## CREATURES AND SPIRITS OF THE SHORE LANDS

Hundreds of miles of coastline make up the Shore Lands, including many fishing villages, port towns and the capital city of the City of the Steel Lotus. Also found in the Shore Lands is the City of Dead Flowers, once the capital of An-Teng and now a desecrated shadowland. All manner of creatures can be found in the shallows and reefs that line An-Teng's shore, and the area surrounding the City of Dead Flowers is haunted by ghosts and worse things. Even in the capital city, spirits hunt the night or are invoked by sorcerers of the Shore Prince's court.

### FUNERAL ORCHID

**Description:** Before the Usurpation and the Great Contagion, the City of Dead Flowers housed the seat of the Solar governor of An-Teng. While very little is known of the place before its demise, it is certain that the people of that fair city, or perhaps its rulers, loved flowers above all other things. Façades, sculptures and treasures from that time and place all display floral art, in both great detail and great variety. It seems no flower, no matter where it may bloom, was unknown to the First Age artisans of An-Teng. Yet, one flower does not appear anywhere in the art and architecture of the old city, a flower that, by the accounts of the few that have explored the city and returned, is the sole growing thing to be found within the shadowland.

The funeral orchid is an orchid of unusual size and coloring. Five feet in diameter, the funeral orchid is the largest flower in An-Teng. Its petals are pale white, like bleached bone, with edges of blue-gray speckled with blood red. The flower grows from a vine and lays open on the ground, its pistil a fleshy column six or more feet tall



and as thick as a man's thigh before tapering to a fist sized head. The pistil is the same blue-gray speckled with red as the edges of the flower's petals. The vine and leaves of the funeral orchid are ashen, the pallor of dead flesh.

Though beautiful in its way, the funeral orchid is a necromantic aberration. It draws its sustenance from the shadowland and possesses a spirit of its own. The funeral orchid seeks to draw the living into the Underworld, where the spirit of its victims become entangled in the plant's roots and become as water and sunlight are to flowers of Creation. The funeral orchid feeds on the Essence of both the living and the dead, existing as the shadowlands do both in Creation and the Underworld simultaneously.

The funeral orchid smells strong and sickly sweet. The perfume of the flower intoxicates living creatures. Victims so possessed by the scent of the funeral orchid lose the power of intelligible speech and become lethargic, unable to walk more than a dozen yards from the flower. The victim eventually settles near the flower and dies of starvation and thirst. This slow demise causes the victim's spirit to slip slowly and silently into the Underworld. Once the victim has passed into the Underworld, the sinuous roots of the funeral orchid wrap around the still entranced spirit. Unable to slip into Lethe or to walk in the joyless land of the dead, the captured spirit feeds the funeral orchid until the ghost's Essence is consumed and the ghost falls into Oblivion. Flowers with many spirits trapped in their roots grow much larger, up to 20 feet in diameter.

### FUNERAL ORCHID TRAITS

Funeral orchids are Abyssal flora and possess no Attributes, Abilities or Virtues. They do have an Essence score, which determines the physical toughness of the funeral orchid as well as the power of its intoxicating aroma. The Essence score of a funeral orchid ranges from

1 to 4, though more powerful versions of the flower exist in the Underworld.

A funeral orchid has a soak equal to twice its Essence score and a number of health levels equal to three times its Essence. Funeral orchids are not harmed by bashing attacks, nor do they suffer penalties as they suffer health levels of damage. When a funeral orchid has lost its last health level, it is destroyed. The roots remain, however, and unless they are dug out of the Underworld itself, the orchid will grow again in a number of weeks equal to its Essence.

The effects of the perfume of a funeral orchid extend five yards for every dot of Essence the flower has. The players of those within that range must make a Willpower roll with against a difficulty equal to the flower's Essence for their characters. Failure results in a total loss of free will: a victim becomes a mindless automaton that desires only to be near the funeral orchid. Such victims wander aimlessly until exhausted, at which point they simple lay down and die of exposure. When the victim dies, its soul is trapped by the tendrils of the orchid's roots, which pull it down into the Underworld to the base roots of the flower. There, it becomes sustenance. A spirit trapped in this way loses one Essence per year until it fades into nothingness. A funeral orchid may effect dematerialized spirits equally as well as other creatures.

If a funeral orchid's roots are destroyed in the Underworld, the flower dies, and any trapped creatures that have not been consumed are freed, though they have lost permanent Essence based upon how long they have been trapped. The funeral orchid's roots possess the same soak and health levels as the flower, but may only be attacked in the Underworld.

### SHADOW PUPPET ASSASSIN

**Description:** The sorcerer's of An-Teng are charged with many duties, from soothsaying to guarding against unkind spirits. Among these duties, none is more important and dangerous than summoning the shadow puppet assassins for the Prince of the Shore Lands.

The shadow puppet assassins have been bound to the sorcerers of An-Teng for millennia. Following the end of the First Age, when the Night Caste could no longer be counted on to perform the hardest diplomacy, the first princes put in place by the Dragon-Blooded commanded their sorcerers to seek out replacements. It was during these dark times, when turmoil threatened to destroy what little of An-Teng the Dragon-Blooded had not themselves undone, that the shadow puppet assassins were first summoned and bound to marionettes that are used in a complex ritual of performance. It is through this ritual, a shadow play depicting the attack upon the target, that the assassin spirits are



controlled by the sorcerers and used as weapons against the enemies of An-Teng.

Shadow puppet assassins appear as nothing more than shadows when dematerialized, sliding across floors, over walls and under doors toward their intended targets. They can be seen only by the most observant watchmen and make no sound whatsoever. Only a slight chill in the air and the sudden flickering of candle- and firelight, as if a nearly doused by a breeze, betrays the presence of a shadow puppet assassin.

A shadow puppet assassin materializes in the instant before it strikes. When materialized, it is a vaguely manlike, three-dimensional shadow standing free rather than cast across the floor or wall. The shadows of thin strings can be seen from both the assassin and its target. When it attacks, it slides into contact with the shadow of its target and uses the shadow strings of the target to strangle the target's shadow. The target merely begins to choke and cough, eventually collapsing from, it seems, a heart attack or a bit of meat stuck in his throat. Once the target has been killed, the shadow puppet assassin dematerializes and disappears until called again.

Though bound by powerful magic to the sorcerers of An-Teng, these spirits resent their enslavement. A careless Shadow Puppeteer can easily allow the shadow puppet assassin too much freedom or invoke the spirit too close to himself or the Three Princes of An Teng. Given the opportunity, the shadow puppet assassin will lash out at whomever it can, intent upon wreaking havoc among the people of An-Teng or killing the sorcerer that commands it. A shadow puppet assassin may only attack those who are included in the performance ritual through puppets of their own, however, but anyone in the same room as the target must be included in this way in order for the ritual to work.

**Sanctum:** Each shadow puppet assassin's sanctum is a dark and lightless room accessed through its marionette. Here, the creature broods hatefully in the time between sorties.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Investigation 2, Larceny 4, Presence 2, Stealth 6

**Backgrounds:** None

**Suggested Charms:** Cunning Thief, Hoodwink, Hurry Home, Materialize, Measure the Wind, Paralyze, Stillness

**Supernatural Powers:** Shadow String Garrote

**Cost To Materialize:** 28

**Base Initiative:** 10



**Attack:**

Shadow Strike: Speed 10 Accuracy 10 Damage 1L Defense 10

**Dodge Pool:** 11      **Soak:** 2L/4B

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

**Essence:** 2      **Essence Pool:** 56

**Other Notes:** When dematerialized, the shadow puppet assassin can still be seen faintly in material Creation (Perception + Awareness, difficulty 5, not generally made reflexively unless the assassin goes into a brightly lit area). If one is ambushing a target, increase the difficulty of the reflexive Wits + Awareness roll to spot the ambush by 2 (see **Exalted**, p. 238). While insubstantial, it is subject to attacks by dematerialized beings, sorcery, the anima effects of most Exalted and attacks made with weapons of the Five Magical Materials.

When insubstantial, the assassin can move freely over walls, floors and ceilings so long as a light source provides shadows without completely illuminating a room. The shadow puppet assassin is forced to dematerialize in the presence of complete illumination, though it can rematerialize if the light dims and the An-Teng sorcerer controlling the puppet maintains the ritual. If the sorcerer ends the ritual, the shadow puppet assassin automatically dematerializes, returning immediately to the marionette.

The ritual that summons the shadow puppet assassin can be performed by mortal sorcerers, though it is a difficult undertaking. A marionette to which a shadow puppet assassin is bound is required for the ritual. The sorcerer's player must succeed at a Performance + Intelligence roll, as well as an Occult + Intelligence roll, both difficulty 2. If both rolls are successful, the



sorcerer summons a shadow puppet assassin, which remains under the control of the sorcerer for a number of hours equal to the combined extra successes rolled. A shadow puppet assassin can travel approximately 10 miles per hour during daylight hours and 20 miles per hour during the night. Each hour of the ritual, the sorcerer's player must succeed at a Performance + Stamina roll in order to maintain the ritual. Failure releases the shadow puppet assassin, which returns to the marionette to which it is bound. If the ritual is interrupted, the shadow puppet assassin dematerializes and returns to the marionette. A botch indicates something has gone wrong with the ritual.

### SHADOW STRING GARROTE

**Cost:** 10 motes

Upon a successful Brawl attack against its target, the shadow puppet assassin uses the target's shadow strings, created by the performance ritual, to strangle the target's shadow. The attack causes 4L damage, plus extra successes on the Brawl roll, which can only be soaked with the target's Stamina and other natural soak. The target automatically takes an additional 2L (with no bonus dice) each turn following from the garrote itself and is choking. Victims may hold their breath as per the rule in the *Exalted* rulebook, page 243, but will continue to take 2L each turn and may eventually die of asphyxiation, as well. Breaking free from the attack follows the rules for breaking free of a clinch (see the *Exalted* rulebook, pp. 239-240).

## AGENTS OF THE REALM IN AN-TENG

An-Teng is a client state of the Realm, at least in name. With the disappearance of the Empress, the ability to control An-Teng, like all outlying satrapies, becomes more difficult with each passing season: The political and economic maneuvering of the Great Houses drains the resources of the Realm, and An-Teng is forgotten as much needed resources are directed elsewhere.

Nonetheless, an imperial garrison remains in An-Teng to guard its port, and a great many Dragon-Blooded aristocrats enjoy visiting An-Teng for an exotic, extended holiday. Among them, the following characters are notable.

### SHURI THE SCARLET, DRAGON-BLOODED GENERAL AND COMMANDER OF THE DRAGON'S JAWS GARRISON

**Description:** For Shuri the Scarlet, a former captain in the Red Piss Legion, duty in An-Teng is a long deserved reward.

The scion of a minor line of House Ledaal, Shuri squandered his youth and meager inheritance on drinking, carousing and otherwise embarrassing the elders of his house. When he was the only child of his generation to Exalt, despite a great number of siblings and cousins, he took to his divine status with a zeal: No servant was too lowly for his orders, and no member of his line was too moral for his disdain. Eventually, his posturing became too great for his family to endure, and it pooled its resources, even borrowing a significant sum from House Ragara, in order to purchase for him a commission in the Vermilion Legion (see **Exalted: Dragon-Blooded**, p. 59).

Shuri took to a soldier's life surprisingly well. If the goal of his family was to have him see a bloody end, it failed. If its goal was to teach the young Dynast the value of humility and duty, it succeeded admirably. He took to military life, distinguishing himself both as a soldier and as a leader. During his time in the Vermilion Legion, Shuri learned the value of life, his and those of his men, and loyalty, particularly the kind that is natural versus that which is merely commanded. Shuri did not, however, lose his appetite for the pleasures of the flesh. In fact, he found life in the Vermilion Legion, at least the hours around the campfire with other soldiers or in his tent with one of the many prostitutes that followed the legion, quite to his liking. His fellows joked that he had been with so many scarlet maidens that he himself was turning red, and thus, he took the moniker Shuri the Scarlet.

Shuri's military career seemed to come to an end when his left arm was severed below the elbow during a battle with beastmen in the Threshold. The terrible acid in the creature's saliva cauterized the wound, preventing it from being regenerated. The maiming of his body struck Shuri severely, and he returned home a dour veteran. He could barely bring himself to drink and whore, and even when he did, he found himself merely going through the motions, watching mockeries such as Nagezzer the Slug and wondering how long it would be until he was like them.

His melancholy would not last long, however. Within a year following his return to the Realm, Shuri was summoned by Ledaal Kebok Omerger, scholar, sorcerer and Ledaal elder. The Realm had need of someone to head the garrison stationed in An-Teng, and House Ledaal had a vested interest in manning that post with





one of their own: The Great House was well invested in trade in the region. Omerger offered the position to Shuri, calling in many favors to ensure his appointment, as well as offering the Exalt a hand of jade to replace the one that he had lost in battle. Shuri accepted the offer at once: The opportunity to make himself whole again was more than Shuri could pass up. In addition, An-Teng was well known to Shuri for its pleasures, and the chance to escape the constant affections of his now very proud parents was a great boon.

Shuri runs his garrison very much like the Vermilion Legion, insofar that appointments and promotions are based on merit rather than political connections. This practice makes him an unusual commander in the current climate, and he has attracted a number of disaffected outcaste officers. Shuri doesn't know it yet, but his garrison is looking very politically unreliable, regardless of the realities of the situation.

Shuri the Scarlet is a capable administrator and a competent law enforcer. At the behest of his house, he has insinuated himself into the mercantile community, dealing with An-Teng, Guild and Lintha traders alike in an attempt to increase Ledaal's influence in An-Teng and the surrounding area. He cares little for these political maneuverings, but given the presence of House Ragara's scion Soras Jor as satrap of An-Teng, Shuri has little choice but play the game. In addition, Shuri has been charged by his house to investigate the City of Dead Flowers and to determine the potential danger of its shadowland. To this end, Shuri employs the brave and foolish to explore the city and report on their findings. He has no desire to enter the place himself and will not waste the lives of his men on such an endeavor.

Shuri's taste for earthly pleasures has returned since his arrival in An-Teng, as well. While his enemies may consider this a weakness, they would be mistaken: Shuri the Scarlet is merely enjoying his just reward for loyal service to the Realm and his house and does not allow his vices to compromise his duties. Shuri maintains close communication with his compatriots in the Vermilion Legion and has hosted Tepet Ejava to dinners, stayed in her pavilion during the last furnace rhino hunt and instituted occasional officer exchanges with her pirate-hunting force in the South.

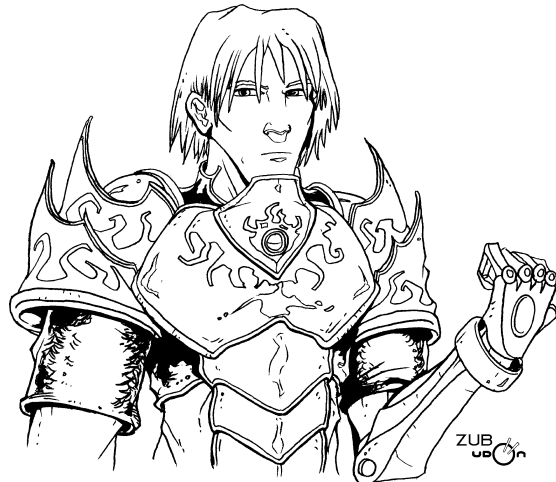
**Aspect:** Air

**Nature:** Gallant

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

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 4, Endurance 2, Investigation 4, Linguistics (Native: High



Realm; Firetongue, Old Realm) 2, Lore 2, Martial Arts 4 (Wind-Fire Wheel +2), Melee 4 (Daiklave +1), Presence 2, Ride 2, Socialize 4, Stealth 2, Thrown 4

**Backgrounds:** Artifact 5, Backing 2, Breeding 2, Command 5, Connections 2, Henchmen 3, Resources 3

**Charms:** Falsehood Unearthing Attitude, Five-Dragon Blocking Technique, Five-Dragon Claw, Five-Dragon Form, Five-Dragon Fortitude, Five-Dragon-Force Blow, Flickering Candle Meditation, Language-Learning Ritual, Loquacious Courtier Technique, Loyal Weapon, Ox-Body Technique, Precision Observation Method, Scent-of-Crime Method, Seeking Throw Technique, Stoking Bonfire Style, Vengeful Gust Counterattack, Warm Faced Seduction Technique, Whirlwind Shield Form

**Base Initiative:** 7

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 8 Damage 3B Defense 8

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 7 Damage 5B Defense 7

Hurricane Wind-Fire Wheels: Speed 9 Accuracy 12 Damage 5L Defense 12

Jade Daiklave (Glorious Storm): Speed 13 Accuracy 11 Damage 8L Defense 11

Hatchet, Thrown: Speed 7 Accuracy 6 Damage 6L (Rate 2, Range 10)

**Dodge Pool:** 8/7    **Soak:** 9L/14B (Jade reinforced buff jacket, 7L/10B, -1 mobility penalty)

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

**Essence:** 3

**Personal Essence:** 13    **Peripheral Essence:** 29 (15)

**Committed Essence:** 14

**Other Notes:** The hurricane wind-fire wheels with which Shuri fights are impressive weapons (Speed +2, Accuracy +2, Damage +2L, Defense +2) with an unusual ability: They are especially attuned to the Air-pected Dragon-Blooded and, when wielded, allow such a character to use

his aspect anima abilities at no Essence cost. While the power is engaged, however, the Terrestrial's anima flares as if he had spend 10 more motes of Essence than he actually has, invariably surrounding the character with shearing winds and thunderheads. This ability costs 3 motes to activate for an entire scene. The hurricane wind-fire wheels are Artifact 3 and require 3 motes of Essence to attune to a pair.

The jade hand that Shuri wears is an Artifact 3 wonder. See the sidebar regarding the jade hand for details.

### RAGARA SORAS JOR, SATRAP OF AN-TENG

**Description:** Soras Jor listened patiently, soaking in each word and analyzing it for implication and subtext, as Ragara Banoba explained the situation: House Ledaal, a longtime rival and the only house to avoid debt to House Ragara, had managed place one of its own officers in charge of the garrison in An-Teng. Ledaal's own merchants were already entrenched in the region, and the presence of a garrison commander subservient to that house could cause Ragara's Guild allies no end of trouble. It was necessary, Banoba said, that Ragara place its own imperial official in An-Teng, one with a position conducive to bending An-Teng's satrapial government to Ragara's interests. Ragara Banoba had chosen Soras Jor to fill that position, to become the Satrap of An-Teng. Banoba would pay the three talents of jade in donatives necessary to ensure Soras Jor's assignment. In return, Jor would serve the interests of House Ragara in addition to those of the Realm, and the profits therefrom would offset Jor's debt to Banoba.

Pleasure filled Jor. Of all the tributaries, An-Teng was one that offered the most civilized comforts and least offensive local customs. He had visited An-Teng twice before during his travels with Ragara-affiliated Guild merchant vessels and found the land reasonably beautiful and the people sufficiently obedient. The Three Princes of An-Teng were, like all barbarians, convinced that they were the true rulers of their land, which Jor found quaint and mildly amusing. At the same time, An-Teng custom demanded acquiescence to imperial influence. Only An-Teng's tolerance of the Lintha Family and its pirates concerned Jor, who suddenly found himself in a position to do something about it. His Guild allies would pay handsomely for sea lanes unhindered by Lintha pirates.

Soras Jor went through proscribed motions of accepting the generous offer, all the while planning: who to have accompany him, how to arrive, when to begin maneuvering against the Ledaal commander. In the weeks that followed, while his assignment was arranged and preparations for his departure were made, Soras Jor considered every aspect of his new position and how to bend it to his will. He investigated the life and career of Shuri the

### JADE HAND (ARTIFACT VARIES)

In addition to granting the wearer (who must have lost a hand by accident or design) a normal range of motion and use of the missing limb, a jade hand acts as a conduit between the wearer and the Essence of a Manse. Only the Dragon-Blooded can wear a jade hand, and even then, the hand must be of the appropriate type of jade as determined by the Exalt's aspect. When using Charms based upon the Aspect Abilities of the element with which the hand is associated, the jade hand reduces the total cost in motes of Essence by a number equal to the hand's Artifact rating. For example, Shuri's jade hand is rated Artifact 3, so the total cost for using any Charm associated with an Air Ability is reduced by 3 motes. In no case can the jade hand reduce the cost of activating a Charm below 1 mote of Essence, nor does it have any effect on Will-power expenditures to activate Charms.

All jade hands possess sockets for the placement of a Hearthstone. Because of the connection between the hand and the element for which it was made, only a like Hearthstone may be set in the hand. If there is a cost to activate the stone, the jade hand does reduce the cost in motes of Essence to activate it just as if it were a Charm of the appropriate element. This ability even extends to the cost of attunement for weapons of the appropriate jade type for the Dragon-Blooded who wears the hand.

A jade hand may possess additional features, as well. Some are crafted with clawlike nails, allowing the wearer to inflict lethal damage with unarmed attacks. Others are designed larger than the wearer's natural hand, allowing the wearer to wield a large weapon, such as a grand daiklave, in one (the jade) hand. If the jade hand possesses such a trait, the Artifact rating of the hand is increased by one, but it does not increase the number of motes of Essence by which it reduces the cost of Charms and other aspect magic.

The hand must be attuned to the wearer and requires a commitment of 1 mote of Essence per dot of Artifact.

Rumors persist of similar hands crafted of the other Magical Materials, such as starmetal and soulsteel. If such creations exist, they are likely very rare, very powerful and very well hidden and guarded.





Scarlet, making notes of his vices and his disdain for politics, and established direct communication with Guild merchants who dealt regularly with An-Teng. He also made advances toward the Lintha, secretly and through chains of intermediaries, in order to identify agents of the pirate family for future “use.” By the time he sailed for An-Teng, Soras Jor was confident in his ability to transform this assignment into a major victory for Ragara and the foundation of his own illustrious future.

The official duties to which Soras Jor is bound consist primarily of collecting and calculating tribute from the Three Princes of An-Teng. In addition, Jor acts as an intermediary between the Imperial Palace and the Three Princes: He delivers messages from one to the other, always taking care to thoroughly examine each one, and works to smooth misunderstandings of language and culture between the two. Part of this duty allows Jor an opportunity to watch Shuri and his garrison carefully, since his office approves many expenses and projects for Shuri’s soldiers. Unofficially, Soras Jor treats with the various powerful merchants of An-Teng, the Guild and, occasionally, even the Lintha. Like his Ledaal counterpart, he manipulates each group toward his own ends using promises backed by imperial credentials. Unlike Shuri, however, Soras Jor is a skilled negotiator and very comfortable with economic and political maneuvering. He clearly has the upper hand in this situation but must take care: Shuri the Scarlet, though not the highest authority on Realm law in An-Teng, could easily turn his police powers against the Ragaran son.

Where Shuri has his vices, Soras Jor has his ambition. He believes that he will one day head the Soras line, perhaps even House Ragara itself, and every action he takes is carefully calculated to achieving that end. Those that can aid Soras Jor in this endeavor, knowingly or not, are both subject to his will and in a position to negotiate with him to their own benefit.

**Aspect:** Earth

**Nature:** Bureaucrat

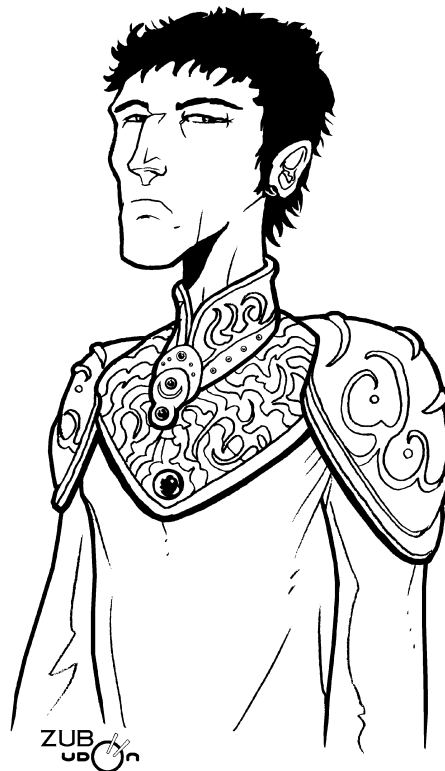
**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

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

**Abilities:** Archery 3, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 5, Dodge 2, Investigation 4, Larceny 3, Linguistics (Native: High Realm; Firetongue, Low Realm, Old Realm, Seatongue) 4, Lore 3, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 1, Melee 3 (Daiklave +2), Occult 2, Performance 2, Presence 3, Ride 1, Socialize 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Artifact 2, Backing 4, Breeding 2, Connections 3, Influence 2, Manse 2, Mentor 3, Reputation 3

**Charms:** All-Encompassing Earth Sense, Benevolent Master’s Blessing, Brother-Against-Brother Insinuation, Confluence of Savant Thought, Dragon-Graced Weapon,



Elemental Bolt Attack, Elemental Burst Technique, Elemental Concentration Trance, Feeling the Dragon’s Bones, Flickering Candle Meditation, Friend-to-All-Nations Attitude, Ghost-Fire Blade, Loquacious Courtier Technique, Phantom Fire-Warrior Horde, Precision Observation Method, Seizing-the-Tongue Technique, Stoking Bonfire Style, Warm-Faced Seduction Style  
**Base Initiative:** 6

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 6 Accuracy 6 Damage 2B Defense 6

Kick: Speed 3 Accuracy 5 Damage 4B Defense 5

Jade Daiklave (The Auditor): Speed 12 Accuracy 10 Damage 7L Defense 10

**Dodge Pool:** 5      **Soak:** 9L/14B (Steelsilk robe, 8L/12B)

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

**Essence:** 4

**Personal Essence:** 14      **Peripheral Essence:** 37 (32)

**Committed Essence:** 5

**Other Notes:** Soras Jor’s white robes, embroidered with gold and gems, are crafted of the same resilient material that make up steelsilk sails, providing uncanny protection from physical attacks while appearing to be nothing more than fine clothing. In addition, Jor possesses the following artifacts: an automaton assassin (see p. 119) and a jade daiklave. Jor avoids open conflict when possible, preferring treachery and political maneuvers.

He is well connected in both An-Teng and the Realm and, if necessary, can summon a great deal of resources with which to attack his enemies.

## THE LINTHA FAMILY

The Lintha rule the Southwestern seas. The blood of gods flows through their veins, and the power of the Yozi flows through their hands. Exalt, god and demon alike align themselves with the Lintha Family, and while the Lintha's numbers are small when compared to An-Teng and the Realm, their power is great. The following represents a smattering of the Lintha and their allies with which to challenge any Circle of Exalts. The Storyteller is encouraged to expand upon this list with both existing material (from sources such as *Creatures of the Wild*, *Games of Divinity* and *Savage Seas*) and with unique creations.

### LINTHA NG HUT DUKANTHA, INFERNAL EXALT

**Description:** As a Prince of Malfeas, Dukantha is not unlike he was as a mortal. He is precocious, alert and ambitious. Delicate and noble, he is a genuine aristocrat of the Malfean realms. Dukantha was an outcaste in his first existence, and he has grown in might since his rebirth. While the fact that he is based on the frame of a Dragon-Blood limits his total power, he likes to think that he can match any of his fellow Infernal Exalted for wit and manners. In any case, Kimberry dotes on him, as he is of her blood as well as her slave, and some would say he is thus a true aristocrat in that he has never truly earned his glories.

Regardless of whether or not his gifts are his due, Dukantha certain possesses them. He has been remade to be slim and darkly handsome. He wears little regalia, but his cloak and collar and body jewelry are the finest in the Demon Realm. He wears armor of greening brass, and his exquisite daiklave is a glittering blasphemy.

Since his Infernal Exaltation, Dukantha has returned to Creation once each year for the five days of Calibration. Normally, when he appears to the Lintha Family, Dukantha comes singly, rising from Malfeas through the womb of his doomed island-sister. However, when in Malfeas, Dukantha is the commander of *Kimberry's Dawn*, a ship crafted by Kimberry from one of her own subsidiary souls. Though it can sail itself, Dukantha has a crew of a dozen dozen (144) of the most savage erymanthoi in the Demon Realm to man his man-o'-war. If Bluehaven were in danger and he came to its aid, he would probably do so from the deck of this ship.

Dukantha teaches the Lintha how to worship the Sea That Marched Against the Flame. These are twisted, cruel rituals that indulge the darkest thoughts of mortals. For their loyalty, the Lintha receive a small measure of power, and more importantly, they gain the power and patronage of Dukantha. Though he emerges only once a year and cannot act in Creation without drawing the ire



Yozis

of the Celestial Bureaucracy, Dukantha can speak to the leader of the Cult of Dukantha, shaping the Lintha to the will of Dukantha and his Yozi mistress. Over time, he has showered many small and terrible trinkets on the Lintha.

The Lintha are but a small part in the Yozi's plot to escape their prison, though Dukantha takes pleasure in guiding and manipulating the pirates. So long as the Lintha continue to serve the needs of the Yozi, Dukantha will bestow his power and wisdom upon them. Should they ever stray from that path or should his dark master ever tire of them, Dukantha will not hesitate to destroy his former family completely and utterly.

**Nature:** Paragon

**Former Aspect:** Water

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

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

**Abilities:** Archery 5, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Brawl 6, Bureaucracy 4, Dodge 4, Endurance 3, Lore 5, Melee 6 (Daiklave +2), Occult 6, Presence 5, Resistance 5, Ride 3, Sail 6, Socialize 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Artifact N/A, Breeding 5, Cult 4, Followers 5, Influence 5, Manse 5

**Charms:** All Dragon-Blooded Charms he meets the prerequisites for, which is most of them. Ox-Body Technique (x3).

**Supernatural Powers:** In addition to his Terrestrial Charms, Dukantha has access to the following Infernal powers: Infernal Resilience, Infernal Sorcery, Primordial Maelstrom, Summon the Sea That Marched Against the Flame



**Base Initiative:** 12

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 12 Accuracy 12 Damage 6B Defense 12

Kick: Speed 9 Accuracy 11 Damage 8B Defense 11

Black Lead Grand Daiklave (Glittering Havoc): Speed 9 Accuracy 16 Damage 18L Defense 16

Black Lead Long Powerbow (Foreshortened Transfixion)\*: Speed 12 Accuracy 12 Damage 12L (Rate 3, Range 350)

\* Dukantha uses green fire arrows. They function much as fire arrows do (see p. 126). However, the range is not halved and the additional damage caused by the infernal flame is 5L, not 3L.

**Dodge Pool:** 10    **Soak:** 19L/23B (Black lead superheavy plate, 15L/15B)

**Willpower:** 10    **Health Levels:** -0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Essence:** 8

**Personal Essence:** 23    **Peripheral Essence:** 61 (37)

**Committed Essence:** 23

**Other Notes:** For a cost of 7 motes of Essence, Dukantha may appear as a huge and even more terrifying image of himself, sheathed in green fire and standing five yards tall. Mortal opponents must possess a Valor of 4 in order to stand against him at all — those with lesser Valor scores flee immediately. Players of Exalted opponents with a Valor of less than 4 must succeed in a Valor check or their characters are unable to look directly at Dukantha, subtracting two dice from all attempts to attack him. Those Exalted whose players botch the roll will flee in terror.

### DUKANTHA'S POWERS

For the brief time he is able to walk upon Creation, Dukantha has the powers of his dark mistress at his disposal.

**Infernal Resilience:** Long since dead in any reasonable sense of the term, Dukantha does not fear injury. Dukantha may reflexively regenerate health levels at a cost equal to the wound penalty (for example, a -4 health level costs 4 motes to regenerate) and a minimum cost of 1 mote. He may regenerate as many health levels as he desires and can afford in a single action, but he can do so only once per turn. Dukantha is immune to venoms, diseases and poisons of all sorts.

**Infernal Sorcery:** Dukantha has learned the art of Infernal sorcery, as stated above. He has access to powers of the First, Second and Third Circles, though he rarely uses powers of the Third Circle. However, he does know the Infernal equivalent of Adamant Countermagic and can break Solar Circle spells with sidescatter and crush without display Terrestrial and Celestial Circle spells.

**Summon the Sea That Marched Against the Flame:** By spending a full turn and spending 15 motes, Dukantha may open a doorway in the sea to Malfeas, allowing Kimberry's corruption to infect the waters surrounding Dukantha. For a number of miles in all directions equal to Dukantha's permanent Essence, the sea takes on the same cold, green-black color of the Primordial Sea. It becomes rank and acidic, dealing 1L per turn (soaked only with Stamina and other natural soak) to any living creature swimming in the water. Boats with mortal wooden hulls will perish in a number of turns equal to 10x the vessels' lethal soak (3 minutes for a 6L soak hull). Ships with First Age hulls were designed to be proof against such horrors, and their substance will not perish without many long days of exposure.

The water itself comes alive, and tendrils of the corrupted sea lash out at Dukantha's enemies. The tendrils have a dice pool of 10 for the attack and deal 10L damage. If an attack results in four or more successes, the target is dragged into the sea (taking the damage noted above, as well as possibly drowning). Regardless, successfully attacked targets are considered clinched. A number of tentacles can appear up to Dukantha's permanent Essence, but a single opponent can be targeted by only two tendrils each turn. Freeing oneself from the grip of the Sea That Marched Against the Flame requires four successes on a Strength + Brawl or Martial Arts roll. The Sea remains alive for a whole scene, but remains polluted for days afterward.

Note that use of this power is a violation Kimberry's contract of imprisonment. Strike forces in the Bureau of Seasons and the Bureau of Fate (see **Exalted: The Sidereals**) go on alert whenever it is used, and the defense grid of the Realm surely also registers it. As a result, Dukantha is reluctant to use it, as it can result in Celestial retribution.

**Primordial Maelstrom:** Dukantha uses this power in only the most dire of circumstances. He must have previously summoned the Primordial Sea, as above. By spending an additional 20 motes of Essence, Dukantha may cause the corrupted water to form a terrifying vortex that pulls anything within its area downward. Vessels and individuals in the water take 15L damage per turn for three turns. At the end of the third turn, anyone caught within the maelstrom is shunted through the veil of Creation into the Primordial Sea itself. Mortals die instantaneously, their souls torn asunder by that dread realm, while the Exalted are bathed in the fetid waters of Kimberry herself (treat as an acid bath, see **Exalted**, p. 244) and will be forced to find their own way home.

*Kimberry's Dawn*, DEMON OF THE SECOND

## CIRCLE

THE PROGENITIVE SOUL OF THE TIDE THAT

KNOWS NO LIFE

**Description:** When Dukantha was taken unto the Sea That Marched Against the Flame and drawn into Malfeas, one demon saw opportunity. She was known as the Dam of the Eristrufa, mother of the Malfean men-o'-war that permeate the body of Kimberry. Seeing that her mistress had great plans for the Lintha warrior, the Dam presented herself before the Primordial Sea and pledged her eternal service to Kimberry's new agent of wrath in Creation.

Kimberry saw the value in this and remade the Dam of the Eristrufa. Her great bloated body twisted and hardened. Her thousand poison tentacles braided and stiffened. Her beak melded closed and twisted into a long horn. When Kimberry had finished her work, the Dam was no longer, and in her place was *Kimberry's Dawn*, an Infernal ship fit for the Yozi's Exalted servant.

*Kimberry's Dawn* is a Second Circle demon remade into a mockery of the great warships of the First Age. Despite the membranous dragonwing-style sails that spread between the blade sharp, black coral spines of its rigging, it travels under its own power at the behest of Dukantha. *Kimberry's Dawn* is loyal to its captain and to the Sea That Marched Against the Flame; whatever ambitions the Dam of the Eristrufa may have had in offering itself up to Kimberry were deconstructed and rebuilt as surely as was its body.

While intelligent and powerful in its own right, the infernal warship cannot act without the consent of Dukantha. However, Dukantha recognizes the value of a vessel that can perform maneuvers and attacks on its own, leaving him free to direct his attentions to the most dangerous of enemies and usually allows *Kimberry's Dawn* to act freely in battle. In cases where Dukantha chooses to take full command of the vessel, he must merely exert his will, and *Kimberry's Dawn* serves his every command without question.

In battle, *Kimberry's Dawn* attacks by ramming enemy vessels with its great twisted horn or by firing infernal bolts from the coral-encrusted cannons atop its prow. If boarded, the demon ship can attack individuals with its razor sharp, venomous rigging.

**Nature:** Follower**Virtues:** Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 5**Role(s):** Capital warship**Length:** 220 feet**Beam:** 132 feet**Draft:** 16 feet**Rig Type/Closest Tack:** Retractable organic dragonwing/2 points (under sail — can take any heading when under power)**Speed:** ●●● acceleration/●●●●● top speed (under power); ●● (under sail)**Maneuverability:** -2 (under power); -5 (under sail)**Standard/Minimum Crew:** 145/0 (capable of autonomous operations and self-repair)**Abilities:** Archery 5, Awareness 5, Brawl 5 (Rigging +2), Dodge 2, Endurance 5, Presence 5 (Physical Intimidation +2), Resistance 5, Stealth 3**Charms:** Confusion, Cunning Thief, Dematerialize, Dreambane, Essence Bite (chilling cold), Ghostly Presence, Harrow the Mind, Imprecation, Landscape Travel, Malediction, Measure the Wind, Portal, Principle of Motion, Shapechange\*, Steal Sustenance, Sustenance, Tiny Damnation, Tracking, Will-o-Wisp  
\* *Kimberry's Dawn* can use shapechange to appear as a mortal vessel or a large sea creature such as a whale.**Cost To Dematerialize:** 30\*\* *Kimberry's Dawn* must pay an additional mote of Essence for each crew member on its deck at the time it dematerializes. If it does not have sufficient Essence to dematerialize its entire crew, it may not dematerialize. Opponents on the ship do not count, however, and are dropped unceremoniously into the sea when the ship dematerializes.**Base Initiative:** 12**Attack:**Ram: Speed 10 Accuracy 12 Damage 20L Defense 13  
Rigging Slash: Speed 12 Accuracy 15 Damage 12L Defense 15

Infernal Cannons (4)\*: Speed 12 Accuracy 15 Damage 35L (Naval Range Very Long, Naval Rate 2/turn) (Rate 1, Range 1,000)

\* The infernal cannons cost 3 motes of Essence per shot. Three face forward, one faces aft. All have firing arcs of 270 degrees, with 70 degrees of upward elevation and 15 degrees of down, meaning the ship can hit almost any target. The attack is a searing beam of green light, drawing its nature from the penetrating beams of Ligier.

**Soak:** 50L\*

\* Treat as a First Age naval hull.

**Willpower:** 7      **Health Levels:** 50/100\*

\* Takes damage as a naval vessel.

**Essence:** 4      **Essence Pool:** 84**Other Notes:** *Kimberry's Dawn* is at once a demon of the Second Circle and a sailing vessel. It soaks damage and suffers health levels as a ship (see *Savage Seas*, p. 51) but is otherwise a spirit. The ship is "crewed" by 144 blood-apes, who are not actually there for anything other than boarding actions and Dukantha's personal security.

## FAMILY MEMBERS

While many conclusions can be drawn about the Lintha in general, each member of the Family is unique. Among the Lintha, power is a currency and every important Lintha possesses it, often to the detriment of other Family members. Any one of the following Family members can be a dangerous enemy or powerful ally for a Circle of Exalts. Should a single threat or opportunity cause them to put aside their rivalries and join forces, however, the Lintha become a power on par with any other.

### LINTHA NG HUT OOLOO, GRANDMOTHER OF THE NG HUT SEPT

**Description:** The Grandmother of the Ng Hut knows her time is coming to an end. Her bones ache, and her flesh sags under the weight of nearly two centuries. Her eyes cloud with age and her once silken sea-green hair, hair that once enchanted the vodonik king, is brittle and thin. Yet, Ooloo's mind remains, as does her lust for power and her obsession with the blood of gods that runs through her veins and the veins of all Lintha.

Born to power in the sept that control's the Cult of Dukantha, Ooloo distinguished herself at an early age for her knowledge of breeding and bloodlines and her uncompromising adherence to the Cult of Dukantha. In her youth, Lintha Ooloo possessed beauty as well as guile and used each in its turn to propel herself through the ranks of the Family, all the while using the devotion of her peers to the philosophy of Kan Pol the Younger as a tool against them. She began her career as apprentice to a midwife, a difficult and important occupation among the Lintha, and soon, she was a midwife in her own right. Then, she entered the Cult of Dukantha, and, aided by her illustrious brother Yrjow Han, rapidly rose in the cult.

During her early priestly career, Ooloo began careful study of the God-Blooded children born there, and as she rose in rank, she began to appropriate orphans and halfbloods, using them as part of an island farm to revivify and rekindle the diluted Lintha blood. In the course of her experiments, she cataloged the results of various unions, performed autopsies on stillborn children and tested the effects of herbalism, alchemy and sorcery on the unborn. Some, she considered successes. From these, she selected the dams and sires of the next generation. As generations of God-Blooded have come to sexual maturity, she has crossbred them selectively in an attempt to recapture specific Lintha traits. The rest, those she considered failures, were forced to undergo the ritual of castration and sent to join the Family, typically in the *Virgin's Spree*, where their numbers were concealed by the awe-inspiring fatality



rate. Lintha Ooloo rose to the status of grandmother by virtue of three generations of God-Blooded Lintha who called her “Mother.”

For over 12 decades, she has guided the development of the Lintha Family's God-Blooded, both before birth and after. Through careful selection of pairings between sire and dam, she has produced ever more powerful generations of God-Blooded, all in service to the Lintha Family. Through selective application of the Cult of Dukantha's practice of castration, she has ensured the purity of the Lintha bloodline. Through the ruthless elimination of her detractors, rivals and enemies, she has remained the most powerful woman in the sept.

Despite all of her machinations and ambitions, Lintha Ng Hut Ooloo is dying. Even a God-Blooded cannot live forever. Ooloo, however, will not resign herself to the fate of mortals, for she considers herself far more than that. Lintha Ooloo's last ambition, the one that will drive her to brink of insanity and past the point of what mortal beings call evil, is simple: She will become a god. As a God-Blooded, the crone needs only the favor of a god to raise her to that status. While she and the vodonik king were consorts long ago, his power is too small to elevate her. She has courted many small gods in her quest for godhood, yet none have had the power or interest to make her a peer. In the end, Lintha



Ooloo knows her final fate lies not with the gods of the Southwest or with the Court of Water. Lintha Ooloo can achieve her ambition only through the malignant grace of the Sea That Marched Against the Flame, the Yozi Kimberry. To this end, Lintha Ooloo will do whatever is necessary, perform whatever task, destroy or create as is her charge, to gain the favor of Dukantha.

**Nature:** Architect

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

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

**Abilities:** Archery 1, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 4, Craft (Breeding) 3, Dodge 3, Endurance 2, Investigation 3, Linguistics (Native: Seatongue; Firetongue, Low Realm, Riverspeak) 3, Lore 3, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 5, Melee 3, Occult 4, Performance 3, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Sail 2, Socialize 2

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Artifact 5, Backing 4, Contacts 4, Cult 1, Influence 4, Manse 3, Resources 6

**Charms:** Blazing Solar Bolt (Water Flux Attack, no special effect damage), Graceful Crane Stance, Harmonious Presence Meditation, Hypnotic Tongue Technique, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Mental Invisibility Technique, Perfect Reckoning Technique, Salty Dog Method, Sensory Acuity Prana, Surprise Anticipation Method, Ten Magistrate Eyes, Underling Promoting Touch

**Base Initiative:** 7

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 4 Damage 2B Defense 4

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 3 Damage 4B Defense 3

Jade Knife: Speed 10 Accuracy 7 Damage 4L Defense 5

**Dodge Pool:** 5      **Soak:** 1L/3B

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

**Essence:** 2      **Essence Pool:** 34 (32)

**Committed Essence:** 2

**Other Notes:** Though not physically imposing, Lintha Ooloo is, nonetheless, a dangerous opponent. She is always accompanied by at least two God-Blooded bodyguards — and, usually, many more. She possesses a number of powerful artifacts as well, including a lesser storm sapphire (see p. 121) and a jade knife (Speed +3, Acc. +2, Damage +2L, Defense +0, Commitment 2 motes) set with a gem of desire Hearthstone (see p. 126).

In addition to her Charms, Ooloo also has access to a small amount of infernal magic due to her alliance with the Cult of Dukantha. This magic is largely the hedge sorcery seen among mortals, though Ooloo's rituals are almost universally malicious: curses, hexes and pokes upon those who displease her. On occasion, Kimberry

will grant her true power, when it suits the needs of the Sea That Marched Against the Flame.

Lintha Ng Hut Ooloo is a heroic character who can perform stunts. Her body is fortified by her God-Blooded condition, and she bleeds and recovers from wounds and illness as an Exalt.

### OOLOO THE GODDESS

Should the Crone of Bluehaven achieve her ambition and be elevated to the status of godhood, she will become a force powerful enough to destabilize the entire region and a significant challenge for even the most experienced Exalted Circle. While not truly a demon, Ooloo will be a dedicated servant of the Yozi Kimberry, the Sea That Marched Against the Flame. Solars, Dragon-Blooded, Lunars and even Abyssals will have reason to fear her power in Bluehaven.

To make Ooloo a god, immediately increase her Essence to 4. In addition, increase her Mental and Social Attributes by 2 and her Physical Attributes by 3. Ooloo's Willpower becomes 9, and her Virtues all increase by 1. Each of her Abilities increases by 2, and she gains access to any number of spirit Charms the Storyteller deems appropriate, such as Memory Sponge, Worldly Illusion and Portal. Note that Attribute and Essence increases will affect her health levels, Essence pool and other statistics.

Upon achieving divine status, Ooloo's first goal will be to take over Bluehaven and the Lintha Family completely. For a long-term goal, she will begin a new line of Lintha God-Blooded: her own. Given time, she will produce many offspring, raising the males and destroying the females (the goddess Ooloo will have no rivals as the Dam of the Lintha). However, Dukantha and the Sea That Marched Against the Flame will not simply allow her pursue her own goals. Their goals become hers, for unlike Dukantha, she can walk Creation every day of the year and see to the needs of the Yozi's plans.

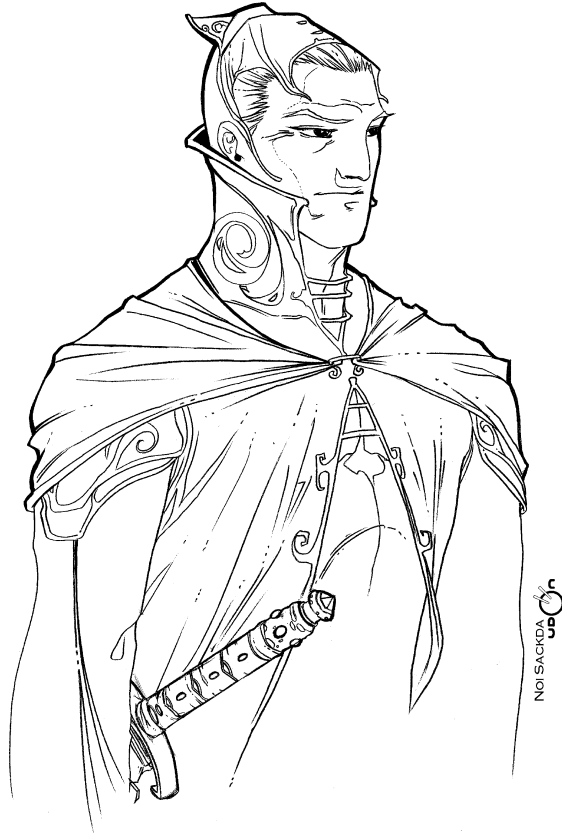
LINTHA NG HUT YRJOW HAN,

GOD-BLOOD GRANDFATHER,

HIGH PRIEST OF THE CULT OF DUKANTHA

**Description:** The lapping of the waves of the Sea That Marched Against the Flame is ever in the ears of Yrjow Han. At night, he dreams of swimming in Kimberry's waters, feeling the ecstasy of the Yozi's





enveloping caress and feeding on the bodies of the drowned damned. When Yrjow Han awakes, a great sadness overcomes him at the sight of the yellow sun and terrestrial sea. Still, he wakes and dresses and eats and shits like all men do, for there is hope yet that his dreams may come true, so long as he serves the will of his Yozi.

Lintha Yrjow Han is brother to Lintha Ooloo and leader of the Cult of Dukantha. For as long as his sister has guided the bodies of the Lintha, Yrjow Han has guided their souls. He possesses no passions beyond those for his Yozi and his final reward, having long ago severed his manhood at the behest of the Infernal Dukantha. He expects no less of the Lintha Family as a whole. He preaches daily, between administrative duties that keep Bluehaven afloat, and performs many of even the most insignificant rituals himself. Every drop of blood on his hands, every genital mutilated by his knife is a step closer to breathing in the waters of the Sea That Marched Against the Flame.

For his devotion, Yrjow Han has been rewarded with great power. While the blood of the Water Court flows through his veins, like it does all Lintha, his true power comes from the Infernal sorcery granted him by Kimberry. Through his dark rituals and unwavering faith, the cult

leader can call upon the power and servants of the Sea — and does so. When Yrjow Han is displeased, demons rise from the froth of the ocean, devouring the offenders or dragging them to the deepest depths where the pressure is so great that their bones shatter. He uses sorcery to read the future and to protect his people, as well, though such power is taxing for him and he uses it sparingly.

Kimberry rules Yrjow Han's every thought and action. Though not as powerful as Dukantha or even a Second Circle demon, Han is, nonetheless, a useful and powerful tool of the Yozi in Creation. Should the Primordial Sea find mortals or Exalts troublesome to her plots, she will use Han and the Lintha to resolve that trouble.

Grandfather Han knows very well his sister's ambitions and how she has, for decades, twisted the rites of the Cult of Dukantha to serve her own ends. This knowledge does not vex him, for Yrjow Han knows that, despite her self-serving goals, Ooloo's machinations make the Lintha stronger. He realizes that, if she is to achieve her goal of divinity, she must curry the favor of Dukantha and the Sea That Marched Against the Flame. To do so, she must bow to him as well, a pleasure he has waited long to enjoy.

**Nature:** Visionary

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

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

**Abilities:** Archery 2, Awareness 4, Brawl 2, Bureaucracy 5, Dodge 3, Endurance 3, Investigation 3, Linguistics (Native: Seatongue; Firetongue, High Realm, Old Realm) 3, Lore 4, Melee 3 (Infernal Dagger +1), Occult 5, Performance 3 (Rites +2), Presence 4, Resistance 4, Sail 2, Socialize 5

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Artifact 4, Backing 5, Cult 2, Followers 5, Manse 3, Resources 5

**Charms:** Blazing Solar Bolt ("Ligier's Eye" Attack, as Blazing Solar Bolt except the damage is aggravated versus Solars, celestial lions, dragons and other representatives of the Celestial Order), Graceful Crane Stance, Harmonious Presence Meditation, Hypnotic Tongue Technique, Infernal Sorcery\*, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Mental Invisibility Technique, Perfect Reckoning Technique, Salty Dog Method, Sensory Acuity Prana, Surprise Anticipation Method, Ten Magistrate Eyes, Underling Promoting Touch

\* Infernal sorcery (see below) is only accessible to Han when he possesses the Talisman of the Cult of Dukantha.

**Spirit Charms:** Tiny Damnation

**Base Initiative:** 7

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 5 Damage 3B Defense 5

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 4 Damage 5B Defense 4

Infernal Dagger: Speed 11 Accuracy 10 Damage 7L\* Defense 8

\* Will not heal properly. See "Other Notes" below.

**Dodge Pool:** 4    **Soak:** 5L/8B (Infernal eel-skin jacket, 4L/6B)**Willpower:** 8    **Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/ Incap**Essence:** 2 (3)\*    **Essence Pool:** 42 (37)**Committed Essence:** 5

\* Yrjow Han's Essence score is 3 with the Talisman of the Cult of Dukantha (see below). Without it, his Essence drops to 2, and his Essence pool drops to 37. His extra 5 motes are spent last, not first, so losing the talisman will cost him 5 motes or however many he has left, whichever is less.

**Other Notes:** Like Ooloo, Yrjow Han never travels without bodyguards, usually two outcaste priests (see p. 104) and a half-dozen heroic Lintha sailors (see p. 102) under normal circumstances. If he feels at all threatened, he will also be guarded by a half-dozen esitrufa (see p. 112) or teodozjia (see *Games of Divinity*, pp. 121-122).

Yrjow Han himself is a heroic character who can perform stunts. His body is fortified by his God-Blooded condition, and he bleeds and recovers from wounds and illness as an Exalt. He may attune to Manses and artifacts of the Magical Materials as an Exalt but gains no Material bonus.

Han is rarely found outside the temple to Dukantha in Bluehaven, which also serves as Han's Manse. The Infernal Hearthstone of the Manse grants Han the ability to use the curse *Malediction* once per day for a cost of 10 motes and 1 Willpower.

The Infernal black-and-red jade dagger, the same that is used in the ritual mutilations and sacrifices of the Cult of Dukantha, has the following stats: Speed +4, Accuracy +3, Damage +4L, Defense +1, Commitment 5 motes. In addition, wounds caused by the dagger fester and weep and do not heal naturally. Add 2 to the difficulty to staunch the bleeding from injuries it inflicts, and Charms or sorcery are required to return health levels lost to the dagger; mortal healing will not suffice. Those who heal as Exalted heal at 1/4 speed (healing time is thus twice mortal human normal).

Yrjow Han has a number of other artifacts at his disposal, which the Storyteller should determine based upon the needs of the story. Han's greatest power, however, comes from the gift of Infernal sorcery granted by the Talisman of the Cult of Dukantha.

## LINTHA HAQUEN RONKEVOOL,

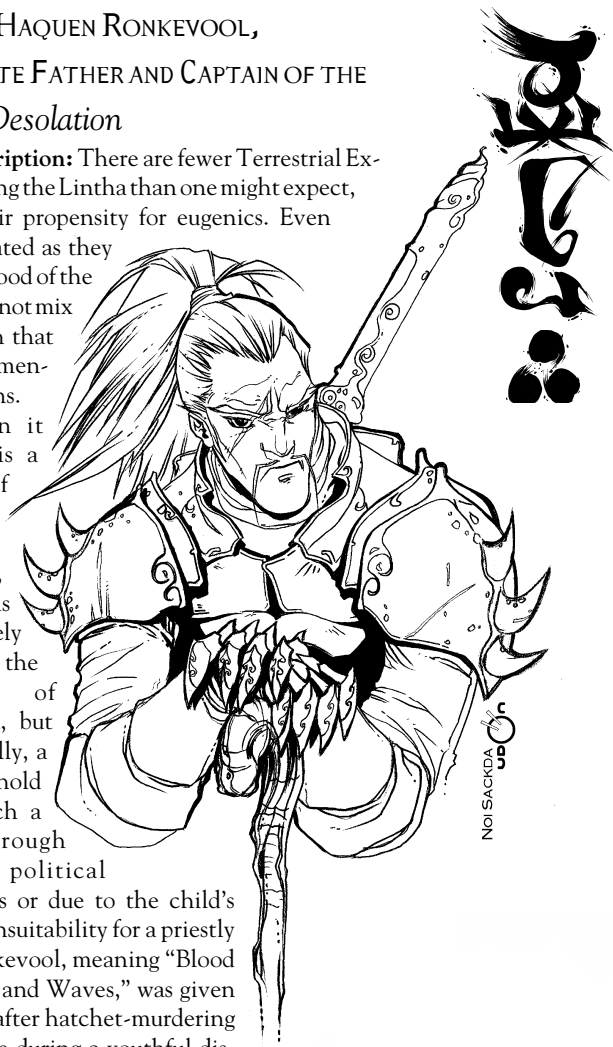
OUTCASTE FATHER AND CAPTAIN OF THE  
*Prince Desolation*

**Description:** There are fewer Terrestrial Exalted among the Lintha than one might expect, given their propensity for eugenics. Even miscegenated as they are, the blood of the Yozis does not mix often with that of the Elemental Dragons.

When it does, it is a matter of great importance. Typically, the child is immediately sworn to the service of Dukantha, but occasionally, a sept will hold on to such a child through various political wranglings or due to the child's obvious unsuitability for a priestly role. Ronkevool, meaning "Blood of Storms and Waves," was given his name after hatchet-murdering a playmate during a youthful dispute. Though the boy was clever enough and of fine breeding, he was of brutal character even for a Lintha.

As he matured, his abilities as a Water-aspected Terrestrial Exalt manifested, and there was little chance he'd serve in the priesthood — the victim of his youthful murder had been a member of the Ng Hut sept, for starters. By 20, Ronkevool had claimed his birthright of power and lived up to his name as one of the most prominent fighters in his sept. He led and participated in many piracies and was already a third *kur* auhzian master. Even so, Ronkevool was not content. Dreams of cities and ships and war and wealth haunted him at night.

It was at that time that the grandmothers of his sept judged him great enough to inherit. They told him of a hidden grotto on a nearby island, where none dared tread. There, the old women told him, was a great First Age ship. It was the property of the sept, but it'd had no outcaste it could trust to pilot the ship for centuries. Ronkevool was ready, the crones told him, to stand as a





god upon its prow and lead raiders to glory and his sept to power. Then, they bred him personally, for like all trueblood Lintha, he would be shorn of his genitals before he left their stronghold.

The ship was called the *Prince Desolation*. A massive warship from the First Age, it had sat untouched for centuries in the grotto. Built by the hands of the Solar Exalted for their Dragon-Blooded servants, the vessel called out to Ronkevoool and whispered the secrets of its sailing to him when he laid hands upon its helm.

Now, the *Prince Desolation* is the flagship of the Host Haquen, and Ronkevoool is a father in the Lintha Family. His savagery and Exalted abilities make him a most formidable captain, while the *Prince Desolation* makes him the most dangerous Lintha pirate of all.

**Aspect:** Water

**Nature:** Bravo

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

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

**Abilities:** Archery 4, Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 4, Endurance 4, Investigation 1, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Seatongue; Guild Cant, High Realm, Old Realm, Riverspeak) 4, Lore 2, Martial Arts 5, Melee 5 (Auhzian +2), Occult 3, Performance 3, Presence 4, Resistance 2, Sail 4, Socialize 2, Stealth 3, Survival 5, Thrown 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Artifact 2\*, Backing 4, Breeding 1, Henchmen 3, Resources 4

\* Does not include his ship. The Storyteller should feel free to add other First Age wonders if appropriate.

**Charms:** All-Encompassing Earth Sense, Bellows-Pumping Stride, Dancing Ember Stride, Elemental Concentration Trance, Feeling-the-Air Technique, Soundless Action Prana, Distracting Breeze Meditation, Dragon-Graced Weapon, Effortlessly Rising Flame, Falling Star Maneuver, Five-Dragon Blocking Technique, Five-Dragon Claw, Five-Dragon Fortitude, Five-Dragon Fist, Five-Dragon Form, Five-Dragon Invulnerability, Five-Dragon Wrath, Five-Dragon-Force Blow, Flickering Candle Meditation, Fiery Prowess, Glowing Coal Radiance, Ghost-Fire Blade, Hopping Firecracker Evasion, Hurricane-Predicting Glance, Incense Smoke Ladder, Memorable Performance Technique, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Phantom Fire-Warrior Horde, Portentous Comet Deflecting Mode, Precision Observation Method, Stoking Bonfire Style, Soundless Action Prana, Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique, Spirit-Grounding Shout, Talented Improvisation, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Threshold Warding Stance, Unsleeping Earth Meditation, Uneating Earth Meditation, Unbreathing Earth Meditation, Vengeful Gust Counterattack, Whirlwind Shield Form

#### Combos:

**Mysterious Sunset Report (Cost: 7+ motes, 1 Willpower, 1 health level):** Five-Dragon Wrath, Falling Star Maneuver, Five-Dragon-Force Blow — *Ronkevoool's leaps into the air, and at the apogee of his leap, there is a terrifically loud bang from another direction, drawing all eyes. Ronkevoool is never seen as he strikes his opponent in a hail of powerfully enhanced attacks. The auhzian is an in-form weapon for this effect.*

**Base Initiative:** 7

#### Attack:

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 9 Damage 3B Defense 9

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 8 Damage 5B Defense 8

Jade Auhzian\* (Flicker-Fang): Speed 15\*\* Accuracy 14 Damage 7L Defense 14

Self Bow: Accuracy 6 Damage 5B (Southern fire arrows)\*\*\* (Rate 2, Range 75)

\* Reaper daiklave. See **Exalted: The Outcaste**, page 51.

\*\* Includes the jade Magical Material bonus.

\*\*\* In addition to the bashing damage, Southern fire arrows cause 5L burning damage on the initial strike and 5L burning damage every turn following for a number of turns equal to Ronkevoool's extra successes on the attack. See page 126, for details.

**Dodge Pool:** 6/4 **Soak:** 11L/13B (Exceptional articulated plate, 9L/9B, -2 mobility penalty)

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

**Essence:** 5

**Personal Essence:** 15 **Peripheral Essence:** 39 (34)

**Committed Essence:** 5

**Other Notes:** Ronkevoool is a ferocious and canny fighter, balancing threats in his mind instinctively. He targets those enemies that are the most dangerous to his victory, even if they are not the most physically powerful. Though a savage by nature, he is no fool, and his crews make good use of fire arrows and other ship-to-ship weapons before meeting in hand-to-hand combat.

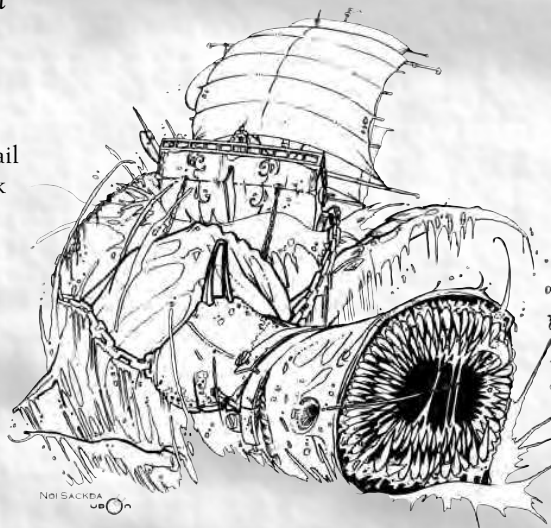
Ronkevoool's daiklave was stolen from the body of another outcaste serving as a bodyguard to a merchant prince whose ship Ronkevoool attacked and destroyed. After winning that battle, Ronkevoool gained a taste for both the artifacts of the Realm and testing himself against other Terrestrial Exalted. He will seek out Dragon-Blooded opponents if at all possible, taking their equipment as trophies and feeding the bodies to his black whaler. Word has reached Shuri the Scarlet in An-Teng of these atrocities, and Ronkevoool hopes it will call the commander out to battle.

Ronkevoool has fought few other Exalted in even duels. He will take care not to leave himself open, but he has yet to meet a fighter his Mysterious Sunset Report didn't devastate, so he is willing to throw it if given a good opening in single combat, betting as much Essence as he can muster on a wipeout victory. He does not generally use demons, but he will summon a pair of tomescu (see p.113) if he is certain he will need aid and cannot turn to mortal allies.



**RONKEVOOL'S SHIP: *The Prince Desolation***

**Roles:** Capital Warship  
**Length:** 200 feet  
**Beam:** 120 feet  
**Draft:** 9 feet  
**Rig Type/Closest Track:** Imperial/3 points (under sail — can take any heading when pulled by the Black Whaler)  
**Speed:** ●●● (under sail); ●●●● (pulled by the Black Whaler); ●●● acceleration/●●●●● top speed (under power with a Solar Exalted pilot)  
**Maneuverability:** -4 (under sail); -2 (when pulled by the Black Whaler); -1 (under power with a Solar Exalted pilot)  
**Standard/Minimum Crew:** 74/12 (Note: A single Solar Exalted may crew the vessel alone.)  
**Soak:** 50L (Note: See the rules regarding First Age ships in *Savage Seas*, p. 62.)  
**Health Levels:** 50/100



**Description:** The *Prince Desolation* was once the flagship of the Fleet of Doves, a war fleet charged with bringing rebellious spirit nations, such as that of the vodonik, under heel during the First Age. The ship was lost centuries before the Usurpation when the Queen of Sirens, a god that has since fallen into obscurity except among her children, lured the captain into the grotto where Ronkevool found the ship. Though weathered by the ages, the *Prince Desolation* remains fit to sail. Only the lack of a Solar Exalted pilot keeps the ship from operating under full power. Ronkevool is forced to employ sails and the Black Whaler to power the ship.

While the ship makes Ronkevool a formidable force on the sea, it also draws the interest of many parties: The Realm and any number of Solar Exalted would go to great lengths to possess a First Age warship in working condition.

**THE BLACK WHALER**

**Description:** The gargantuan infernally tainted Black Whaler hunts the ocean depths in search of prey. A lamprey-like monstrosity over 100 feet long, the Whaler is a sickly black color, with tough, slime covered skin, and a flat mouth full of dozens of rows of razor-sharp teeth. A venomous stinger, six feet of ebony bone, grows from the end of its fat tail. As its name implies, the Black Whaler feeds mostly on whales and other large, warm-blooded marine creatures, though it has been known to devour giant squid as well. Its massive circular maw attaches to its prey, rending flesh and draining the victim's life's blood, while the stinger pierces the victim repeatedly. Other creatures of the sea, even the great siaka and cachalots, will not feed on the remains of the Black Whaler's victims due to the beast's venom.

Ronkevool is unique in his ability to have subdued the Whaler, which he managed through sheer force of both body and will. The beast creates a fear in his enemies that few creatures could match. As a reward for loyal service, Ronkevool often steers his vessel into whale pods to allow the Black Whaler to feed.

Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will	Health Lvl	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/Soak	Abilities
18/3/20	4	-0x6/-1x4/	Bite: 3/6/18L*, -2x4/-4x2/1	3/10L/20B Stinger: 4/7/12L**	Athletics 2 (Swim +3), Awareness 1, Brawl 2 (Bite +1, Stinger +2), Endurance 4, Presence 2 (Intimidate +3), Resistance 4

\* Once the Whaler has successfully attacked a target, it latches on with its maw and feeds on the blood of its prey, dealing 14L damage every turn, soaked only by natural soak, until the victim dies or is freed. Breaking free of the Whaler's grip requires extra successes on an opposed strength roll between the victim and the Whaler.

\*\* The stinger also delivers black whaler venom into the target if even a single health level of damage is incurred. The venom has Stamina + Resistance difficulty of 4, does 3L upon success and 10L upon failure. The target also suffers a -3 penalty to all actions for six hours after the venom is introduced.



## LINTHA ROOJAG RITHA, GOD-BLOOD CHILD AND CAPTAIN OF THE *Virgin's Spree*

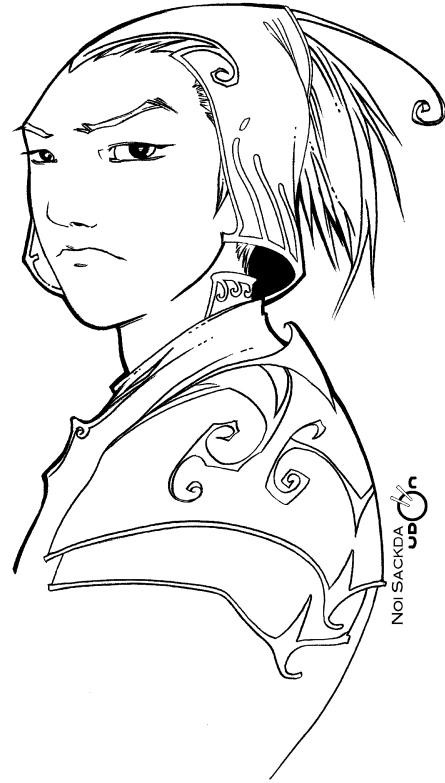
**Description:** They laugh when the *Virgin's Spree* first bears down on them. The merchant mariners look through their spyglasses and see the gangly bodies and beardless faces of their attackers, and they shake their heads. Children, they think. Children are going to board us and kill us and take our goods? They do not laugh so heartily when the grappling hooks are thrown or when the fire arrows fly. The chuckles turn to screams, then, as the child crew of the *Virgin's Spree* spills onto their decks and the small hands drive cutlasses into their bellies.

Lintha Roojag Ritha is an orphan. His God-Blooded parents, the celebrated Father Kibrakoo and Mother Priestess Leopoe, perished at sea when he was seven. He was taken into the care of Grandmother Ooloo, who pronounced him fit to fight yet not fit enough to breed. She gave him over to Grandfather Yrjow Han, who castrated the boy and put him on the *Virgin's Spree*. Now 14, Roojag Ritha is the captain of the *Spree*.

All Lintha orphans, and many others merely abandoned by their parents, serve aboard the *Virgin's Spree*. Few survive more than a year. The children who make up the crew are as merciless to one another as they are to the enemy. Despite the dangerous work, the beatings and the murderous rages of his peers, Roojag survived. Weakness is met with death on the *Spree*, and Roojag refused to die. He embraced the ruthlessness of his fellows and surpassed it. By 12 years of age, his kill scars all but covered his small frame, his supple young flesh forever hardened by murder. He became captain only a year ago, after eviscerating the former captain and devouring his heart in front of the entire crew. None dared oppose him, and those few that whispered words against him were cut to bleed but not die and dangled overboard on ropes as bait for sharks.

His god-born blood makes Roojag Ritha far more physically powerful than his slight build would suggest. Though young, he has mastered many of the powers of his kind. Nonetheless, his true power, the thing that makes him a danger to his crew and enemies alike, is his uncompromising cruelty: Roojag Ritha knows neither fear nor compassion and is not content to merely kill, but rather, seeks to slaughter, to torture and to destroy. He is a cannibal not because he apes his betters or because the Cult of Dukantha demands it. He devours his enemies because of the fear it creates, because he knows the terrifying power of seeing a young man painted in blood with a half-eaten limb in one hand and a cutlass in the other.

Roojag Ritha will not be Captain of the *Virgin's Spree* for much longer, even if he survives attempts by his subordinates to take his place. At 16 years old, he will be



required to leave the ship to the other children and crew another Lintha vessel. Whispers suggest that Roojag has his eye on the *Prince Desolation*. Roojag Ritha has no concept of the Exalt's abilities.

**Nature:** Survivor

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

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

**Abilities:** Archery 3, Athletics 3 (Climb +2), Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Endurance 2, Larceny 2, Melee 3, Presence 2, Resistance 3, Sail 4, Stealth 2, Survival 4, Thrown 2

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Artifact 2, Backing 4, Followers 3, Resources 4

**Charms:** Accuracy Without Distance, Graceful Crane Stance, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Perfect Reckoning Technique, Reed in the Wind\*, Salty Dog Method, Sensory Acuity Prana, Shadow Over Water, Sight Without Eyes, Storm-Weathering Essence Infusion, There Is No Wind, Wise Arrow\*

\* Ritha cannot add more than five dice to any one roll.

**Base Initiative:** 8

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 8 Accuracy 9 Damage 3B Defense 9

Kick: Speed 5 Accuracy 8 Damage 5B Defense 8

Khatar: Speed 5 Accuracy 8 Damage 5L Defense 7  
Slashing Sword: Speed 11 Accuracy 9 Damage 5L Defense 9

Short Jade Powerbow (Nutcutter): Speed 8 Accuracy 10  
Damage 7L\* (Rate 2, Range 250)

\* Broadhead arrows.

**Dodge Pool:** 8/7    **Soak:** 5L/8B (Buff jacket, 3L/4B, -1 mobility penalty)

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

**Essence:** 2    **Essence Pool:** 31 (27)

**Committed Essence:** 4

**Other Notes:** Roojag Ritha is very fond of fire arrows and of fire cannons, two of which are mounted on his ship. He tells his crew, and sometimes his victims, that he prefers his food cooked. This is, of course, a lie: Roojag will eat his enemies raw just as soon as he will eat them charred.

The child-captain has no mercy in his heart, for his victims or his crew. His tactics, while effective, are simple: Rain fire and death upon them while closing, then send waves of frothing child-soldiers at them until they stop moving. Roojag flies the Lintha flag proudly and never allows for negotiations or entertains offers of peace: Whatever the victim has will be his anyway, he feels. Only when faced with an obviously superior foe will Roojag Ritha consent to talking instead of fighting, and then, he is merely attempting to find a weakness or an opportunity to flee back to Bluehaven.

Lintha Roojag Ritha is a heroic character who can perform stunts. His body is fortified by his God-Blooded condition, and he bleeds and recovers from wounds and illness as an Exalt. The crew of the *Virgin's Spree* possesses the stats for infantry on page 278 of the **Exalted** rulebook. The brutal conditions aboard the ship assure that only heroic individuals survive on the crew, and thus, all the crew have a full complement of health levels, can perform stunts and are not extras for the purposes of effects that target such characters.

## LINTHA ARGOONA, GOD-BLOOD FATHER AND SECOND *Kur* OF THE SWORD BROTHERHOOD

**Description:** The hand without a sword has no water. A sword without a hand has no wind. A blade cuts through flesh like the keel of a vessel cuts through the sea. Blood and seawater spill the same on the deck of a ship. A man on the deck and a listing vessel are lovers in peace and companions in war. These are the tenets of the art of *kur*, the Lintha school of swordsmanship.

Born of a pedigree so pure that Grandmother Ooloo spared him from Yrjow Han's ritual castration, Lintha Argoona is a true prince among pirates. He has trained his entire life in the art of *kur*. He is considered by the Lintha to be the greatest swordsman the world



has ever seen, surpassed only by the first *kur*, who long ago went into seclusion to master the art and has never returned. More than a warrior, however, Argoona learned diplomacy, economics, navigation and astrology, all in a bid to perfect the mind that guided the hand that guided the sword.

Argoona lives in Bluehaven on a large merchant vessel captured from the Guild decades ago. The hold has been converted into a gymnasium where the second *kur* practices daily and trains students of the art. Within he keeps the scrolls that depict the whole of the art of *kur*, given to him by the first *kur* before the master's departure. Argoona runs his household like a military organization, granting rank to his servants. Many of his servants are also students of his, making any attempt to infiltrate and steal the scrolls, which are priceless to any master of swordsmanship or collector of rare knowledge, an extremely dangerous endeavor even when Argoona is away on business.

The life of piracy, where savagery is the order of the day and death is always close at hand, holds no Charm for Lintha Argoona. Like all Lintha, he grew to manhood on the deck of a ship and has his share of kill scars. However, Argoona prefers skill over power and wisdom over audacity. Lintha Argoona is, nonetheless, an extremely dangerous man and a Lintha to his core: To oppose him, whether physically or politically, is to invite death (whether at the end of his blade or from poison slipped ever so discreetly into one's wine). The respect he receives from his peers and subordinates is based on more than mere fear of his swordsmanship. All Lintha are aware of Argoona's skill at diplomacy, mastery of politics



and knowledge of economics. Even Yrjow Han values the counsel of the second *kur* on such matters.

For all of his virtues, Lintha Argoona does possess a consuming vice: pride. This is not the banal vanity of a fop, but the unbending personal honor of a warrior. Argoona will let no insult go unpunished or challenge go unmet, even if he is wise enough to bide his time and carefully plan his response. Moreover, he considers any affront to his students, servants, slaves and wives an affront against his person and will respond to any act against them as if he himself had been attacked.

Argoona fights with a daiklave fashioned of moonsilver. The weapon is said to have been taken from the body of a Dragon-Blooded captain who herself received it from her father. The elder Terrestrial claimed the weapon had been passed down through countless generations since the Usurpation, when his ancestor took it from the body of an Anathema captain. If this tale is true, the weapon must certainly have been a gift from the Solar's Lunar mate. Moreover, the weapon's history would suggest a bad end to whoever holds it. While Argoona cannot access the special properties of the daiklave, it is a powerful weapon regardless, and Argoona never parts with it.

**Nature:** Paragon

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

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

**Abilities:** Archery 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 3, Endurance 3, Martial Arts 4, Medicine 2, Melee 5 (Daiklave +2), Occult 2, Presence 2, Resistance 4, Sail 4, Socialize 3, Survival 2

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Artifact 5, Backing 4, Contacts 2, Followers 2, Influence 3, Manse 3, Resources 5

**Charms:** Dipping Swallow Defense, Excellent Strike\*, Fire and Stones Strike, Golden Essence Block\*, Graceful Crane Stance, Integrity-Protecting Prana, One Weapon, Two Blows, Peony Blossom Attack, Perfect Reckoning Technique, Salty Dog Method, Sensory Acuity Prana, Solar Counterattack, Storm-Weathering Essence Infusion

\* Argoona cannot add more than five dice to any one roll.

**Base Initiative:** 7

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 8 Damage 4B Defense 8

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 7 Damage 6B Defense 7

Moonsilver Daiklave (Quicksilver Companion\*): Speed 10 Accuracy 13 Damage 9L Defense 13

Composite Bow: Speed 7 Accuracy 8 Damage 6L\*\* (Rate 3, Range 250)

\* He has dubbed it thus. He has no idea what the weapon's real name is.

\*\* Broadhead arrows.

**Dodge Pool:** 7/5 **Soak:** 7L/11B (Reinforced breastplate, 7L/6B, -2 mobility penalty)

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

**Essence:** 2 **Essence Pool:** 37 (32)

**Committed Essence:** 5

**Other Notes:** His mastery of the Lintha sword art, coupled with his God-Blooded abilities, makes Lintha Argoona a dangerous opponent in a one-on-one battle, even for an Exalted opponent. While Argoona has managed to simulate the power and skill of Solar warriors, the anima effects created by these Charms are not the radiant light of the Unconquered Sun, but a blue-green glow or a strong ocean breeze wrapping around him. Argoona's students are Lintha God-Blooded (see below), though some are advanced enough to have learned one or two of the *kur* Melee Charms, usually beginning with Excellent Strike and Hungry Tiger Technique.

## LINTHA GOD-BLOODED

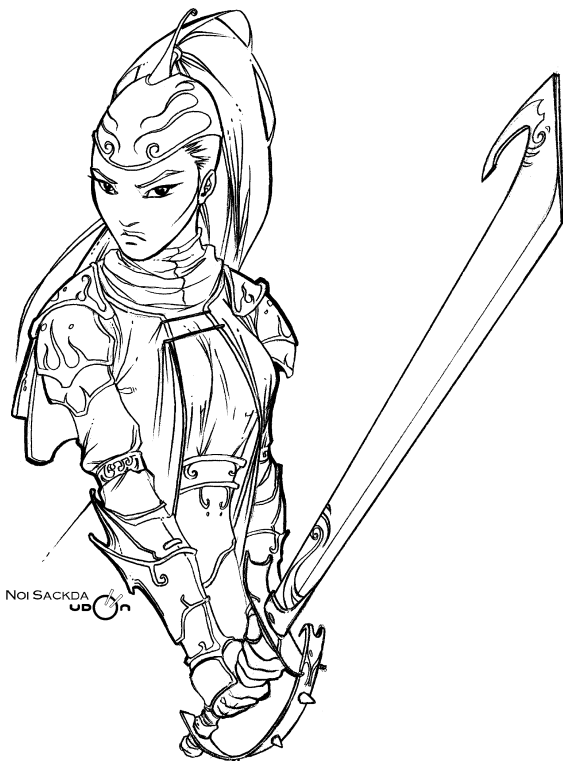
**Description:** The Lintha predilection for preserving the Family bloodline and Lintha Ooloo's carefully orchestrated breeding program have produced God-Blooded children of exceptional strength and power for the Lintha. These offspring are often the result of meticulous design, such as would impress even the most skillful Terrestrial matchmaker. The god blood that runs through their veins is unique, built on a foundation of both spirit and elemental blooded mortals. Before Ooloo began her program, the blood was growing thin, and the results of unions between mortals and God-Blooded were haphazard. Lintha Ooloo has removed such flaws from the Lintha bloodline. Selecting mated pairs and introducing new blood through alliances with subsidiary souls of Kimberry, Ooloo and the Cult of Dukantha have bred a mighty strain of hero.

Nearly all Lintha God-Blooded are used for breeding before their sterilization and indoctrination into the Cult of Dukantha. The God-Blooded of the Lintha are bred for combat and physical exertion. As such, they tend to be powerfully built and exceptionally healthy. This fitness is improved by strict education in the Lintha crèche, which rivals the imperial schooling system in its thoroughness and far surpasses it in brutality. Still, the God-Blooded are ultimately mortal not Exalted and, thus, of limited power.

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

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





Exceptional Auhzian: Speed 8 Accuracy 8 Damage 8L Defense 7

**Dodge Pool:** 6/4 **Soak:** 5L/8B (Reinforced buff jacket, 5L/6B, -2 mobility penalty)

**Willpower:** 5 **Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/ Incap

**Essence:** 2 **Essence Pool:** 30

**Committed Essence:** 0

**Other Notes:** Lintha God-Bloods can attune themselves to Manses and to items of the Five Magical Materials, but gain no Material bonus. Lintha God-Blooded are generally not extras, but are each heroic mortals who can perform stunts and have the full normal complement of health levels. They heal, bleed and resist disease as Exalted due to the strength of the Primordial blood in their veins. If they are extras, treat Lintha God-Blooded as elite.

In addition to their weapons and armor, most Lintha God-Blooded possess a number of efficacious talismans, and many own a minor artifact or two (Artifact •• or less). These are usually part of the goods distributed from successful raids or perhaps gifts bestowed upon the lesser Lintha by the grandparents for minor service.

Common items include jade daiklaves and armor, light Essence weapons such as implosion bows and breast-plates for warriors or cords of the winds (see p. 119) for sailors. Nearly all Lintha God-Blooded are unwaveringly loyal. However, whether they are loyal to the Yrjow Han or the Cult of Dukantha or to their sept is often in question, and individuals at all levels try to use their positions as a basis for political influence.

Use these statistics for actual full-blooded members of the Lintha Family. Not every crewmember aboard a Lintha ship is God-Blooded except in a few circumstances. Most are outsiders who are part of the Family as cousins. Depending on their quality, these brigands and cutthroats are equal to elite troops, at best, or infantry, at worst (see **Exalted**, p. 278). Many are heroic, but those who are not should probably be treated as elite opponents (see **Exalted**, p. 241) even if heroic specimens are infantry.

**Abilities:** Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 3, Endurance 3, Larceny 3, Linguistics 5, Lore 1, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Sail 4, Socialize 1, Thrown 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Backing 2, Contacts 2, Mentor 1, Resources 2

**Suggested Charms:** Graceful Crane Stance, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Perfect Reckoning Technique, Salty Dog Method, Sensory Acuity Prana, Storm-Weathering Essence Infusion

**Base Initiative:** 7

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 5 Damage 4B Defense 5

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 4 Damage 6B Defense 4

### THE AUHZIAN

*pronounced OW-zee-ahn*

This trademark weapon of the Lintha Family is brutally demanding of its wielders, which is of little trouble to the fearsome Lintha, but may pose a challenge to less able characters. The characteristics provided are for an average specimen. Those wielded by the Lintha are invariably exceptional and typically add a point to accuracy and defense. Keep in mind that this blade is the signature weapon of a devil-worshiping band of castration-happy slaver-pirates. A character will have problems finding someone willing to make one and problems if she carries one around.

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Resources	Minimums
Auhzian	+1	+2	+4L	+0	•••	S•••, D•••



### LINTHA PIRATE SHIP

**Role(s):** Pirate craft  
**Length:** 250 feet (up to 425 feet with towing creature)  
**Beam:** 90 feet  
**Draft:** 9 feet  
**Rig Type/Closest Tack:** None  
**Speed:** ●●●● acceleration/●●●●● top speed  
**Maneuverability:** -2 to -4 (depending on the nature of the towing creature)  
**Standard/Minimum Crew:** 68/10  
**Soak:** 15L  
**Health Levels:** 25/50

**Description:** Ships fitted for piracy are equipped with heavy and light ballistae and the occasional fire cannon. The ballista darts may be attached to ropes or wires to allow the pirates to pull fleeing craft in toward them.

### LINTHA SLAVER

**Role(s):** Slaver  
**Length:** 160 feet  
**Beam:** 70 feet  
**Draft:** 18 feet  
**Rig Type/Closest Tack:** None  
**Speed:** ●●● acceleration/●●●● top speed  
**Maneuverability:** -1  
**Standard/Minimum Crew:** 100/40 (to turn wheel)  
**Soak:** 10L  
**Health Levels:** 13/30

**Description:** Conditions aboard Lintha slavers are wretched. The captains cram the captive slaves not operating the wheels into every available corner of the ship, leaving very little breathing room for captives huddled together and on top of one another in lower decks no more than two feet in height. Each of these cargo decks, one above and one below each of the six normal six-foot-high decks are divided into segments and accessible by trap doors, which lock tightly and can be easily hidden. Each slaver can hold as many as 1,100 slaves, though in such cases many perish for lack of proper air. The heat and stench on a slaver, especially in the lower cargo decks, is so offensive that those not accustomed to life aboard one can enter the areas below deck only with great difficulty.

### LINTHA PRIEST

**Description:** Lintha priests can usually be found only in Bluehaven, though, rarely, one might be found being transported on a Lintha pirate vessel. They are armed with daggers or other small weapons, as they have

not received formal training in the use of the auhzian. Most priests have formal cult duties for which they are responsible.

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

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

**Abilities:** Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 2, Linguistics 5, Lore 3, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 2, Melee 2, Occult 2, Performance 3, Presence 3, Sail 2, Socialize 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Backing 2, Contacts 2, Influence 2, Mentor 2, Resources 3

**Suggested Charms\*:** Harmonious Presence Meditation, Listener-Swaying Argument, Masterful Performance Exercise, Respect Commanding Attitude, Salty Dog-Method, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Whirling Brush Method, Wise-Eyed Courtier Method

\* These approximate the Infernal powers available to the priest.

**Base Initiative:** 6

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 6 Accuracy 6 Damage 3B Defense 6

Kick: Speed 3 Accuracy 5 Damage 5B Defense 5

Blessed Jade Dagger\*: Speed 10 Accuracy 7 Damage 6L Defense 3

\* The Lintha must commit 5 motes to wield this blade.

**Dodge Pool:** 5      **Soak:** 5L/8B (Wyld-plagued mantle, 3L/6B)

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

**Essence:** 2      **Essence Pool:** 42 (37)

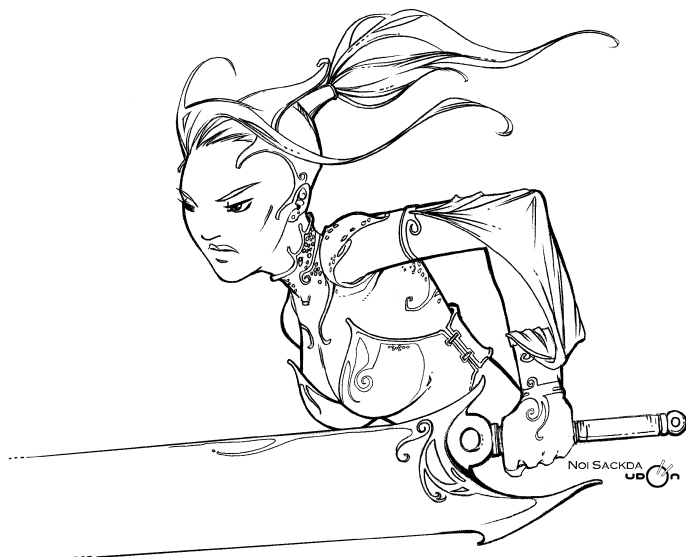
**Committed Essence:** 5

**Other Notes:** Most Lintha priests wear Wyld-plagued mantles that both soak damage and pervert the structure of weapons striking them. Mortal weapons that strike the priest perish into unstable Wyld prodigies after a single blow.

Lintha priests can attune themselves to Manses and to items of the Five Magical Materials, but they gain no Material bonus. Lintha priests are generally not extras, but are each heroic mortals who can perform stunts and have the full normal complement of health levels. They heal, bleed and resist disease as Exalted due to the strength of the Primordial blood in their veins. If they are extras, treat Lintha priests as elite.

### LINTHA OUTCASTE PRIEST

**Description:** Outcaste priests of Dukantha begin their service with high honors and, eventually, attain a positions of great authority. They are both formidable sorcerers and masters of the auhzian. Each Lintha outcaste priest receives a jade auhzian upon entrance to the Cult of Dukantha. These priests rarely leave Bluehaven for any reason.



**Aspect:** Water

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

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 4, Endurance 2, Linguistics 5, Lore 4, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 3, Melee 5, Occult 5, Performance 4, Presence 4, Sail 3, Socialize 3, Stealth 3, Thrown 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 5, Backing 5, Breeding 1, Contacts 4, Followers 3, Influence 3, Manse 3, Mentor 3, Resources 4

**Suggested Charms:** All-Encompassing Earth Sense, Benevolent Master's Blessing, Distracting Breeze Meditation, Elemental Bolt Attack, Elemental Concentration Trance, Feeling-the-Air Technique, Five-Dragon Blocking Technique, Five-Dragon Claw, Five-Dragon Fortitude, Five-Dragon Fist, Five-Dragon Form, Five-Dragon Invulnerability, Five-Dragon Wrath, Five-Dragon-Force Blow, Flickering Candle Meditation, Glowing Coal Radiance, Hurricane-Predicting Glance, Loquacious Courtier Technique, Memorable Performance Technique, Ox-Body Technique, Phantom Fire-Warrior Horde, Portentous Comet Deflecting Mode, Precision Observation Method, Respect Commanding Attitude, Spirit-Grounding Shout, Soundless Action Prana, Stoking Bonfire Style, Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique, Talented Improvisation, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Whirlwind Shield Form

**Suggested Spells:** Calling the Wind's Kiss, Eye of Alliance, Ritual of Elemental Empowerment, Song of the Lintha, Viridian Mantle of Underwater Journeys

**Base Initiative:** 7

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 7 Damage 4B Defense 7

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 6 Damage 6B Defense 6  
Jade Auhzian\*: Speed 15\*\* Accuracy 10 Damage 8L Defense 10

\* Reaper daiklave, see **Exalted: The Outcaste**, page 51.

\*\* Includes Magical Material bonus.

**Dodge Pool:** 7      **Soak:** 7L/10B (Wyld-plagued mantle, 3L/6B)

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

**Essence:** 4      **Essence Pool:** 52 (57)

**Committed Essence:** 5

**Other Notes:** Most Lintha priests wear Wyld-plagued mantles that both soak damage and pervert the structure of weapons striking them. They can attune themselves to Manses and to items of the Five Magical Materials. Most outcaste priests will defend themselves with between two and four demons if they have time to prepare, but they do not generally keep them bound into servitude, as the individuals most likely to attempt to harm an outcaste priest is another outcaste priest fairly certain to know Emerald Countermagic. Esitrufa are favored (see p. 112), followed by erymanthoi (see **Exalted**, pp. 294-295) and tomescu (see p. 113).

## ALLIES OF THE LINTHA

The Lintha are not alone in the Southwest. Numerous pirates, brigands and villains stalk the archipelagos. Those that the Lintha do not feel compelled to destroy or simply absorb often find themselves in league with Bluehaven. For some, alliance is a matter of necessity and survival. For others, the Lintha represent opportunity and freedom, even if their demonic rituals hold no charm. Some few merely choose not to fight the Lintha and "allow" Bluehaven to maintain its dominance over the sea for their own purposes.

In addition, Lintha "cousins" can be found throughout Creation, serving the aims of Bluehaven while remaining apart from it. These agents and associates are well compensated for their efforts but are never as loyal as true members of the Lintha Family.

## MNALILF NGANTO, LUNAR PELAGOTHOPE

### AND ADMIRAL OF HOST PWOONA

**Description:** The sea-dwelling beastmen known as the pelagothropes (see **Exalted: The Lunars**, p. 45) are common in the waters of the Southwest. Among them, the Selachian tribe is most closely aligned with the Lintha.

Mnalilf Nganto was, for most of her life, typical of a Selachian female. Raised in a nursery on one of the many barren islands in the Southwestern Archipelago, she learned to swim and breath underwater with the rest of her clutch. As a female, however, her training was





limited to weaving nets, preparing meals and sorting the bounty collected by the Stone Society warriors for sale to the Lintha. When times were lean, she and the other girls of the Selachian tribe scoured the sea floor for baubles among the wreckage of sunken vessels. She was a fast swimmer and had a sharp eye for finding treasure buried beneath the silt but was otherwise unexceptional.

One day, she was collecting sea slugs (a staple in the pelagothrope diet) in the shallows near a drowned hulk when the sun was blotted out by a Guild vessel above her. Mnalilf froze and waited, as she had been taught to do. She panicked when the land-dwellers unexpectedly dove into the water. They swam freely and could breath just as easily beneath the surface, though they seemed as surprised by her presence as she was by theirs. As she attempted to flee, they surrounded her, holding her at bay with nets and spears. Of the half dozen surface-dwellers, half began to search the nearby wreckage. The remaining three taunted her with their spears and make obscene gestures at one another. Fear began to build in Mnalilf, and she tried to break free. The sailors grabbed her and pummeled her. Too late, she saw the violent lust in their eyes. As she struggled against them, she felt her strength increase and power grow within her. Like a frenzied shark, she tore at them. She reached her hand in one attacker's mouth and tore out his tongue — and the vodonik tooth beneath it. In moments, the water was murky with blood.

She never saw if the other three returned to their vessel or, if they had, what treasure they had retrieved from the wreckage. Her mind reeling from Exaltation, Mnalilf swam back to her tribe, diving down to where the sun did not reach to meet the Deep Society, to ask the shamans what she had become. They told her that she had been chosen. She was no longer merely a girl of the

Selachian tribe, but a Lunar Exalt — the leadership of the tribe was her birthright.

Mnalilf Nganto's Exaltation came 230 years ago. In the years that followed, she came to rule the Stone Society of the Selachians, leading raids and acting as emissary to the Lintha. Through breeding and raiding, she has formed the Beast Fleet, five captured ships manned by beastmen and barbarians. The Lintha call this fleet Host Pwoona and name her admiral, though, in reality, she neither possesses nor desires an official place in the Lintha hierarchy. Instead, she commands the Beast Fleet to prey upon merchant vessels, selling the slaves and stolen goods acquired to the vodonik and the Lintha. Mnalilf bears no love for the Lintha's demon worshiping, though she respects the value of ritual and even self-mutilation and understands why the Lintha work to keep their bloodlines pure. Her alliance with Bluehaven is informal but strong, and should Bluehaven be attacked, she will rally the Beast Fleet to its defense.

Mnalilf commands the *Tumult's Prowl*, a blue-water merchant ship outfitted for piracy. As the flagship of the Beast Fleet, its crew numbers the strongest and often most twisted of the Selachian beastmen.

Mnalilf knows about Argoona's ownership of a moonsilver weapon but has been exceedingly careful never to publicly notice the blade. If the Lintha ever begin to endanger her, she plans to mention the matter during a *tlak* with her peers, with the general assumption that the resulting destruction will probably allow her to flee without consequence.

**Caste:** Full Moon

**Nature:** Leader

**Tell:** Shark's teeth\*

\*Very prominent. It is unmistakable in her true shape or if her Tell is already known. The Wits + Awareness roll to spot it if she is regarded suspiciously while shapechanged is difficulty 1.

**Attributes:**\* Strength 6 (10), Dexterity 6 (9), Stamina 6 (10), Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

\*Attributes in parentheses reflect Mnalilf when using Deadly Beastman Transformation.

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 6 (Swim +2), Awareness 6, Brawl 5 (Natural Weapons +2), Craft (Weaving) 3 (Improvised Materials +2), Dodge 5 (Attacks by Magical Beings +2), Endurance 5, Presence 2 (Leading Beastmen +2), Resistance 5, Sail 4, Survival 6, Thrown 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Artifact 3, Followers 3, Heart's Blood 4, Influence 2, Renown 3, Resources 3

**Charms:** Armor-Forming Technique, Beast Instinct Method, Bending Before the Storm, Body Weapon Technique, Bowing Reed Technique, Deadly Beastman

Transformation (x4) (*Gifts: Resilience of Nature, Rugged Hide, Savage Moonilver Talons, Terrible Beast Claws, Wound-Knitting Power*), Deadly Claw Blow, Ever-Wary Fox Technique, Finding the Spirit's Shape, Fish Tail Technique, Gill-Breathing Technique, Golden Tiger Block, Ground-Denying Defense, Hide-Toughening Essence, Humble Mouse Shape, Hydra Head Attack, Monkey Arm Style, Moonilver Monkey Exercise, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Sense-Sharpening Change, Sensing the Deadly Flow, Shaping the Ideal Form, Sinuous Striking Grace, Snake Body Technique, Steel Paw Style, Tiger Claw Swat, Towering Beast Form, Tyrant Lizard Strike, Wary Swallow Method, Weather-Scenting Method, Whale-Breath Technique, Wind-Dancing Method

#### Combos:

**Blood Frenzy (Cost: 3+ motes, 1 Willpower):** Bowing Reed Technique, Deadly Claw Blow, Tyrant Lizard Strike — *Mnalilf's eyes and skin bulge as she increases her blood pressure to force her own blood to spray from her claws and teeth, artificially stimulating her insatiable shark hunger and driving her to slay her foes. This is Mnalilf's standard combat Combo. She usually activates it as part of a dice action split between attack and defense.*

**Fish School Attitude Five (Cost: 1+ motes, 1 Willpower):** Armor-Forming Technique, Bowing Reed Technique, Deadly Beastman Transformation, Ever-Wary Fox Technique, Wary Swallow Method, Wind-Dancing Method — *Mnalilf spins with the perfect unity of a school of fish, her image seeming to turn all at once to confront and block blows. When she completes her first evasion, she is surely in her beastman form. Defense from sneak attack is a preoccupation of Mnalilf, and she has a number of obsolete versions of this Combo, hence the name.*

**Morning Storm Stroke (Cost: 7+ motes, 2 Willpower):** Deadly Claw Blow, Hydra Head Attack, Sinuous Striking Grace, Tyrant Lizard Strike — *The Exalt simply snaps her arm out, claws toward her foe, and he is struck repeatedly by the Essence of the attack. After the strike is complete, cold silver light washes off Mnalilf in a sphere, ignoring her anima banner, if any. This is Mnalilf's standard finishing move or wipeout.*

**Base Initiative:** 12 (15)

#### Attack:

Punch: Speed 12/15 Accuracy 11/14 Damage 6B/10B Defense 11/14

Kick: Speed 9/12 Accuracy 10/13 Damage 8B/12B Defense 10/13

Bite (hybrid form): Speed 18 Accuracy 18 Damage 18L Defense 16

Claws (hybrid form): Speed 21 Accuracy 20 Damage 15L Defense 20

Sailcutter Chakram: Speed 12/15 Accuracy 14/17 Damage 8L/12L (Rate 3, Range 50)

**Dodge Pool:** 11 (14)\* **Soak:** 11L/14B//20L/20B (Spirit sharkskin buff jacket, 8L/8B)

\* +2 die specialty when fighting magical beings.

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

**Essence:** 6

**Personal Essence:** 22 **Peripheral Essence:** 56 (50)

**Committed Essence:** 6

**Other Notes:** Mnalilf Nganto is a Full Moon Caste Lunar. As a pelagothrope, Mnalilf can breath both air and water and suffers no penalties associated with underwater actions and combat. Normally, her skin is tinted green, and her eyes are large and round. When she uses Deadly Beastman Transformation, she becomes a sleek, towering hybrid of human and barracuda: Scales cover her body, her nails and teeth extend and sharpen, and fins grow out of her back and elbows. When transformed, Mnalilf rarely uses weapons, preferring instead to tear into her enemies with tooth and claw.

Mnalilf has consumed the heart's blood of sharks, dolphins, barracuda, sea snakes and other predatory sea creatures. Since she does not consider herself mortal, she does not consume the heart's blood of humans, as it would be beneath her divine status. In periods of relaxation, times coming fewer and farther between as the Realm weakens and order dissolves, Mnalilf hunts the sea in her animal forms. She has been known to massacre entire crews for unknowingly attacking her while in one of her animal forms.



### SAILCUTTER CHAKRAM (ARTIFACT ••)

Crafted of cold wrought iron with an edge of the Magical Materials, these paired chakram are, in the hands of a skilled thrower, the bane of ship captains everywhere. When used against living opponents, the sailcutter chakram are merely highly effective weapons of their kind. However, their true power is displayed when used against the rigging of a sailing vessel. Against the sailcutter chakram, rigging has no soak, and each success adds two additional dice of damage when used versus rigging. See page 93 of *Savage Seas* for rules on attacking the rigging of a ship. Like most artifact thrown weapons, a sailcutter chakram returns to the wielder's hand after use. It costs 3 motes to attune to each of a pair, and these weapons must be used paired, for a total attunement cost of 6.

Name	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Artifact
Sailcutter Chakram	+2	+2L	3	50	••



## THE BEASTMEN OF THE *Tumult's Prowl*

**Description:** The beastmen under the command of Mnalilf Nganto are the fittest specimens and most skilled and savage warriors of their tribe. Use the stats for beastmen as presented in the Main Rulebook for the majority of the Beast Fleet mariners and the following stats for the crew of the *Tumult's Prowl*.

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

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 3 (Swim +2), Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Endurance 2 (Ocean +1), Melee 3, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Sail 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Thrown 2

**Base Initiative:** 7

### Attack:

Bite: Speed 7 Accuracy 9 Damage 6L Defense 6

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 8 Damage 4B Defense 8

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 7 Damage 6B Defense 7

Axe: Speed 7 Accuracy 7 Damage 9L Defense 7

Javelin (melee): Speed 8 Accuracy 8 Damage 6L Defense 7

Javelin (thrown): Speed 7 Accuracy 7 Damage 7L (Rate 2, Range 30)

**Dodge Pool:** 6      **Soak:** 5L/7B (Scales, 3L/3B)

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

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** The beastmen of the *Tumult's Prowl* have the poxes Enhanced Smell and Hearing, Fangs and Large and the affliction Thick Skin (Scales). They are heroic characters, capable of stunts.

## CABEL JAN, LINTHA UNCLE

**Description:** The Gem Bazaar is home to all manner of scoundrels, Cabel Jan among them. Introduced to the Lintha Family two decades ago, Cabel Jan began his career as a dealer in black-market gemstones — an occupation that is both extremely profitable and extremely dangerous in that Southern city. At that time, the Lintha were seeking yasal crystal, the rare stone that conveys to its user power over spirits, in an effort to allow Lintha Ooloo to introduce new god blood into her breeding program. Cabel Jan was able to provide precious gems and has ever since been a key in the Lintha's operations in the South.

Cabel Jan was only recently promoted to the rank of uncle and provided with a small circle of cousins to aid him in his endeavors. For the better part of the last two decades, he has operated alone, meeting with intermediaries and only rarely speaking with other Lintha directly. He preferred the old method. The current situation demands more of his attention and attracts more attention from the agents of the Despot of Gem. Fortunately



for Cabel Jan, the Lintha are now only moderately interested in yasal crystals and other black-market gemstones. Since his promotion, Cabel Jan has been under new orders: Collect as much firedust as possible, as quickly and inexpensively as possible.

Cabel Jan neither knows nor cares why the Lintha desire such large quantities of the volatile substance. It is not his place to ask. Instead, he spends his time skimming off the top of firedust sales he brokers, black-mailing alchemists into creating the stuff at cost and hiring mercenaries to raid caravans carrying it. He has turned an otherwise innocuous middle-class apartment in the lava tubes into a firedust warehouse. It is under constant guard by both mercenaries and a small number of spirits bound through the use of yasal crystal.

Cabel Jan has never visited Bluehaven, nor does he ever intend to. Through rare contact with other Lintha agents and written reports and messages, he gives lip service to the ideals of the Cult of Dukantha. However, losing his manhood is nowhere on his list of priorities, and so long as he remains in Gem, he feels himself safe from that fate. Moreover, he is a mere mortal among a vicious society of God-Blooded pirates and has no intention of putting himself in a position of danger. His loyalty to the Lintha is tenuous, extending only so far as the money he is paid allows. Cabel Jan will betray the Lintha before dying for them.

Though a mere mortal, Cabel Jan has a great number of resources at his disposal and is a consummate

negotiator, trader and liar. He believes wholeheartedly in the philosophy that if he has to fight, he has already lost. As such, he takes great pains — making deals, committing blackmail and using assassination — to ensure that such a thing never happens.

**Nature:** Conniver

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

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

**Abilities:** Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 4, Craft (Lapidary Appraisal) 3, Dodge 2, Investigation 3, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Firetongue; Riverspeak, Seatongue) 2, Lore 2, Martial Arts 2, Melee 2 (Slashing Sword +1), Presence 3 (Persuasion +1), Socialize 3 (Discern Motivation +2)

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Backing 2, Contacts 4, Influence 2, Resources 4

**Base Initiative:** 5

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 5 Accuracy 4 Damage 2B Defense 4

Kick: Speed 2 Accuracy 3 Damage 4B Defense 3

Slashing Sword: Speed 8 Accuracy 6 Damage 4L Defense 6

**Dodge Pool:** 4      **Soak:** 0L/3B

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

**Essence:** 1

**Other Notes:** Cabel Jan is well aware of his limitations as a warrior and avoids physical confrontation at all costs. He keeps a number of mercenaries as bodyguards on permanent retainers (use the stats for “Elite Troops” in the *Exalted* rulebook, p. 278), as well as an ifrit warrior (see *Games of Divinity*, pp. 67-68) named Dubar as a “confidante.” Dubar does not realize that his friendship with Cable Jan is based on the power of the yasal crystal the merchant wears around his neck. Jan’s wealth and contacts among the Gem underworld allow him access to virtually any mundane resources he may need — and even some magical ones.

## LORD VERETHINE, VODONIK KING

**Description:** The palace of Verethine, King of the Vodonik of the Southwestern Ocean, stands atop a mountain of coral a mere league beneath the waves. Built from the timbers of First Age vessels, the palace has stood for thousands of years. It stretches out with twisting branches, all hollow and alive, like a great sponge. The coral mountain has continued to grow, armoring the walls of the palace and guarding the invaluable materials of which the palace is built. The palace contains a thousand chambers, each one grander and more obscene to mortal eyes than the last.



Within the palace walls, Verethine lives a life of opulence and decadence. Though he is as old as the palace itself, the King of the Vodonik is ravenous in his appetites for both pleasure and cruelty. His harem contains a thousand nymphs, and he keeps a dozen mortal women as pleasure slaves, his own teeth placed under their tongues and their mouths sewn shut. Those that have displeased the vodonik king in some way — sailors and merchants that have trespassed in his territory, members of his court that have spoken against him, petulant concubines who have assumed too much — fill the hundreds of torture chambers of the palace. In these, elaborate and horrible displays of Verethine’s cruelty can be witnessed: a Guild merchant found trading in vodonik teeth granted the ability to breath water but doomed to never again see the sun, a nymph forced to swim naked among men-o’-war but denied release in death, an outspoken heketa courtier forced to suckle the brine cur pups of Verethine’s kennels. Deeper in the palace, close to the core and near the coral mountain, bones float in the dense, dark water. Here, something unnamable lurks in the walls, devouring whatever poor soul Verethine has condemned to be sent within, while onlookers enjoy the spectacle from numerous windows and portals.

Ranking above all other entertainment, however, is the hunt. Verethine will hunt mortal and elemental alike, though he prefers to hunt humans. The trappings of his hunts are as elaborate as his palace: He often dresses his prey in costume or creates intricate but impossible rules for the victim that, if correctly followed, ensure survival, riches or even his own crown. Verethine



has never failed to bring his prey in, dead or alive, and has never allowed any prisoner to escape unless it pleased him. A challenging hunt is both rare and savored, though Verethine will go to whatever lengths, even breaking his own “rules” to ensure his success.

As ruler of the vodonik, Verethine possesses a great deal more power than his lessers. Age has taught him many tricks, and to Verethine, a fair fight is one in which only he stands a fair chance of victory. His soldiers, armed with their mind numbing spears and mounted atop brine curs, constantly patrol the palace. His subjects, the vodonik and the other elementals beholden to his court, range far and wide, bringing him news of opportunities and threats alike.

The relationship between the Lintha and Verethine is a simple one: Verethine keeps his subjects under control and patrols the oceans around Bluehaven for elementals unattached to Verethine’s court, and the Lintha make regular sacrifices of their undesirables to the vodonik. Each party not only gains something from the other, but is engaged in actions it would likely take regardless of the agreement between them. On occasion, the interests of the Lintha and the vodonik king cross and there is bloodshed. Both parties are forward looking, however, and such disputes are generally forgotten in short order, at least officially. The Lintha and Verethine have existed side by side in the islands for hundreds of years and are not likely to allow a brief squabble to overwhelm sense.

**Attributes:** Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Stamina 8, Charisma 6, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4, Perception 5, Intelligence 6, Wits 6

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

**Abilities:** Awareness 5, Brawl 6, Bureaucracy 3, Dodge 4, Endurance 4, Lore 6, Melee 6, Occult 5 (Water Spirits +3), Performance 4 (Rabble-Rousing +2), Presence 7, Resistance 5, Ride 7 (Brine Cur +3), Socialize 6

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Artifact 5, Backing 4, Contacts 3, Cult 4, Familiar 3, Followers 5, Influence 4, Manse 5, Resources 5

**Charms:** Affinity Element Control, Benefaction, Confusion, Donning Spiritual Armor, Essence Bite, Hurry Home, Instill Obedience, Landscape Travel, Largess, Malediction, Measure the Wind, Portal, Principle of Motion, Scourge, Sense Domain, Shapechange, Stoke the Flame, Summon Food, Tiny Damnation, Tiny Gift, Tracking, Uncanny Prowess

**Elemental Powers:** Aegis, Element’s Domain, Mobility, Rejuvenation

**Cost To Dematerialize:** 68

**Base Initiative:** 12

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 12 Accuracy 12 Damage 7B Defense 12

Kick: Speed 9 Accuracy 11 Damage 9B Defense 11

Spear: Speed 22 Accuracy 22 Damage 22L Defense 22  
**Dodge Pool:** 7      **Soak:** 14L/18B (The Coral Crown, 10L/10B)

**Willpower:** 9      **Health Levels:** -0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Essence:** 7      **Essence Pool:** 115

**Other Notes:** Unlike his subjects, Verethine does not require his spear to use the Charm Instill Obedience. In addition to his vodonik spear, Verethine possesses the Coral Crown of the Vodonik.

## VODONIK

**Description:** These male water spirits are master shapeshifters, sometimes appearing as old men with long green or white beards, sometimes as creatures with huge toes, claws, horns, a tail and burning eyes in a human face. At times, they look like corpulent old bald men and, other times, like mossy looking fish or tree trunks. If one takes on human form, he can be recognized by the water seeping from the left side of his coat. Vodonik live in underwater palaces made from treasures salvaged from sunken ships and often marry nymphs.

Vodonik are usually malicious and are believed to lie in wait for human victims so that they may drag them under the water to their deaths. Dark marks on the bodies of drowning victims are held to be bruises received during struggles with the vodonik. Retrieving a drowned body angers the vodonik, who want to keep and devour his spoils. For this reason, it is common for sailors to toss the bodies of those who die while traveling on the sea overboard in an effort to appease these creatures. Vodonik may also be appeased by pouring butter into the water or by offering them one’s first fish of a catch. Fishermen often ask the aid of these creatures by tossing a pinch of tobacco into the water and saying a prayer aloud. Sometimes, when the whim takes one, a vodonik bestows one of its long, almost transparent teeth to a hapless petitioner. By keeping this tooth under one’s tongue, a mortal may breathe underwater.

The vodonik do not leave the safety of the oceans. If they are removed from the sea through force or trickery, they immediately dissolve into a noxious green and black muck that, if treated properly, may be used to produce a potent poison. Vodonik dying in the manner are permanently dead and cannot return or reform later. Vodonik know this and, consequently, stay as far away from dry land as possible.

Politically, vodonik are most notable for holding frequent water courts that are rife with “entertainments” such as public executions, displays of powerful captives, military demonstrations and other bellicose exhibitions. In addition, vodonik have an outright disrespect for most other underwater spirits, most notably sirens, whom they consider to be dull and too



devoted to the Storm Mothers. Vodonik have little love for Storm Mothers either, although there is little vodonik can do about the spirits. At court, vodonik often bar certain creatures from attending at whim and make terribly unjust proclamations about dress codes and modes of speech. Vodonik are also often fond of odd décor for court proceedings, such as ordering the water within the halls colored orange and scented with the blood of sailors. One such vodonik ordered a volcanic vent to be opened in his halls and the soldiers of an enemy army to be boiled alive one by one in the roiling white-hot rock.

In battle, these creatures bear heavy enchanted spears that command the obedience of those struck and ride upon massive brine curs. Vodonik do not often ride into combat alone, though, unless the object of a summoning — in which case they will attempt to skirt the summoner's bindings at every turn. Fortunately, the vodonik do not understand sorcery very well and so are usually not successful.

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

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

**Abilities:** Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 4, Endurance 2, Lore 2, Melee 3, Occult 5 (Water Spirits), Performance 4 (Rabble-Rousing), Resistance 3, Ride 4 (Brine Cur), Socialize 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 2, Artifact 3, Backing 2, Contacts 2, Cult 2, Familiar 3, Followers 4, Influence 2, Manse 3, Resources 4

**Suggested Charms:** Affinity Element Control, Confusion, Essence Bite, Instill Obedience (from spear), Measure the Wind, Sense Domain, Shapechange, Stoke the Flame, Summon Food

**Elemental Powers:** Aegis, Element's Domain, Mobility, Rejuvenation

**Cost To Dematerialize:** 25

**Base Initiative:** 7

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 12 Accuracy 11 Damage 9B Defense 13

Kick: Speed 11 Accuracy 9 Damage 10B Defense 5

Spear: Speed 14, Accuracy 15, Damage 17L Defense 16

**Dodge Pool:** 7      **Soak:** 3L/5B

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

**Essence:** 5      **Essence Pool:** 92

**Other Notes:** None

## BRINE CUR

**Description:** Horrific, pale-gray, giant-finned dogs with kelp-like fur and seven barbed tongues, these salt-water elementals are the preferred steeds of

vodonik warlords, though they also may be found in wild packs that attack unfortunate wanderers and sailors indiscriminately. The terrible 10-tined claws and massive jaws of these beasts are fearsome enough even without their legendary barbed tongues and nearly invisible tails.

Only semi-intelligent in their own right, these creatures are, nevertheless, expert order-takers when properly trained or ensorcelled. If treated properly, these beasts can be convinced to remain in the service of a master even after the original term of servitude. Of course, this requires such a master to remain in the undersea realm, as brine curs cannot journey long on land, perishing after a mere day out of salt water.

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

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

**Abilities:** Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Stealth 4 (Ambush)

**Backgrounds:** None

**Suggested Charms:** Measure the Wind, Tracking

**Elemental Powers:** Coarse Skin, Element's Domain, Mobility

**Cost To Dematerialize:** 15

**Base Initiative:** 6

**Attack:**

Bite: Speed 8 Accuracy 8 Damage 9L Defense 7

Claw: Speed 9 Accuracy 8 Damage 17L Defense 8

Tail: Speed 11 Accuracy 6 Damage 14B Defense 11

Tongue: Speed 13 Accuracy 10 Damage 15L Defense 17\*

\* Brine curs can attack with up to four tongues per turn.

**Dodge Pool:** 7      **Soak:** 5L/7B (Tough fur, 3L/3B)

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

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

**Other Notes:** None

## DEMONS OF THE LINTHA

The following demons — the eristrufa and the tomescu — are commonly found in the service of the Lintha Family. The eristrufa are especially favored by mortal and Exalted sorcerers among the Family, as of course their creator has now been reshaped to serve as Dukantha's warship, and her child race's fate is thus intertwined with the Lintha's. Tomescu are favored for their superior combat capabilities. Theodozjia are never summoned save in the direst crisis, even in the security of Bluehaven, as neither the great disruption they cause to Creation nor the direct Celestial attention their crassly blasphemous presence draws are seen as especially desirable by the Lintha.





## ERISTRUFA, DEMON OF THE FIRST CIRCLE

### PROGENY OF THE DAM OF THE ERISTRUFA

**Description:** Inhabitants of the black oceans of Malfears, the eristrufa are mist-demons, creatures of the fog and shadows. Eristrufa are normally summoned by sorcerers to track down and slay enemies that are known to be riding the shorelines or traveling by ship. Occasionally, some number of them escape captivity or are sent by the Yoziis to rid their masters of some annoyance in a particularly awful fashion.

The normal form of an eristrufa in Creation is of that of a dense fog bank several miles deep that can move against the wind or tides when it desires. (A number of eristrufa will occasionally join together, creating a fog bank dozens of miles long, capable of covering an entire island.) Those who stumble into the demon when it is in this form (voluntarily or otherwise) are beset with disturbing sounds not quite out of the range of hearing, the mournful, muffled tolling of ship's bells and occasional hideous laughter or moaning sobs of agony. Sleepers in this bank dream the dreams of the damned and awaken more exhausted than when they laid down to rest. Directions become muddled, and ships drift off course, the eristrufa following their path to make sure the crew gets no relief. Eventually, the victims are driven mad by their torment and set upon one another or run their ship up against a reef or shoal. Islands or port towns attacked by these tormentors are left desolate ruins, destroyed by their inhabitants, or empty testaments to madness unchained. Often, the ghostly former inhabitants of the latter reside in the untamed lands that surround their residences, maddened furies still attached to their dwellings in an inexplicable fashion, easily enraged into attacking anyone who dares enter the place they once called home.

If the eristrufa loses its patience or sees that this tactic is not going to work for some reason, it can take the form of a mass of writhing tentacles, some of them 20 feet long, hanging in midair. Some of these tentacles bear eyes, others grasping and piercing claws or cutting edges. All of them are strong and covered with powerful suckers that can rip the skin right off the body with their force. An eristrufa in battle is a raging whirlwind, lashing out at anyone with the temerity to approach it, wrapping opponents in tentacles or impaling them on claws.

Some legends suggest that they may have a third form. Details differ, however, on whether they can take the shape of a dolphin, a beautiful fae lord or lady or a rainbow. Any, all or none of these may be correct, but in any case, wary ships' crews worry upon seeing a lone dolphin or a rainbow in a sunny sky.

Eristrufa will not set out against a victim on a Venus' Day (although if they are already attacking a target, they won't back off, although the madness will lessen a bit), and they cannot change forms when the moon is full in the sky. They cannot abide the smell of freshly harvested garlic and will not embrace a home or ship that contains large amounts of it. None know what it is that eristrufa eat, if, indeed, they eat anything at all. An offering of blood will sometimes cause them to forego destroying an entire vessel or village, if they have no specific target, but nothing short of powerful sorcery or death will cause them to give up their intended target.

**Attributes:** Strength 8, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6, Charisma 1, Manipulation 4, Appearance 0, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

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

**Abilities:** Awareness 3, Brawl 3 (Claw +1, Grab +2), Dodge 4, Endurance 2, Presence 3 (Physical Intimidation +2), Resistance 2, Stealth 1

**Suggested Charms:** Confusion, Cunning Thief, Dreambane, Essence Bite (chilling cold), Ghostly Presence, Harrow the Mind, Landscape Travel, Materialize, Measure the Wind, Principle of Motion, Shapechange, Sustenance, Will-o-Wisp

**Cost To Materialize:** 30

**Base Initiative:** 8

**Attack:**

Tentacle Grab: Speed 8 Accuracy 9 Damage lethal clinch\* Defense 9

Tentacle Slash: Speed 6 Accuracy 9 Damage 10L Defense 6

\* The damage from this clinch increases by 1 every turn it is maintained.

**Dodge Pool:** 8      **Soak:** 6L/9B (Scaly, slippery skin, 3L/3B)

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

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

**Other Notes:** A materialized eristrufa can switch between its material body and its mist shape as a dice action, which costs 1 mote and requires no roll. In its mist form, an eristrufa has no Strength, but can "touch" any target that is in its "body," for purposes of Essence Bite, Cunning Thief or Sustenance. Only fire attacks have any effect on an eristrufa in mist form, and they deal no more than one health level of damage unless powered by a Solar. Attacks such as Blazing Solar Bolt or Fiery Solar Chakram will do normal damage.

## TOMESCU, THE CLAMOROUS CLOUD ARSENAL, DEMON OF THE FIRST CIRCLE

### PROGENY OF THE LIVING TOWER

**Description:** Every tomescu knows its ultimate destiny. For this reason, it cries out in pain when a new day dawns, and it cries out in pain when each day ends. And by the cries of the tomescu, one may know the passage of days even in the city of demons. Only one tomescu in 100 does not cry out. Of these, 99 in 100 are stoic or addled. Only one tomescu in 10,000 foresees a beautiful end. These tomescu, the other demons fear.

One never sees a tomescu directly, for a cloud always surrounds it, an airy vapor that partakes of the creature's Essence. On occasion, one or more limbs become visible: long green insectile legs tipped with metal blades, thick stone hammers, long thin axes, spears and even golden bows. Goetic tomes depict them as green-carapaced crabs with at least five dozen limbs. Most of these limbs end in weapons below the joint, but the innermost limbs have either hands capable of working the bows and manipulating other objects or feet to support the tomescu in its crablike gait.

The tomescu do not live for violence, for they remember the beginnings of their lives and they know the ends of them. To them, the matters of beginnings and endings hold no interest, nor the matters of life and death. They live for the instants of the present and in service of the immortal things. In the transient events that pass under the clouds, they find great joy and great pain. In honor to the Yozis, who endure past time, the tomescu live their lives in furious service. They listen to the air of the Demon City and, from it, glean the whims or will of the Demon Princes. The tomescu move from place to place in the city, carrying out their incomprehensible tasks, and do no differently when freed to act in the mortal world.

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

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

**Abilities:** Archery 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Dodge 3, Endurance 2, Lore 2, Occult 2, Martial Arts 5, Melee 4, Resistance 2

**Backgrounds:** None

**Suggested Charms:** Materialize, (Natural Prognostication), (Spirit-Cutting)

**Cost to Materialize:** 35

**Base Initiative:** 8

**Attack:**

Axe Limb: Speed 9 Accuracy 9 Damage 8L Defense 12  
Sledge Limb: Speed 3 Accuracy 8 Damage 13L Defense 12

Spear Limb: Speed 12 Accuracy 10 Damage 6L Defense 12  
Sword Limb: Speed 9 Accuracy 10 Damage 7L Defense 12  
Short Bow Limb: Speed 8 Accuracy 10 Damage 8L (Rate 2, Range 300)

**Dodge Pool:** 7

**Soak:** 7L/11B (Carapace, 6L/8B)

**Willpower:** 7

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

**Essence:** 2

**Essence Pool:** 65

**Other Notes:** Experts at fighting multiple opponents, tomescu receive a free parry or counterattack at their full dice pool for each attack made against them.

A tomescu generally conceals its sledge limb within the cloud, swinging it out only if a battle turns against the demon.

Tomescu bows normally fire broadhead arrows, but the tomescu obtain and notch these arrows in a mundane fashion. Thus, they can run out of ammunition. Tomescu can also use fowling, frog crotch or target arrows, if available.

Tomescu have other limbs, including various sorts of swords, axes and maces. Most particularly, they have limbs that resemble seven-section staves or hook swords. They use one or two of these when parrying attacks, even if attacking with another limb.

A typical tomescu *must* cry out at dawn and at each day's end, even if it desires stealth.

## SUNDRY CREATURES OF THE SOUTHWEST

The Lintha and An-Teng are but two main powers in the Southwest. Many other island tribes, small nations and creatures exist in the region. The following creatures are found in various locales within the region, apart from Bluehaven or An-Teng.

### LINTHA SEA MONSTERS

Many things live in the deep ocean, some as old as Creation itself. Though not visible to the naked eye, the Wyld touches the depths as surely as it does the surface, and monstrosities are born, ravage their environments and die without ever having been seen by mortal eyes. Sometimes, these creatures rise to the surface. Some are glimpsed but briefly, becoming the stuff of sailors' yarns. Others attack, leaving only one or two witnesses to tell the tale — or none at all.

Over the centuries, the Lintha have become particularly skilled at trapping, taming and training the monstrous things that live in the ocean. With the aid of Verethine and his vodonik warriors, the Lintha have managed to capture dozens of unique "sea monsters." Most are lashed to Lintha vessels and used as both engines and weapons. Some merely hunt the waters surrounding Bluehaven, trained to sense the difference



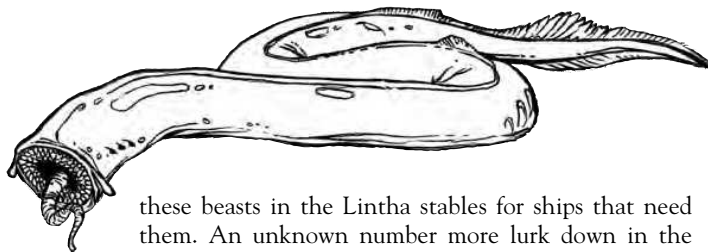


between Lintha vessels and those of the Guild, the Realm and An-Teng.

The following is a short selection of some of the creatures used by the Lintha. Storytellers should feel free to expand upon the list with whatever Wyld-twisted monstrosities of the ocean depths spring to mind.

**Infernal Worm:** The most common beast used to pull Lintha ships is the infernal worm, a type of Third Circle demon that swims in the depths of Kimberry's fetid waters. Though these creatures are mere beasts, too unintelligent to act without a handler, they will still wither as a demon would if kept too long outside a Manse or Demesne.

Those Lintha who are able use more natural beasts, for the infernal worms trail bad omens behind them like a thundercloud, and targets with competent fortunetellers are often long gone or well alert. However, the worms are very fierce, amenable to control, and there are dozens of



these beasts in the Lintha stables for ships that need them. An unknown number more lurk down in the floating roots of the island sister, feeding on her waste and dying tissue, waiting to be called up and pressed into service by the Cult of Dukantha.

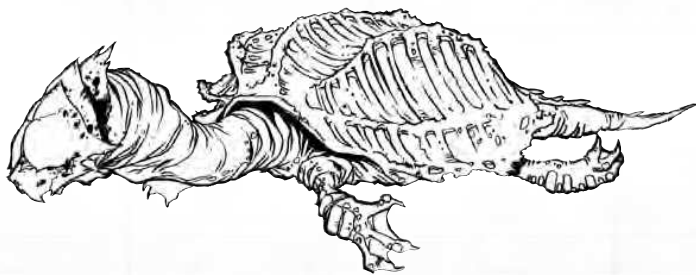
**The Porosaur:** Saltwater crocodiles inhabit many islands in the Southwest and are common on the coasts and in the tidal rivers of An-Teng. Rapacious predators with a well-deserved reputation as man-eaters, the crocodiles are alternatively worshiped and hunted to near extinction. The Porosaur was first one and then the other. This massive crocodylian extends over 40 feet from snout to tail and weighs four and a half tons. Its massive head is covered in bony hornlike protrusions, and its jaws are lined with daggerlike teeth. Unlike true crocodiles, the Porosaur has no legs, giving it a somewhat thick serpentine appearance. It has two tails rather than one, and each forks off into two smaller tails as well. This beast once lived in a lagoon on an unnamed island in the Southwest, where local tribal peoples worshiped it as a god and fed to it their criminals and captives. In addition to its terrible jaws, the monster can expel noxious vapors from its nostrils. Stories of the beast spread from tribe to tribe and, eventually, to the merchants that traded with



them. Finally, the tales landed in the ears of the Lintha, who, intent upon taming the beast, came to the island in force. Two hundred God-Blooded sailors died before Lintha Ronkevoool, the same Dragon-Blooded pirate who had brought the monstrous Black Whaler under heel, was able to tame the beast. He brought it back to Bluehaven, where it was lashed to one of the many Lintha pirate vessels that hunt the waves. Although difficult to control, the creature is fast and strong and is a terrible weapon on the side of the Lintha (provided Lintha sailors do not get too close).

The Porosaur can expel a cloud of poison gas instead of biting. The gas fills an area approximately 40 feet in diameter directly in front of the Porosaur. Those inside automatically take 4L damage from the acidic nature of the gas. In addition, those that do not hold their breath take an additional 4L damage from the poison, which can only be soaked with Stamina. The gas remains for three turns in light wind conditions, two turns in moderate wind conditions or one turn in high wind conditions. The damage caused by the gas is suffered each turn of exposure. The Porosaur may use this attack only once every four turns.

**The Reef Dragon:** The beast referred to as the Reef Dragon appears to be a pelagic dragon of both unusual size and bearing a unique hide. The monster stretches 200 feet from nose to tail, with the traditional serpentine neck and tail of its smaller brethren. Its name comes not from its habitat, but from its appearance: The Reef Dragon has a thick hide of stonelike plates covered in living coral. This hide, which is impenetrable by all but the most powerful



of attacks, covers only the back of the creature. Its underside, including its neck, is no more protected than that of a common pelagic dragon. Lintha Argoona once commanded the Reef Dragon as his own. Since Argoona's semiretirement from sailing to concentrate on his studies of the sword art *kur*, the Reef Dragon has lived freely in the waters surrounding Bluehaven. It was taken young and knows only the Lintha, keeping close at all times to Bluehaven and viciously defending the floating city should it come under attack.

**The Sea Yeddin:** Nature might have intended for this poor creature to be a sea lion or walrus, but the

power of the Wyld not only caused it to grow to a gargantuan size but also twisted it nearly beyond recognition. The Sea Yeddin, called such because of its thick hairy body and its ability to pull even the most overladen merchant vessel back to Bluehaven, is 30 feet long with a massive, many tusked head and four sets of



great clawed flippers. It is undoubtedly male, as it occasionally mounts captured vessels, and it appears to be a warm-blooded sea mammal.

Although somewhat ill tempered, the beast is kept in check by cruel handlers, Lintha God-Blooded with the ability to breathe underwater who actually ride and direct the beast. The Lintha corral the Sea Yeddin in a Bluehaven pen, where it dines on the cuttings from Lintha whalers and fishermen, until a Guild or other merchant vessel is captured but cannot be brought to Bluehaven under its own power. An immensely powerful swimmer, the Sea Yeddin is brought to the resting hulk and chained to it, then forced to draw it back to Bluehaven. No one among the Lintha claims this great yelping beast as her own and even its handlers have difficulty loving the creature.

### GARA FISH

**Description:** Ravenous predators of sea and land, gara fish occasionally scourge An-Teng. More often, they feast upon the inhabitants of small islands or the crews of ships passing through the region.

Gara fish are the size of sea bass, with large mouths full of daggerlike teeth. They swim exceedingly fast and leap out of the water in long jumps, sometimes catching birds. When they spy prey on land or on the deck of a ship, they leap three times before attacking. On the third leap out of the water, their broad fins spread out like wings, and they fly at their terrified prey. Gara fish always attack in a swarm, ranging from a few dozen to hundreds of fish. Their hunger is insatiable, and they devour everything edible in their path: people, livestock and even cloth and soft wood. Gara fish cannot remain out of the water for long, how-

ever, and their attacks last only a few minutes before they must return to the sea. In that short time, gara fish can empty an entire vessel or seaside village of all life.

Gara fish attacks run in cycles that can be predicted through astrology and other forms of divination. A successful Lore + Intelligence roll allows a character to correctly determine the timing of the most immediate previous or upcoming attack. People so informed often use rice seasoned with human blood, for which the gara fish have a particular fondness, to distract or trap the fish. The people of An-Teng poison the rice, while some island tribes hide nets under it and capture the gara fish. Lintha, Guild and imperial captains are familiar with the gara fish, and if they must travel during periods of gara fish activity, blood soaked rice is hung in buckets over the side of the ship near the waterline. So distracted, the fish make easy targets for men with clubs. The meat of the gara fish has the taste and consistency of shark meat.

### THE RAPTOR OF BLACK KUNG ISLAND

**Description:** At its closest approach, Black Kung Island lies 60 miles to the southeast of Bluehaven. A near-barren slab of rock in the ocean, Black Kung Island offers no shelter and food fit only for the tiny mice that crawl among the stones. There is one tree to be found, however, atop a jagged knoll in the center of the island. The tree bears no leaves and only a single fruit. In the tree perches the Raptor of Black Kung Island.





Name	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will	Health Lvl	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/Soak	Abilities
Infernal Worm	12/5/10	6	-0/-1x4/ -2x8/-4/I	Bite: 6/12/12L	6/8L/18B	Athletics 2 (Swim +3), Awareness 4, Brawl3 (Bite+2), Dodge 1, Presence 2 (Intimidate +3)
Porosaur	12/4/10	5	-0/-1x3/ -2x3/-4/I	Bite: 5/10/16L	5/11L/16B	Athletics 3 (Swim +2), Awareness 3, Brawl4 (Bite+2), Dodge 1, Presence 2 (Intimidate +2)
Reef Dragon	14/4/12	4	-0x4/-1x8/ -2x8/-4/I	Bite: 6/7/10L; Ram: 5/6/18B	4/14L/19B*	Athletics 3 (Swim +2), Awareness 1, Brawl3, Dodge2, Presence 3 (Intimidate +2)
Sea Yeddin	14/2/11	4	-0/-1x3/ -2x3/-4x2/I	Tusk Gore: 2/3/14L	3/8L/12B	Athletics 4 (Swim +2)**, Brawl 4 (Tusks +2), Dodge 1, Endurance 2, Presence 2 (Intimidate +2), Resistance 2
Gara Fish	3/4/3	3	-0x2/-1x2/ -2x2/-4/I	Bite: 3/6/6L	6/6L/8B	Athletics 3 (Glide +2, Swim +2), Awareness 2, Brawl2 (Bite+1), Dodge 2, Endurance 4, Presence 2 (Intimidate +2), Resistance 4

\* The underside of the Reef Dragon is not armored like its back. The soak for the underside is 4L/9B.  
 \*\* The Sea Yeddin is a mammal. While it may hold its breath for over an hour, it cannot breath underwater and will drown if knocked unconscious in the sea or somehow held beneath the surface.

The Raptor is black as pitch, with brilliant blue and yellow tips on its wings and a face as green as spring grass. It is a massive bird, as tall as a man and with a wingspan of nearly 20 feet when it takes flight. It watches the island with its great, shining eyes, ever watchful for visitors and prey. May legends persist among the surrounding islands

tribes about the Raptor, and its form appears on many idols and in many prayer weaves. The truth of the matter remains lost in the ashes of the First Age.

Few visitors ever come to Black Kung Island, save for the occasional shaman from among the island tribes who brings gifts and offerings to lay at the feet of the Raptor's

tree. Adventuring Dynasts and Guild poachers sometimes come to Black Kung to investigate the rumors of the islands unusual sole inhabitant. Most return never having spied the bird, while some do not return at all. The remains of foolish explorers, who the neighboring islanders say angered the gods by trying to trap or kill the Raptor or to steal the lone fruit, can be found in crevices among the rocks and half buried in the sands of the beach.

In truth, the Raptor is a powerful terrestrial spirit bound to Black Kung Island in the First Age by a Solar sorcerer who had tired of the spirit's arrogance and vanity. Centuries of isolation on the small rocky isle have driven the spirit half mad, though the presence of the occasional worshiper among the local population allows the spirit to maintain some hold on sanity. The Raptor hates Exalts, however, particularly Solars. It will attempt to lure Exalted into carelessness through the use of illusions and mind-affecting Charms. When its hated target has dropped his guard, the Raptor will strike. Due to the nature of its binding to the isle, the Raptor cannot be killed. If its materialized form is destroyed, its dematerialized form remains bound to the isle, and the Raptor materializes again on the next moonrise.

Many legends persist regarding the singular fruit that grows on the tree of Black Kung Island. Some locals believe that anyone who kills the Raptor and eats the fruit is, in turn, transformed into the Raptor. Other tales suggest that the fruit is a treasure guarded by the Raptor, providing wisdom, power or other boons to the one who eats the fruit. The truth is, in fact, the secret to the sorcery that binds the spirit to the island: so long as, year in and year out, the tree lives and bears fruit, the raptor spirit may not leave the isle or break the spell that binds it. Should the tree fail to bear the fruit, however, the spirit will be freed from its imprisonment. Causing such a thing to happen is no simple matter, however: One cannot simply kill the tree or pluck the bud from which the fruit grows every spring. Only Adamant Countermagic, specially researched Celestial Circle sorcery or a Celestial Decree by the Bureau of Seasons can undo the tree itself and affect the Solar Circle binding ritual that traps the raptor spirit.

**Nature:** Bravo

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

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 2 (Flight +2), Awareness 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Endurance 3, Lore 3, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Socialize 3, Stealth 2

**Backgrounds:** Cult 2

**Charms:** Benefaction, Confusion, Cunning Thief, Harrow the Mind, Host of Spirits, Imprecation, Materialize\*, Measure the Wind, Sense Domain, Tiny Damnation, Tiny Gift, Worldly Illusion

**Cost To Materialize:** N/A\*

\*The Raptor of Black Kung Island is, through the Solar sorcery which binds it, forced to remain materialized except for brief periods after the Raptor's material form has been destroyed. If the Raptor is freed from its imprisonment, it has a cost to materialize of 40 motes.

**Base Initiative:** 9

**Attack:**

Beak: Speed 8 Accuracy 8 Damage 10L Defense 8

Claw: Speed 10 Accuracy 10 Damage 6L Defense 10

**Dodge Pool:** 9      **Soak:** 4L/8B (Tough old bird, 2L/4B)

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

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

**Other Notes:** Aside from serving as the focus of the Raptor's binding, the fruit that grows on the tree of Black Kung Island imparts upon any who eat of it the effects of the spirit blessing Largess (see the **Exalted Storyteller's Companion**, p. 52), usually returning temporary Willpower or spent motes of Essence to the character, though the exact effects are up to the Storyteller. Note that the Raptor has no control over the blessings provided by the fruit. The fruit can be shared by no more than three individuals and grows back one month after having been eaten, though the fruit will not grow in the autumn or winter.

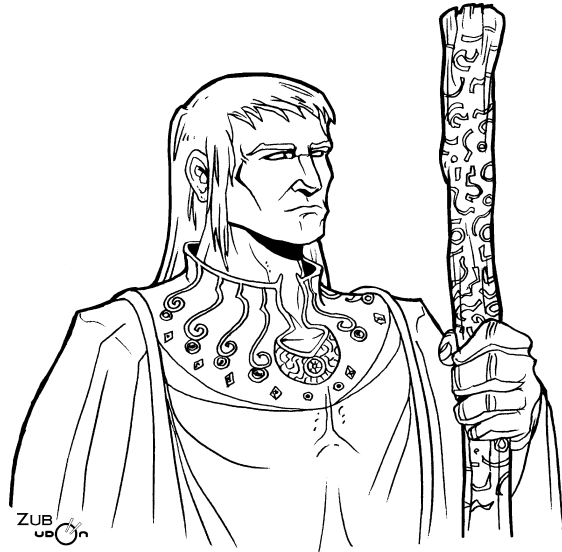
## THE YUN GIANTS

**Description:** The Yun giants are great, enigmatic Fair Folk dwelling on Island Gamelan.

When the gates of Creation broke before the hordes of Chaos and the Great Contagion swept across the world, the Yun giants chose the small island known as Gamelan as their home. As they passed into Creation, they fashioned for themselves identical shells of flesh: 10-foot-tall, broadly built men with flowing hair of bright blue and marble white skin. They wear gossamer robes simple in style yet exquisite in craftsmanship and are adorned with jewelry of pearls, gold, silver and other precious gems and metals. They bear no weapons aside from their walking sticks, tall staves of white wood covered in intricate, incomprehensible symbols and sigils.

Across the island stretch the great instruments of the Yun giants: gongs, xylophones of bamboo and wind chimes varying greatly in size and complexity. These instruments are the key to the presence of the twin giants on the isle. Without apparent rhyme or reason in timing, the Yun giants will march through the fields of instruments that cover over half the isle, striking them with





their long walking sticks and creating a cacophony of beautiful noise that can be heard for leagues in all directions. Scholars of An-Teng and among the Lintha have tried to tie the playing of the music to celestial events with mixed results: While the giants do indeed play their songs during some celestial events, others are seemingly ignored, and the Yun giants will play their instruments on random days that have no apparent celestial significance.

The Yun giants boast a tribe of Wyld barbarians known as the Feathered Men as their worshipers, though, in truth, the giants seem little interested in the tribe. The Feathered Men bring tribute to the giants, in the form of beautifully decorated sea shells and the occasional treasure that has washed up on the shore of the isle, at dawn following their playing. Compassion and Temperance are the Virtues upon which the Yun giants feed, and the Feathered Men provide those most fully when the giants play.

This is the true nature of the Yun giants' music: The harmonies of the gamelan produce serenity, introspection and creativity in those who hear it. That men have applied meaning to the timing of the songs only increases the emotions that are produced, so the Yun giants make no effort to dissuade such beliefs.

As nobles of the Fair Folk, the Yun giants possess a great deal of wisdom and power. They are not predatory as are many other fey, nor are they hedonists or warriors. In many ways, the giants enjoy the company of mortals and are willing to aid them so long as it does not endanger themselves. They have lived in the Southwest since the end of the Contagion and are reservoirs of knowledge regarding the region. Like many fey, however, they often provide information in riddles and vague prophecies.

They will not go to war for mortals under any circumstances, mostly because both Temperance and Compassion suffer in times of battle. They will defend themselves, however, and due merely to their nature as Fair Folk nobles, they are competent warriors.

The Yun giants do not seem to have individual names. They often finish sentences for one another or echo one another's statements when speaking with those who come seeking their wisdom. This has given rise to the belief that they are, in fact, not two separate entities, but one split between two forms. No one has managed to discern the truth of this theory.

**Nature:** Savant

**Type:** Noble

**Element:** Air

**Attributes:** Strength 8, Dexterity 5, Stamina 7, Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 6, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

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

**Abilities:** Awareness 5, Craft (Glamour) 5, Dodge 3, Endurance 3, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Guild Cant, High Realm, Low Realm, Seatongue) 4, Lore 6 (Southwest +2), Melee 3 (Staff +2), Occult 4, Performance 6 (Gamelan +2), Presence 5, Resistance 3, Socialize 4

**Powers:** Note that the giants cannot use these powers individually, but must perform them in concert for a singular effect.

**Beguile:** 10 motes, 1 Willpower. Roll the Yun giants' Charisma + Socialize — the result is the number of scenes for which any reasonably phrased suggestion seems perfectly natural to the target. See **Exalted**, page 286, for complete rules regarding the use of Beguile.

**Control Air:** 5 motes. The Yun giants have mastery of the element of air, allowing them to cause strong winds to blow, to hear conversations over long distances and to predict the weather with near-perfect accuracy. They may also call or banish thunderstorms, blizzards, sleet and hail, though this use of the power costs 10 motes. They may imbue a target with a dice penalty or bonus equal to their permanent Essence or make an attack that does lethal damage equal to twice their permanent Essence. Air attacks cannot be dodged, only parried.

**Glamour Sorcery:** The Yun giants are able to perform glamour sorcery, as described in **Scavenger Sons**, page 138. The power Yun giants generally use this to create confusion in or to provide visions to the target or recipient. If hard pressed, however, the giants can use glamour sorcery to strike down opponents.

**Base Initiative:** 9

**Attack:**

Staff: Speed 13 Accuracy 14 Damage 14L Defense 12



(The staves of the Yun giants are inlaid with gossamer runes, providing them with the following statistics: Speed +4, Accuracy +4, Damage +6L, Defense +2.)

**Dodge Pool:** 8      **Soak:** 12L/16B (Gossamer raiment, 9L/9B)

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

**Essence:** 4      **Essence Pool:** 40

**Other Notes:** Iron does aggravated damage against the Fair Folk, and they cannot soak it with their Stamina. Against iron weapons, the Yun giants have only the 9L/9B soak from their gossamer raiment. Note that most weapons are forged from bronze or steel, not iron. The Feathered Men that worship the Yun giants have the same stats as the Wyld barbarians presented in the *Exalted* rulebook, pages 281-282.

## WONDERS OF THE SOUTHWEST

An-Teng was once home to a great many Exalted. In the First Age, Solars and their Lunar consorts built Manses in the lush forests and fertile fields. Their Dragon-Blooded servants lived in An-Teng as well, and many more would visit the beautiful, peaceful land on holiday. Even after the Usurpation, the Dragon-Blooded remained. The presence of so many Exalted meant the creation of hundreds of artifacts, from the simplest toys, crafted for the children of the First Age Solars, to the most powerful weapons, wielded by the hands of the Dragon-Blooded in their treachery. While many of these artifacts have been lost to time or carried away to the Blessed Isle, some yet remain in the hands of the princes and the other powers in An-Teng.

Likewise, the Lintha are themselves a vast trove of wonders. Their centuries of plunder and gifts from their dark patrons have made their island fortress a stronghold of wealth beyond measure, especially the lost glories of the First Age.

What appear below are some of the most notable treasures of these two groups or items that are certain to be found among their members. Some of the material below originally appeared in *Savage Seas*. It is repeated here for ease of reference.

### CORD OF WINDS (ARTIFACT •)

A relatively common artifact, produced by even mortal sorcerers. Partially discharged examples can be found on many ships, even relatively small ones, as they have been created in large numbers over the centuries. The cord of winds is normally a silken cord, usually light blue but possibly of any color, adorned with a number of knots. Each knot holds a minor air elemental bound up in it. If released, an elemental will serve for a day and a night, raising wind when asked. After its service is up, the elemental is free to depart. Any attempt to detain the

elemental will be poorly received and may well bring retribution down upon the offending party at some point. Most cords will have 20 knots in them when first created, of different sizes and complexities. The smaller, simpler knots hold elementals that are little more than breezes, while the elementals bound in the larger, more complex knots are more powerful. Unraveling a knot in a hurry is an extended Wits + Sail task. The difficulty of the task depends on the power of the air elemental bound up in the knot. A simple breeze's knot has a difficulty of 4, while the knot securing a powerful zephyr or gale might have a difficulty of 10, although such powerful elementals and spirits are only rarely bound up in a cord of winds. Most elementals or spirits bound will have a permanent Essence less than 4. Any knot can be untied given time, if one is patient enough not to cut it in half.

### AUTOMATON ASSASSIN (ARTIFACT ••)

Automata assassins are clockwork creatures disguised as jewelry—most often rings, earrings or decorative belts. They take the form of small insects, spiders, snakes or other creatures of appropriate size. Inactive, they appear to be meticulously detailed works of art, often of great beauty.

The first automata assassins were built before the Usurpation as part of the plan to kill the Solars and were of much greater potency. All of these were believed destroyed in the subsequent ambush, but they took a heavy toll on the Anathema before the devices were destroyed. Since that time, the Exalted have found it impossible to duplicate those earlier automata and have resorted to more subtle creations that depend more upon stealth than raw power.

The controlling Exalt must invest 5 motes of Essence to animate the jewelry, which unfolds and moves as a perfectly articulated replica of the creature it resembles. For one scene, the automaton moves according to the Exalt's mental directions, and she can focus her senses through the item, seeing through its eyes and hearing through its ears. Automata carry a terrible poison of magical origin, which they can inject with a bite, although each such bite costs the controlling Exalt 2 motes of Essence. As usual, an Exalt who is investing Essence into an automaton not of her type pays double the investment cost, but the bite costs only 2 motes regardless of the automaton's type.

Automata assassins are rare, but popular among the Terrestrial Exalted, who often use them to create "openings" in the ranks.

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

**Abilities:** Athletics 3 (Climb +1), Awareness 2, Dodge 5, Martial Arts 4, Stealth 5

**Base Initiative:** 9





**Attack:**

Bite: Speed 8 Accuracy 8 Damage 1L (3L if inflicting venom\*) Defense 8

\* The automaton's bite is venomous. If one causes a health level of damage, it injects a magical toxin into the victim. The target's player must make a successful Stamina + Resistance roll, difficulty 3, or the target suffers the appropriate effect, as described below. Those who successfully resist the toxin still suffer one unsoakable level of lethal damage. The poison's effect can be prevented through the use of Charms that provide immunity to poisons.

Dodge Pool: 10 Soak: 1L/3B  
 Willpower: 0 Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/-4/Incap  
 Other Notes: None

**Jade**

Jade automata carry a poison that saps the victim's strength and energy, leaving him lethargic and vulnerable to more permanent harm. If the victim's player fails the Stamina + Resistance roll, the victim loses two dots each of Strength and Stamina for the scene.

**Moonsilver**

Venom from moonsilver automata liquefies the target's flesh, causing severe scarring and crippling injury. The victim suffers three unsoakable health levels of lethal damage, as well as the loss of one dot each of Dexterity and Appearance. The lost Attribute dots can be healed in the same manner as aggravated damage.

**Orichalcum**

Orichalcum automata inflict burning venom that literally sets the blood on fire. If the Stamina + Resistance roll fails, the victim suffers four levels of aggravated damage as his flesh sears and blisters from the fiery toxin.

**Soulsteel**

Soulsteel automata have a poison that inflicts an accelerated rotting on the victim. If the Stamina + Resistance roll fails, she suffers three health levels of aggravated damage and loses one dot from each Physical Attribute and Appearance. The Attributes can be healed in the same manner as aggravated damage.

**Starmetal**

Starmetal automata venom renders the victim confused and delirious. If the Stamina + Resistance roll fails, he loses two dots from each Mental Attribute for the scene.

**LIGHT IMPLOSION BOW (ARTIFACT ●●, ●●● IF HEARTHSTONE OR REAGENT POWERED)**

These fearsome weapons are First Age relics whose workings remain beyond the full understanding of any savant or engineer of the present day, though their use is simple once the operator becomes familiar with their functioning. The player of a character without prior experience with these devices must make an Intelligence + Lore check at difficulty 3 for his character to decipher the controls. Resembling a ballista mounted atop a heavy gimbaled pedestal, the mechanism appears to be made of a dark, glossy, wine-red wood, with elaborate inlays and fittings of the Five Magical Materials and adamant (an incredibly strong, glassy material used during the First Age).

When properly used by a character capable of channeling Essence (any Exalted type and also Fair Folk and possibly others), these weapons launch projectiles of pure Essence. (Characters unable to channel Essence cannot operate these artifacts.) They are fired using Archery and have +3 accuracy, a rate of 1 and a range of 500. Before firing, the user may select the type of damage to be done, and the amount is dependent on how many motes of Essence the user channels into the weapon. For 1 mote, the projectile inflicts either 7B or 5L damage (depending on the control settings) on everything within a 10-foot radius of its target. In naval combat, these settings allow for attacks against rigging with the weapon, and it can also be used against units or troops. For 2 motes, the range and area of effect remain the same, but the damage settings increase to 15B or 12L.

The weapon's pedestal *must* be mounted securely to a solid surface for it to fire, but the bow has an arc of fire extending 360 degrees horizontally and 90 degrees vertically (30 degrees below and 60 above horizontal). Some versions are powered by Hearthstones, and some by alchemical reagents. Typically, however, an implosion bow is manned by one of the Dragon-Blooded, who powers it with his own Essence.

Light implosion bows must be maintained, though they are less demanding than the more powerful lightning ballistae. An implosion bow must be overhauled every 100 shots by a character with Lore ●●● and Occult ●●. The overhaul includes the replacement and repair of some mechanisms made with rare components. It costs Resources ●●●, and the components are unlikely to be available outside of the Realm and the largest Threshold cities.

Name	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Rng	Naval Rng	Naval Rate	Min
Light Implosion Bow	+3	7B/5L or 15B/12L	1	500	Long	3/turn	None

**STEELSILK SAILS (ARTIFACT ••)**

Highly sought after by those who favor speed and agility in the wind and durability in battle, these rare sails were supposedly made out of the silk of wood spiders or other spider spirits. Gossamer fine and light but strong as metal, steelsilk is nonetheless very stiff and makes poor armor. The art of manufacturing steelsilk sails has been lost, and those who possess examples of it guard them highly, often keeping them locked up except when the ship needs speed above all else. Steelsilk sails are most renowned for their ability to withstand punishment. Storms that will leave silk sails in tatters, fires that will turn wet canvas sails into ash and weapons that would cut even reinforced canvas into ribbons all fail to damage steelsilk. Steelsilk sails add +1 to all Sail rolls for keeping control of the ship in a storm or for gaining or losing speed, and they allow a ship to sail two points closer to the wind and are all but impenetrable to mundane weapons. A ballista might punch a hole in a steelsilk sail, but arrows, knives, javelins and other weapons are turned. Sails made of steelsilk have 15B/10L soak, take 20 health levels to damage and 40 to destroy. The sails take only half damage from wind, waves and fire. Repairing steelsilk sails requires a Charm such as Crack-Mending Technique. No other way is known today to mend steelsilk once it is damaged.

**STORM SAPPHIRE (ARTIFACT ••• FOR LESSER STONES OR •••• FOR THE BLACK STONES)**

Storm sapphires are giant sapphires, most the size of a man's fist or larger. The most powerful storm sapphires are black, but they come in all colors, with green sapphires (the least powerful) being the most common. Storm sapphires have the power to quell storms, calming the sea and sky under even the most savage conditions.

This power does not come without a cost, however. To stop a storm, an Exalt must power the sapphire with her own life force. Each use of a sapphire costs the user motes of Essence, Willpower and health levels as shown on the chart below. These health levels cannot be soaked or reduced if the stone is to work properly, although they can be healed normally.

The user of a storm sapphire can attempt to judge how strong the storm is going to be (a Perception + Occult roll) before trying to stop it. The difficulty of this task depends on the intensity of the storm, how quickly it springs up and whether or not the storm has magical foundations (difficulty starts at 2 and ranges up to as high as 5 for an extremely fast moving, powerful storm that comes upon the user unawares). Magically summoned or influenced storms are actually easier to predict and control using the sapphire. Reduce the severity of the storm by one level for purposes of determining how much it will cost to dissipate it, and reduce the difficulty of judging the storm by 2 (minimum difficulty of 2).

Lesser stones (green through light blue) can disperse most storms but can do nothing against the strongest ones. The power of a storm sapphire either works or does not. The darkest blue stones and black stones can disperse any storm, but the cost in life force is dependent on the storm — and the Exalted, spirit or God-Blooded using the sapphire will not know how much of her existence she will have to devote before choosing to battle the storm.

The creation of a storm sapphire involves the sapphire itself (which must be utterly without flaw), the blood of a Storm Mother and a wind spirit that has never seen a mortal before being captured. The enchantment takes a year and a day and must be performed on a ship floating in the clear waters of the uttermost West, out of



**STORM SAPPHIRE EFFECT TABLE**

Storm Strength	Cost to Quell Storm	
	Blue or Green Sapphire	Black Sapphire
Storm	20 motes, 2 Willpower, 2 health levels	20 motes, 2 Willpower, 2 health levels
Greater storm	25 motes, 2 Willpower, 3 health levels	25 motes, 2 Willpower, 2 health levels
Gale	25 motes, 3 Willpower, 3 health levels	25 motes, 3 Willpower, 2 health levels
Greater gale	30 motes, 4 Willpower, 3 health levels	25 motes, 3 Willpower, 3 health levels
Hurricane	—	30 motes, 4 Willpower, 3 health levels
Greater hurricane	—	35 motes, 4 Willpower, 4 health levels
Tsunami	—	40 motes, 5 Willpower, 4 health levels
Greater tsunami	—	45 motes, 5 Willpower, 5 health levels
Island killer	—	50 motes, 6 Willpower, 6 health levels

A character who lacks sufficient motes or Willpower can, for the purposes of using the storm sapphire only, convert health levels into motes or Willpower (one health level = 10 motes of Essence or 1 Willpower). This can only be done if the user lacks sufficient resources to power the stone otherwise. He cannot choose to burn health levels in order to leave himself with some motes after the storm dissipates.



sight of any land. Naturally, there are few in existence, and they are highly prized and sought after by Exalted ship captains and fleet admirals.

### ANCESTOR SASH (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

Worn by the personal guard of the Prince of the Middle Lands in order to transform themselves into the Elephant-Riding Ghost Generals, the Ancestor Sashes are artifacts of immense and strange power. Each is 20 feet of spun gold and silk, embroidered with gems of every kind. The embroidery depicts the many princes, queens and heroes of An-Teng's First Age, all basking in the light of the Golden Lord. The sash is wrapped many times around the waist and over the shoulder of the wearer, always tied so that the scene of the wearer's choice is displayed proudly. When riding into battle, the warriors traditionally choose to show a scene in which a great general of the First Age, atop an immense elephant spirit, led the forces of An-Teng in a war against the Pale Mistress' cult army.

By invoking the power of the sash, the wearer summons and is infused with the greatness of the past heroes of the kingdom. Those who made the sashes sacrificed a small portion of their power in order to ensure the survival of the kingdom. The wearer of the sash need not be Exalted, and in fact, these artifacts work better when worn by mortals.

The sash increases the wearer's Essence score to 4. The cost for using the sash is a number of temporary Willpower points equal to the difference between the wearer's normal Essence score and the one the sash provides. These effects last for a full day or until the character removes the sash. The additional powers of the sash are based upon the difference between the wearer's normal Essence and the Essence provided by the sash.

The wearer's Attributes all increase by the difference, and the following Abilities increase by the same amount: Archery, Athletics, Awareness, Brawl, Dodge, Endurance, Martial Arts, Melee, Presence, Resistance, Ride, Socialize, Survival and Thrown. The character gains a +3 Ride specialty in Elephants, replacing any existing specialty. The character gains a number of -0 and -2 health levels equal to the difference, additional lethal soak equal to the difference and additional bashing soak equal to twice the difference. Those soaks are considered natural. The character gains access to the spirit Charms Principle of Motion and Uncanny Prowess if they cannot use Charms normally.

If the character is Exalted, calculate the character's new Essence pool based upon the increased Essence score. Characters who cannot channel Essence gain a temporary Essence pool of 40 (their Essence x 10). A character donning the Ancestor Sash immediately becomes a heroic character if he is not already and may remain one after the sash is removed. While under the effects of the sash, the character cannot be ambushed



and bleeds and resists illness and disease as an Exalt. However, this effect fades with the effects of the sash, so the Ghost Generals had best have their wounds dressed and cleaned, or the injuries they have sustained may quickly prove fatal.

While the sash is activated, the mien of the wearer changes. The Essence invested in the sash by its previous owners carried with it a small portion of their being. The wearer may take on traits or experience disjointed memories associated with those who have worn the sash in the past. In rare cases, the character's Nature may change during the scene in which the sash is activated.

If the wearer already possesses an Essence score of 4 or higher, the sash grants no further Abilities, powers or Essence to the wearer. Such characters may sacrifice a permanent point of Willpower to invest a portion of themselves in the sash. Doing so provides no benefit to the character, but ensures that all those who will wear the sash will be influenced by the character's Nature and Essence.

### THE SEVEN LOTUS CROWN (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

The most significant of all the lost implements of rulership over An-Teng, the Seven Lotus Crown once sat on the head of the High Queen of An-Teng. Crafted of orichalcum and decorated by seven perfect jade flowers: green jade leaves behind white and blue jade petals laced with black jade veins, with red jade pistils at their center. This artifact was a gift and reminder to the mortals who ruled An-Teng from the Solar Exalted who lived there: orichalcum for the glory of the Unconquered Sun and the array of jade in the flowers for the Dragon-Blooded who served both them and the rulers of An-Teng. More than a mere badge of office, the Seven Lotus Crown conferred upon the rightful wearer, the High Queen and only the High Queen, the strength of spirit to rule the land.

When worn by anyone other than the High Queen of An-Teng, the crown offers no bonuses of any kind. For a false queen, it is no more than a trinket (albeit a very powerful one in the eyes of those who do not know enough to expect more). Upon the head of the rightful ruler of An-Teng, however, the crown reveals its true power — the ability to allow the High Queen to achieve her true potential as a ruler. When wearing the crown, the High Queen evokes an aura of power and leadership. When making Ability rolls requiring the use of any Social Attribute, as well as any requiring the use of Wits or Stamina, her player does not roll those Attribute dice. Instead, the High Queen receives an automatic success for each dot in the Attribute. Note that her player rolls Ability dice normally.

As an added bonus, the crown protects the High Queen from harm, granting 4L and 4B soak. While wearing the crown, the High Queen's Willpower increases by 2.



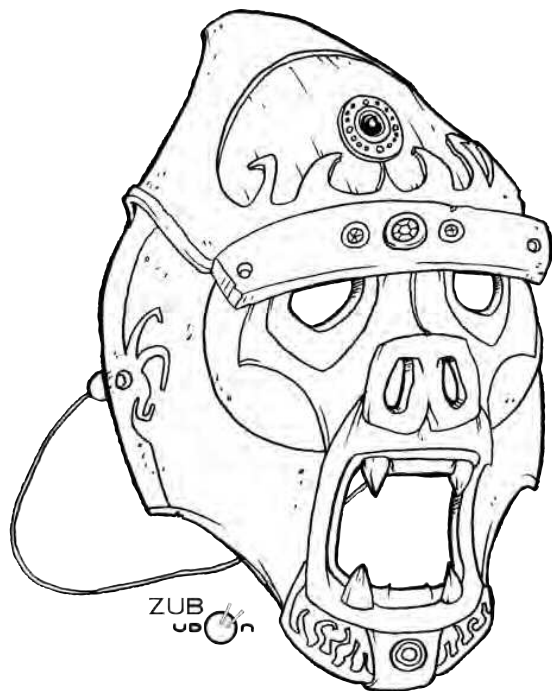
### THE MASKS THAT COMMAND THE ANIMALS

#### (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

The Prince of the High Lands of An-Teng possesses, among many treasures, these artifacts from the First Age of An-Teng. Cast in bronze and decorated with many jewels, the Masks That Command the Animals bear the likenesses of the great animals of An-Teng: the tiger, the ape, the elephant and others. There are many such masks, one for each animal the people of An-Teng revere, though the masks of lesser animals have been given out as gifts to other nobles and friends of the Prince of the High Lands. For himself, the High Prince keeps the Tiger Lord Mask and the commander of his armies holds the Ape Lord Mask. The bearer of the masks are collectively known as the Masked Commanders of the Animals.

Each mask grants its wearer two abilities. Foremost, the wearer gains the ability to summon and command all animals of the mask's type within 100 miles of the wearer. The animals are not automatons, but rather, view the Masked Commander as they would a greater animal spirit, performing tasks without question or hesitation. This power costs a point of temporary Willpower, is a simple power and lasts for a day.



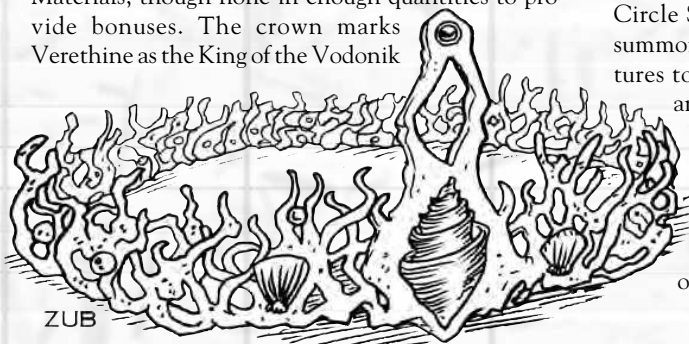


The secondary power of the mask allows the wearer to transform into the animal of the mask's type. This ability can be used only once each day or night, depending on whether the animal is diurnal or nocturnal. While so transformed, the wearer possesses the Physical Attributes and Abilities of the animal (or his own, whichever are greater). Transformed characters may communicate normally and maintain the command ability of the mask. Using this ability costs a point of temporary Willpower, is reflexive and lasts for a scene.

Animal spirits and the animal avatars are not affected by the powers of the mask. In addition, they are suspicious of those who employ the masks, though they will only act against a wearer if the animals under the wearer's control suffer for it.

### THE CORAL CROWN (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

Verethine's crown appears as a misshapen mass of coral with seven tall spines reaching upward. Encrusted within the coral are specks of all the Five Magical Materials, though none in enough quantities to provide bonuses. The crown marks Verethine as the King of the Vodonik



and places him high in the hierarchy of the Water Court. While wearing the crown, Verethine may communicate telepathically with any subject within 1,000 miles and use Charms and elemental powers that target another creature on any of those subjects. Also, while wearing the crown, Verethine gains +10 to his lethal and bashing soak and an additional four -0 health levels (already factored in above). Only the true King of the Vodonik may wear the Coral Crown, though it need not be Verethine in particular. If he is destroyed, his heir or one placed in his position by the Water Court may make use of the crown. Lintha Ooloo knows this and considers it as she plans for divinity.

### THE TALISMAN OF THE CULT OF DUKANTHA

#### (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

Yrjow Han, as leader of the Cult of Dukantha, possesses a powerful Infernal artifact known as the Talisman of the Cult of Dukantha. Each cult leader before him has possessed a similar talisman, and all that follow him will as well. At the heart of the Talisman, which grants the bearer the ability to call upon Infernal sorcery, are the mummified remnants of the bearer's own genitalia, ritualistically removed by Dukantha himself and infused with the power of the Primordial Sea.

The bearer of the Talisman must have an Essence of 1 or more. Possession of the Talisman increases the bearer's Essence by 1 as well. In addition, the Talisman gives the bearer access to Infernal sorcery. So long as the bearer keeps the Talisman and remains devoted to Dukantha and the Sea That Marched Against the Flame, the bearer may learn sorcery spells as if he possessed the Terrestrial Circle Sorcery Charm. If the Talisman's effect increases the bearer's Essence to 3 or more, the bearer may also learn spells as if he knew the Charm Celestial Circle Sorcery.

The spells that can be learned this way are neither Terrestrial nor Celestial spells, but rather, Infernal spells that are roughly analogous to those circles. First Circle Infernal sorcery is roughly equivalent in power to Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, capable of summoning First Circle demons, cloaking the sorcerer in lies or taking command of the minds of mortals. Second Circle Infernal sorcery is similar in power to Celestial Circle Sorcery. An Infernal sorcerer of this skill can summon demons of the Second Circle, cause structures to fall to the ravages of time in mere moments and even take command of the minds of spirits and Exalted. While the Talisman is incapable of granting its bearer access to Third Circle Infernal sorcery, such a circle does indeed exist. Infernal Exalted and powerful demons with access to this level of sorcerous might are on par with Solar Circle sorcerers.

## SPELLS OF THE WEST

The sea is one of the places where sorcery is most useful. A sorcerer can call up or banish winds, defend a ship from sea gods, divine a vessel's location and possibly even preserve a ship in the case of a terrible accident. As a result, sorcerers, even mortal and God-Blooded with minimal control over the elements, are fairly welcome aboard ships. Those members of the Lintha Family who can practice sorcery invariably learn weather magic as some of the first additions to their repertoires. All of these spells are of the Terrestrial Circle.

### CALLING THE WIND'S KISS

**Cost:** 10 motes +2/hour of wind (maximum 20 additional motes)

The sorcerer calls the elements to do his bidding, and a wind is summoned up to fill the sails of his vessel. The spell lasts a number of hours equal to the caster's permanent Essence, plus an additional hour for every 2 additional motes of Essence spent on the spell. For as long as the magic lasts, the ship will travel at its maximum safe rate of speed and will always have the wind at its back in battle. An air elemental with a permanent Essence at least as high as that of the sorcerer who cast the spell can take control of the winds away from him, if it desires. Alternately, the sorcerer can send the winds against an enemy vessel up to (permanent Essence x 3) miles away. If this is the case, the enemy ship will always suffer the effects of having to tack into the wind or will be deprived of wind altogether. Only one effect can be active per casting of the spell. If the sorcerer has cast it once, he can help his own ship or hinder an enemy ship — but not both. The sorcerer can bid the winds begone at any time, but only countermagic, neutralizing the wind's effects with conjured winds of her own or summoning an elemental to take control of them will enable another to counteract the actions of this spell.

### MAST SHATTERING SPELL

**Cost:** 20 motes

The sorcerer utters a word and points at a vessel within easy unaided viewing distance (he must be able to clearly make out the crew on the deck for this spell to work). The targeted ship's mast cracks and shatters into a cloud of foot-long splinters that spray out in all directions. If the vessel has more than one mast, the ship's main mast is the one that shatters. When the mast shatters, any crew on the deck suffer injuries from falling rigging and the blast of splinters. Unless protected by some kind of magic, everyone on the deck will take lethal damage equal to (the sorcerer's permanent Essence x 2). This damage can be soaked normally. A variant of this spell works against the vessel's oars instead of its mast. The oars on one side of the vessel are all shattered, with similar effects, although damage scored against the crew

is limited to the caster's permanent Essence and is only suffered by the oarsmen on that side of the target ship.

Masts that have been magically reinforced may survive this spell. The player of the sorcerer casting this spell must make an Essence + Occult roll (difficulty equal to the permanent Essence of the Exalted, spirit or elemental that protected the mast — a good default is difficulty 2 or 3). If the roll fails, the sorcery is unable to overcome the Charm or enchantments protecting the mast and fails.

### SONG OF THE LINTHA

**Cost:** 25 motes

This Terrestrial Circle spell, taught to the Lintha Terrestrial Exalted by Dukantha, is a ritual spell that takes six days to fully cast. For the whole of the casting period, the caster must keep her eyes closed and remain in a state of concentration and meditation. On the sixth day, the caster sings a repeating three-note, seven-syllable song that grows in volume and power as the day proceeds and the virulent Infernal energies coalesce around her. When the spell is complete, a door of black putrescent flesh appears before the caster as she opens her eyes. This door does not open. The caster, or anyone else present when the spell is finished, may enter the door by slicing the thick flesh open with a blade forged of one of the Five Magical Materials and sliding her body into the dripping wound and emerging in a exitless cave of hard black stone. This cave is a chancre on the heel of Malfeas. It is a place where the Yozi can hear the voice of a mortal and either send a minion to speak with the caster — or cut the chancre off, hurling the caster and/or anyone else inside into the emptiness beyond knowing, forever lost.

Should the Yozi, specifically Kimberry, the Sea That Marched Against the Flame, deign to hear, she will send Dukantha or some demon of strength commensurate with the importance of the request and how sympathetic the Yozi is at that particular moment. This minion may be more or less delighted to see the caster, but will listen to her petition. In the case of a demon, some price must be paid, especially if the requested service requires immediate action. As Dukantha is a Lintha himself, he may be inclined to offer aid, especially if the request is in line with the interests of the Great Mother.

### WATER'S ALLY

**Cost:** 15 motes

For a day and a night, the caster becomes a kin to water and can exist in water or air with equal ease. She can swim in the water at the same speed as she moves upon land, may breathe water or air and can see underwater just as she can in the air. She is not affected by the water's crushing depths or its chilling cold. While in the water, she may add two dice to her Stealth dice pool as she blends into the deep colors. The spell provides no protection against predators or other



active threats of the ocean. It merely adapts the caster for existence in the water. A sorcerer has to deal with the creatures of the depths on her own.

## HEARTHSTONES

The following Hearthstones appeared in other publications (one in **The Book of Three Circles** and one in **Caste Book: Dawn**) and are reproduced here for ease of reference.

### GEM OF DESIRE (WATER MANSE ●●)

**Trigger:** Concentration

This stone is a transparent and beautifully faceted, bright-yellow gem. It causes a person to be overtaken with moderate desire for something or someone. This effect lasts for half a day. During this time, the target's player must succeed at a Willpower roll in order for the character to pass up any opportunity to satisfy his desire. This stone may only be used once per day on a single target, and the bearer must be within 10 feet of that target.

When the effect ends, the target's player makes a Willpower roll. If the roll fails, this stone will spark a longer-lasting desire within the character. If the roll botches, he becomes obsessed with the object of his desire.

### THE JEWEL OF STABILITY (EARTH MANSE ●●●)

**Trigger:** Constant

This stone is solid inky black and slightly rough. Any character bearing it cannot lose his balance or fall down as long as he is standing on the ground. In addition to being immune to both knockdowns and knockback, the character will never slip or fall while running along a narrow ice-covered mountain path or sprinting along a slick path made of small, wet, moss-covered stones. The character also cannot be picked up while standing on the ground. Even when standing on one foot, he remains firmly rooted to the earth. All forms of movement while climbing ropes and ladders or on upper stories of a building are unaffected by this Hearthstone.

## FIRE ARROW

Despite the danger, fire arrows are sometimes used against enemy vessels. The simplest fire arrow is just an ordinary arrow (usually a broadhead or pointed arrow) with the head wrapped in rags soaked in whale oil that is lit just prior to launching. Fire arrows are standing fire weapons, doing an additional 3L damage every turn for a number of turns equal to the attacker's extra successes or until extinguished. This damage is applied every turn and is separate from the arrow's damage. Armor soaks as usual. The range of fire arrows is halved due to the extra weight of the oil-soaked rags.

## SOUTHERN FIRE ARROW

These fire arrows are less common but safer, though by no means safe. They use an alchemical mixture developed in Chiaroscuro several centuries ago that burns and spreads when released. These arrows have only a small point, behind which is a bulbous hollow, resembling that of a fowling arrow, filled with the mixture. When fired, the impact ignites the mixture, bursting the bulb and spreading flames in the nearby area. A hit does the archer's Strength + 2 in bashing damage and a 5L standing fire attack. Due to the weight and poor balance of the arrow, range is halved. A half-dozen Southern fire arrows costs Resources ●● in the South and Resources ●●● elsewhere. Fire arrows are a real specialty weapon, and they may be difficult to find outside the South, even in martial metropoli such as Nexus. Because of their hazard, these arrows are normally kept in a heavy, metal-lined wooden case; this case holds up to 12 arrows and weighs 10 pounds when fully loaded.

## WATER SHOES

In the West, many sailors and fisher folk often find it useful to be able to walk upon the water. Water shoes were developed to allow people to move freely over calm waters. They are made from yard-wide, dish-shaped pieces of zeelawood bark, coated with wax boiled from the flesh of the lion shark. Water shoes are useless in any but the calmest of seas and are most commonly used in inlets, in bays and in similar sheltered environs. However, the shoes can also prove invaluable on the open ocean, since they allow sailors to easily repair external damage to a ship's hull.

Water shoes do not allow their wearer to move faster than a walk, and if the wearer falls, the shoes must be discarded and the wearer must instead swim — once lost, it is impossible to regain ones footing on water while wearing these shoes. Also, the shoes must be removed before the wearer attempts to walk on land. On land, anyone wearing water shoes is limited to a speed of one yard per turn and will damage the shoes severely. Water shoes cost ●● in the West or ●●● elsewhere. They are rarely available outside of Bluehaven.



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# PLAYERS GUIDE



**EXALTED**