

BOOK OF  
**BONE** AND **COB**™



A Compendium of Necromantic Lore for

**EXALTED**



BOOK OF  
**BONE** AND **Coony**<sup>TM</sup>

BY KRAIG BLACKWELDER, GENEVIEVE COGMAN, DANIEL DOVER,  
JIM KILEY, KRISTER MICHL AND PETER SCHAEFFER

## CREDITS

**Authors:** Kraig Blackwelder, Genevieve Cogman, Daniel Dover, Jim Kiley, Krister Michl, Peter Schaeffer

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

**Developer:** Geoffrey C. Grabowski

**Editor:** John Chambers

**Art Direction:** Brian Glass

**Artists:** Ross Campbell, Chynna Clugston, Susan Luo, Joshua Gabriel Timbrook, UDON featuring Greg Boychuk, Eric Kim, Noi Sackda, Eric Vedder and Jim Zubkavich, Melissa Uran and Eva Widerman

**Cover Art:** UDON featuring Andrew Hou and Christine Choi

**Cover Design:** Brian Glass

**Layout and Typesetting:** Brian Glass

## DEVELOPER'S SPECIAL THANKS

To Frank, who died a samurai's death.

## PETER SCHAEFFER'S THANKS

Michael "I know a guy" Goodwin for the hand up.

Roger "There's this cool game" Maleski.

And my parents, for making the bribes possible.



1554 LITTON DR  
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA  
30083  
USA

© 2005 White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. Reproduction prohibitions do not apply to the character sheets contained in this book when reproduced for personal use. White Wolf and Exalted are registered trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. The Book of Bone and Ebony, Exalted

the Abyssals, Exalted Players Guide, Savant and Sorcerer, Time of Tumult, Age of Sorrows and the Second Age of Man are trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters, names, places and text herein are copyrighted by White Wolf Publishing, Inc.

The mention of or reference to any company or product in these pages is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright concerned.

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. Reader discretion is advised.

Check out White Wolf online at

<http://www.white-wolf.com>; [alt.games.whitewolf](http://alt.games.whitewolf) and [rec.games.frp.storyteller](http://rec.games.frp.storyteller)

PRINTED IN CANADA



BOOK OF  
**BONE** AND **Cony**<sup>TM</sup>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER ONE: STYGIA	8
CHAPTER TWO: THE ARTS OF THE DEAD	34
CHAPTER THREE: THE WONDERS OF THE DEAD	54
CHAPTER FOUR: CREATIONS OF BONE	80
CHAPTER FIVE: NECROMANCY	116
CHAPTER SIX: CREATURES OF THE UNDERWORLD	146





# INTRODUCTION



*"Not that I put any stock in names, nor should you... You should be proud we have a special part for you to play, such a talented artist. In time you will forget yourself entirely in your work, as all do eventually. Myself, I go around with a trunkful of aliases, but do you think I can say who I once was really?"*

—Thomas Ligotti, "Teatro Grottesco"

Welcome to **The Book of Bone and Ebony**. This book covers two closely related topics. The first is necromancy, a dark form of magic that draws on the fundamental powers of the Underworld. Pioneered by the Twilight Caste before the Usurpation, perfected by the Deathlords and practiced in the Second Age by those dark beings and their Abyssal Exalted servants, necromancy is a form of power distinctly different than sorcery but of comparable power.

This book is, in effect, a **Savant and Sorcerer** for necromancy, expanding the grimoire of necromancy spells and discussing the logistical implications of assembling large necromantic war machines. It should help expand the horizons of necromancers. Yet, necromancy is a more limited form of power than sorcery. While it is as mighty as sorcery, the scope of its effects is limited, and there are fewer master practitioners

devising new wonders and even less sharing between them. Most of the spells in this book that are not Shadowlands Circle utility sorceries or survivors of Solar experimentation are probably known only to one or two Deathlords and their cadre of deathknights.

But that's not all that's here. This book also deals extensively with the dead as well. This is no small topic — the dead vastly outnumber the Abyssal Exalted, by a factor of millions. They populate the entire Underworld and, even in Creation, form a distinct class of spirits that, while not comparable to high-Essence celestial divinities, are capable of delivering miracles to coax worship from their descendants. They interfere in the world of the living whenever they are able, and the Immaculate Philosophy strives to oppose them and stem the flow of sacrifice into the Mouth of Oblivion. The Deathlords

live among the ghosts of the Underworld and use them as servants and raw material. The dead will play an important role in the coming Time of Tumult, as well as in many different **Exalted** series.

This book details both the milieu of the dead and their powers. From their great mausoleum-city of Stygia to the strange plasmic creatures that inhabit the Underworld, this book details the unique conditions of existence among the dead. It also details the many wonders they manufacture, driven by the occult principles of their own Essence and of the Underworld itself. These items, often used by the Deathlords and the Abyssal Exalted as well as the dead, are a characteristic trademark of the dead and extend their power greatly beyond the painstaking revelations of the Arcanoi.

### THIS IS AN ABYSSALS SUPPLEMENT

This is primarily a supplement for players using **Exalted: The Abyssals**. There might be some very interesting stories taken from this material and told with other types of characters, but this is material that almost solely concerns the Underworld and the sorceries of the Deathlords. If you don't have **Exalted: The Abyssals**, you are going to be very lost reading the contents of this book because most of the mechanics and all the setting material are detailed in that hardback. If you're looking for an introduction to the Underworld in **Exalted**, **Exalted: The Abyssals** is a much better place to start.

### THE ARTS OF THE NECROMANCER

The Solar Exalted of the First Age were masters of the art of sorcery — and of other arts as well. Toward the end of the Solar Deliberative's reign, a number of the Twilights explored the Underworld and began to deduce from experiments the principles of initiation that might be explored to master the occult forces of the Malfeans' tomb-world. This was just the beginning of their learning.

After the Usurpation, the dark apotheosis the Deathlords underwent when those murdered Solars submitted to the domination of the Malfeans increased their knowledge considerably, as have many years of labor and studies afterward.

This book concerns itself with two main topics: necromantic spells and information about war machines animated through necromantic ritual. A selection of powerful spells and a mighty host of death-warriors are the hallmarks of the deathknight, and this book attempts to round out the selection of powers

available to the lords of the Underworld and their servants to encompass all the most logically likely possibilities for effects.

This book is also a text on black sorcery in the world of **Exalted**. It assumes an understanding of the game's extended rules for sorcery. While these are not required for the use of the material in this book, things such as the cost notation for the creation of artifacts and many references to "initiation" and other aspects of theoretical sorcery all presume that the reader has a familiarity with **Savant and Sorcerer**. However, that book is not necessary to actually use this material, merely to understand some of the technical matter in this book.

### THE LORE OF THE DEAD

In addition, this book also expands the game's material on ghosts. It contains extensive descriptions not only of the city of Stygia, but also of various forms of Underworld fauna. Called plasmics, these many strange creatures haunt various locations in the Underworld. Some of them have actual origins, but many of them are nothing more than self-mobile equivalents of haunts. Many are potentially dangerous, and all are of interest to Underworld savants.

In addition, **The Book of Bone and Ebony** also details an assortment of Arcanoi practiced by the dead, both those used by ghosts and also those specifically developed for nemissaries, the possessing ghosts who roam the lands of the living serving their own ends or those of the Deathlords.

### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**The Book of Bone and Ebony** offers a guide to occult matters concerning the Underworld, covering both necromantic and ghostly matters. Its chapters cover their contents in a topic-by-topic format, with each chapter covering a single matter as completely as space allows. These chapters are written with the assumption that the reader has the **Exalted** books at hand, and page references to **Savant and Sorcerer**, **Exalted** and **Exalted: The Abyssals** are frequent.

**Introduction** This chapter describes the general intent of the book and discusses the text's presuppositions. You're reading it right now.

**Chapter One: Stygia** covers the greatest city in the Underworld or Creation. Stygia, capital city of the Underworld, seat of the Dual Monarchy and metropolis on the very well-lip of Oblivion, is a source of endless adventure and intrigue. This chapter details the Dual Monarchs, the city's system of justice and certain of its more famous districts and officials.

**Chapter Two: The Arts of the Dead** details new and specialized Arcanoi for use by the dead. These

Charms grant the dead their occult strength, and the powers in this chapter greatly strengthen both the dead in general and certain small groups, such as the Lintha, who possess the knowledge of specialized Arcanoi.

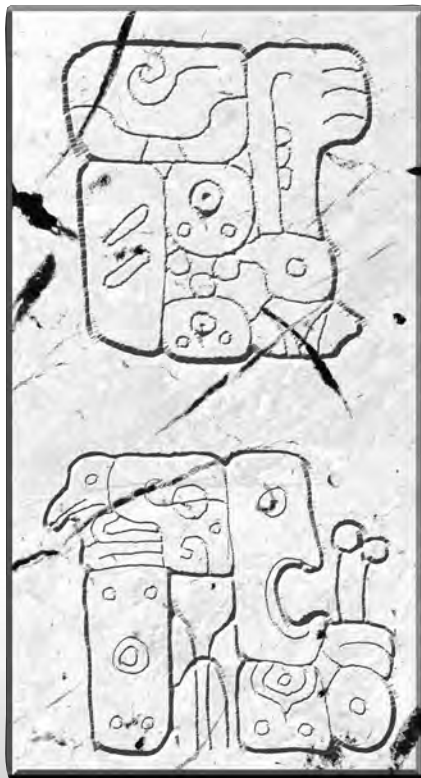
**Chapter Three: The Wonders of the Dead** covers the many grave wonders that fall from the hands of the dead. Though they are not as potent as gods, they are far cleverer as creators of miracles that can work at the command of any hand. The tool-craftiness of the Dead has served the princes of the Underworld and the Deathlords well. This chapter significantly expands the catalog of such wonders available to Storytellers and players for use in their games.

**Chapter Four: Creations of Bone** provides a transition between material detailing the Dead and the coverage of necromancy proper. Creations of Bone covers both the advanced arts of the nemissaries — ghosts who inhabit corpses and use them to travel the world of the living — and the more morbid creations of the Abyssal necromancers, the great war machines

they construct of flesh, bone and metal to wield against the living and the dead alike.

**Chapter Five: Necromancy** describes spells of all three necromantic circles. While the focus of necromancy is narrow, the individual spells are mighty within their narrow sphere of effects.

**Chapter Six: Creatures of the Underworld** details plasmics, creatures native to the Underworld. These beings are horrifying spawns of the Neverborn's dark dreams and the natural processes of the Underworld, and each is unique. With their unique ecologies (or lack thereof) and their unusual powers, many plasmics, particularly those from deep within the Labyrinth, are quite dangerous, wielding horrifying attacks that can damage the souls of their victims. Even the Exalted and the nephwracks must tread carefully when faced with these horrors. This chapter also details three different possible sets of statistics for the Mask of Winters' maggoty minions when they finish their breeding cycle within the decaying flesh of his vast corpse-citadel.









# CHAPTER ONE STYGIA



Within the untamed depths of the Isle of Sorrow's wilds, past the final curves of the River Styx, at the center of the land of the dead, great and ancient Stygia rises in haunting splendor. Spanning from horizon to horizon, this vast necropolis sprawls across seven hills and seven valleys, the largest city of both the sunlit world and its shadow. The silver and soulsteel spires of Stygia spear the shadowy clouds above, their lanterns and lights scattered like artificial stars against the dark sky. The churning gears and bright, ghostly lamps of the Calendar of Setesh, the axis of the Underworld, loom above it all.

The city seems as wondrous and strange from within as from without. Suffocatingly narrow paths and alleyways jam together at odd, painfully sharp angles. Metallic walkways stretch like cobwebs between the tall and baroque towers above. Fires dance behind red stained-glass windows, casting blood colored shadows across the dark gray stones of the streets. Everything smells of incense and dust. Only the constant drone of prayers or the occasional, whispered exchanges between the dead breaks the unsettling silence of the necropolis, replacing the shouts and laughter so often found in living cities. Despite appearances, Stygia is nothing like a mortal city. Rather, it is a vast mausoleum containing echoes of those who refuse to be forgotten.


Stygia is unique within the Underworld. It alone is a city constructed by the dead for the dead, created not out

of some disaster in Creation, but by the will of ghosts. Once a buttress designed to hold off the hordes of Oblivion, nephwracks now openly walk its streets and Deathlords make their homes there. The Cult of the Dual Monarchy and the stability the Monarchs offer the Underworld is centered in Stygia. Every event of the Underworld has left an indelible mark on the Grand Necropolis, and yet, mystery continues to shroud its very origins. In truth, the land of the dead literally revolves around Stygia, and without it, the very nature of the Underworld would falter and change.

## THE DEAD OF THE GRAND NECROPOLIS

In most respects, the Stygian dead differ little from those found in the other necropoli of the Underworld. They dress in tomb-scented fineries bejeweled in sacrificial Essence, their faces perfect alabaster and, despite their passionate pretensions at life, only emptiness and longing fills their dark eyes. They eagerly seek news of both the Underworld and the land of the living. Creatures defined by ritual, the dead of Stygia pursue an existence filled with endless repetition as they dutifully offer up prayers to their leadership.

Despite the similarities, the dead that reside in Stygia are a strange and unique breed, for Stygia occupies a singular and important place in the Underworld. Unlike the ghosts of other necropoli, Stygian dead *choose* to exist



in Stygia, for death deposits few spirits on its streets. With no neighboring shadowland, Stygia is far from Creation, and ghosts who enter the necropolis must be willing to sacrifice their ties with the land of the living. Thus released from the trappings of their former lives, many new residents quickly and eagerly adopt fresh roles for themselves. These factors combine to create a city of constantly shifting hierarchy that focuses primarily on the needs of the dead, rather than the needs of the living.

Many ghosts entering Stygia have little to lose by abandoning Creation. Perhaps they were unloved beggars in life or were the dishonored dead. For whatever reason, they have concluded that Creation will not sustain them and that they must seek their fortunes elsewhere or suffer the indignation of Lethe. These dead quickly shed their former roles in life and take up some task within the city, such as physical labor or prostitution. Such ghosts form the ranks of the working dead within Stygia. Starved ghosts fill the roads to Stygia, marked by their ragged clothing, long teeth and ravenous eyes. Those who can hold on to their existences long enough to make it to the Grand Necropolis can feed on the aura of prayers that leak into the city streets. The rest either fall into Lethe or succumb to Oblivion's whispers.

A few of the dead entering Stygia have gained all they can from Creation. These powerful ghosts have become embedded in their clan's ancestral worship, and their fetters are safely secured. All that remains for them to gain now is political power. Stygia lies at the center of the web of ghostly influence and lacks the rigid hierarchy that stifles the other kingdoms of the Underworld. These dead form the elite of Stygia and head the smaller cults and unions.

The constant influx of foreign dead gives Stygia a cosmopolitan feel. The mark of any historical period from any culture can be found in the architecture of the city or reflected in the mannerisms of its dead. Seeing labyrinthine gray and blue frescoes of a long-lost pelagothrope civilization decorating the walls of a building of modern Realm architecture is not uncommon. Ghosts dressed in the fashion of great Meru during the time of the Contagion might perform a modern Coral tea ceremony. These clashing and anachronistic details blend into a seamless whole, creating a uniquely Stygian atmosphere that is at once hauntingly familiar and strangely alien to any visiting ghost.

Whereas, in most other necropoli, the dead can prepare a house for a dying descendant, the Stygian dead lack that luxury, and so, their housing arrangements are unique in the Underworld. While architecture varies from district to district, many elements of Stygian homes remain the same. They are small, as the dead need little space, and are either stacked in huge, teetering towers or wedged between larger, more important buildings. Within, all Stygian homes have a small shrine to the Dual Monarchy. A bed usually rests in the home, though the ghost

## THE FOUNDING OF STYGIA

In the dark, early days before the Calendar, the Underworld was chaotic and disjointed, an unsafe purgatory for any ghost. Malfean rage ripped through the land of the dead in the form of terrible storms, and nothing governed the rules of reality or the passage of time. Desperate, the bravest of the dead gathered an army and battled their way past hordes of monsters and nightmare-tossed landscapes, journeying to the center of the Underworld with only the pull of Oblivion to guide them. There, they gazed with trepidation upon the Well of the Void and the tombs of the Malfeans. Mining the nearby hills, they built a city, expanding it until it separated the Labyrinth from the rest of the Underworld and sealed away the worst of its monstrosities, bringing peace at last to the land of the dead.

Stygia began as a fortress against Oblivion. The remains of Old Stygia reveal robust walls and defensive occult designs meant to ward away the nephwracks and the hekatonkhire. The early Stygians forged the crowns of the Dual Monarchy and established the long tradition of succession that ensured incorruptible leadership in this most important city. They undertook the monumental task of building the Calendar to regulate the flow of time. When they completed this unparalleled project, it stood as a beacon of the dead's defiance of Oblivion.

The task of guarding the Underworld could not be left to Stygia alone, and so, representatives of the Cult of the Dual Monarchy went forth to the still-young kingdoms of the dead. Stygia offered tranquillity and stability for a small tribute of Essence and worship, and most nations gladly paid. As the cult grew, so too did Stygia's prestige, until it became the most powerful city in the Underworld and the dead flocked to its streets. Within a few centuries, the Dual Monarchy presided over a world of peace and prosperity, a mirror of the golden age ruled by the Solars in Creation, for while the scent of prayers drew nations into their embrace, tradition soon kept them there. The newly dead worshiped the Dual Monarchy because their elders had, and Stygia became an institution. In those early days, Stygia only grew in power and influence, but bloated with pride, it ignored the rumblings of the Labyrinth below.

makes no use of it, and a kitchenette, though the ghost need never cook. No unwashed dishes ever lay on the counters, and no discarded clothes litter the floor, creating

the overall impression of a dollhouse: small, quaint and never sullied. The only real color in the small abode is inevitably the plaques marking fetters or brilliantly painted pictures of family or loved ones. Because ghosts are creatures of rigid tradition, gaining a house in Stygia is a difficult task best left to the most patient of the dead. Small committees within each district decide whether a ghost is worthy of a permanent home or not. In general, if a ghost has become a fixture of Stygia and his character is appropriate to the district in question, he will receive a home. Owning such a home costs nothing, as it is an honor bestowed upon the Stygian. However, the committees are notoriously slow about these matters, and ghosts have been forced to wait for centuries. In such cases, inns with claustrophobically small rooms can be rented to house the personal effects of the dead. Such a room costs Resources • per month.

Travel in Stygia is made difficult by the sheer breadth of the necropolis. Because of this fact, ghosts seldom travel beyond the borders of their districts. For such travel, walking is the preferred method of transportation, and major roads are clogged with the pale masses of slowly parading spirits. Wealthier ghosts travel by litter, tottering and swaying down the streets visible above the rest of the crowd. Using this mode of transportation costs Resources ••, and because it is associated with prestige, most Stygians will frown upon any who use it while having an Influence of less than •. For more distant travel, many ghosts clutter the flat-bottomed boats of the Stygian waterways that flow through the necropolis. The physics of the Underworld allow for strange, distance twisting shortcuts, and a streetwise ghost can duck down one alley and navigate his way across the local district in a few short moments. Such travel is difficult, however, requiring a Wits + Larceny roll with a difficulty between 3 (to travel to a nearby location in half the time) and 5 (to travel across the district in a few minutes). This method of travel is never exact, always bringing the ghost close to his destination but never precisely to it, and it can never bring the ghost over the border of his district. A ghost whose player botches becomes lost — or worse, at the Storyteller's discretion.

The closeness of Stygia to the Well of the Void does a great deal to define the character of Stygians. Dark dreams of the relentless and perfect darkness of Oblivion sear their minds, and the Deathlords and their servants walk among their number daily. Even the great Calendar of Setesh is bound to Oblivion, for the clock measures the descent of the Underworld into the Void. The constant reminder of the inevitable doom of the Underworld adds something of a frantic edge to existence within Stygia. Desperate to maintain their passions, Stygians distract themselves in whatever way they can. They throw grand parties, show offense at the smallest slights and engage in fierce feuds and romances. This is not to say the Stygians

are terrified of the Void and all associated with it. They think nothing of descending into the Labyrinth to mine it for its resources, and in their long existences within the city, many ghosts have grown accustomed to the calls of nephwracks and have become used to existing in fear of another attack from the Abyss below. Rather, the nearness of the Void intensifies the pointlessness of existence that all ghosts feel.

### BENEATH STYGIA

No gods rule the storms of the Underworld. While the Calendar of Setesh produces most weather, the dark clouds that veil the sky are the last remnants of Malfean bitterness. When enough hatred gathers in one place, the sky unleashes its fury in a torrent of blood and water. Though these storms pale in comparison to the tempests that existed before the Underworld was tamed, they do present considerable danger.


Lying at the center of the Underworld, Stygia serves as a sort of lightning rod for the Underworld's storms. While the necropolis seldom suffers tempests as bad as those in other parts of the Underworld, it does suffer more of them as it drains the worst of these foul energies back into the Labyrinth. The constant accumulation of rainwater is dangerous, however, and so, the founders of Stygia built drainage sewers beneath the city. These were the only defensive structures that remained untouched during the nephwrack uprising.

Constructed of pale limestone, with smooth walls and grooves that channel the flows of runoff beneath the city, the storm drains mix and mingle with the old basements, cellars and abandoned mines to form the catacombs that lie beneath the city. It's a dangerous place, with half-mad ghosts scuttling in the shadows and strange monsters coalescing from the hatred that coagulates in the storm waters. Occasionally, the Dual Monarchy sends hunting parties into this murky undercity, lit only by luminescent fungi, to bring down these horrors and ensure that they don't grow too strong. While the sewers protect the city, they underscore the constant vigilance necessary to maintain the stability of the Underworld.

### THE WEALTH OF STYGIA

The dead of Stygia almost universally turn their passions away from the land of the living and to the land of the dead. Without any neighboring shadowlands, Stygia must rely on those nations and empires that reside closer to Creation for its prosperity. In exchange for this wealth,





Stygia offers a great number of services for the dead, everything from beautiful courtesans and delightful gaming houses to dour mercenaries and a medium for the exchange of Essence. By supporting the dead, rather than caring for the living, Stygia promotes its usefulness to all of the Underworld.

Stygia draws much of its wealth from trade. Standing at the center of the Underworld, it is a natural destination for many merchants, and ships often sail up the River Styx to enter Stygian ports. Many of Stygia's services cater to the needs of those ghostly traders that enter the necropolis. This considerable trade allows for markets where nearly anything, from exotic grave goods to forbidden pleasures, can be bought or sold. What Stygia cannot trade for, it produces independently. The necropolis is home to some of the finest artificers in the Underworld, with industries that are second only to the facilities of the Thousand.

For the dead, prayer is of even greater importance than material wealth. Prayer generates Essence, and Essence fuels the society of the dead. For this reason, the leaders of the Underworld demand worship from their subjects, much as a mortal leader might demand taxes, ensuring that the rulers can protect their people and, more importantly, that they maintain enough power to keep their thrones. While the worship of kings and rulers tends to remain local, the Cult of the Dual Monarchs is universal, spanning the entire Underworld. Temples to the Dual Monarchy clutter the streets of the necropoli, and even the simplest farmer's hut has a small shrine in its corner. The amount of Essence this worship generates is almost incalculable, and all of Stygia thrives on it.

The Grand Necropolis itself was designed to serve as a nexus for these prayers and to channel their Essence to powering the Calendar of Setesh, as well as to perform various other tasks. Many aspects of the city, from the occult designs of the streets to the very nature of the districts and their symbols, serve this purpose. Standing at the center of Stygia, as both the metaphorical and literal heart of the city, is the Palace of the Dual Monarchy. The Dual Monarchs are the focal points of the Cult and the linchpin of the Essence it generates. Without their ritual lifestyle, the Essence Stygia enjoys would falter and wane. The design of Stygia isn't perfectly efficient, however, and Essence leaks from its streets and structures, creating the miasma of reverence that pervades the city.

Not even the Dual Monarchs can make full use of the enormous amount of Essence generated by such pervasive worship, yet they cannot afford to waste their excess. To accommodate the overflow of Essence during bountiful years, Stygia created a system of banks and repositories. The Dual Monarchs, for example, adorn their clothing with soulfire crystals so they can shed and store any surplus Essence they might generate. These charged crystals are removed and stored away in vaults at the end of the day, with new, empty crystals being stitched into their clothes as

## BREATHING PRAYERS

No place in the Underworld is as saturated with reverence as Stygia. The prayers of the dead pour in from all over the world, and every mausoleum and temple hums with it. The very air is spiced with the aromas of incense and scented oils. As a result of this intense piety, the dead of Stygia can regain Essence more quickly in their necropolis than they can elsewhere, as if they possessed Underworld Cult •• (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 153). This benefit is inherent to all dead who have resided longer than a few months within Stygia, and a Storyteller running a ghostly chronicle in the Dark Jewel of the Underworld should not require players to spend the Background dots for this benefit. However, the extra respiration is lost outside of the city.

replacements by a small army of tailors. Flows of Essence across the city are diverted into vast crystal batteries where they can be stored and processed. Over time, these institutions have expanded their purposes to include making loans and investments and supervising the general flow of Essence across Stygia. The clack of abacus beads and the rustle of papers fill these large and impressive buildings as accounts are tallied and numbers are recorded. Stygia, enjoying the riches of the Dual Monarchy, serves as the nerve center to the Underworld's economy. Along with a brisk trade in grave goods and the creation of artifacts, the exchange of Essence serves to bring wealth to all of the city.

## THE CLERICS OF THE DUAL MONARCHY

Clerics are the foremost officers in the army of bureaucrats that monitors Stygia's Essence. Each wears long, loose flowing leggings, sandals and a jade mask that denotes his role within the bureaucracy. Each also wears a white sash, the end of which is marked with dark bands indicating the rank of the Cleric. Their torsos are bare, and each carries a smoking censer and scroll cases that hold the long, ribbonlike parchments upon which the cleric records his accounts. While common in Stygia, they are also often seen beyond the city, serving in the courts of other nations as representatives of the Dual Monarchy. They are both priests of the Cult of the Dual Monarchy, directing rituals and overseeing worship, and tax collectors, ensuring that the dead offer up the proper amount of reverence to the Monarchy. Masters of the Essence-Measuring Thief Arts and the Tenacious Merchant's Way, these ghosts often serve as local bankers and suppliers should the need arise. Despite the apparent tedium of their tasks, they are held in high regard as the representatives of the cult, and their passions are dedicated utterly to the advancement of the Dual Monarchy.




## BANKS OF ESSENCE

While the banks of Stygia were originally formed to house surplus Essence generated by the worship of Stygia and the Dual Monarchy, over time, they became the financial backbone of the necropolis. Heaps of thousands of soulfire crystals lie within their vaults, accumulated during the long history of Stygia, and the clerics constantly seek new types of Essence storage technology. Whenever a ghost needs great sums of Essence for some project or undertaking, the banks can offer loans and investments, whether in the form of soulfire crystals or Essence directly infused into the ghost. Nations from all over the Underworld come to Stygia to trade for Essence, offering material goods in exchange for crates of soulfire crystals. Indeed, this is one of Stygia's greatest sources of revenue, and over the passing centuries, the banks have acquired vast treasures of material wealth and grave goods. This allows them to aid Stygians financially, and a ghost can seek monetary loans as well as loans of Essence or seek to exchange one for the other.

The exchange rate between Essence and Resources is roughly comparable to the ratio for sacrificial Essence, as found on page 33 of **Exalted: The Abyssals**. For example, 10 motes would cost a ghost Resources •••. However, because draining motes is less efficient than offering them, unless the ghost depositing the Essence has an appropriate Charm, a ghost must offer twice as much Essence as the equivalent Resources is worth. For example, a ghost would lose 20 motes to gain a single Resources ••• purchase. In addition to exchanges, ghosts can take loans in either Essence or wealth, and the system is the same for both. For each dot of temporary Resources gained, or its equivalent in motes, the ghost gains a point of the Debt Flaw, as found on pages 38-39 of the **Exalted Players Guide**, for which the ghost gains no experience. Exchanges and loans both require a great deal of paperwork. Gaining approval requires a Manipulation + Bureaucracy roll at a difficulty of the Resource value of the transaction (thus, a ghost offering Resources ••• for 10 motes rolls at a difficulty of 3). Processing the application takes several days for most transactions, and can take weeks for transactions involving Resources •••• or higher. This time is reduced by additional successes at a rate of one day per success, but the time involved can never take less than a day.





The clerics oversee many aspects of Stygia's bureaucracies, and the color of a cleric's jade mask indicates his responsibilities. Those with red-jade masks govern the Cult of the Dual Monarchy, serving as its priests. The Scarlet-Masked Clerics of lesser rank oversee worship ceremonies and preach to the dead, while those of greater rank govern the workings of the cult itself, such as where its abundant resources are allocated or dictating aspects of the cult's theology. The bearers of the green-jade masks serve as diplomats and representatives of Stygia and the Dual Monarchy to the nations of the Underworld. Present in nearly every kingdom of the land of the dead, the Emerald-Masked Clerics serve the roles of the other four departments in their absence and are accustomed to a great deal of autonomy. Those who wear the blue-jade masks are often seen as the least exciting of the clerics, for they serve as bank tellers and money counters. Still, the task of the Azure-Masked Clerics is an important one, and their financial acumen is impressive indeed. The black-masked clerics are the auditors and the inquisitors of Stygia. Whenever a deal defaults or a heretic against the Cult of the Dual Monarchy arises, an Ebon-Masked Cleric is dispatched to investigate and, if necessary, punish. These clerics are also tasked with the investigation of their colleagues, for while the clerics are bound by a strict code of conduct, corruption certainly exists in their ranks. Finally, those whose masks are crafted of white jade govern the clerics themselves. The Ivory-Masked Clerics are the commanding officers of the Stygian bureaucracies, ensuring that the other four departments remain carefully on task and never falter in their duties to the Dual Monarchy.

Any ghost who presents himself to the Offices of the Ivory Mask and proves his bureaucratic acumen and his loyalty to the Dual Monarchy can become a cleric. This requires a minimum Bureaucracy and Lore of ••, and while Socialize and Occult are highly valued, they are not prerequisites. Further, the ghost must know at least Aura-Reading Technique. Assuming he meets these requirements, the ghost can become an initiate cleric with Backing (Stygian Cleric) •, and one of the five departments recruits him based on the scores of his test. Should he learn Blending the Streams of Essence or Earnest Creditor Technique, he may be promoted to adept cleric (with Backing ••). Clerics also consider Filling the Precious Vial and Careful Debtor Stance to be exceptionally useful Arcanoi, and the Ebon-Masked Clerics often make use of Feeding the Lamprey's Appetite. Beyond the rank of adept, promotion becomes competitive, and a ghost who wishes to gain in rank must both wait for one in a higher rank to gain a promotion or pass into Lethe and then prove himself a better candidate than his colleagues. A cleric's Backing (and, by extension, his rank) may never exceed his Bureaucracy or his Lore. The number of bars upon a cleric's sash denotes his rank, with one bar indicating an

initiate, two indicating an adept, etc. The fifth and final rank is reserved for a single ghost per department, and they are referred to as secretaries. The Ivory-Masked Secretary is the master of all clerics, and he is properly titled the Grand Secretary of the Gathered Masks.

## GEOGRAPHY

Flatlands of dark, rich loam encircle the Grand Necropolis. Fed by the unpleasant and strange waters of the River Styx, this land is unusually fertile and home to many farms. A rustic shanty town surrounds the Dark Jewel of the Underworld, filled with both the dead content to work the land and provide some food for the city and those ghosts who, for whatever reason, cannot make a living within Stygia itself. While vulnerable to attack or to the sudden marauding of monsters, the effigies of the Dual Monarchy stand in silent vigil, providing comfort and security to the quiet community. Though it lacks the reverent aura of Stygia itself, the local farms are close enough to feed off the castoff prayers of the necropolis, and long-time residents gain an additional mote per hour, as though they benefited from a Underworld Cult rating of •. Stygia and its surrounding flatlands are nestled into the valleys of seven hills. Some say the tossing of a fitfully slumbering Malfean formed the hills, but what matters most to Stygians is the wealth their mines and quarries provide. These slopes are rich in ores and stone (primarily basalt, granite and marble) and provide much of the material for construction projects and industries. The centuries of mining and quarrying have cut grooves out of some of the slopes — tiers that some sections of the city currently reside on — and have riddled others with long-forgotten shafts and nephwrack-haunted tunnels that lead into the Labyrinth.

Beyond the hills of Stygia, vast and overgrown wilds surround the Dark Jewel of the Underworld. Thorny and impassable undergrowth fills tangled forests of twisted, leafless trees, which creak hungrily in the presence of the dead. Towering, broken crags rise up from the land like monstrous, black teeth, impassable to all but the most skilled ghosts. Marshes filled with moist, hungry earth eagerly await the chance to swallow up unwary travelers. Monsters from the Labyrinth roam these lands freely, and their thundering roars or eerie, humanesque screams shatter the silence of these unpleasant lands.

Once, long ago, the island teemed with ghosts, echoing the majesty of the Old Realm. In this current Age, however, the lack of worship and the absence of shadowlands forced the dead of the Isle of Shadows to move on to more profitable locations, and those with the means fled to Stygia. Those that remained behind withered as their cities were reclaimed by the wilds. Now, all that is left of these ancient necropoli are crumbled ruins and a few haggard, barbaric ghosts who have grown used to

surviving in these wild lands. Still, the Isle of Shadows remains a reflection of the Blessed Isle, and though untamed, parallels between the two can be drawn. For example, those regions on the Blessed Isle that are filled with corruption and resentment are savage, brutal forests in the Underworld, and serene villages in Creation create small, peaceful glades in the Underworld that provide ghosts a moment's respite.

### THE SINKING CITY

The Void is more than a place or a thing. It is an inexorable destination to which all of the Underworld is drawn. Inch by inch and year by year, more land sinks, coming closer to its yawning mouth. Only the influx of fresh memories from the newly deceased pushes back the borders of the land of the dead, buying more precious time before all of their world sinks into the Labyrinth below.

Because it rests at the center of the Underworld, this phenomenon is noticeably stronger in Stygia. The constant pull of the void creates Stygia's catacombs, sinking the structures of the past while the dead place new construction on top of them, the houses of yesterday becoming the basements for the houses of today. The dead of Stygia seldom worry, or even bother to notice, this slow, inexorable event, simply shuffling their boundary stones about in an eternal game whenever it becomes problematic.

Only Monarchs' Way, perched atop the Mouth of Oblivion itself, is immune. The Calendar of Setesh doesn't rest upon the ground. Rather, it is hooked to the heavens above, and from it, all of Monarchs' Way hangs suspended above the Well of the Void. Millennia from now, the district is destined to be the final, crumbling island floating atop the ever growing hole of Oblivion as the rest of the Underworld fades away, until it too falls, and then, all light is snuffed out.

The River Styx is famous throughout the world of the dead. Springing forth from the fountains of the Water Runs Red district, this dark-watered river flows through the angular and twisted channels of the city. Eventually, it spills out into the Pool of Sorrows, where the white-hulled vessels of the Dual Monarchy's fleet rest, and then continues its course into the Sea of Shadows. The water of the River Styx is foul, and none drink it, for the touch of the water is warmly acidic. Darkly opaque, its mirrored surface reveals nothing of what lies below. The dead of Stygia commonly swear by the name of the river, for any oath taken in the name of the waters is guarded by the Malfeans themselves (and breaking such an oath will result in a

single botch inflicted upon the oath-breaker at a critical moment).

The river does not follow the straight courses of space and time that mortals understand, but rather, the flow of the river bends and twists. It touches every district of Stygia in a way that defies mapping, and those who seek the river have only to turn two corners to find it. Some ghosts have mastered the properties of the river and pole their flat-bottomed boats slowly through it, offering quick passage for a small sum. The waters of the River Styx touch upon all the rivers of the Underworld, including those of the Abyss, and a true master of the river's ways can find a course to any place in the Underworld. Such travel, though, is surely as dangerous as walking the Labyrinth itself.

### SAILING THE STYX

Sailing the River Styx within Stygia itself isn't terribly dangerous. Travel from one location to another requires a Wits + Sail roll at a difficulty between 3 (for traveling across a district in half the time) to 5 (traveling across Stygia in a few minutes). A botch means the ferryman has taken a wrong turn and become lost, or worse, ended up upon one of the rivers of the Labyrinth. In general, ferrymen charge a fee of Resources (the difficulty of the trip - 2).


## MASKS OF POWER

The Dual Monarchy is the keystone upon which the order and stability of the Underworld is constructed. Every noble, every king, every ghost that lives within the nations of the dead bow their heads to this august and ancient body. The Dual Monarchs do not rule through military power, though all of the dead look to their mighty army of effigies for protection from the minions of the Abyss. They do not rule through wealth and economic influence, though their city is the most prosperous of the Underworld and their merchants have ties all across the land of the dead. No, the Dual Monarch spread their influence through the mutual benefit of prayer. Those nations that accept the power of Stygia have an opportunity to feast at the well of reverential Essence that springs up around the necropolis. By supporting the vast Cult of the Dual Monarchy, the dead guarantee that Essence will continue to flood into the city, that millennia-old tradition is maintained and that the fragile infrastructure of prayer constructed since the founding of the city remains whole.

By all records, the Dual Monarchy has always ruled Stygia. However, mystery wreaths its origins. Information on the founding of Stygia is vague at best, and the raids of the nephwracks during the downfall of the necropolis scattered and destroyed many documents. Speculation and legend







describes the original Dual Monarchs as the great heroes who united the dead in confronting the Abyss and established the city. This legend also suggests that they preserved their memories and their powers in their crowns so that each succession would be a rebirth of a kind. Alternatively, some scholars have put forward the proposal that the Monarchs may never have actually existed. According to this heretical theory, the founders of Stygia constructed archetypes based on different aspects of the Calendar of Setesh and then forged them into crowns and ritual masks to provide the chosen leaders with the knowledge and power needed to rule properly. The dead, however, do not care. The Dual Monarchy is. For Stygia, and the rest of the Underworld, that is enough.

Few dead can rival the power of the Dual Monarchs. Stygia generates vast sums of Essence, and as the embodiment of Stygia, the Dual Monarchs have access to nearly endless supplies of Essence if they wish it. While the Dual Monarchy has gone through countless incarnations throughout its reign, the Monarchs retain their memory and Arcanoi, making them, effectively, among the oldest of the dead. Only a few ancient and mad nephwracks are the Monarchs' peers. Tribute shipments bring more artifacts and riches yearly to the Dual Monarchs, and they have a plethora of weapons and magics at their disposal. All of this combines to make each Monarch a terrible adversary in both battle and intrigue.

Despite their enormous power and wealth, the Dual Monarchs are more akin to figureheads than true rulers. While the nations of the Underworld bow their heads to the Monarchy, they make their own laws. Even Stygia itself is more influenced by its bureaucracy and the City Council than by the edicts of the Monarchy. Instead, the Dual Monarchs focus on a lifestyle of ritual pageantry, serving as literal figureheads for the prayers of the dead. Beholden to their ancient rituals, they are bound on a fundamental level to their cult and to Stygia. Some scholars have even gone so far as to speculate that the Dual Monarchs are merely extensions of the Calendar, a personification of its unifying effects on the land of the dead. The Dual Monarchy are the puppet kings of the dead, dancing on strings of Essence and prayer to hold the minions of the Abyss at bay and to preserve the order of the Underworld.

## THE COURT OF THE MONARCHY

The Palace of the Dual Monarchy dominates Monarchs' Way, the central district of Stygia. Its tall spires, constructed of overwrought steel and baroque stone, spike high into the air, higher than any other tower of Stygia. Wandering, mazelike paths, narrow hedges, dark vegetation and silent, watching statues fill the grounds surrounding it. Within the palace, red carpets adorn the dark marble floors of long, colonnaded hallways illuminated by candles cupped in vaulted hollows. During the day, stained-glass windows depicting strange scenes long forgotten in the

mortal world let in the faint glow of the Underworld's sun, painting the halls a multicolored hue. The scent of incense is strong in the air, and the constant drone of prayer echoes in these otherwise silent halls. Only the Stygian dwellings of the Deathlords can match the grandeur of the Dual Monarchy's Manse.

Deep inside the palace, the sounds of prayer give way to the whispers of intrigue. Within the expansive, five-cornered court chamber sit the two ornate thrones of the Monarchy. Upon their thrones, in whatever aspect they choose, the Dual Monarchs are grandly clothed in the finest of garments, adorned in a rain of jewels and fitted with the finest of grave goods. Every gesture they make is carefully measured, and every syllable they intone is precisely pitched. Masked, darkly swathed servants surround the Monarchs, serving as their ritual aides. They emphasize and augment the ceremonial nature of every action the Monarchs undertake and every order they issue. Something as simple as a beckoning motion results in a flurry of these shrouded performers unfolding a path before the selected subject with their gauzy veils and their sparkling eyes. The self-important elite of Stygia mingle at the edges of the court, filling the air with the dazzle of their finery. Greater than the courts of the mortal world yet lesser than the splendors of Yu-Shan, the wonders of Stygia's court are an exotic wonder to behold, making it the greatest court of the Underworld.

Despite its marvels, the Court of the Dual Monarchy is not a place of true political power. While many Stygian courtiers swirl about the halls of the palace, they fill it with pointless intrigue and frantic romance. Rather than acting as a nexus of political influence, the precision and passion of the court serves as the center of the Dual Monarchy's cult. With each ceremonial performance, the Dual Monarchs play their roles as religious leaders, gathering up the Essence of prayer. The scent and crackle of this Essence fills every alcove and hollow of the palace, and its pious sensation is palpable within the court itself, clinging to the Dual Monarchs like an anima. Those who frequent the court come to hear gossip or to witness the wondrous formality of the Monarchs, rather than to make policy decisions or plead for judgment.

## THE RULE OF LAW

A vast, silver-paged volume records every dictate of the Dual Monarchy. Standing as tall as a man, the book known as the Mandate of the Dead is bound in black iron and sealed with a massive lock when not in use. The Byzantine and confusing laws of Stygia are inscribed upon the glimmering, metallic pages with indelible black ink. The texts are a maze of cross-references, judicial precedents, ancient, indecipherable decrees and legal notation, an unsolvable legal knot for those unwilling to pour an eternity into understanding it. Locked away within the Hall of Two Truths, the center of the Stygian Bureaucracy, it serves as the basis for justice and law within the Grand Necropolis.

## COURTLY ESSENCE

The courtiers that walk the halls of the Dual Monarchy's palace manage to attain a measure of greatness merely from their association with the Dual Monarchs. Without knowing it, their presence serves a role in the vast and ongoing ritual of the Cult of the Dual Monarchy. Those who become most accepted in the court are those who become deeply attuned to this process and can tap into the intensity of the prayers in the Dual Monarchy's palace, receiving the benefits of Underworld Cult •••. This requires a minimum of Socialize •• and at least a month of making friends and contacts within the court (which can be represented by either a Background of Contacts • or Influence • in relation to the court). This association is fickle, however, and the Storyteller has the final say over who is a member of this "inner clique" and who is not. Such members are notoriously arrogant, perfectly aware as they are of their greater status within the city.

The Keeper of the Mandate, Master Amenti, knows every law, every precept, by heart. He is a frail spirit with thin, white hair and skeletal hands covered in the fine parchment of ancient, ghostly flesh. His face hides behind a bestial mask, and long, colorful robes adorn his body. He long ago forgot the mortal world, and all of his passions and enormous intellect now focus on the legal matters of Stygia. None understand the law as well as he. He is hopelessly corrupt, with his hands in every governmental pocket and bribes flowing from his many arrests. He is petty, filled with all the spite and rigidity of the dead, and he enjoys using his position to wreak havoc on his enemies. His rivals have come to despise the rustling whisper of his voice and the impeccable logic of his arguments. However, despite his shortcomings, his dedication to the status quo makes him the most stalwart ally the Dual Monarchy has, and he uses all of his considerable resources to aid it. Hidden in the Hall of Two Truths, behind his scrolls, legal summons and the massive Mandate, he reads in peace, occasionally reaching out with his influence to ensnare the foes of the Monarchy in bureaucratic red tape.

The law serves Stygia in a myriad of ways. Foremost, it serves as a method to clean the streets. The police gather up useless rabble and either throw them into chains to serve as slave labor or pitch them from the city, exiling them into the wilds that surround Stygia. For the wealthy, it serves as a distraction, something to fuel their passions. Many powerful dead pay close attention to the drama of legal proceedings. A few police even hunt down dangerous elements within the city. Not every agent within Stygia is a corrupt thug, and often, the young ghosts of investigators and guards are

driven to seek out nephwrack conspiracies and hostile criminal organizations, bringing safety to the city.

When an arrest occurs, the officer generally arrives with a sizable contingent of armed guards, usually between five and ten. For wealthy detainees, the guard serves a sort of ceremonial function, and the more guards that attend, the greater the prestige associated with the arrest. For more reluctant suspects, the guards must be prepared to fight, for the dead are passionate and enjoy a final showdown. The charges are read from a long scroll, and the flowery detailing of the crimes can take several minutes. Charges come in varying degrees of severity, and the Storyteller should assign a level between one to five for them. Level-one charges are minor traffic infractions, violations of etiquette and various small peculiarities and technicalities that exist in the enormous legal codes of Stygia. Such charges are often dismissed outright after some legal wrangling and a few bribes. Level-two and -three charges are often assault and theft, with petty theft and assault against lesser, unimportant ghosts making up the level-two charges and greater theft and assault against more prominent dead making up the level three charges. Level-four and -five charges are reserved for murder, treachery and consorting with the minions of Oblivion, though this final charge is seldom leveled with any seriousness anymore and *never* leveled against any servant of a Deathlord. However, the complexity and obscurity of Stygian law ensures that arrests can be made for almost any reason. For example, insulting Lord Stalwart might result in some strange and ancient level-four charge being brought against the offender. Also, a torrid affair with a foreign princess might bring a level-two charge, just to keep things interesting. In practice, arrests are not made to serve justice. Rather, Stygians use them to further their tormented games of intrigue and politics.

After receiving the charge, a ghost may attempt to construct a defense that will diminish the effectiveness of the charges made against him. This requires an Intelligence + Bureaucracy roll with a difficulty equal to the severity of the charges. If successful, the severity is lessened by one, and level-one charges are dismissed (meaning that only the most legally inept ghosts ever go to court over such minor infractions).

Court proceedings can best be described as a circus. Because the verdict is always known before the trial even begins, the purpose of the trial is not to prove innocence or guilt, but rather, to provide a platform for melodramatic performances. Prosecutors grandstand, and witnesses burst out in wailing confession, and above it all, perched atop towering podiums, the skulls of the judges peer down from beneath their powdered wigs, their claw-like hands clicking hungrily against the wood of the bench. Indeed, the powerful ghosts of Stygia find it quite fashionable to be arrested and enjoy the hardships of the Stygian legal system, so long as the price of conviction isn't too high.





## DEFENDERS OF THE MANDATE

The bulk of Stygia's guards are poorly skilled militia, ghosts given perfunctory training and weaponry and then sent off to aid in arrests. To represent them, use the "Militia" statistics from *Exalted*, page 278, or more simply, treat them as extras with four dice. For particularly dangerous or prestigious arrests, Master Amenti unleashes his crack police forces, who are heavily armed and well trained and referred to as the Hounds of Amenti. Treat them as "War Ghosts" on page 301 of *Exalted* or as extras with six dice. Sometimes, packs of hungry ghosts or jade effigies accompany the Hounds of Amenti.

The Stygian police often focus their Arcanoi on the Chains of the Ancient Monarchs art, found on pages 51-53, and usually have at least Soul Anchor and Essence Binding. Essence-Devouring Ghost Touch and Spirit-Catching Eye Technique, found in *Exalted: The Abyssals*, are also popular Arcanoi, and those ghostly police who use hungry ghosts often employ Relentless Hunter's Mark. Standard guards often have no applicable Arcanoi, but a Hound of Amenti always has at least two.

For truly difficult and dangerous targets, Master Amenti has access to elite cadres of mercenaries and bounty hunters. These ghosts are always heroic dead, usually travel in bands of three to five, and typically have signature techniques and Arcanoi that make them both intriguing and deadly.

Storytellers should play up the baroque character of the legal system and give it roleplaying attention. Make the player of the accused ghost act out her character's defense, bringing in his evidence, badgering his opponent's witnesses and presenting thunderous arguments. When complete, make an opposed Manipulation + Performance roll for both the defendant and the prosecutor. Bonus dice are awarded based on the evidence and the effectiveness of testimony (usually one die per witness or piece of evidence, but these must be suitably persuasive or impressive to count). Effective use of evidence and witnesses requires skill in law, though, and no more bonus dice may be added in this manner than a character's Bureaucracy. Stunting is always encouraged, and dice gained from stunting is cumulative with the dice gained from evidence and witnesses. Whoever wins the contest wins the trial.

For those characters inept at legal matters, the services of a ghostly barrister can be purchased. Such a barrister has a Bureaucracy of at least 2, and his Manipulation + Performance dice pool is generally equal to (the Resource cost of hiring him + 3). For cases against the state

(as opposed to civil suits), Master Amenti always provides a prosecuting barrister with a Bureaucracy of at least ●●● and a Manipulation + Performance dice pool of (the severity of the offense + 4). Defendants are not guaranteed a barrister in Stygian law, and those too poor to afford a barrister must defend themselves.

Should a defendant's player botch his legal roll, the punishment leveled against the defendant by the courts is either slavery (if he's useful) or exile (if he's not) to the wilds that surround Stygia. Should his player merely lose the contest, the defendant suffers a fine equal to the severity of his crime, or his Resources, whichever is lower. This is the most common result of a trial, and these fines serve as the grease for the wheels of Master Amenti's bureaucracy. The poor suffer at the hands of the Stygian legal system, and any ghost who has Resources • or less that is convicted of a level-two or higher offense suffers as though he botched his roll. Success indicates vindication and innocence, and the defendant need merely pay legal fees that are, inevitably, out-of-pocket expenses (one less than the ghost's Resources). Truly spectacular displays during the trial may impress the Stygian elite that frequent the trials. At the Storyteller's discretion, extraordinarily high rolls may result in a dot of Contacts within Stygian high society. The worst penalties of the Stygian legal system are seldom meted out. Soulforging occurs rarely,

but for the worst offenses and the most dangerous ghosts, it is a possibility. In the most truly heinous cases, the criminal is cast into the Mouth of the Void. Discounting the ravages of the First and Forsaken Lion, this punishment has been issued only thrice in the history of Stygia, and each instance was a somber and dreadful affair.

## THE COUNCIL OF STYGIA

In contrast to the Dual Monarchy's palace, the housing of the City Council is unattractive, built with gray stone and buttressed with square, efficient pillars. Within the ugly, scarred exterior, a maze of handsomely decorated rooms and hallways spiral around a grand central room, where the squabbling and powerful legislature sits. The City Council of Stygia serves to counterbalance the pomp and opulence of the Dual Monarchy with practical, if argumentative, politics. Those who seek real power find it in the whispered conspiracies of the Council's back rooms as well as in the melodramatic speeches given on the floor of its congress.

Due to the machinations and assassinations of Stygia's politics, the membership of the Council changes from year to year. A perfect and current list would be impractical, and so, only five of the current thirteen are presented below. For further details on the districts each Council member leads, see pages 21-33.



## THE TRUE POWER BEHIND THE DUAL MONARCHY

While the Dual Monarchy outwardly appears to rule Stygia, any deep examination of the true political situation will reveal the Monarchs to be powerless figureheads. The legal system is out of their hands. Decisions are made by the Deathlords and imposed upon a powerless Stygia. Real politics occur in the City Council not in the Court of the Dual Monarchy. In reality, the Monarchy exists only as a ritual tool: Essence batteries that constantly recharge the economy of the Underworld.

Yet, the Dual Monarchs are incredibly mighty ghosts. They predate the Deathlords by millennia and have access to nearly limitless stores of Essence. They know Stygia better than anyone, for they were at its founding. They have access to an enormous amount of knowledge, whether it takes the form the secrets of the newly dead, mastery of the Calendar or the voice of the Abyss. Only the Deathlords exceed their occult might, and none surpass their wisdom.

In truth the most powerful of the dead, the Dual Monarchs are far from the least politically potent. As a matter of deception, they have reached out with bejeweled hands and intentionally tangled the bureaucracies and courts that surround them with red tape and pointless intrigue. They have receded into their ritual, allowing others to believe they are governed by their constant ritual propitiations. While so hidden, they advance their agenda through both overt allies, such as Master Amenti and the clerics, and more concealed friends, such as the Hollow King. They also make use of the less obvious methods of courtly gossip and well-placed arrests. Their ultimate objective is to continue the rivalry between the Deathlords and prevent any kind of unity between them. In so doing, they hope to ensure the continuing safety of Stygia and, perhaps one day, freedom from the Deathlords' grasp. However, should their conspiracy ever be discovered, the Dual Monarchs know that they will cease to function as free-thinking rulers, assuming the Deathlords even allow them to continue to exist. So, they remain quiet, playing a deadly and secretive game of cat and mouse with Deathlords who are too busy with their own machinations to notice.



### THE MISTRESS WITH THE WHITE HANDS

None who witness the Mistress' beauty can easily forget her. The ghostly whore's features are as white as porcelain and just as delicate. She clothes her small and shapely body with simple robes of a thin fabric that subtly emphasize her curves. Upon her hands she wears white gloves, which she only removes when she wishes to kill. Her long hair is dark and silken, always moving on an unfelt wind, and its touch is soothingly cool. Her eyes glimmer like dark pools of passion, utterly unlike the black pits that fill the eyes of nephwracks and Deathlords. She seldom voices her thoughts, preferring instead to kneel and quietly listen as she drinks her tea. When she does speak, her words are quiet and brief but surprisingly logical and astute. Those who know her describe her as loving and wise but haunted by the secrets of her own, unpleasant past. Many see her as a soft-spoken voice of wisdom upon the Council, and her district adores her.

Though the Mistress began her career as a sexual plaything, she no longer offers her favors to another unless it gains her an advantage or suits her whims. Instead, her power springs from her many holdings within the District of the Bone Lanterns, as well as the influence and information her courtesans bring her. A master of the Shifting Ghost-Clay Path, her normal appearance has the effect of the Entrancement Visage, and she can don an even more beautiful appearance, if she wishes it, to tempt even the

most temperate of beings (+2 difficulty to resist). Though unskilled in the ways of battle, she is capable of very subtle plots, and the other Council members are wary, though respectful, of her. Despite her humble origins, few question her power now.

Recently, the Mistress with the White Hands has grown withdrawn and attends the Council less often. Because of an unusual astrological reading, she has come to believe that her mortal lover, with whom she committed suicide centuries ago, has returned from Lethe and walks once more upon Creation. She is lost in indecision, yearning to seek him and terrified of what these new events might mean. Her heart slowly breaks as she hesitates. Her courtesans scour Creation and the Underworld for any sign of him, and some fear she may succumb to her grief and enter Lethe. Darker elements within the Council have taken advantage of her absences, and if she does not recover from her melancholia soon, some fear that the Council may lose a powerful and positive voice.

### LORD STALWART

The master of the Street of Swords is a rich and intelligent businessman. He dresses impeccably, often wearing a dark coat and a vest held closed with silver buttons and a thin chain running from one pocket to the other. He wears his collar high about his neck and folded over in an archaic fashion. His hair is iron gray and cut



Stygia

short, and lines of middle age crease his pale face. On his back, the tall ghost carries his enormous, black-iron blade, the symbol of his district and the badge of his office. With his smooth, tenor voice, he is a deft conversationalist, making casual jokes or discussing complex topics with equal ease. However, his quick wit and fine grooming are carefully cultivated disguises for his selfishness and ambition. Wealth is his foremost concern, and his passions drive him forward to seek more power and more profits. Despite his pretensions, his actions have proven that he sets his own interests before those of Stygia, earning him the enmity of the population.

No Council member wields as much power as Lord Stalwart. His enterprises have afforded him great wealth, and only the Deathlords and the Dual Monarchy have access to more resources within Stygia. With bribes, he can encourage officials to ignore his less legal deeds and buy their favors. A small army of thugs and bodyguards are on his official payroll, and those whom Lord Stalwart cannot buy, he can bully. He isn't so foolish as to trust his safety entirely to his wealth, however, and he is an exceptional warrior with his sword. Within the Council, there are few willing to challenge his might, and only his unpopularity keeps him from outright domination.

Lord Stalwart forged his alliance with the First and Forsaken Lion when the Deathlord seemed on the verge of conquering the necropolis. Though his partnership granted

him a great deal of influence, the businessman has begun to chafe under his master's iron fist. Squirring to gain a more equal footing with his partner, he finds himself in the laps of the Courtier of Silk and Shadow and the Emissary of Righteous Victory and deeper within the clutches of Oblivion. With three of his lieutenants fallen to the Whisper of Oblivion, an awareness of the price of his machinations slowly dawns on Lord Stalwart, and the councilman can no longer close his eyes to the agenda of his allies. Caught in an ever-tightening web of greed and deceit, he sees that the madness of the Void is inevitable if he continues his course but has no idea how to escape his fate. Whether Lord Stalwart will make a mad, suicidal dash for freedom or succumb reluctantly to his destiny remains to be seen.

## THE HOLLOW KING

Any examination of the longest seated member of the Council is a study in contrasts, for the Hollow King appears both sophisticated and primitive. His robes are woven of fine silks and linens, but the swirling, hypnotic patterns that decorate them are primal in design. He covers his face with a wooden, tribal mask depicting upturned eyes and a smiling mouth, and he wears his dark, coarse hair in a long mass of thick braids. His fingers end in graceful talons, which he uses with elegant ease, whether to lift a goblet of wine to his wooden lips or to gesture sharply as he illustrates a point.

Despite his impeccable etiquette, he outwardly eschews the conceits of his status, mingling often with the common ghosts of his district. The Hollow King's multifaceted personality shrouds his nature as completely as his mask hides his true identity, which is precisely what the master of Little Shoe wants.

The Hollow King is an unparalleled manipulator, unafraid to conspire with or against even the most cunning of Deathlords. His mastery of the passions that flow through the dead allows him to deliver thunderous speeches that enflame the masses. Conversely, it also allows him to relate a delightful anecdote that eases the highest of tensions or the most delicate of situations. He translates his wit and poise into an insidious death-grip on Little Shoe, the primary source of his power. All the union bosses of his district answer directly to him, and very little organized crime occurs in Little Shoe without the Hollow King's knowledge and consent. While not the most powerful member of the Council, he is nonetheless a formidable one.

The Hollow King's mastery of subterfuge and deceit is no accident, for he has many deadly secrets that must remain hidden for his survival. Not the least of these is his alliance with the Dual Monarchy. Despite his apparent corruption and the disdain he seems to hold for the law, the Hollow King understood long ago that the Dual Monarchs are the heart of Stygia. They represent its elite and its order as much as they represent its poor and its corruption. After the fall of Stygia to the hands of the nephwracks, the Hollow King made a secret pact with the Dual Monarchs to support the stability of their reign, and now, the knives he commands in the night rise and fall at their order. Because the Deathlords see him as a mercenary, a crime lord they can manipulate for their own ends, he keeps his alliance a careful secret, allowing him to play both sides for the benefit of Stygia. Should he ever be caught, however, the Dual Monarchy lacks the open power to actually save him from the wrath of the Deathlords and his own criminal circles, and so, he must tread very carefully.

## MARU

Nephwracks are generally mad, deformed things, and Maru is no exception. The spectre is small and frail, with hands curled into claws and gray flesh clinging tightly to his skeletal ribs. His feet and legs are withered and useless, for he floats rather than walks. His head is hairless, and his eyes and mouth are sown shut with black thread. Despite this, the ugly creature is fully aware of his surroundings and speaks with little trouble. An aura of subtle, unpleasant sounds follows him, and from this, he assembles and forms words in a horrid, ethereal voice. Maru is as mad as any nephwrack, but his words have disturbing clarity and often reveal startling insight if taken out of context. Though his actions seem random, they aid him in unexpected ways, and his madness advances his agenda. Either Maru is a lucky wretch who stumbled into power, or he is an insane

genius whose ascent to the rulership of the District Where Shadows Walk was inevitable.

No ghost can truly rule a district filled with minions of Oblivion, but Maru has managed to maintain relative peace amongst the factions for over a year. His cult is not the largest, but it grants him access to a wealth of Essence and wild, suicidal warriors that will not question his orders. What he lacks in martial discipline, he more than makes up for with occult prowess. His mastery of Arcanoi is unparalleled on the Council, and he knows dark arts unseen outside of the Labyrinth. Despite all of his power, however, he has many enemies throughout Stygia and influences little outside of his district. While a disturbing element within the Council, he is not a major factor of its politics, and this fact does not please him.

Maru reserves his deepest hatred for the newly arrived Emissary of Righteous Victory. His mere presence is enough to summon a furious and discordant jangle from the nephwrack's aura. Maru knows just how tentative his position on the Council is, and the rising popularity of the Emissary in the District Where Shadows Walk has made him wary. While the Emissary so far displays little desire to usurp Maru, the nephwrack's paranoia forbids him from trusting his rival. Nothing would please Maru more than seeing the Emissary cast into Oblivion, and currently, this passion drives his every action.

## UNWANTED WHISPER

Sometimes called the Orphan Queen, this representative of the District of Whispering Streets is easily forgotten and easily ignored. Her grand robes are humorously oversized for her small, childlike frame. Her hair is boyishly short, and her eyes are large and soulful. On the occasions that she does speak, her soft, high-pitched voice sounds timid and furtive, and her choice of words rustic and ineloquent. She doesn't belong amongst the other Council members, and she knows it. Her life was spent as a street rat, and her death continued the trend. She fades away from conversations with ease, preferring to be ignored, and the others have no difficulty obliging her.

Unwanted Whisper is clearly the weakest member of the Council, but despite this, she causes endless trouble. Outside her cursed district, the waif has no friends, no connections, no wealth and no power. All she has is the silent backing of the dead within her district and the protection of her personal honor guard. Her greatest asset, however, is her stubbornness. The District of Whispering Streets could not break her, and now, nothing can. Her soft voice rises in defiance of the Deathlords and their politics, a lone, brave call for sanity. No threats and no intimidation has broken her of her sense of justice, and none will. Indeed, her voice has found support amongst others of the council, the Mistress with the White Hands and Master Wun in particular. Some fear that her assassination is inevitable, but she continues her course, for she

has seen firsthand the horrors that the Labyrinth and Oblivion have wrought upon her district, and she will not see it happen to the rest of Stygia.

## TRUSTED ADVISORS AND WELCOME GUESTS

Whenever a Deathlord sets foot in Stygia, the Court of the Dual Monarchy swirls around him. Courtiers and servants flutter close to the ancient spectre, exchanging gossip and staring in wonderment as the Monarchs themselves rise to greet their valued friend. Niceties are exchanged as the Deathlord offers some carefully pondered advice, perhaps, or asks permission to commune with the Void. The self-important elite of the necropolis stand back, witnessing all and whispering audibly amongst one another that the alliance between the Deathlords and the Monarchy is a truly wondrous thing, an auspicious sign for the future.

It's a sham.

The Deathlords grip the city with an unrelenting iron fist. The Monarchy ignores their "advice" at its peril. As far as the Deathlords are concerned, all of Stygia's politics are merely an amusing game. Though never outwardly acknowledged as such, the word of these sorcerer-kings is law within Stygia. The praise and compliments the Stygians offer to the Malfears' chosen are feigned, are whispered through gritted teeth and hide genuine resentment and fear. The only reason the Deathlords do not rule Stygia openly is that they are fractious, and each would rather see the city ruled by a useful puppet than by one of his rivals. Further, their open rule would terrify the citizenry, and what use is an empty necropolis? Better to let those who already know and understand Stygia manage the day-to-day affairs of its governance. Until the day that a single Deathlord rises above his peers and claims Stygia as the capital of his dark empire, the Grand Necropolis remains an occupied city-state in fact, if not in name.

Deep below the palace of the Dual Monarchy, in a secret chamber built of nameless, dark stone quarried from the Labyrinth itself, the Deathlords hold their rare and secret congresses. The vast room is domed, and the stone used in its construction drains all light, curtaining the edges of the room in shadows. The trappings of the Abyssal castes decorate the five corners of the chamber, once in memory of the Deathlords' former roles as Solars and now in honor of their deathknights. Those who wish to address their gathered comrades step forth into a shaft of sourceless white light that illuminates a crimson circle in the center of the room. Below the chamber, galleries overlook the Mouth of the Void, allowing the Deathlords and their Abyssals to contemplate its dark perfection in utter silence.

## THE COURTIER OF SILK AND SHADOW

Deathlords have many petty and mercurial demands. When one enters the city, a horde of retainers, warriors

and champions inevitably accompany him, and each needs personal accommodations worthy of such a powerful lord's servant. Those Deathlords who enjoy festivities often throw lavish parties requiring enormous preparations and a large drain on funds. Each visit from a Deathlord is a logistical nightmare even for Stygia.

The Courtier of Silk and Shadow rises to meet these demands. As the Chief Liaison of Stygia to the Deathlords, the responsibility and authority to accommodate the needs of the Deathlords, and to see that they are properly hosted and entertained, falls on his shoulders. Though this seems a relatively minor position, the Courtier is, in fact, the most powerful ghost in the Palace of the Dual Monarchy. An army of butlers, maids and servants follows his every command, and he has free access to the coffers of Stygia. Because the bureaucrats of the palace tremble at the very mention of the Deathlords, none dare to challenge his requests, and as a result, almost nothing limits his influence.

The Courtier is a striking and suave figure. Long, oiled curls of hair fall about gray features, carefully moliated to present the most handsome face possible. Always elegantly dressed, he wears finely crafted silken robes, the cut and dark colors of which vary from day to day, though they're always fashionable and intriguing, and his hands are adorned with silver rings. The Courtier often smiles smoothly, but joy never glimmers in the dark pits of his eyes. Despite his playful demeanor, the ghostly liaison is intensely ambitious and often openly conspires. His desire to see the Dual Monarchy overthrown and replaced with a Deathlord is barely secret, and he has formed alliances with Lord Stalwart and, more recently, the Emissary of Righteous Victory. He doesn't go completely unchallenged, however, for Master Amenti despises him. Both bureaucratic geniuses, their conflict is subtle and intense, taking the form of red tape rather than assassination... so far. Still, despite his power, the Chief Liaison's position is far from secure. The Deathlords care little who fulfills their demands so long as their demands are fulfilled. Without open, genuine support, the Courtier has only guile and vague intimidation to achieve his ends, but for now, that is enough.

## THE FACES OF STYGIA

Like everything else in Stygia, the 13 districts are deeply symbolic and ritually significant. While dividing Stygia made sense from a logistical perspective, allowing the city to be more easily governed, the true reasons behind the divisions were occult in nature. Much of Stygia's design focuses prayer and Essence upon the Calendar of Setesh like a lens, powering it and aiding it in the regulation of the reality of the Underworld. The 13 districts act as filters for these flows of Essence. Each district has a distinct character and represents a fundamental aspect of the nature of the Underworld. Little Shoe represents the fury of the oppressed, the foreigner





## CAPPING THE LEADERS & TAKING OVER THE JOINT

One of the hallmarks of **Exalted** is the effect players can have on the setting. Nations are conquered, cities are destroyed, and societies are utterly rewritten by the players' characters' hands. **Exalted** accommodates, even expects, this sort of behavior. So, why should Stygia be any different? Why couldn't players conquer it, overthrow the Dual Monarchy or restore the city to its former glory and set everything right once more? Nothing should discourage a Storyteller from running such a game. However, a few factors and consequences should be considered first, for Stygia is utterly unlike the cities of the mortal world.

The Underworld thrives on stability. It is literally filled with people and personalities who refused to let go of their old lives and aren't about to now. Major change, even positive, is seldom greeted with cheers. A victim of assault or tyranny might resent liberation, for her existence might be defined by that injustice. And in many ways, the Dual Monarchs embody this stability. They have always ruled, and most of the dead would rather they continue to do so. Their Calendar regulates this stability and allows for the endless repetition of days. Further, their very nature as ritual kings lets Essence flow into Stygia, and their destruction could jeopardize the very wealth of the city the players may be seeking in the first place. Caution should be used when usurping the rule of Stygia, for the metaphysics of the Underworld do not match Creation's, and the Dual Monarchy serves as a very real linchpin for the natural order of things in the land of the dead.

Additionally, despite appearances, the Deathlords rule Stygia, not the Dual Monarchy. Assuming the players could depose the mighty Dual Monarchs with little trouble or upheaval, they would likely find themselves in the thrall of the Deathlords, parroting their proclamations just as the Dual Monarchy did. True control of Stygia requires the defeat of the Deathlords, the 13 most powerful and malevolent ghosts in existence. Assuming the players are strong enough to defeat them, then the conquest of Stygia is likely the smallest of their goals.

Perhaps the most approachable source of power in Stygia is a Council seat. The control of a district grants enormous amounts of Essence from the worship of the dead, and the Council itself offers a very real opportunity to shape some of the policies of Stygia. However, other ghosts understand just how worthwhile the pursuit of Council membership is, and the players will find themselves embroiled in intense politics and deadly competition. Despite the benefits of this more subtle approach to rulership, becoming a member of the Stygian City Council can cause as many problems as any other source of power.

In the end, players should not feel discouraged from making sweeping changes in the Underworld, so long as they understand the consequences of their actions. The Time of Tumult is sweeping up even the land of the dead, and change is inevitable. Without player intervention, Stygia and the rest of the Underworld will likely fall into the clutches of Oblivion. Though they kick and scream, the ancestors of Creation must face change or fall forever into damnation.

and the common man, for example. The prayers generated in each district, as well as the Essence channeled through them, is colored by its association with the district and allows for a diversity of fate to flow from the Calendar. As a district grows in power and influence in relation to the other districts, its representations grow stronger in the Underworld. As the Street of Swords gained wealth, for instance, more war began to erupt across the Underworld. Whether the district's influence alters the fate written out by the Calendar or the changes in the Calendar are reflected by changes in the districts is unclear. While changes in the relationships between districts never produces predictable results, scholars have learned that careful observation of the politics within the districts grants insight into the fate of the Underworld. Any attempts at astrology in the land of the dead using the model of Stygia's current map as a guide grants one die. This bonus is not compatible with bonuses granted

by the observation of the Calendar, for information gleaned from the workings of the Calendar exceed and supersede the knowledge gleaned from Stygia itself.

The Grand Necropolis is vast, and each district is larger than most mortal cities. Though each has a distinct and consistent character, the districts are certainly large enough to accommodate lesser cultural groups, and small communities of ghosts lose themselves in the twisting streets of Stygia. Because of its enormity and variety, the separate faces of Stygia must be examined before the necropolis itself can be fully understood.

To further describe Stygia, five of the thirteen districts are detailed below. Though an incomplete list, the districts described serve important functions within Stygia and are typical of the necropolis. Any storyteller running a Stygian series is encouraged to expand upon these descriptions and use them as templates for the details of those districts not featured here.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE BOUNDARY STONES

When the founding ghosts of Stygia finally won their battle against the Labyrinth, among their first tasks was the design and construction of the boundary stones. They mined the local hills, choosing specific sorts of stones for the various districts. Marble was chosen for the District of the Bone Lanterns, for example, and granite for the Street of Swords. Once quarried, they carefully shaped them to occult specifications. Finally, they chose 13 of the bravest and most noble heroes of their company, each of whom embodied the character of their respective district. From each of these ghosts, a treasured possession was taken and sanctified, and then, each was carefully and gently dismembered, their ghostly flesh dissolved and their plasm decanted. The stones of the districts were bathed in this mixture, imbuing them with the heart and the nature of each of the heroes, empowering them to work as wards and boundaries for Stygia.

The yearly anointment of blood and scented oil upon the stones feeds the memories of these souls and keeps them awake enough to work their magic. Should this ritual falter, the power in the stones would fade, the districts would forget themselves, and Stygia itself would slowly decay.

## LITTLE SHOE

Home to Stygia's masses of poor and powerless dead, Little Shoe displays a greater variety of clashing cultures and architecture than any other part of the necropolis. The spires here resulted not from grand projects, but from the long accumulation of small houses over the ages, precariously piled atop one another and connected by thin walkways and rickety ladders. By day, throngs of ghosts crowd the suffocatingly narrow streets as they march reluctantly to their jobs, dressed in drab gray and grumbling quietly. By night, the occasional cry of an assault victim breaks the silence, and glittering eyes watch from shadowed alleyways as the district quietly vents its frustrations. Mortals who witness Little Shoe find it the closest echo to a true, living city in the Underworld.

Little Shoe is the largest of the districts, perpetually swelling with new immigrants. Part foreigners' quarter, part ghetto, this district is where the dead who come to Stygia seeking their fortune first settle. Those few who achieve their dreams abandon the poverty of Little Shoe, quickly making their way to more affluent places. Those forced to remain grow to resent the wealthy as their own hopes slowly die, and the older ghosts who reside here are marked with bitterness. As a result, the district simmers with barely muffled anger that regularly coalesces into

ethnic tensions and carefully staged riots. Little Shoe grinds newcomers into the Stygian mold and locks away those rebellious enough to resist.

As with any place stricken with poverty and hostility, crime and corruption are rampant throughout the streets of Little Shoe. Under the guise of protecting downtrodden laborers, unions gather oppressive dues and crack the ethereal bones of the dead who refuse to join. Crime lords command even more influence than the union bosses, wielding bloody knives in the dark against any who oppose them. Friction between the various ethnic factions results in endless rituals of slaying, as ghosts murder one another silently in the night. Only the Hollow King's masterful hand keeps the pain and corruption from spilling across Little Shoe's borders and becoming a problem. With a mixture of drama and intrigue, he carefully guides the shifting tides of hatred and despair to create a functional, if unpredictable, district that offers him great power.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### THE FESTIVAL OF ASHES

Once a month, Little Shoe sweeps away the rabble and opens its arms to all of Stygia as it celebrates the Festival of Ashes. Located in the central square of Little Shoe, bordered by the four most powerful guilds, the Festival takes place in the largest market in all of Stygia. Black bunting spans the roads, silver and white confetti peppers the cobblestones, and merchants crowd the square with their goods. Ghosts float from stall to stall, sticks of black, greasy carnival meat in their hands, negotiating quietly with merchants and listening to the occasional snatches of strangely keyed music. All of this spectral frivolity makes the Festival one of the most anticipated events of the month in Little Shoe.

Nearly anything can be purchased during the Festival of Ashes. Merchants from all over the city bring their wares at least once in the year, unloading their cargo from the dark-watered Styx straight onto the square. Food and clothing sells surprisingly well, considering that most of the dead have little need for either. Grave goods, talismans and artifacts are also found throughout the market. Trinkets from the mortal world sell best, however. Located far from the living, Stygians find any item from Creation fascinatingly exotic and eagerly collect toy dolls, lovingly homespun clothing and the simplest, homemade pots. Little Shoe gathers a great deal of money from this monthly festival and ensures that the best is always available.

### THE DEN OF WHISPERS

Atop the highest spire of piled apartments in Little Shoe sits the simple abode of the Hollow King. Unlike the fine mansions of the other Council members, this apartment is no larger nor more opulent than those of any other common ghost, for the Hollow King prefers the dead of his



district to see him as one of them. To show his humility and devotion, a shrine to the Dual Monarchy rests against the far wall. To show his hospitality, a fine and delicate tea set rests upon his hearth. To show his ruthlessness, shriveled heads hang from his ceiling by their hair, slowly twisting as though viewing the room with their unseeing eyes. Even though it is decorated to impress any favored guest he chooses to invite, the Hollow King is seldom found here except when he is entertaining or when he must Slumber.

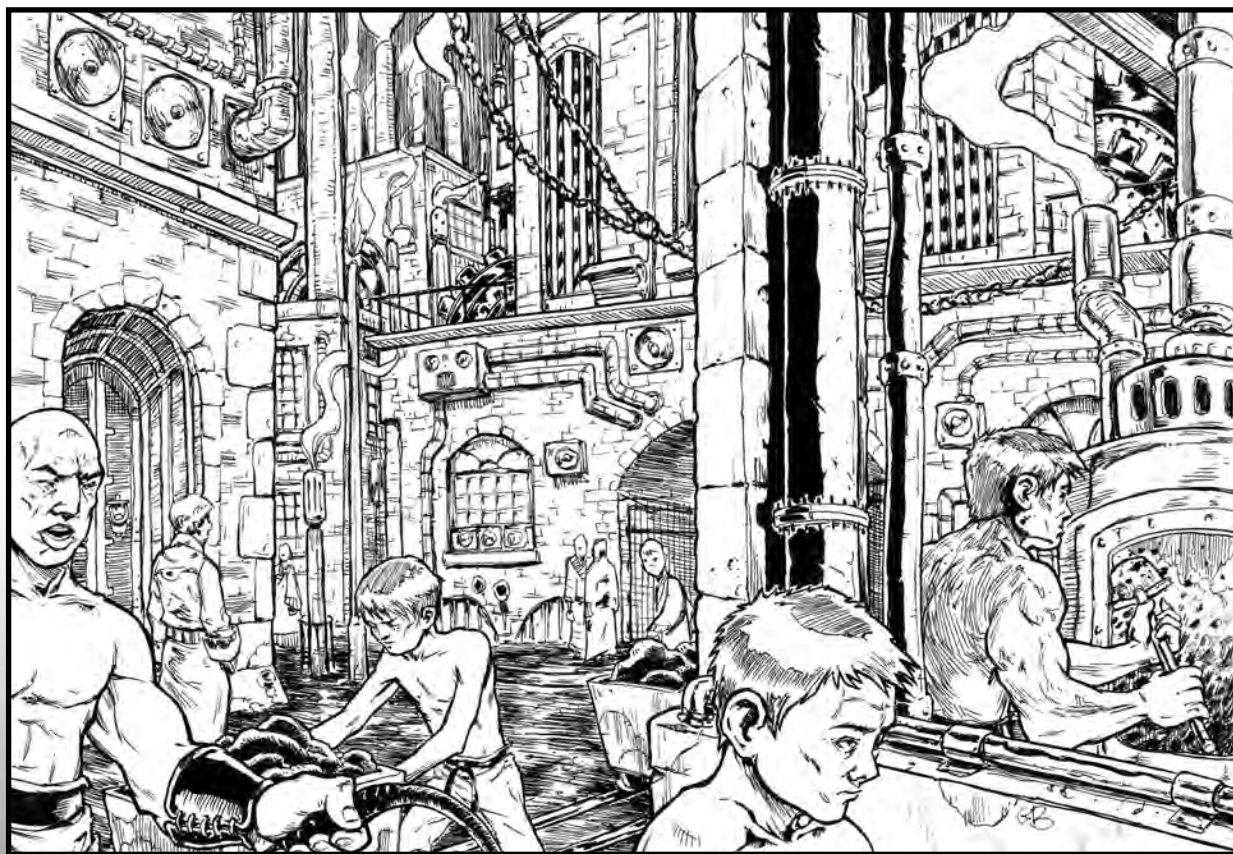
If one seeks the master of Little Shoe, he is most easily found in his favorite restaurant, the Den of Whispers. Located in the less reputable region of the district, it lies at street level, wedged between a warehouse and a cheap brothel on a difficult to find thoroughfare. The business presents an unassuming front, with only a placard announcing its name and a door guarded by a hulking ghost dressed in thick gray garments that shroud his features. The bouncer examines each ghost seeking entrance, turning away those distrusted by the establishment. Darkness curtains the dining chamber within, punctuated by islands of light pooling around small, yellow lanterns that hang above the scattered clientele. Bamboo partitions divide the restaurant into a maze of small, private chambers where patrons can eat and speak in peace, sitting around reed mats decorated with strokes of red and green paint. The cuisine consists of small bowls of rice, chunks of spiced beef or water fowl and pomegranate seeds, served by

beautiful, nude attendants with snow-white skin and ivory masks that hide their features. The whispers of guests fill the place with a constant waterfall of sound as they speak and conspire among one another.

The Hollow King doesn't own the Den of Whispers, but he controls those who do. Here, he holds his court, inviting those with whom he wishes to negotiate or those he wishes to reward. He sits in the largest chamber, relaxed and surrounded by his roughly attired guard, as his claws dip into various bowls and he listens carefully to his guests. While the Den of Whispers is his favorite, the Hollow King controls many such places, whether for his business or his personal enjoyment. Many, including the Den, are interconnected by a series of secret tunnels that honeycomb the underside of Little Shoe. The Hollow King and his allies use them for unseen travel or quick escape, as well as for secret conferences or the storage of ill-gotten treasures. For the Hollow King, all of Little Shoe is his mansion, his fortress, and by constantly shifting his center of operations, he keeps his enemies off guard.

## THE STREET OF SWORDS

In contrast to the unsettling silence of the rest of Stygia, the air of this district weeps with the soft grinding of gears, punctuated by the heavy clashes of metal striking metal and the occasional screaming sobs of souls being alloyed with the black ores of the Abyss. Massive, black



steel refineries held together by clunky rivets spattered with thick, oily grease dominate the skyline. The green fires of roaring furnaces cast dancing shadows into streets of black gravel that crunch beneath the heavy boots of laborers and slavers. The heat is uncommonly stifling in this hellish place, and the air is thick with the scent of ash, metal and tears. Like an enormous, fire-eyed mechanical spider, the Street of Swords looms over all of Stygia, belching forth its dark, violet-tinged smoke.

This district is the industrial center of Stygia. It sprawls across the city, consuming vast swathes of both space and resources, for few districts can defy the power and wealth of the Street of Swords. The extensive facilities, second only to those of the Deathlords, attract some of the finest craftsman and artificers of the Underworld. The industry churns out goods and material of the highest quality, sold both in Stygia and in all of the nations of the dead, adding yet more prestige to the city. Next to prayers, this industry is Stygia's most lucrative venture, and without it, Stygia would be a far poorer and weaker place.

Though the abundant wealth of the Street of Swords ensures that even the lowliest apprentice is richer than many ghosts outside of Stygia, these riches come at the cost of compassion. The presence of soulforges and the brutality inflicted upon soulsteel-shackled slaves has hardened the hearts of many of the dead that live within the district. The sight of ghostly children, empty eyed and bloody palmed, slaving away at the bellows, or of a frail, grandmotherly ancestor trembling under a load of ore is not uncommon. Residents of the district also think nothing of the piteous cries of those few damned souls destined for the forges, preferring to count their money instead. Like the uncaring factories in their midst, the dead of the Street of Swords see one another as tools to be used rather than as friends and neighbors.

Despite the wealth that flows from its industries, this district is hated. While the forges craft the weapons needed to hold back the Abyss, Stygians watch Lord Stalwart bow to the First and Forsaken Lion and wonder whose side the district is truly on. They understand that all of Stygia grows in power because of the Street of Swords, but what good will that do if the corruption and horror growing in this district subverts the entire city? With the Underworld standing on the brink of an Age of chaos, many dead watch the Street of Swords with wide eyes and tense postures, hoping against hope that the district will not fail them when they need it most.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### THE FORGE OF JADE AND IRON

In the center of the Street of Swords, a vast complex of steel and iron rises up from amidst the smithies and shops of the district. The towering factory's black walls are rugged and thick, and heavy spikes erupt intimidatingly

from its edges. Formerly the heart of Lord Stalwart's industrial empire, the Forge of Jade and Iron was once a factory for the construction of artifacts such as jade daiklaves and armor. After an accident, however, the massive doors were sealed shut, and now, by day, it stands as a silent relic.

However, by night, the barred windows burn with the ominous red glow of hidden forges. Those residing nearby hear the muted sounds of grinding machinery and whimpering slaves. In the shadows surrounding the factory, thick boots pound against cobblestones as heavily armed soldiers stalk the nearby streets, discouraging the curious from peering into unwanted places. For any ghost that slips past these guards, the truth becomes clear. Within, pale and skeletal slaves scuttle about the dimly lit gloom under the cracking whips of gray-fleshed, hulking slavers whose faces are shrouded in black leather masks. Thick gears, glistening with grease, churn below narrow catwalks, upon which a brooding Lord Stalwart oversees the secret production of his factory. In the largest chamber of the structure, a forbidden army of freshly constructed soulsteel golems stand in silent rank and file, their eyes dull, awaiting activation.

The Forge of Jade and Iron was never abandoned. At the order of the First and Forsaken Lion, Lord Stalwart arranged for an "accident" and then quietly refitted his factory. Under the cover of darkness, he quietly began construction of a horde of soulsteel golems and over 100 have already been built. Despite his attempts at secrecy, however, hiding vast shipments of soulsteel has proven impossible, and Lord Stalwart's enemies have become suspicious.

### THE GILDED MANOR

Away from the heavier industries of the Street of Swords, a mansion resides atop a hill. Its sloping roofs come to angled peaks, and its gray stone walls are covered in the dark tendrils of vines. Tall, arching windows with ebon frames watch the city below, and looming walls, surmounted by spikes and gated with black-iron bars, block the well-kept garden surrounding the manor. Within, lamps and candles cast a yellow glow down the long, carpeted halls. Large portraits of important, long-dead people adorn the walls with their dour expressions. Staircases with polished wooden banisters curve up to the higher floors, where fine sculptures and rare treasures are kept. If the master of the house is present, the first thing visible as one enters is the massive two-handed sword, the very symbol of the district, hanging in the central hall.

This is the Manse of Lord Stalwart. He entertains his guests here, and within the cozy confines of gaming rooms, they gamble petty cash and discuss the economic matters of the Street of Swords. Servants chosen for their beauty flit quietly from room to room, pleasing their patrons in any way they can. This mansion is a blatant display of Lord Stalwart's personal fortune, and he hesitates to show it to no one. This Manse is the center of political power within the Street of Swords, and quiet discussions behind closed



doors do more to dictate the policies of the district than any union negotiation. Any attempt to influence the district, by any means, must begin here.

## THE DISTRICT OF WHISPERING STREETS

Beyond the crowding of Stygia's streets and marketplaces, silence reigns in a broken district as the voices of the dead fall away until only the streets whisper. Here, long-abandoned houses seem to gaze hungrily at those who pass by their empty windows. The treacherous roads flow and move when not watched, trapping travelers in blank alleyways and leading them into dangerous places. Faint voices echo across the streets, too quiet to understand but loud enough to gnaw at a listener's sanity. Dark things hide just beyond the vision of travelers, always scuttling back into shadows before they can be seen. The District of Whispering Streets is alive and filled with malevolent intent.

Once, long ago, the district was home to savants and nobility, but now, it only scars Stygia, a haunting reminder of its first defeat at the hands of Oblivion. Where once glorious buildings and humble homes rose, now only festering and unpleasant ruins remain. Only madness lurks where wisdom was once spoken and secrets were once revealed. None know what dark magics affect this place, but it is more akin to the Labyrinth than the Underworld. Monsters roam throughout the area, born in the tangled pits where too many paths have intersected and too much dark magic has collected. The district inexorably grows, pushing the boundary stones outward by a few inches every year. All Stygian dead fear to touch them, to push them back. The District of Whispering Streets will not go away, will not be forgotten, no matter how much Stygia may wish otherwise.

A few wretches do exist within the district itself. Most are weak-willed ghosts trapped by the district. They entered, perhaps by mistake, perhaps seeking treasure, and found their exit barred. These pathetic creatures are often rail thin and skeletal, with wide, desperate eyes and patched, tattered clothing. They lurk near doors and alleyways, watching newcomers with eager longing and scampering out of sight when spotted. Those driven insane by the district actually serve the dark power that taints the streets, sometimes luring new victims in or taming and guiding monsters. The rest simply long for escape and gather in small, huddled communities, trying to blot out the whispers with quiet stories and shared pain. The district cannot trap all who enter, especially the unwavering and strong. Some among the residents of the District of Whispering Streets choose to reside there for whatever reason. These spirits usually have a dark agenda and use the district's confusing and terrifying streets as a perfect hiding place. Regardless of how they arrived at the district, or why they remain, those who encounter the dead in this dark place should be especially wary.

### THE CURSE OF THE WHISPERING STREETS

The District of Whispering Streets is alive. It lives and grows. It consumes and hates. It moves. Whatever corrupted the district granted it the ability to warp its dimensions and shift its streets, making it almost unnavigable to the untrained. Any attempt to travel in the District of Whispering Streets requires a Wits + Larceny roll at difficulty 3. Charms such as Maze-Unraveling Concentration and Beast Instinct Method — or any other Charms that provide navigational or instinctive benefits — are explicitly allowed to affect these rolls. The difficulty can be higher or lower, depending on whether the traveler's choice of direction pleases the district or not. If the player fails his roll, his character becomes lost. A botch may land him in a monster's den or lead him closer to the malevolent heart of the district. If the district refuses to confuse the traveler, whether because the traveler serves the district or the district fears him, the roll is waived.

The district manifests its hatred by twisting the fate and fortune of those who walk its streets, defying the stars of the Underworld. The evil within the district lacks the strength to rewrite fate, but it can corrupt it. Within the District of Whispering Streets, the Rule of One (see *Exalted*, pp. 89-90) is slightly altered. Any time a roll is made, tally the number of 1s rolled. If the number of ones rolled exceeds the number of successes rolled, the success is somehow perverted. This doesn't eliminate the success of the roll. Rather, it alters it slightly, so that the character's success is tainted with dark consequences. For example, a warrior might successfully strike his foe only to chip and crack his blade, leaving it vulnerable to further damage. However, most consequences are not immediate. Instead, these curses follow the character, causing him trouble later on. A successful seduction may lead to future jealousy, while successful research may lead the character to forbidden and maddening lore. The Storyteller should be creative with her curses but should also remember to keep them in the appropriate scale. After all, even a curse isn't as bad as a botch. A good luck talisman will negate a curse as easily as a botch, and most ghosts stock up on lucky charms before entering the district, just to be safe.

### PLACES OF INTEREST

#### THE PALACE OF FALLING BLOSSOMS

Many ghosts enter the District of Whispering Streets seeking long-lost treasures. Because the district was once

a very wealthy and prosperous part of Stygia, many ruins within, such as old universities or abandoned Manses, hide ancient secrets and artifacts. The dangers of the district ensure that most of these prizes remain untouched. Though most treasure hunters vanish forever, slain by monsters or swallowed by the shifting streets, enough bring back small trinkets and prizes to fuel more stories and greed.

The Palace of Falling Blossoms is one such legendary location. Books describe the library as a vast building constructed of delicate, gray granite with doorways made of artistically wrought steel. Before the fall, it was the center of knowledge within the district, and according to legend, it held every book ever written in Stygia. If true, assuming the building still stands, it would be a treasure trove of long-forgotten knowledge and ancient, necromantic secrets.

Of particular interest is *The Seven-Sealed Tome*. Three years and three days before the Usurpation, 228 mortal servants of the Solar Deliberative committed ritual suicide at the same hour. As each fell, their dying whispers woke dark Nebthys from her Slumber and imparted to her their last wisdom. Fanatically driven by their forbidden knowledge, Nebthys frantically sought a way to purge her mind of these unpleasant truths and wrote out the tome. One page existed for each person who fell, and each is a vivid illustration of the secret one whispered to her. She sealed the volume away and stored it within the Palace of Falling Blossoms. Satisfied, and her mind now clean of the memories, she blissfully forgot the entire affair and turned her attention back to rulership. If *The Seven-Sealed Tome* still exists, it is likely a phenomenal key to some of the greatest mysteries of Creation.

## THE SAFEHOUSE

Near the edge of the district lies a haven from the dangers of the District of the Whispering Streets, an oasis of stability and safety amidst the writhing, monster-infested streets. Fire-blackened timbers form the skeleton of this long-abandoned home, and sharp teeth of broken glass line its gaping windows. The ragged fingers of the roof's remaining shingles clutch at a torn and tattered banner, depicting a faded scene of childish delight. Within, past the dust and the ashes, a single trap door opens to a winding stone staircase and into the cellar beyond. Larger than the house, the cellar is constructed of large, limestone blocks, with rounded, broken grates of rusted black iron partially blocking apertures that lead into the sewers beyond. Scraps of furniture are scattered about the floor, small stools, rocking chairs with their backs broken off and three-legged tables propped up by old crates. Makeshift weapons, such as jagged ended sticks, filed spoons and lengths of chain decorate the walls alongside a few childish drawings and paintings. Opposite the stairs and past the furniture rests an intact ebony chair raised up on a dais constructed of old crates and toy boxes and covered with a patchwork

gray quilt. Beside the chair sits a small table where a bronze bell rests.

The Safehouse is the throne room of the master of the district, the personal residence of Unwanted Whisper. Whenever the Orphan Queen is present, she opens the cellar to all and presides over her feeble court, sitting proudly atop her chair, listening to complaints and offering what help she can. Those few ghosts whose sanity and happiness have not yet been fully consumed often huddle in the cellar, perched on the tiny chairs and stools, waiting for her judgment on small disputes or her pronouncements on more urgent matters. The presence of the bell, symbol of the district, holds the worst of the district's hatred off, and many of the ghosts that cling to the edges of Unwanted Whisper's court do so for the temporary respite from the chaos without.


Attending Unwanted Whisper and ensuring her safety is her personal honor guard, a ragtag band of orphans and street urchins. Their ghostly frames show the marks of the starvation and the beatings that killed them in life, and they have fragile bodies, large eyes and tangled hair. Despite their innocent appearance, a certain savagery surrounds them. Their teeth flash whenever they laugh and smile, and their movements are graceful and predatory. Those who underestimate them fail to grasp the fundamental nature of the dead, for the 200-year-old ghost of a child is as skilled and deadly as the 200-year-old ghost of a man. Long existence within the cursed district has honed the ghosts' already formidable skills of survival and taught them how to kill. They wield their makeshift weapons with astonishing prowess and battle with every unfair tactic they can muster, scattering when attacked and retaliating under the cover of shadow before fading into the twisting streets they know so well. Shadowing their Orphan Queen, they are a formidable force and are directly responsible for stopping assassination attempts against her on several occasions.

## THE DISTRICT OF THE BONE LANTERNS

Whenever a mortal dies in the flush beauty of youth, the promises of her life unfulfilled, a single cherry blossom falls in the District of the Bone Lanterns. Thus, fragile white petals rain eternally upon this beautiful Stygian sanctuary. Paper lanterns, hanging across the streets from ropes, cast a soft, white glow that paints the houses and parlors of the district with gentle hues. Intoxicating perfumes and the spice of tea leaves scent the local wind. The songs of flutes and zithers mix with the patter of fountains and artificial streams. This tranquil district is an homage to everything beautiful and desirable about the dead.

The ghosts of this district seem serene, lacking the pretension of urgency that marks the ghosts of the rest of Stygia. They drift quietly along the wide boulevards with peaceful expressions upon their faces, the sounds of soft





laughter, sighs and whispered conversations following in their wake. Their apparent calm, however, is only a mask worn to tempt the more troubled ghosts of Stygia, to draw them into this apparently peaceful district. In truth, the dead of the Bone Lantern District are as tormented by inner passion as any ghost. Lust and fury draw ghosts to this place as much as the desire for a cup of tea and conversation, and resentment and hunger flicker within the seemingly placid eyes of many of the courtesans and musicians that populate this part of Stygia. Despite appearances, the dead of the District of the Bone Lanterns have no true answers to the doubts and pains of the afterlife, offering instead only a momentary respite from a ghost's troubles.

This district exists to comfort and sate the passions of the dead. All cities have a place of pleasure or ill repute, but the District of Bone Lanterns appears alien to mortals who walk it. The needs of the dead are different than those of the living, for their lovemaking is futile and they eat food only out of habit. The dead need, instead, a quiet place to shed their tears and confess their tragedies, a place to unleash their abuses or sate their remembered lusts. Every street corner, lavishly decorated to be aesthetically pleasing to the dead, caters to these needs. From the laughter and tears of the dead, the district squeezes its astonishing wealth and beckons for more ghosts to join in the frivolities.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### THE PARLOR OF UNSHED TEARS

Open only at night, the Parlor of Unshed Tears is a favored refuge for the poets and artists of Stygia. It is a small, squat building located near the edges of the district. Its dark shingles sparkle like stars, and the roof angles low to the ground, the eaves curled to form elegant gutters. Silver ribbons hang along the edge of the roof, fluttering lightly in the wind. An attractive woman, her hair silver and her robes white, sits beside the door lightly playing a dulcimer and greeting those who wish to enter. The Parlor is exclusive, allowing access only to those who appreciate the arts, and it requires a small entrance fee to cover the drinks and hospitality the patron will enjoy, costing Resources •. Within, the walls and floors are painted black and lit by flickering candles with white wicks. Ghosts rest upon cushions that are scattered about the room, with the rustle of their pens against paper and the clink of their tea cups filling the room. Sheaves of paper, those poems most loved by the clientele, decorate the walls and flutter whenever someone enters or exits. The dead here speak only occasionally, breaking the silence with soft commentary or a favored verse whispered to a friend.

This teahouse exists for the writing of poetry. However, the poems of the Parlor are never ones of joy and love, but of heartbreak and sorrow. Here, the dead express their passions and shed their tears over lost regrets and broken hopes. Mournful confessions written in meter and rhyme

decorate the walls, and ghosts find relief in the writing and the reading of these poems, their tortured, immortal hearts soothed. This pleases Lord Sibilant, the master of the Parlor. He is an aged figure that rests in the far corner of his teahouse, his hair thin and white, his skin pale and wrinkled like the parchment he sketches upon and his fingers deft and thin. His clothing is simple, humble gray robes, with his feet bare and his eyes covered with white cloth. Lord Sibilant was the finest poet of the First Age, but his masterwork remained unfinished. He resides now in the Parlor, listening to the dead whisper their poetry, savoring the pain in their hearts as he struggles to find the final words necessary to complete his work and pass on into Lethe.

### THE HOUSE OF DOLLS

In the center of the district's largest avenue lies the most esteemed palace of pleasure in the necropolis. The roofs of this multi-floored building are red shingled and low sloping, with lamps hanging from their corners. Soft light casts shadowy silhouettes of patrons against the gauzy curtains that shroud the large windows. Silk paneled partitions decorated in swirling and abstract patterns separate the spacious room within into small private chambers. Finely dressed ghosts kneel at low tables, filling the house with their quiet chatter and the clicks of their game tiles. The mood is surprisingly pleasant, and some of the most prestigious of Stygia's dead visit here.

The House of Dolls is the home and business of the Mistress with the White Hands. Part casino, part inn and part brothel, it is famous throughout Stygia. Fistfuls of Essence change hands as ghosts play quiet games of chance on the first floor. The House serves drinks and food of all sorts, drawn from the Mistress' own larders. Above the gaming floor, beyond the wide, red-carpeted stairs, small rooms can be rented for a small price, whether the ghost seeks a night's rest or a night's entertainment. With such fine facilities, most of the dead visiting Stygia make an effort to stay at least one night in the House of Dolls.

The Mistress with the White Hands' famous courtesans attend the patrons of the House. As well known as the concubines of Sijan, the Mistress trains and shapes these beautiful ghosts with her own pale hands. The dead that enter Stygia without wealth and without hope often make their way to House of Dolls, where, if they are willing to bow their head in service to others, the Mistress reshapes each of their faces into a visage of beauty and offers them the raiment of prostitution. Though each courtesan is uniquely beautiful, they all share common features. Their white robes are slashed with patterns of striking red, and their porcelain faces are painted entirely in white except for the color of their bright eyes and lovely lips. Their training covers performance as much as intimacy, for the dead are less interested in the act of sex as they are in the drama that surrounds it. The Mistress' courtesans, for example, will attend two conflicting patrons, attempting

to stoke the fires of jealousy, or if jilted and abandoned, will wail and shed tears, fulfilling the wishes of their clients. Even the necromancers of Creation have heard of these shapely dolls and are quick to summon them to fulfill their sexual desires, for the courtesans are equally well-trained in the needs of mortals for those among the dead who desire to ape the ritual of life.

The House of Dolls caters especially to a very select and rare sort of clientele: mortals traveling the Underworld. They are precious few in number — mostly necromancers and mediums walk the lands of the dead — and even fewer enter the distant and remote city of Stygia. The hollow foods and the empty hearts of the dead cannot sustain those who do, however. The Mistress with the White Hands long ago ensured, at great cost, that her larders were filled with the foods of Creation and that her courtesans were trained in the desires of mortal flesh. To any mortal that enters Stygia, she offers all of her hospitality for one small price. Every morning, at dawn, every living guest of the House of Dolls (seldom more than one, and often none) must rise and, with a silvered knife, offer the Mistress their own blood. She asks for only enough to fill her ornate chalice (never more than a single health level of damage), and unless already grievously wounded, the victim will recover the small wound by the next day, ready for the next offering. The dead enjoy the taste of few things more than blood, and ghosts flock to the House of Dolls should they learn of the presence of a mortal. To those that please her, the Mistress sometimes offers this finest of delicacies. By carefully playing favorites and allowing others to accept the savory offering in her stead, she gains small favors and slowly spreads her influence.

## THE DISTRICT WHERE SHADOWS WALK

Madness lurks under the surface of this otherwise normal district. Black cobblestones still pave the streets, but deeper within the district, the stones grow broken and torn. The tall buildings and spires of this district are twisted and topped with jagged peaks. The shrill screams of the nephwracks and the dark chanting of their followers replace the monotonous hum of prayer. Though the ghosts here carry on with their normal tasks, they cast nervous glances over their shoulders at the ubiquitous disciples of Oblivion. This district bears no scars from the nephwracks' occupation and was spared the wrath of the Deathlords, lending it an ancient feel. Surrounded by the shadowy cathedrals of the Abyss and watching the nephwracks preach their insidious gospel on the street corners, none within the district can deny that they reside in the center of Stygia's darkness.

The District Where Shadows Walk was surrendered to the nephwracks after their occupation of the city. By the laws of the treaty signed thousands of years ago, the Dual Monarchy has only token control over the area. Packs of

vicious mortwights replace the stability of the Monarchy's soldiers with their own brand of law and order. Monstrous temples replace government buildings, and enormous monuments to Oblivion rise out of the depths of the district. Nephwracks battle one another constantly for dogmatic dominion with both magic and weapons, and only the occasional threat of force from the Monarchy's effigies is enough to keep their struggles from spilling over the borders. The dominion of the district requires both cunning and brute force, and the rulers of this part of Stygia seldom last long.

Not every ghost within the district follow the teachings of Oblivion. Despite the confines of the nephwracks' insane religions, many ghosts choose to remain here, for there are worse places to live. Even so, peril abounds in the District Where Shadows Walk. The greatest danger of the district is the attentions of one of the Void-maddened priests. Generally, professing unspecified devotion to Oblivion and quietly nodding in agreement with the priest's rants will satisfy him. However, appearing too pious can hold its own dangers. Some cult leaders seek a reverent ghost devoted to the Void for a sacrifice. Other nephwracks take murderous offense at the slightest theological error. Worse, a new sect could violently sweep away the old and seemingly safe philosophies of yesterday, endangering any perceived as adherents to that faith. Despite the constantly shifting political atmosphere and the murderous leadership of the district, most ghosts residing in there manage to avoid the attentions of the nephwracks and continue their existence unmolested.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### THE STARK MONOLITH

A massive obelisk of seamless, shadowy marble rises from the very center of the District Where Shadows Walk. The empty ground surrounding the monument is rumpled and broken as though something had churned violently beneath it. The Monolith evokes a silence in its immediate area, and no being can force himself to speak louder than a whisper in its awe-inspiring presence. Legends have risen around it, the most popular claiming that the monument is the haft of an enormous spear that slew a Primordial and continues to pin it in its grave. At the base of the obelisk lies a single stone door, and no amount of effort has ever opened it or even scratched its unbreakable surface. None knew what lay within the Stark Monolith, and none knew what the monument marked.

Three years ago, the day the first Abyssal stepped upon the soil of Stygia, the door opened, and an ancient spectre stepped forth. After surveying his surroundings and the stunned crowd that gathered to witness his entrance, the spectre nodded and proclaimed his satisfaction. He has been a powerful resident of the District Where Shadows Walk ever since.







The Emissary of Righteous Victory, as he calls himself, is as beautiful as he is powerful. He wears a mantle of dark, soundless robes, and beneath them, he clothes his lithe and athletic body in silvery, close fitting armor. A round, featureless mask decorated with labyrinthine swirls covers his face, and behind the expressive eye slits sits only serene darkness. Two beautiful black wings spread from the Emissary's shoulders, glittering with every iridescent color of the Void. In battle, he summons a soulsteel spear

to his hand, but none have seen its full powers unleashed. He is ancient, and some whisper that he lived and served the Malfeans before Stygia was first founded. Minor disciples of the Abyss have begun to flock to him, calling him not a priest of Oblivion, but a saint. Because the Emissary is more than strong enough to oust him, Maru jealously fears for his status. Despite his enormous prowess and great occult and political might, however, the Emissary of Righteous Victory is only a ghost. He bows before the strength of the Deathlords, and though amused, he seems pleased to work beside them. Many watch the actions of this dark herald and believe that he is a portent of unpleasant times. Only time will tell what consequences his presence shall bring.

#### THE CATHEDRAL STAINED

##### IN MURDER

A massive cathedral dominates one of the major entrances to the District Where Shadows Walk. Constructed of black stone quarried from the Labyrinth, it rises high into the air, dwarfing those who pass beneath it. Spires, pillars and arches clutter the surface of the vast temple, making it seem jagged and elegant. Unlike so many other temples to Oblivion, this one is dominated with silence, for the congregations within do not speak or sing. The enormous inner chamber is light by candelabras and filled with the smoke of bitter incense.

Behind the stone altar that stands at the rear of the church stands a tall stained-glass window that dominates the whole room. The image it depicts is never the same twice, once a scene of carnage, next a picture of mind-bending violations of physics. It depicts the mood of Maru, master of the district, for it was painted with the colors of his discarded sanity.

This is Maru's cathedral, the center of his personal cult. While present, Maru stands before his congregation, gathering his unearthly voice to deliver his sermons filled

with his madcap logic. He is flanked by his deacons, those ghosts who have reached enough enlightenment and loyalty to Maru that they have taken pilgrimages with him into the depths of the Labyrinth. These dark priests shroud themselves in black robes, their faces concealed with featureless black masks that hide their eyes and their mouths welded shut with spiked, steel bands. Many attend Maru's sermons, for he is among the most popular nephwracks at the moment, and his pews are almost always

full. Those who most fervently accept his philosophies sew their eyes shut, so that they can see nothing but the perfect darkness of Oblivion, and they sow their mouths shut, so that they can speak no word Oblivion itself would not utter. Those who wish to commune with the nephwrack lord of the district can most often find him here, but speaking to him before his cult is risky, for like all nephwrack cults, his followers are fanatical, unafraid of death, blood-thirsty and insane.

### SUMMONING THE PRESTIGIOUS DEAD

Necromancy is an incredibly diverse and powerful discipline. Even at the simplest level, a young Exalt can call forth the mightiest and most powerful of the dead. While some necromancers content themselves with simple war ghosts and surly ancestor spirits, the most ambitious seek out the names of the elite of the Underworld. Rather than allow a common spirit to defend them, these necromancers wish to have the Emissary of Righteous Victory at their side. Discontent with the simplest of ghostly whores, they seek to enslave the Mistress with the White Hands herself. With great power comes great pride, and those who tread the fragile paths of ghost summoning should be wary of the consequences.

The most powerful of the dead have no specific immunities to the bindings of necromancy. They are, however, more powerful than most dead, and so, a necromancer should carefully consider some factors before attempting to summon up a Ghost Lord. Of course, summoning requires either the ghost's name or a piece of his corpse. Names are especially difficult to gain, for the dead understand the power of them. The Mistress with the White Hands is not actually named the Mistress with White Hands. Like many ghosts, she carefully hid her true name away and assumed a sobriquet, allowing her name to grow forgotten. Any scholar seeking it would need to devote a great deal of his time to research. A piece of the corpse is even harder to acquire, for the tombs of the powerful dead are carefully sealed away, their bodies often decayed to dust over the long centuries. Should a necromancer acquire either of these powerful tools, his difficulties are far from over. The Ghost Lords listed in this chapter are very potent. Most will have an Essence of 5 and a Willpower of 8 or higher, meaning that a novice necromancer will be forced to spend a great deal of his Essence if he wishes to master the will of the Ghost Lord. Finally, even if the necromancer is successful in his binding, he may find the consequences of his actions unpleasant. The Underworld doesn't stop simply because one of its leaders has vanished, and chaos could ensue when a councilman or an important courtier simply vanishes. Further, enslavement is enslavement, whether by chains of soulsteel or chains of Essence. The dead do not enjoy being bound, and the necromancer should be prepared to deal with the enemy he has made. However, if the necromancer can accommodate all of these factors, nothing stops him from binding a powerful ghost to his will. The Exalted are mighty, as are their arts, and against a master necromancer, all ghosts are powerless.

The exception to this rule are the Duel Monarchs. Lacking true names, they cannot be summoned. Upon the coronation of a ghost as a Monarch, she loses her old name forever, and the new name that replaces it isn't truly hers either. This loss of name isn't the same as an Abyssal or Deathlord casting her name into the Void. Rather, it comes from an ambiguity of identity. As such, Monarchs cannot be summoned, for they are neither entirely who they were nor who they currently are.

No statistics have been provided for the prestigious dead within this chapter, and the Storyteller is encouraged to provide his own. As a guideline, the dead presented here are often the best in the Underworld at what they do. Most will have powerful artifacts and powerful, unprinted Arcanoi. However, they are only ghosts, and an experienced Celestial Exalt should have little trouble defeating them. As a general guide, the most powerful of the dead should be slightly weaker than Second Circle demons.







## CHAPTER TWO THE ARTS OF THE DEAD



As spirit beings composed largely of Essence, ghosts had great potential to develop mastery of their own magical natures. As former mortal men, they were compelled by their nature to explore the possibilities of their bleak new world. Among their number were savants, princes and former Exalts, all of whom were familiar with the science of metaphysics, and many of whom had handled and shaped Essence themselves when they were alive. Though the principles were different and the static nature of ghostly existence made progress slow, there were compelling reasons to explore this matter — to procure prayers and sacrifices from the living, to reshape and ward against the hazards of the Underworld and, of course, to gain dominion over one's fellow ghosts.

All of these were the impetus, and within a few generations, the scattered denizens of the Underworld had developed spiritual technologies that allowed them to fulfill many of their needs. As Essence effects springing from spirit beings, many of these were highly idiosyncratic, unique to the individuals who created them and the situations they found themselves in. Others were created by students of Essence or sprang from some generally shared elements of ghostly existence and could be taught and refined.

These more general spirit powers were the first Arcanoi. In the First Age and the millenium and a half thereafter, a fairly large number of Arcanoi were developed. Many, especially those dealing purely with ghostly existence in

the Underworld, were discovered early, refined early and taught widely among ghosts. Other, more exotic arts, especially those involving questionable activities or interaction with the often-difficult land of the living, were more specialized. While these arts were often practiced by multiple ghosts, they were also often confined to specific cultural regions or family groups and frequently perished or were partially forgotten.

The various upheavals that the Underworld has suffered — particularly the rise of the Deathlords and the often-chaotic times since — have provided the impulse for these broken traditions. Yet, such “lost” arts are not genuinely forgotten in many cases, for the dead do not perish of age, and they often remember their arts after those arts have become impolitic or unfashionable to use or when they no longer have any use for them. Many of these “lost” arts linger on in the corners of the Underworld, the organized propagation of the knowledge disrupted but the knowledge itself still alive and, in many cases, actively practiced by the ghosts who mastered these tricks when they were actively taught.

The Arcanoi seen in Chapter Six of **Exalted: The Abyssals** are by no means the only arts known to the dead. Many of the other Arcanoi seen below can be found only in the hands of certain ghostly communities (and are described as such), but other Arcanoi are common among the undead and can be learned by any ghost.

## COMMON ARCANOI

The Arcanoi listed below are not part of long Charm trees. Most are individual arts that can be learned piecemeal, though there may be dependencies between some of them. These are Charms of ordinary utility to nearly any ghost (heroic or not).

### DARK STEED MASTERY

**Cost:** 1 mote per die  
**Duration:** Instant  
**Type:** Supplemental  
**Minimum Conviction:** 1  
**Minimum Essence:** 1  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

This Charm is frequently taught to ghostly cavalry in the service of a Deathlord or another tyrant of the Underworld. Dark Steed Mastery allows a ghost to better control a ghostly mount. This Arcanos adds one die to the ghost's Ride dice pools for every mote of Essence spent, to a maximum number of dice equal to his Essence. This Charm can only be used within the Underworld or a shadowland, unless the ghost uses Manifest the Dark Steed (see p. 41).

### POLE THE BLACK DEPTHS

**Cost:** 1 mote per die  
**Duration:** Instant  
**Type:** Supplemental  
**Minimum Conviction:** 1  
**Minimum Essence:** 1  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

This Charm allows a ghost sailor to better fulfill his duties. The ghost who uses Pole the Black Depths gains one die to his Sail dice pools for every mote of Essence spent, to a maximum number of dice equal to his Essence. This Charm can only be used within the Underworld or a shadowland, unless the ghost is on the crew of a boat manifested through the use of Conjure the Defeated Vessel or Sunken Admiral Technique (see p. 41-42).

### SCENT OF SWEET BLOOD

**Cost:** 1 mote  
**Duration:** One scene  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Compassion:** 1  
**Minimum Essence:** 1  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

This simple Charm allows a ghost to smell spilled blood or bleeding wounds at a range of one mile per dot of Essence. The blood does not have to be particularly fresh, but it should be from a mortal or Exalt — animal blood is only sensed at half the range that mortal or Exalt blood can be smelled. The ghost learns the direction of and distance to the blood. Unusually large amounts — say, more than

a human body's worth — may be detected at as far away as five miles per dot of Essence, and strong wind currents or other intense weather may interfere with this ability.

### MOON'S COLD GLOW

**Cost:** 2 motes  
**Duration:** One night per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Conviction:** 1  
**Minimum Essence:** 1  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Underworld is gloomy and dark even on its brightest mornings. This simple art allows a ghost to pierce the natural darkness of the Underworld. If there is no precipitation or fog, double the distance for both Clear Vision and Murky Vision for the ghost, to a maximum of 100 yards (see *Exalted*, p. 237). Roll Perception + Conviction. Success means that the ghost can see normally until the following dawn, and each additional success adds 24 hours to the duration from that point.

### TWO WORLD VISION

**Cost:** 2 motes  
**Duration:** One turn per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Conviction:** 1  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Every spot in the Underworld has an analog within Creation proper — the lands of the dead are simply a dark mirror to the lands above. With this Charm, a ghost can glance from his location in the Underworld at the corresponding space in Creation. A Perception + Occult roll suffices to activate the Charm and provides one turn of vision per success. Two World Vision only works at night. This Arcanos doesn't work both ways. Even if the ghost finds himself in the living world one night, he cannot look into the Underworld.

### WHISPERS OF THE LIVING

**Cost:** 3 motes  
**Duration:** One minute per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Conviction:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Underworld is itself a dark reflection of Creation, and every point in the Underworld corresponds to a particular space in Creation. This Arcanos allows the ghost to hear the living world as though she was standing in the equivalent spot to her current location in the Underworld. A Perception + Occult roll activates the Charm, and the ghost can listen for one minute per success. A botch on this roll allows any living being in that same location to hear unearthly whispers and winds,

giving away these strange goings-on. Whispers of the Living only works at night. As with Two World Vision, Whispers of the Living does not allow a ghost to listen in from Creation into the Underworld.

### PYRE SMOKE FORM

**Cost:** 2 motes  
**Duration:** One turn per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

With Pyre Smoke Form, a ghost may become incorporeal even in environments where he would ordinarily be manifest — in the Underworld, for instance, or in a shadowland during Calibration. Using this Arcanos requires a Stamina + Temperance roll, and each success allows one turn of incorporeality.

### BREEZE-CARRIED ASH FORM

**Cost:** 5 motes  
**Duration:** One turn per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Conviction:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Pyre Smoke Form

Breeze-Carried Ash Form allows a ghost to fly through the air at any speed up to his maximum running pace, so long as he is incorporeal as he does so (this Charm is primarily effective only in the land of the living). His player must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll, and each success allows one turn of flight. If the ghost is above ground level when the Charm expires, he falls toward the ground as though solid. He does not take any damage from the fall, however, because he must be incorporeal to use this Arcanos.

### ASSASSIN'S SUBTLE ESCAPE

**Cost:** 5 motes, 1 Willpower  
**Duration:** One hour per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Assassin's Subtle Escape allows a ghost to temporarily inhabit a mundane object in the living world. The ghost simply lays his hand upon the object, and his physical essence is absorbed into the thing. The ghost's presence cannot be detected by mundane means, though Charms such as Superior Sight Focus (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 205) allow others to detect him. While inhabiting an object, the ghost cannot be directly harmed. Damage to the object does not harm the inhabiting ghost, but the item's destruction by fire, pulverization or magic sends the ghost to Lethe. The ghost's player must

succeed in a Manipulation + Crafts roll for the ghost to successfully inhabit the object, and he remains within it for up to one hour per success or until he decides to leave — note that once the ghost leaves the object the Charm expires. The ghost may expend an additional 5 motes and a point of Willpower in order for his player to reroll his duration at any time. However, the new duration of the Charm is measured from the new expenditure and roll (rather than being tacked onto the end of the existing use of the Charm).

Assassin's Subtle Escape does not allow a ghost residing in an object to animate the object in any fashion. He is only a passenger. Only one ghost can reside in a given object at a time.

### MOTIVATED SHELL

**Cost:** 8 motes + 1 Willpower  
**Duration:** One turn per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Valor:** 3  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Assassin's Subtle Escape

Motivated Shell can only be activated once a ghost inhabits an object through Assassin's Subtle Escape (above). This Arcanos enables the ghost to control the motions of an object he inhabits. The motions must be the sorts of things that the object could ordinarily do or be made to do by hand. A door swings open or closed; a lock turns or opens; a cart's wheels roll on their own. The ghost's player rolls Manipulation + Craft, and each success allows the ghost to control the object's ordinary movements for one turn.

### RIDE THE MYSTIC VESSEL

**Cost:** 3 motes  
**Duration:** One turn  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Valor:** 3  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Assassin's Subtle Escape

This Charm allows the ghost to use Assassin's Subtle Escape to inhabit an object made of the Five Magical Materials. Ride the Mystic Vessel does not allow the ghost to inhabit highly enchanted items (those requiring Artifact •• or higher) unless those items are made of soulsteel or jade. Even then, the ghost cannot inhabit an item if it is Artifact •••• or above or attuned to an Exalt.

Ghosts cannot combine Arcanoi into Combos, so this Arcanos cannot be activated simultaneously with Assassin's Subtle Escape. Instead, the ghost must activate Ride the Mystic Vessel and then, the following turn, activate Assassin's Subtle Escape and enter the object in question.





### ANGRY TRICKSTER GHOST METHOD

**Cost:** 5 motes

**Duration:** Three turns

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Two World Vision, Assassin's Subtle Escape

This Arcanos allows an angry ghost to harness his rage into a storm of flying objects in Creation. This storm will injure any unarmored beings caught within it, and it does not differentiate between friend and foe. The ghost's player rolls Conviction + Melee. Every success increases the diameter of the storm by five yards. The storm hurts those caught in the area. It deals four dice of lethal damage if the objects used are sharp and hard and four dice of bashing damage otherwise (with successes adding to this damage). An entity caught within the storm of objects can defend against it normally.

### FORMER LIFE DESTRUCTION TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Type:** Special

**Minimum Temperance:** 4

**Minimum Essence:** 4

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

This art — one of the few introduced to ghostly society by the Deathlords — replicates the Abyssal Exaltation in that it allows a ghost to hide his true name from Creation. The ghost hides his name behind a title or an obviously false name and can never speak or respond to his true name. In return, the character receives an additional three dice to resist any sorcery or necromancy that relies on his name or identity. It does not protect him against line-of-sight magical attacks, however — the character's identity as "Mavis Karan" is protected, not his identity as "third guy from the left at that table."

### STAGGERED DARK STARS MOVEMENT

**Cost:** 5 motes, 1 Willpower

**Duration:** Varies (see below)

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 4

**Minimum Essence:** 4

**Prerequisite Charms:** Flying Time Technique (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 241)

Staggered Dark Stars Movement allows a powerful ghost to take advantage of Setesh's Calendar in such a way as to allow hours to pass like moments for himself. The ghost simply pushes his own path further along Setesh's

Calendar than those around him. The Charm allows the ghost to “skip” over minutes or hours. To the ghost, it seems as though time simply jumps forward a few minutes or hours. To those watching, the ghost seems to disappear, only to return after a few minutes or hours. The ghost’s player must roll Intelligence + Occult, and for every success, the ghost can jump forward up to 30 minutes. The player rolls and determines the maximum amount of time the character can leap forward. After that maximum duration is determined, the character picks any amount of time up to that maximum that he wishes to jump. Note that the ghost cannot perceive events that happen in the interim, nor can he make conditional jumps — “jump forward until these guys leave” is not permitted. This Arcanos is a fine way to escape combat, but the ghost *cannot* jump backward. Any time he skips over is forever lost to him. This Charm can only be used in the Underworld, as Setesh’s Calendar has no power over Creation.

### HOURS LIKE AUTUMN LEAVES

**Cost:** 6 motes and 1 Willpower per person

**Duration:** Varies (see below)

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 4

**Minimum Essence:** 5

**Prerequisite Charms:** Staggered Dark Stars Movement

Hours Like Autumn Leaves allows the most powerful ghosts to pull themselves and nearby companions forward along Setesh’s Calendar. For all ghosts caught in the pull of this Charm, the world seems to flicker as they jump forward in time. Observers see all ghosts affected by the Charm vanish, only to reappear later. The player of the ghost using this Charm must roll Intelligence + Occult and the ghost must spend 6 motes for himself and every entity to be dragged forward with him, as well as 1 Willpower per being. For every success, the whole group can be moved forward in time up to 30 minutes. The player rolls and determines the maximum amount of time the group can leap forward, and after that maximum duration is determined, the character picks any amount of time up to that maximum that he wishes to jump. Note that the ghost cannot perceive events that happen in the interim, nor can he make conditional jumps — “jump forward until these guys leave” is not permitted. The total span jumped is at the discretion of the ghost using this Charm (those brought along have no control over the span of time over which they jump). Willing subjects of this Charm should be within 10 yards of the ghost using it. An unwilling subject can only be brought along if the ghost is physically touching her.

It is rumored that the ghosts of Stygia have a more powerful version of this Charm that allows ghosts to leap forward years, rather than hours.

## UNCOMMON ARCANOI

The arts below are collected into trees of Arcanoi, and they are typically taught from a common source. Knowledge of these Arcanoi slowly radiates throughout the Underworld over time, and each tree of Arcanoi can be traced back to its ghostly progenitor.

### EVOKE THE ANCIENT CLAY

Most ghosts can materialize. However, Materialize is extremely expensive in Essence, and for ghosts, Materialize only lasts one scene. The Lintha ghosts of the West have discovered a slow progression of Arcanoi that culminate in abilities that far exceed Materialize in every way that matters. Of course, Materialize has no prerequisite, and Evoke the Ancient Clay is a chain of Arcanoi, but each of these arts provides benefits of its own, and many provide limited versions of Embody at far lower Essence costs than that art.

### WHISPER

**Cost:** 1 mote

**Duration:** One scene

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Valor:** 1

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

This Charm allows a ghost’s whispered voice to be heard in the portion of the living world that corresponds to his location in the Underworld. The ghost must literally whisper as he uses this ability — if he speaks at normal volume, those near him in the lands of the dead hear him normally, but those in the living world do not. The ghost’s whispers can be heard clearly within one yard of his location. A successful Perception + Awareness roll must be made for those within 10 yards to hear the whispers, and an additional success must be achieved for every 10 yards distance for anyone further away.

### MARSH LIGHT

**Cost:** 1 mote

**Duration:** One scene

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Valor:** 1

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** Whisper

Marsh Light allows a ghost to create a light or a small group of lights in the living world in the spot corresponding to her current location in the Underworld. The light or lights must form simple shapes and can only move with the ghost.

The lights often pique the curiosity of the living. Players of living creatures who see the lights and aren’t actively engaged in something they consider to be important (combat, critical craftwork, healing a friend, etc.)





must make a successful Conviction roll for their characters, or they spend a turn considering the lights. Living creatures or spirits with an Essence higher than the ghost's are immune to this effect.

### SWEET WINSOME LIGHT

**Cost:** 4 motes  
**Duration:** One minute per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Valor:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Marsh Light

Sweet Winsome Light creates a beautiful bobbing light that attracts all who see it. Ghosts use this Arcanos to lure their prey — or their enemies — to their doom. The light dances in the wind, eternally just five or ten yards out of reach, and it appears to be a traveler's torch or a glowing talisman. The Sweet Winsome Light can be created within 20 yards of the ghost's current location or (for an additional mote of Essence) at the spot in Creation corresponding to the ghost's current location in the Underworld. To create the light, the ghost's player rolls Charisma + Occult, and it lasts for one minute per success.

The light attracts all who see it. Animals that notice it automatically move toward it (though they don't charge with all their will — their handlers or riders may resist the Arcanos with standard Ride feats if they can keep their own heads about them). Living beings (even Exalted) resist the Sweet Winsome Light with a Conviction roll. For each turn that the light is visible, the target's player must get at least one success on the Conviction roll, or the target moves toward it at his best possible speed. A spent point of Willpower negates the effect of the Sweet Winsome Light for a full minute.

### TINKER'S BODY

**Cost:** 4 motes  
**Duration:** One scene  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Valor:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Marsh Light

A ghost using Tinker's Body can assemble a patchwork body for himself in the living world out of nearby scraps, trash and trinkets. The ghost remains intangible but is able to motivate the collection of objects and feel through the Tinker's Body as though it was his own flesh and blood — at least to some extent. The ghost cannot speak through the Tinker's Body, though he can clap, stomp and make similar gross-motor sorts of sounds. The ghost loses two dice from all Social dice pools while "wearing" the Tinker's Body — a penalty that may be reduced if the ghost's player succeeds in an appropriate Craft roll for his character to fabricate a suitably expressive face. The ghost's Mental Attributes are unchanged in the

Tinker's Body, while his Physical Attributes depend on the composition of the body.

The Tinker's Body gets one dot in each of the three Physical Attributes, and the ghost gets an additional four dots to be split between the Physical Attributes based on the objects out of which he constructs the Tinker's Body — a Tinker's Body made of twine and straw may have a Dexterity of ••••• and Strength and Stamina of • each, while one made of loose brick and stone may have a Dexterity of • and Strength and Stamina of ••• each. The Tinker's Body is only a shell; it has four health levels (-0/-1/-2/-4). Wound penalties represent bits of the body being knocked off or otherwise destroyed, rather than pain and shock.

### SLEEPER'S CAUL

**Cost:** 3 motes  
**Duration:** One scene  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Valor:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Marsh Light

Sleeper's Caul enables a ghost to make a static solid body in the land of the living. This body is not truly the ghost's own body; it is a shell, and even if it is destroyed, the ghost remains unharmed. The Sleeper's Caul has a Strength and Dexterity of 0; it cannot move. Its Stamina is equal to the ghost's Stamina. The Sleeper's Caul can hear, speak and see (even blink and move its eyes). The ghost has a sense of touch, even if it cannot move, so it does feel pain. The Sleeper's Caul has three health levels (no wound penalties apply, since the body can never perform actions).

### EMBODY

**Cost:** 5 motes  
**Duration:** One scene  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Valor:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 3  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Sleeper's Caul

Embody allows a ghost who is disembodied in the material world to create himself a temporary body out of Essence. This body takes the ghost's likeness (which may not be exactly the same as his appearance in life!). The meat-body that the ghost pulls together with Embody is not a fully functional body by comparison to the ghost's normal abilities in the Underworld, a shadowland or during Calibration. The ghost has its normal Intelligence, Wits and Social Attributes while in this temporary body, but as an improvised bag of flesh, its other Attributes are all reduced by two dots (to minimum of •). The meat-body has four health levels (-0/-1/-2/-4), and the ghost really does feel the pain of any wounds it takes — and it is obviously not well suited for combat.

**MANIFEST THE DARK STEED****Cost:** 3 motes**Duration:** One scene**Type:** Simple**Minimum Conviction:** 2**Minimum Essence:** 2**Prerequisite Charms:** Embody

This Arcanos allows a ghost to bring a single ghost animal into a manifest form when he manifests. He must be touching the animal to do so. The animal retains all of its Attributes, Abilities, soak and health levels. Other animals of its species will recognize it to be strange and shy away from it. The ghost animal returns to incorporeal ghost form at the end of the scene — or sooner than that, if the ghost using this Arcanos ends his manifestation before the end of the scene.

**BIRTH THE WARRIOR FORM****Cost:** 20 motes, 1 Willpower**Duration:** Five minutes per success**Type:** Simple**Minimum Valor:** 4**Minimum Essence:** 3**Prerequisite Charms:** Embody

Birth the Warrior Form allows the ghost to use his Essence and Willpower to create a body that is prepared for combat — the ghost also creates temporary armor and weapons that manifest in the living world. The player should roll Valor + Occult to create the body, and for each success, the Warrior Form lasts for five minutes. This body takes the ghost's likeness and has his full Attributes. The Warrior Form also has the ghost's full health levels. Additionally, the ghost may fabricate any single nonmagical weapon and single nonmagical set of armor, each of whose Resources cost is less than or equal to his Essence. For instance, if the ghost's Essence is 3, he may create a great sword and a chain hauberk, but not plate-and-chain. The ghost may dissolve the Warrior Form at any time before the end of the Charm's rolled duration, in which case, the Warrior Form is considered to have ended. When the Charm ends, the armor and weapon created by it dissolve along with the Warrior Form.

**BIRTH THE PERFECTED MASTER****Cost:** 20 motes, 1 Willpower**Duration:** Five minutes per success**Type:** Simple**Minimum Valor:** 2**Minimum Essence:** 3**Prerequisite Charms:** Embody

Ghosts exist outside of the formal strictures of Creation. The body that a ghost creates for himself does not have to match the characteristics of his dead flesh, if he knows Birth the Perfected Master. Birth the Perfected

Master creates a meat-body like Embody, except that it has the ghost's full Ability scores. The flesh that Birth the Perfected Master creates reflects the ghost's idealized self-image. The ghost may split six dots among the following Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina and Appearance. This body is created stark naked, and it lasts for five minutes for each success that the player achieves on a Valor + Occult roll.

**UNENDING REBIRTH****Cost:** 8 motes, 1 Willpower**Duration:** One turn per success**Type:** Simple**Minimum Valor:** 4**Minimum Essence:** 4

**Prerequisite Charms:** Birth the Warrior Form, Birth the Perfected Master

The ghost experiences his first birth in Creation, and his second birth comes when he enters the Underworld as one of the Restless Dead. This Arcanos allows the ghost to flicker back and forth between living and ghostly forms. Use of this Charm does *not* permit a ghost to take on a flesh form — in order to do that, he must use Materialize, Weighted With the Anchor of Flesh (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**) or one of the other Arcanoi in this tree. However, once manifest in a physical form, Unending Rebirth allows him to switch from immaterial to physical and back. The ghost can only activate this Charm once he is manifested, and it requires a Wits + Occult roll. If that roll succeeds, he may change back and forth from manifest to immaterial as he wishes until the duration of Unending Rebirth (or his manifestation Charm) expires. Each switch from flesh to ghost or back requires 1 mote of Essence and is a simple action. A “switch” of this nature does not terminate a manifestation Arcanos.

For Example: The long-dead Master Cotep, manifest to visit his namesake in a village in the South, finds himself surrounded by angry villagers. He is already manifest in Creation. Cotep spends 8 motes and 1 Willpower (and his player rolls Wits + Occult) to activate Unending Rebirth, and he becomes immaterial. He runs through the wall of his namesake's hut and past his foes. The next turn, he spends another mote to rematerialize and fight on his own terms. A few turns later, things are going badly, so he spends another mote to dematerialize and run for safety.

**CONJURE THE DEFEATED VESSEL****Cost:** 5 motes**Duration:** One hour per success**Type:** Simple**Minimum Conviction:** 3**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pole the Black Depths, Tinker's Body





Conjure the Defeated Vessel allows a ghost to bring a single ship, regardless of size, from the Underworld into Creation. Ordinarily, a ship crossing into Creation from a shadowland becomes intangible, just as ghosts do. Conjure the Defeated Vessel is used once the ship has entered the physical realm, and it makes the boat fully physical. The ghost's player must roll Intelligence + Sail, and the boat remains fully physical for one hour per success. The ghost may spend additional Essence and his player reroll the Charm's duration at any time — the duration of Conjure the Defeated Vessel is measured from that point onward and uses the new roll (in other words, if the Arcanos still has three hours duration left to it and the ghost spends 5 motes of Essence and his player rerolls, getting four successes, the boat will stay physical for another four hours, not seven). Essence spent activating this Charm is committed until the effect's duration expires, so ghosts will be drained of Essence if they attempt to maintain it overlong.

The ship's Traits are all just as they would be in the Underworld (in other words, the same as any other boat of the same type and materials in Creation). It is considered to be intact (despite any appearances to the contrary) and has all its health levels (unless it suffers from unrepaired damage from the Underworld, in which case, it retains that damage). Once so manifested, the boat remains physical until its pilot or the ghost using this Arcanos becomes incorporeal again. The boat is blasted to ash and dust by direct sunlight (though if it stays in caves, travels only

when it's overcast or is shrouded by fog, it can survive until the Charm's duration expires).

### SUNKEN ADMIRAL TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 8 motes per boat, 2 Willpower

**Duration:** One hour per success

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 4

**Minimum Essence:** 4

**Prerequisite Charms:** Conjure the Defeated Vessel

While Conjure the Defeated Vessel enables a boat's pilot to make that single vessel manifest in Creation, Sunken Admiral Technique lets a lone ghost pull every boat within sight into Creation — within the limitations of his Essence. The ghost's player rolls Manipulation + Sail, and the ghost spends his Essence. For every success, the fleet can remain in Creation for one hour. As with Conjure the Defeated Vessel, each boat retains its full Traits in Creation. Its weapons work normally, and its hull is considered to be whole even if it has massive ancient rents in its side.

### UNCONSCIOUS SPEECH

**Cost:** 1 mote

**Duration:** One turn

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

This simple art allows an incorporeal ghost in the material world to sneak words out through the mouth of a living person. The ghost must “touch” the target and spends a mote of Essence, and his player rolls the ghost’s Dexterity + Expression. If he succeeds, the target involuntarily says what the ghost intended him to say — one word for every success achieved. The target does not immediately realize that she is speaking at all, but she can figure it out by her player succeeding at an Intelligence + Occult roll after someone around the character points out that she said words she doesn’t remember speaking. A conscious target who is aware that a ghost is manipulating her can resist such manipulation for the scene by spending a Willpower. If the target wishes to allow the ghost to speak through her, the ghost must spend 1 mote of Essence per sentence but no roll needs to be made.

## SHADOW CONSTRAINT CRAFT

Ghosts’ activities are tightly constrained in the Underworld, and mortals are bound as much, if not more so. The secret laws of the Underworld stem from the Dual Monarchy, which nearly every ghost venerates at least in name. Ghosts who learn Shadow Constraint Craft learn to manipulate the taboos and secret laws of the Underworld and to punish ghosts and mortals who violate them.

## ILLUMINATE THE SHADOW CONSTRAINT

**Cost:** 1 mote

**Duration:** One minute

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Temperance:** 1

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Throughout the Underworld, subtle laws apply to the activities of ghosts. Most such laws stem from the use of ancient and wide-ranging necromancy, but others are restricted in their area of effect, are new or have nothing to do with necromancy itself — they are inherent to the fabric of the Underworld. Ghosts can create temporary taboos with the Impose Stricture Arcanos (see p. 45).

Illuminate the Shadow Constraint reveals any taboos that apply to any locations within sight. Alternately, the ghost’s player may roll Perception + Bureaucracy when her character uses this Charm in order to determine any taboos that apply to a particular person or ghost. Studious and careful ghosts learn Illuminate the Shadow Constraint in order to remain aware of taboos and strange laws of reality as they travel from realm to realm.



## TWENTY TABOOS

The Storyteller may use any of these as local taboos, while players may choose to create them with necromancy or some of the Arcanoi in this art. This list should be seen only as inspiration. These are not the only possible taboos by any means.

- The living may not eat food grown in this place (or they may not eat a particular food, such as pomegranates).
- Slay no ghost animals.
- Do not say the word “love.”
- Touch no other ghost.
- Never let your feet touch the ground.
- Look at no other ghost’s eyes.
- Do not speak of Creation or of your mortal life.
- Wear no woven clothing.
- Never speak your name.
- Light no new fires.
- Give thrice-daily veneration to the Dual Monarchy.
- Drink only collected rainwater.
- Do not fight with thrown weapons.
- Carry a piece of stone against your flesh at all times.
- Speak only in whispers.
- Eat only the flesh of carrion eaters such as hyenas or vultures.
- Sleep only under the open sky.
- Cook only using implements crafted from cold iron (or bone).
- Sleep in a bed crafted for children.
- Cover every inch of your flesh save your eyes (or face).

## DARK SORCERY OBSERVATION

**Cost:** 1 mote  
**Duration:** Instant  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 1  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

A ghost who activates Dark Sorcery Observation instantly notices the presence of any active necromantic effects within his field of vision, so long as his player succeeds in a simple Perception + Occult roll. Ensorcelled people, objects or areas emit a dark, pulsing aura to the character's eyes for a moment or two. With three or more successes, the ghost is aware of the circle (Shadowlands, Underworld, Void) of the necromancy, and with five or more successes, he learns a one-word description of what every effect in the area is doing.

## GHOSTLY MAGISTRATE PERCEPTION

**Cost:** 1 mote  
**Duration:** One scene  
**Type:** Instant  
**Minimum Temperance:** 2  
**Minimum Essence:** 1  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Illuminate the Shadow Constraint

This simple Charm allows a ghost to detect the presence of criminals against the local natural order. It immediately points out any living being in line of sight within the Underworld (even if he attempts to conceal his presence through non-magical disguises or the like). Additionally, with a Perception + Bureaucracy roll at standard difficulty, the ghost-magistrate notices any entity that has violated a taboo of the Underworld within the last 24 hours and not had his violation forgiven through the use of Accept Amercement.

## BRIEF EXEMPTION

**Cost:** 3 motes  
**Duration:** One scene  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 3  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Illuminate the Shadow Constraint

Brief Exemption allows a ghost to tiptoe around a taboo of the Underworld, whether it is a "natural" taboo, one imposed by necromancy or one created by Impose Stricture (see p. 45). A Manipulation + Stealth roll is required. An "ordinary" natural taboo requires just one success to ignore. One imposed by Necromancy or Impose Stricture requires a number of successes equal to the Essence of the entity who created the taboo (a default of four if unknown).

## ACCEPT AMERCEMENT

**Cost:** 3 motes, 1 Willpower  
**Duration:** One scene  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 4  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Brief Exemption

Accept Amercement allows a learned ghost to forgive another's trespass of local taboo. The violator does not have to be truly repentant; the Charm simply eliminates the negative effect of the taboo for the scene. If the taboo act is a simple, instant thing — eating pomegranates, for instance — this Charm "erases" the act, and the target of the Charm will suffer no further ill effects from his past violation. If the taboo is a state of being — for instance, wearing shoes when it is forbidden to do so — the Arcanos allows the target to continue to violate the taboo for the duration of a single scene.

## LEVY FINE

**Cost:** 3 motes  
**Duration:** One scene  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 4  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Accept Amercement

The intensity of punishment for violating a taboo varies wildly. This Arcanos allows a ghostly magistrate to add his own penalty to a violation. This additional punishment can take one of several forms, at the magistrate's discretion:

- -2 dice to all dice pools
- A visible or audible sign that the violator is a criminal (such as a brand or a phantom crow that shouts "Violator!" from the character's shoulder)
- All forms of movement reduced by 1/3 due to some visible impediment

Similarly scaled punishments may also be levied, at the Storyteller's discretion. All such effects last until the end of the scene in which Levy Fine is invoked but require no dice roll to impose so long as the target of the Charm has violated a local taboo. No punishment can be used if the target has not violated a local taboo. This Charm may be applied multiple times to a single target, but only if he has violated multiple laws of the Underworld.

## HOUSE ARREST

**Cost:** 5 motes, 1 Willpower  
**Duration:** Permanent (see below)  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 4  
**Minimum Essence:** 3  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Levy Fine

The successful use of House Arrest forces a living violator of an Underworld taboo to remain in the Under-

world or a shadowland until such time as he is forgiven for his transgression. This forgiveness can only come from the use of Accept Amercement (above) by a ghost with equal to or higher Essence than the ghost who uses this Arcanos. This Arcanos has no effect on ghosts, nor even on Ghost-Blooded.

### HIDE THE LIVING NAME

**Cost:** 10 motes, 1 Willpower  
**Duration:** Instant (see below)  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 4  
**Minimum Essence:** 4  
**Prerequisite Charms:** House Arrest

Hide the Living Name turns a living transgressor into a ghost for all intents and purposes until his crime is forgiven by a ghostly magistrate with equal or higher Essence than the user of this Arcanos. The Charm strips away the subject's physical form and life-essence, imprisoning it in an unknown location (many suspect the Labyrinth — which might have dire consequences in the long run, see below). What's left, the target's higher soul (or hun), persists as any other ghost might. The subject of the Charm can leave the Underworld through a shadowland and even enter Creation, but no matter where he goes, he remains a ghost (and is incorporeal in Creation, etc.). His physical body does, apparently, age — a few centuries ago, in a rare case, a mortal was stricken to ghosthood by a vengeful magistrate and left in that state for several years. When he returned to a living state, he found that his hair had grayed and that lines had crept across his face.

Living targets of this Charm with particularly high scores in any Virtue and low Willpower may find that their bodies become possessed by spectres while they are under the influence of this Arcanos. Spectres are attracted to the bodies of the particularly virtuous (regardless of the Virtue), but are repelled by the leftover Willpower that anchors the living body's mind. If the sum of the character's two highest Virtues exceed his Willpower, that character's body is a potential possession target. A possessing spectre takes a living body back into Creation and wreaks havoc as it sees fit. It cannot read the victim's mind, so it cannot necessarily destroy the character's life, but it can certainly break laws and cause trouble no matter where it goes. If a possessed body is killed in Creation, it returns to the Labyrinth and slowly regenerates, and the spectre that took it to Creation is ejected.

If the character's body is possessed at the time that his sentence ends, he cannot return to it until the spectre residing in it is somehow ejected. It is the Storyteller's call as to whether the target's body has been possessed at all and particularly whether the body is "out" at the time that the target is ready to return to it.

### IMPOSE STRICTURE

**Cost:** 10 motes, 1 Willpower  
**Duration:** Three days per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 4  
**Minimum Essence:** 4  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Levy Fine

The ghost using Impose Stricture can create a short-term taboo in his local area — within one mile per point of permanent Essence (or the size of a small village). This taboo should be relatively simple — nearly all taboos either preclude a single simple behavior (such as eating pomegranates) or require a single behavior (such as wearing a particular garment at all times). No taboo can be impossible to adhere to — even taboos that are logical impossibilities ("Everyone in this area must be male and female at the same time") has to have a possible symbolic solution (ritual transvestitism, for instance). Taboos created by Impose Stricture only apply within the Underworld. Impose Stricture implies only a single, relatively minor penalty — violators of a taboo suffer a one-die penalty to all dice pools until one hour past the time that they stop violating the taboo. That is, if the taboo is a single action, violators suffer a one-hour penalty. If it is a continuous action ("Wear no leather"), the penalty applies as long as the criminal violates the taboo and then an additional hour after that. The one-hour duration can be cut short if the violator receives the use of Accept Amercement by a ghost magistrate.

### CURSE OF THE DAMNED

**Cost:** 10 motes, 1 Willpower  
**Duration:** Instant  
**Type:** Special  
**Minimum Temperance:** 4  
**Minimum Essence:** 4  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Impose Stricture

A magistrate-ghost uses Curse of the Damned to apply a permanent taboo to another being — be it a spirit, a ghost or a living being. The target of this Arcanos must have an Essence lower than the ghost using it, and it is difficult to apply — the ghost's player makes a Manipulation + Lore roll, while the target's player resists with Willpower. If the ghost achieves more successes, the target suffers from a taboo for the rest of its existence. As with Impose Stricture, above, violation of the taboo results in a one-die penalty to all dice pools for at least one hour after the violation. The taboo should be straightforward, as described in Impose Stricture (with examples given in the boxed text on p. 43). The Curse of the Damned can be removed if the ghost who inflicted it uses Accept Amercement or if any other entity with an Essence higher than the ghostly magistrate who invoked the taboo uses Accept Amercement.





## HONORED ANCESTOR WAYS

This minor art is uncommon in areas dominated by the Immaculates, but it is quite common in the Underworld just about everywhere else. Honored Ancestor Ways allows its ghost practitioners to more effectively monitor and interact with their living descendants.

### COURIER IN DREAMS

**Cost:** 2 motes

**Duration:** 50 words

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 1

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

With this Arcanos, a ghost can send a message to a living being through dreams. The ghost can perform this Charm from the Underworld, a shadowland or Creation, and send the message to a subject anywhere in Creation. The message travels instantaneously to the subject's current location. However, the subject does not receive the message until the next time he sleeps (and if that is more than eight hours away, the subject does not receive the message at all). The ghost may speak up to 50 words to the subject, who sees the Charm's effect as the ghost standing and speaking the words to him. This Arcanos does not allow for two-way communication — the subject receives the ghost's message but may not send a reply.

### HONORABLE DESCENDANT BLESSING

**Cost:** 5 motes

**Duration:** One day

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** Courier in Dreams

A ghost can use this Arcanos to send a minor blessing to an appropriately pious living descendant. The ghost simply speaks the descendant's name aloud, pictures him and spends the necessary Essence, and the subject of the Charm immediately receives a three-dice bonus pool that can be used to supplement any action at any time in the next day. As the Arcanos takes effect, the subject feels a pleasant surge of energy and good fortune. These dice can only be used once — after the subject of the Charm uses the bonus dice, they are gone. This Charm only works on living mortals and Exalts who can trace a line of blood descent from the ghost.

### DISHONORABLE DESCENDANT CURSE

**Cost:** 6 motes

**Duration:** One hour per success

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 2

**Prerequisite Charms:** Courier in Dreams

This Arcanos is, in most ways, the opposite of Honorable Descendant Blessing. It can only be used on living mortals and Exalts who trace a line of blood descent from the ghost. It works at any range, however. The ghost must simply visualize the target and state his name aloud, and the subject feels a dull, throbbing pain throughout the duration of the Charm. While the curse is active, the subject loses one die from all dice pools. Spend the necessary Essence, and roll Compassion + Lore. For every success, the curse lasts one hour. The ghost who activates the Arcanos may dismiss the curse at any time.

## SCHOLARLY WAYS

This art first cropped up around the centers of scholarly learning within Stygia, as it relates to the levels of trust between professor and student. Its secrets were distributed early on by unscrupulous students, and it has subsequently spread throughout the Underworld.

### UNSEEMLY LIBRARIAN NATURE

**Cost:** 2 motes  
**Duration:** One hour per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 1  
**Minimum Essence:** 1  
**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The studious ghost-librarian is well in tune with the knowledge of the Ages. After all, many evenings he has nothing better to do than to read scrolls and books found in the Underworld — materials forever lost to Creation. By activating this Arcanos with 2 motes and his player making a successful Intelligence + Lore roll, the scholarly ghost receives one automatic success with all Daybreak Caste Abilities (Craft, Investigation, Lore, Medicine and Occult) for one hour per success.

### DISCERNING STUDENT TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 2 motes  
**Duration:** One minute per success  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 3  
**Minimum Essence:** 2  
**Prerequisite Charms:** Unseemly Librarian Nature

The ghost scholar who knows Discerning Student Technique has whole libraries of information buried within his ghostly mind, and he can easily compare the known facts of a situation against the statements of another being. The ghost's player rolls Perception + Empathy as the ghost activates this Arcanos. Throughout the duration, he gains one automatic success to detect most falsehoods. Discerning Student Technique provides insight (that automatic success) into statements that the speaker knows to be lies. It also provides the same level of insight when a speaker misstates objective fact, so long as that objective fact is recorded in a public, scholarly storehouse of knowledge

located in the Underworld (it would prove to be of no use if a scholar's allies began saying "...the Scarlet Empress is in Sijan! ...the Scarlet Empress is in Chiaroscuro! ...the Scarlet Empress is in Wangler's Knob!" until they found one statement that did not register as false — it only works on matters of scholarly record). This Charm does not provide the ghost with insight into the truth of a situation in any circumstances, only awareness of whether a statement is false.

### MASTERLY PEDAGOGICAL INQUIRY

**Cost:** 3 motes  
**Duration:** Instant  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Temperance:** 3  
**Minimum Essence:** 2

**Prerequisite Charms:** Discerning Student Technique

The ghost-scholar using Masterly Pedagogical Inquiry can force his subject to answer a single question truthfully. The ghost simply spends the necessary Essence and asks a direct question of the target, and the ghost's player rolls Manipulation + Presence; the target's player rolls Willpower to resist. If the ghost achieves more successes than the target, the target must answer the question as fully and truthfully as possible — though generally speaking, this Arcanos cannot get more than a 100-word answer out of anyone with a single question. This Charm does not work on individuals with an Essence higher than the ghost's.

### IMPERIOUS INSTRUCTOR'S DICTATE

**Cost:** 5 motes + 1 Willpower  
**Duration:** One day  
**Type:** Simple  
**Minimum Conviction:** 4  
**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Masterly Pedagogical Inquiry

Imperious Instructor's Dictate allows a ghost to issue a single command to her subject, which must be followed to the best of the subject's ability. The scholar spends her Essence and Willpower and immediately issues a single command, a short imperative sentence. The ghost's player rolls Charisma + Presence, and the target's player rolls Willpower to resist. If the ghost achieves more successes than the target, the target will obey the command — and not realize that he's been given a command, but rather, think that this is his own idea. The target loses interest in fulfilling the command after about a day, so the ghost using this Arcanos should make the command relatively easy to accomplish within that period. If the ghost's player manages to botch the roll on this Charm, the target instantly knows that he is being magically manipulated and is likely to respond angrily. This Charm does not work on individuals with an Essence higher than the ghost's.





## FAVORED-STUDENT CHARM

**Cost:** 10 motes + 1 Willpower

**Duration:** Varies (see below)

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 4

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Imperious Instructor's Dictate

The ghost with this Charm manipulates another ghost's hun, rendering that ghost friendly to the Arcanos' user. This ability, unlike most of the previous Arcanoi in this art, works only on ghosts. Typically, the Charm induces the sort of camaraderie seen between a skilled student and a wise instructor (the ghost using this Arcanos may choose to impose either role on the target). The target of the Arcanos generally can't be forced to act in contradiction to his Nature or strongly held Virtues. He also won't sacrifice his unlife or livelihood for the ghost, but he will do his best to assist the ghost as much as possible.

The ghost cannot use this Arcanos on another ghost with a higher Essence than hers. The player of the ghost using Favored-Student Charm makes a Charisma + Socialize roll, after the ghost spends her Essence and Willpower, and the target may resist with Willpower. A botch on the roll to activate this Arcanos immediately reveals the ghost's intentions to the target, probably with dire consequences. When the Arcanos wears off, if it is not renewed with the expenditure of more Essence and Willpower, the target will have a vague idea of what was done to him and may feel somewhat uneasy around the user (+1 difficulty to all Social rolls between target and user). The number of net successes determines the duration:

Successes	Duration
1	One hour
2	Until the next dawn
3	One full day
4	One week
5	One month

This Charm does not work on individuals with an Essence higher than the ghost's.

## ETERNALLY LOYAL STUDENT PRANA

**Cost:** 10 motes + 1 Willpower

**Duration:** Special (see below)

**Type:** Special (see below)

**Minimum Compassion:** 5

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Favored-Student Charm

The wise ghost-scholar can manipulate a student's hun sufficiently to permanently implant an order in another ghost's mind. Like Favored-Student Charm, Eternally Loyal Student Prana can be used only on other ghosts, rather than the living or other spirits. The scholar must first spend a full day with the target. At the end of this time, he spends the Essence and Willpower to insert the com-

mand into the target's mind. The ghost cannot use this Charm on a ghost with an Essence higher than his own. The Arcanos requires a roll of Manipulation + Presence, and the target's player may resist with a Willpower roll. The scholar's player must achieve at least two net successes on his roll. The orders cannot be more complex than about 100 words' worth unless the ghost achieves five or more net successes (in which case, they can be as complex as he wishes, down to subclauses and special cases). As with Favored-Student Charm, no orders may be implanted that directly contradict the target's Nature or high Virtues.

## NOBLE CRAFTSMAN WAYS

Ghostly craftsmen learn to manipulate soulsteel as well as artifacts from Creation. Ghostly artisans realize that every component of the Underworld contains the Essence of a formerly living creature, and they use talents gained in life to manipulate that crystallized Essence. The following Charms all rely on the Craft Ability to some degree.

### SOULSTEEL SCREAM

**Cost:** 1 mote

**Duration:** Instant

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 1

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The ghost with this Arcanos needs only for her player to successfully roll Perception + Craft to gain insight about the origins of a piece of soulsteel or a soulsteel artifact. For every success, the ghost can ask one simple, straightforward question about the physical details of previous handlers of an item or events for which the object was present or used. These events can predate the item's destruction in Creation, if the object is in fact an echo of Creation.

### SOULSTEEL SHAPER

**Cost:** 1 mote

**Duration:** One day

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 2

**Prerequisite Charms:** Soulsteel Scream

Soulsteel Shaper allows a ghostly artisan to aid in the creation of soulsteel items. With Soulsteel Shaper, a ghost can serve as a "trained thaumaturge" for the purposes of assisting an Exalt or other master craftsman in creating a soulsteel artifact, even if he lacks the necessary levels of Craft, Lore and Occult. See **Savant and Sorcerer**, Chapter Two, for details on assistants and crafting. Activation of this Arcanos simply allows the ghost to serve in this role during its duration on soulsteel projects. It does not enable him to assist with artifacts crafted from other substances.

## GRAVE GOODS SHAPING TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 2 motes

**Duration:** One day

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Soulsteel Shaper

As the ghost artisan approaches master status, he gains the ability to modify relics that echo into the deadlands from the living world as part of a character's Grave Goods Background. With this Arcanos, a ghost artisan can (slowly) transform a grave good into another form without changing its nature or magical Traits. The artisan cannot remove more than about 10 percent of the grave good's mass if he wants it to retain any magical properties, nor can he add more than about 10 percent in new materials. For example, the artisan might transform a relic sword into a shield or a group of steel mugs. The transformed item remains composed of the same materials — a transformed sword remains mostly steel, a transformed chair mostly wood. If the relic is transformed into a group of items, those items only retain any magical properties when they are together. It takes seven days per dot of the Grave Goods Background to modify a relic in this fashion, which means that a ghost who wishes to change any potent grave good must be prepared to spend a great deal of Essence to do so.

## SOULSTEEL REBUILDING TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 3 motes

**Duration:** One day

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 4

**Prerequisite Charms:** Soulsteel Shaper

As the ghost artisan approaches master status, he gains the ability to modify soulsteel artifacts. With this Arcanos, a ghost artisan can (slowly) transform an artifact made mostly or entirely of soulsteel into another form without changing its nature or magical Traits. The artisan cannot remove more than about 10 percent of the artifact's mass if he wants it to retain its magical properties, nor can he add more than about 10 percent in new materials. The artisan might transform a soulsteel suit of armor into a different sort of armor, for example, or a mated pair of swords.

Essentially, any purely physical transformation can be made that does not alter the item's various artifact sub-ratings, such as Usefulness, Game Impact or Script Immunity, as per **Savant and Sorcerer**, Chapter Two. It is possible that the Storyteller will allow changes to the item's Usefulness or Game Impact through this Charm, but changes to the item's Power, Script Immunity and

Essence Drawback are explicitly forbidden. If a single artifact is transformed into a group of items, those items only retain their magical properties when they are together. It takes seven days per dot of the Artifact Background to modify a soulsteel artifact in this fashion, which means that a ghost who wishes to change any potent artifact must be prepared to spend a great deal of Essence to do so.

## SOULSTEEL FORGING

**Cost:** 5 motes

**Duration:** One day

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 4

**Minimum Essence:** 4

**Prerequisite Charms:** Soulsteel Rebuilding Technique

Given a quantity of raw soulsteel, a ghost-artisan with this Charm may help to forge it into a new artifact. Such an artifact lacks magical Traits beyond the standard abilities conveyed by soulsteel as a Magical Material (in the hands of an Abyssal Exalt, a soulsteel melee weapon gets +1 accuracy and drains Essence from the target when damage is done, while soulsteel armor gets +2 soak when attuned by an Abyssal, and so on — see **Exalted**, Chapter Nine, for details). Creation of the soulsteel item takes as long as it would take to craft an item out of ordinary steel in Creation, but this Arcanos must be activated every day in order to do so.

## SOULSTEEL MINER'S SENSE

**Cost:** 5 motes

**Duration:** One hour per success

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Soulsteel Rebuilding Technique

While active, this Charm gives a ghost the same sense that a spectre has within the Labyrinth — the ability to more easily detect soulsteel veins within the stone of the Labyrinth itself. The player of the ghost using this Arcanos rolls Perception + Craft, and for every success, the ghost can aid in the search for soulsteel for one hour. This aid comes in the form of a -1 difficulty on any roll to find or mine soulsteel.

## TENACIOUS MERCHANT'S WAY

The merchants of the dead mostly deal in artifacts and relics rather than in coin and jewels, though most kingdoms of the dead do have money of a sort. In any event, Essence is the most important coin of the Underworld. These Arcanoi allow a ghostly merchant to move Essence from ghost to ghost, typically taking his own cut in the process as a broker's fee.



## JANGLING COIN POUCH SENSE

**Cost:** 1 mote

**Duration:** 10 minutes per success

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Temperance:** 1

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

With a successful Perception + Bureaucracy roll made by his player, the user of this Arcanos can detect the existence of nearby money, whether its “real” money minted by a kingdom of the living or dead, burned sacrificial “hell money” sent to the Underworld by suitably pious descendants of the dead or Essence-minted money created by one of the other Arcanoi in this art. Jangling Coin Pouch Sense lasts for 10 minutes per success rolled, but during its duration, it only enables the user to detect actual money — not mere valuables, gems or jewelry, but money that may be used in exchange for goods or services or in payment of taxes.

## EARNEST CREDITOR TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 3 motes

**Duration:** Instant

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 1

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The wise merchant knows when to extend credit to a favored customer — the kind of customer who will bring plenty of business back to the merchant over the long run. This Arcanos allows a ghost to give Essence to another entity — ghost, mortal, god or Exalt. The ghost need only touch the subject of the Arcanos, and the subject receives 2 motes of Essence. The ghost may use this Arcanos as often as he likes, on whichever subjects he likes, and it may be used multiple times upon the same subject. The subject does not need to be willing, but if for some reason he is not, the ghost must succeed in touching the subject before transferring the Essence.

## CAREFUL DEBTOR STANCE

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Duration:** Instant

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 2

**Prerequisite Charms:** Earnest Creditor Technique

The wise customer takes on only as much debt as he knows he can afford to pay back. This Arcanos allows a ghost merchant to take motes of Essence from a willing creditor. The ghost and the subject must touch one another to enact this Arcanos. The subject of the Charm must be willing — if he is in any way resistant to the

transfer of Essence, the Arcanos automatically fails. The ghost may take as many motes of Essence as his player achieves successes on a Conviction + Bureaucracy roll.

## BOLD THIEF’S WAY

**Cost:** 3 motes

**Duration:** Instant

**Type:** Reflexive

**Minimum Conviction:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 2

**Prerequisite Charms:** Jangling Coin Pouch Sense

Unlike Careful Debtor Stance, Bold Thief’s Way enables a ghost-thief or unethical ghost-merchant to steal Essence from an unwilling target. Any time the ghost comes into contact with another entity (ghost, god, mortal or Exalt) he may reflexively take Essence from them by spending 3 motes and his player rolling Conviction + Larceny. The ghost takes 1 mote for every success on this roll (so unless his intention is simply to drain the target of Essence, he had better get at least three successes). The ghost may not use this ability if he hits a target with a melee weapon. He must hit with a Brawl or Martial Arts attack.

## REDIRECTED PRAYER PATH

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Duration:** Instant

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Temperance:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Jangling Coin Pouch Sense

Living descendants of ghosts who have sufficient filial piety to remember and honor their ancestors often make sacrifices to their ancestors’ ghosts. These sacrifices become Essence and Willpower in the Underworld (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 33, for details). Each such sacrifice appears in the Underworld as a black-jade token inscribed with the name of the ghost for whom it is intended. The token appears in the Underworld location corresponding with the spot in Creation at which the sacrifice is performed. A canny ghost with Redirected Prayer Path can intercept these sacrifices. While standing within five yards of the Underworld spot where the token arrives, the ghost can spend Willpower and activates this Charm. The black jade token appears, with this ghost’s name inscribed on it, and for all intents and purposes, the token and its contents are considered to be his.

If two or more ghosts use this Charm simultaneously, each one’s player must make a Manipulation + Larceny roll. The ghost achieving the most successes wins, and the token is inscribed with his name.

## CANNIBAL CALL

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

**Duration:** Instant

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Temperance:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Bold Thief's Way

Ghosts have a difficult time healing damage. Typically, they must use Arcanoi or enter Slumber to do so. Cannibal Call allows a ghost to heal damage by biting another ghost and literally devouring its corpus. This requires a successful bite attack (if the ghost has no special abilities that enable a bite attack like an animal's bite, the bite is at -3 speed, 0B damage and -2 accuracy and defense, and if using Exalted Power Combat, its rate is 3). If the ghost succeeds, he heals one health level for every two health levels damage done to the target.

## SECRET IMPERIAL MINT TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 2 motes per dot, 1 Willpower

**Duration:** Instant

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Temperance:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Bold Thief's Way

This Arcanos turns Essence into coinage. To properly replicate the local coin, the ghost's player rolls Intelligence + Larceny, and the ghost spends as many motes of Essence as he wishes, to a maximum of his Temperance. If the player succeeds in the roll, the ghost creates a pile of local coinage sufficient to provide a bonus to his Resources level equal to one dot per 2 motes of Essence spent. This is a temporary Resources level (though the coinage is permanent) — it is sufficient to make a single purchase at that Resources level. Once that purchase is made, the coinage is disbursed into the population, and the ghost reverts to his normal Resources Background (which represents his sustainable income).

## CHAINS OF THE ANCIENT MONARCHS

This art descends from the enforcers and magistrates of the Dual Monarchy in Stygia. Variations on their talents have spread throughout the Underworld, though, to the point where any ghost who holds a true allegiance to an undead sovereign may learn and use these Arcanoi. A ghost who learns this art doesn't have to truly be an authorized enforcer of his monarch — nor does he have to possess true, deep loyalty to his lord — but he performs the Arcanoi below in his lord's name.

## SOUL ANCHOR

**Cost:** 2 motes, 1 Willpower

**Duration:** 10 minutes per success

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Temperance:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 1

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Minions of various dead monarchs use this Arcanos to keep criminals and battlefield foes from escaping justice. When Soul Anchor is active, no one within 25 yards of the ghost using it is able to use supernatural abilities to move faster than they could at a full sprint. This prohibition even extends to the ghost using Soul Anchor! The ghost may be able to fly or run up walls, and he is still able to do that, but he cannot move faster than he could at an ordinary run. Ghosts and other entities with an Essence higher than that of the ghost using Soul Anchor may spend a Willpower point to overcome the effect of this Arcanos.

## MONARCH'S GLORIOUS BRILLIANCE

**Cost:** 3 motes

**Duration:** One turn

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 2

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The ghost using Monarch's Glorious Brilliance channels some of the splendor of his undead liege lord (whether a Deathlord or another monarch) into a coruscating white aura. This brilliance makes the ghost visible from quite a long way off — the light can be seen from a mile away on an ordinary day in the Underworld and from the horizon at night. Entities within 20 yards who happen to be looking in the ghost's direction at the time this Arcanos is activated are temporarily blinded, and their players must make a Wits + Resistance roll for the characters to look away as quickly as possible. Targets are blinded for three turns, minus one for every success on that Wits + Resistance roll. Those targets that are not blinded by the brilliance must still look away from the glorious light or be blinded, so they are considered to be blind with respect to the ghost using this Arcanos. Foes immune to blindness and those wearing heavy whole-face helmets are immune to this Charm. The effects of blindness are described in **Exalted**, pages 237-238 — a blind character loses two successes from all attack rolls.





## ESSENCE BINDING

**Cost:** 5 motes

**Duration:** One turn per success

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 2

**Prerequisite Charms:** Soul Anchor

Essence Binding calls up bands of Essence representing the ghost's authority in the name of his ruler(s). He then uses those bands to temporarily restrain his foe's hands or feet. This Arcanos works only on corporeal foes (ghosts in the Underworld, mortals anywhere). The ghost-magistrate spends his Essence, and his player then rolls Dexterity + Bureaucracy at +2 accuracy to extend his sovereign's influence. The ghost must determine whether he plans to bind the target's hands or feet. The attack works only within hand-to-hand combat range, and the target may dodge or block this attack if he is able to do so. If the Essence Binding succeeds, the target's hands or feet are bound. If the target's hands are bound to his body, he may use no weapon that requires two hands, and he is considered to be held as the victim of a hold attack. If the target's feet are bound, he is restricted to using unusual modes of locomotion (walking on his hands, swinging by a rope, flying) or to hopping no more than one-fifth his normal movement per turn. This binding lasts for one turn for every success achieved on the Dexterity + Bureaucracy roll, above. The bonds can be broken by main strength. A total of four successes is required on a Strength + Athletics roll to break them (and this is a simple action).

## SNARE THE FLEEING THIEF

**Cost:** 5 motes

**Duration:** One turn per success

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Conviction:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 2

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence Binding

A ghost with Snare the Fleeing Thief can use his Essence and his dedication to his liege to halt an enemy in her tracks for a short period of time. This Charm doesn't merely create binding ropes of Essence. Instead, it encases the enemy's body in a light somewhat reminiscent of Monarch's Glorious Brilliance. The enemy can still move around while encased in this brilliance but at a greatly reduced speed — no more than one-fifth her normal movement per turn, no matter what form of locomotion is being used. Snare the Fleeing Thief requires a hand-to-hand attack using a Dexterity + Bureaucracy roll at +4 accuracy. This attack can be dodged or blocked as normal. If the ghost bypasses such defenses, the target is bound as described above for one minute per success.

## ESSENCE LASSO FORM

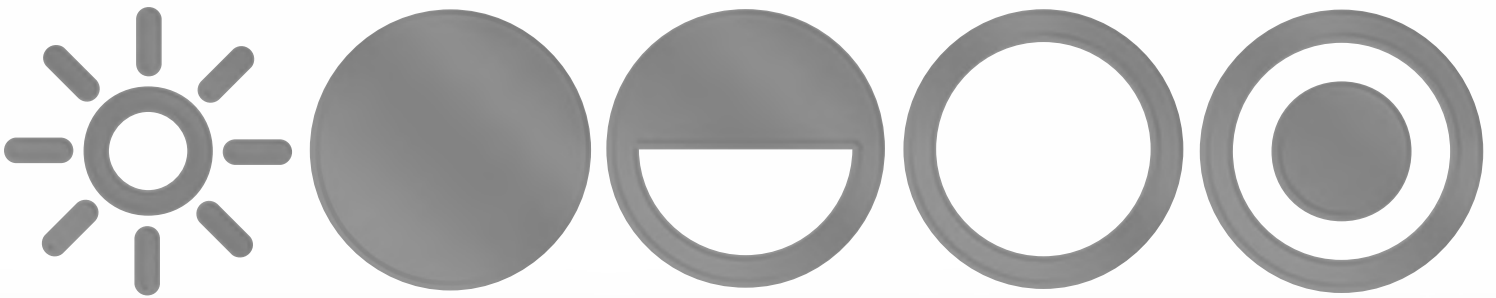
**Cost:** 6 motes**Duration:** One turn per net success**Type:** Simple**Minimum Conviction:** 3**Minimum Essence:** 2**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence Binding

This Charm works similarly to Essence Binding, save that it works at a range of up to 10 yards per point of Conviction and that it cannot be blocked, only dodged. The ghost calls up a binding in the name of his sovereign, points at the target and spends his Essence, and his player rolls Dexterity + Bureaucracy at +2 accuracy. This attack cannot be parried, as it bypasses such defenses. The target's hands or feet are bound for one turn per success. If the target's hands are bound to his body, he may use no weapon that requires two hands, nor may he swing his arms around to make effective Melee or Brawl attacks against any foe that isn't right up against him. If the target's feet are bound, he is restricted to using unusual modes of locomotion (walking on his hands, swinging by a rope, flying) or to hopping no more than one-fifth his normal movement per turn.

## NET

**Cost:** 7 motes**Duration:** 1 minute**Type:** Simple**Minimum Conviction:** 3**Minimum Essence:** 3**Prerequisite Charms:** Snare the Fleeing Thief, Essence Lasso Form

Net allows a ghostly magistrate to ensnare a group of enemies, binding them hand-and-foot in the name of his lord. The ghost spends his Essence and designates a target location no more than five yards away per dot of Conviction. Everyone within five yards of that location is ensnared in a binding net of Essence, unless they successfully leap to safety — the ghost uses Dexterity + Bureaucracy to target the net, and targets must successfully dodge (not block) it to get out of the area of effect in time. Those caught in the net are considered to be held (see **Exalted**, p. 240) until the effect ends or they expend a point of Willpower to free themselves from the Arcanos.







CHAPTER THREE  
THE WONDERS  
OF THE DEAD



There are three main factors governing the creation of artifacts in the Underworld (as opposed to those items that were brought through by funeral rites): the craftsmen that can make them, the ingredients used to make them and the need for them. If there are no craftsmen, nothing will be made. If there are no available ingredients — primarily soulsteel, soulfire crystals or Essence-containing gems and jade — then nothing can be made. And if there is no driving demand for artifacts, then while some smiths will produce them simply because it is their passion to do so, artifacts will be few and far between.

There is also the aspect of trade and distribution. In areas such as Stygia or Sijan, metropolises of the dead

where trade and exchange and extortion and other civilized amenities are possible, there is a rapid flow of artifacts moving through the regions. Why should a ghost hold onto his petty wonder when he can exchange it for some immediate advantage in terms of Charms or rank or possibility and can hope to buy a better one with his new capabilities? This sort of logic, combined with a healthy market in fraud and loans with heavy interest, keeps artifacts moving in and out of circulation and makes it possible for a ghost to acquire almost any artifact, if he can pay for it — or, alternatively, lose almost anything he has managed to acquire.

#### WHERE DO THEY GO?

The question isn't so much how the Underworld happens to contain or produce artifacts, but why it doesn't have more of them. In the land of the dead, time has no effect on the relics that the dead have had sacrificed to them, and it is possible for an item in the land of the living to be stolen and rededicated to the dead multiple times, resulting in several copies of it existing simultaneously in the Underworld. The number of artifacts entering the Underworld or being created there is far greater than the number leaving it. However, this doesn't mean that the demand for items of power has slowed; quite the contrary. The more people have, the more they want, either for their own convenience and consequence or for fear of their likewise well-supplied enemies.

Of course, the main reason that artifacts are destroyed in these sad days of the Age of Sorrows is that they are taken into battle with the forces of living Creation. But even before the modern day, they perished frequently in catastrophes and wars of various types, for in the Underworld, it is the nature of tools to see use and the nature of that use to be destructive. Whether it is due to them going outside a shadowland, them having drained into the Labyrinth or them having been broken up for scrap, artifacts aren't invincible. They can be destroyed, just like the dead themselves.





## SMITHS AND CRAFTSMEN

Some artifacts the dead bring with them into the Underworld: ever-flowing pitchers, golem servants and weapons that they held in life and that were buried in their graves. Others, however, they make for themselves — or for their masters. There are great Shogunate-era forges in the Underworld, where ghostly smiths slave for the Deathlords, and there are small workshops where those dead who loved crafting practice their art with a passion that is all they keep of their living days. In between the two extremes fall the experts who have given their loyalty to great kings and queens. They may lack the talent and passion of the true geniuses, but they cooperate to produce weapons and tools at their rulers' requests.

In the Underworld, ghosts are defined by their passions. Among the dead, no smiths or craftsmen are casual practitioners or see their art as a mere pastime. Those who take up hammer and chisel or knife and flame do so because it is one of the imperatives of their nature. Even those who are forcibly enslaved to serve the Deathlords find some satisfaction in being able to fulfil this heartfelt desire of their nature. Of course, those poor souls who are sacrificed to feed the soulsteel forges might have objections — but when did the material ever have a choice in its forging?

The solo workers, alone in their forges save for admiring disciples and servants or yearning lovers, may produce the strangest items. They are free of the constraints of serving others and are therefore free to work on whatever catches their fancy. One might spend years smoothing the curve of a shield or perfecting the edge of a blade. However, these artisans' relative solitude can mean that they lack vital ingredients, secret tomes, necessary incantations or other items vital to their current projects. This leaves them open to coercion, which can range from promised favors to outright threats. These lone craftsmen may produce literally anything, from the cruelest or kindest of items to the most exotic objets d'art to the simplest, plainest tools. A smith might forge the most bloodthirsty of daiklaves or might carve a necklace that will allow a ghostly mother to sacrifice her existence in order to save her living child. Or he might simply content himself with spending years on casting a simple, practical tool, comforted in his passion that his work should be a perfect example of what it is.

Those smiths who serve the Deathlords must produce what their masters demand, often working together by the dozen in order to create artifacts of shuddering immensity. They are given no choice in their servitude — though most Deathlords will sweeten their service with luxuries and respect, ultimately such smiths are not going to be allowed to leave the forges, unless it is as hammered soulsteel. Many such craftsmen take what pleasure they can in working with the best materials, on the most exacting projects, using the skills that they spent their lifetimes accumulating and find that sufficient to content them.

Forges of this sort produce the most exotic and unbelievable wonders of craftsmanship, but must also constantly turn out minor artifacts of weaponry and armor, so that the Deathlord's troops may be well-equipped in the field.

Craftsmen in service to a member of the nobility — a lord of Stygia, perhaps, or a ruler of one of the outlying domains of the Underworld — fall somewhere in the middle. A crafter of true genius will not need to enter anybody's service (or will receive an invitation from a Deathlord that he cannot refuse), while one with no talent will not be sought after. This sort of crafter, therefore, is skilled but rarely truly inspired. He will be given many exotic materials, soulsteel, soulfire crystals of moderate size and ancient spellbooks but will only occasionally gain the materials necessary to create truly great artifacts. These artisans will be allowed some free time by their sponsors to pursue their own projects, but they will be expected to devote much of their labor to satisfying their ruler's whims, whether this might mean crafting exotic fripperies, personal weaponry or armor for his troops. Such craftsmen are assured of rank, status and respect, though they will doubtless be compared unfavorably to the lonely hermits who forge wonders in secret. They may console themselves that they live well (for ghosts) and that they can spend the rest of eternity at their beloved pursuits. It is a safe existence, if a confined one, and in the event of war, craftsmen of this stature may expect to be taken captive; their skills are too rare to waste.

## SOULSTEEL

Anyone in the Underworld knows what soulsteel is made from: hammered souls, trapped in eternal pain and misery, wailing quietly but constantly. Nevertheless, soulsteel items seem to have become widespread through the Underworld in the last few decades. Of course, if a hero or a family owns such an item, they will no doubt claim a perfectly innocent provenance for it. It was taken from an enemy in battle (and we really should keep it, as it would be a waste to throw it away), or it was passed down from a distant ancestor (and it would be improper to discuss the things she might or might not have done), or it arrived in some other vague but totally innocent manner. No right-minded person is going to admit to deliberately seeking out soulsteel or receiving it directly from the Deathlords.

This is because soulsteel is outright *evil*. It's not just casual use of something that was doomed already. It's deliberately sacrificing ghosts to a fate of Oblivion just so that you can make tools out of them. It's what *spectres* do. Everyone knows that it's produced by the Deathlords, so openly carrying soulsteel relics is an obvious indication that you are one of their clients (unless you have a very, very persuasive reason as to how you happened to pick up that soulsteel daiklave). However, given that questioning the very powerful tends to promote a short afterlife expect-

ancy, it's rude to openly scoff at someone's claim that her soulsteel relic was left to her by Grandmother just before she passed into Lethe, however implausible the story is.

The actual distribution of soulsteel is one of the factors by which the Deathlords increase their grasp on the Underworld's economy. While other major rulers could theoretically produce it, the Deathlords and their agents are, without a doubt, its largest manufacturers. They have the smithies, the dark ores, the metalworkers, the spells and, most importantly, the captive souls to spare — and the will to destroy them. The Deathlords' allies are armed with soulsteel blades and soulsteel armor and soulsteel chains, and their enemies must tremble before them. Even if the concept of soulsteel has existed since the Malfeans were first confined and Oblivion opened its Mouth, it has never been mass-produced on this scale before. What is more, the growing number of ghosts and shadowlands means that raw material is unlikely to run short any time soon. There will always be more ghosts to be locked into soulsteel shackles, marched to soulsteel anvils and beaten into soulsteel themselves with soulsteel hammers.

## SOULFIRE CRYSTALS AND ESSENCE-CONTAINING GEMS

Many artifacts in the Underworld require some form of Essence-storage device, making soulfire crystals and Essence-containing gems vital commodities. Soulfire crystals have the advantage of being natural to the Underworld, and they can be freely mined and worked, assuming that an unexploited vein of crystal can be found. However, Essence-containing gems are ultimately capable of storing as much or more Essence than soulfire crystals and are therefore much sought after. Although Essence-containing gems are dependent on suitable gems being brought in as grave goods and then undergoing the proper treatment, they are far more useful and resistant than soulfire crystal. In fact, there have been rumored cases of Deathlords or other potentates organizing assassinations among the living, when the targets would have valuable gems included among their grave goods, in order to provide suitable raw materials to create Essence-containing gems.

In practice, however, soulfire crystal is far more commonly used, especially among the less powerful dead or in minor artifacts. Since expeditions to dig soulfire crystals require heavy protection against spectres and other creatures, the location of a seam, mining equipment and the ability to transport the crystals once mined, any large-scale operation is likely to be under the control of a major Underworld figure or even a Deathlord. Numerous smaller missions to dig just a few soulfire crystals are common, and some of them are even successful, managing to return with most of the team still intact. Ghosts or others in need of soulfire crystals — particularly large ones — must decide whether to undertake a



risky private mining expedition or whether to pay the price that more powerful entities may demand.

For obvious reasons, a Hearthstone might well trump either soulfire crystals or Essence-containing gems as the power source for an artifact, but these are rare, as most Manses in the Underworld are owned by the various Deathlords. While many of the Deathlords' wonders use these items for the source of their power, most of those made by the dead for the dead in the last thousand years do not. A few ancient wonders still call for them, and now, these items, usually extremely powerful miracles from the First Age, sit mostly useless or have been taken into the hands of the Deathlords and become theirs.

## ARTIFACTS OF THE UNDERWORLD

The following is a selection of artifacts that have been created or are used in the Underworld or in shadowlands throughout Creation. While many more powerful artifacts exist, whether weapons, tools or merely items of unimaginable power, artifacts of this lower degree of power are far more common and likely to be found in the hands of an enemy — or an ally.

### BLOOD APPLES (ARTIFACT • FOR A SINGLE APPLE, •• FOR A TREE)

The crystal blood-apple trees grow only in the Underworld or in shadowlands and must be watered weekly with blood from living creatures — humans or animals, either will do. At Calibration, they bear glass apples that smell of snow and salt. Anyone who bites into one of these apples will fall to the ground as though dead. She will cease to breathe, and her heart will stop beating. Her spirit rises from her body as a ghost and, for 12 hours, may travel the shadowlands or Underworld as a ghost would. At the end of the 12 hours, her spirit is pulled back to her body, which begins to live and breathe again.

There are certain hazards involved in this way of reaching the Underworld. If the user's body is destroyed while she is away from it, by fire or decapitation or other such means, then she is truly dead and now a ghost indeed. Equally, if her spirit is prevented from returning to her body at the end of the 12 hours by some form of specifically targeted Sapphire or Adamant Circle magic (or its necromantic equivalent), then her body will remain intact and unchanging until her spirit can return to it or until it is destroyed. On at least one occasion, the apples have been used in this way to maintain a kind of immortality. However, this ended with the destruction of the user's body.

Apples can be harvested at any point during Calibration but are as fragile as thin ice. They will remain in existence until the first day of the next Calibration, and if brought into Creation, they will react like soulfire crystals. Since blood-apple trees must be fed blood regularly and are as fragile as the apples themselves, only the wealthiest or

most powerful of Underworld or shadowland powers can afford to maintain even one of them, let alone an orchard. Each tree bears up to five apples on each day of Calibration.

#### Artifact Traits:

Power ••, Usefulness ••••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Maintenance •, Notoriety •)

### BLOODY ICE COMB (ARTIFACT •)

This garnet comb may be used to pin back the hair and easily goes unnoticed there. However, when it is cast to the ground with the appropriate invocation, it summons a violent storm of ice and blood, which whips across the landscape in the trail of its owner. This bloody maelstrom is the equivalent of a supernatural ice storm (see **Exalted**, p. 244), spreading for a mile to either side, but its leading edge is where the comb strikes the ground, and whatever the prevailing wind, it moves back in the direction that the user has come from, thus striking any pursuers following her. The storm exists for five minutes, and does not affect the comb's user or any of her companions, unless they deliberately retrace their steps into it. The comb itself is gone once used and cannot be retrieved.

#### Artifact Traits:

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback • (Notoriety •)

### COLLAR OF THE BESTIAL SHADE (ARTIFACT •)

These collars come in several different forms, depending on the associated type of animal. Each appears as a strip of furry or feathered hide from the relevant animal, with a jade buckle, and allows a ghost to change her form to that animal for as long as she desires. Known collars include ones that allow the shape of ghost tigers, pyre hawks and savanna lions, though others may exist. By donning such a collar, the wearer gains the Physical Attributes of such a creature (even if that means lowering her own) but keeps her own Mental and (where appropriate) Social Attributes. Other members of that animal's species will react to them as though they were natural animals of that genus.

These items do have one significant danger — or at least, a danger to some. Existing in an animal body, with all the associated animal senses, helps the ghost draw away from her political and personal preoccupations and reminds her that Lethe waits for her, offering her a new birth and a new life. For each continuous week after the first that a ghost wears one of these collars, her player must roll the ghost's Willpower, adding one die for every dot of Fetters that she has remaining. If she does not score at least three successes, she succumbs to Lethe, and the collar is left behind once she has vanished. Removing the collar after a week and then donning it again spares the wearer from this effect. Some records suggest that the tug toward Lethe is, in fact, the original purpose of the collars and that they

were first created to help ghosts remember the simple cycle of life and death and life again.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**DRUM OF THE LIVING HEART (ARTIFACT •)**

For those ghosts who wish to keep watch over those mortals who are dear to them — or, alternatively, over their bitterest enemies — this artifact is a useful one. It is a small drum, surfaced and bound with human skin and strung with human sinews, barely a handspan across. To make it function, it must be anointed with a drop of the target's blood. Once this is done, it will beat in time with the target's heartbeat, speeding and slowing with the target's pulse, and will cease to beat entirely when the target dies. Some of the family groups in the Underworld have whole rooms where the shelves are lined with these drums, and the whispering beats echo through the room constantly.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**FORMS OF HARMONY (ARTIFACT •,  
•• FOR A SET OF FIVE OR MORE)**

These musical stringed instruments are crafted from black ash, inlaid with nacre and silver and soulfire crystal dust and strung with soulsteel. When commanded by its master, the instruments will play separately or together in harmony. They can also be played like normal instruments but always have a strange, uncanny undertone. Many wealthy nobles and lords of the dead have one or more of these instruments, setting them to play during social gatherings or when receiving petitioners. Few of them have been created in recent times. They are antiques and status symbols, as far as most of the inhabitants of the Underworld are concerned.

What is less well known about these instruments is that if five or more of them are gathered together, they can soothe the emotions and lower the suspicions of those within hearing range. When they are set to play in harmony, their owner gains a bonus dice to all her player's Social rolls against everyone within 50 yards of the instruments. (They are not created to be particularly noisy.) The instruments can continue to play for a scene but then require a day's rest, though they can stop and start several times within that scene if their owner wishes to gesture them to silence. It is considered rude to use the powers of a set of forms of harmony against someone who knows about them. The problem, of course, is finding out whether the prospective victim knows. Deathlords and old, power-

ful ghosts will certainly be aware, while newly made ghosts, however powerful, may well have no idea.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback ••• (Component ••, Notoriety •)

**GRAPES OF TORMENT (ARTIFACT •)**

Grown from the very essence of pain and suffering through horrible commixtures of necromancy and fleshworking, these dark globes are swollen to bursting with an evil juice. When someone ingests one of them, she is filled with a sudden surge of energy and strength, but is tormented by agonizing pain that echoes through her ghostly body. She gains a bonus of two dice to all Strength-related rolls for the duration of the scene, but at the cost of a penalty of one die to all Perception-related rolls due to the pain. Some of the dead have become psychologically addicted to these grapes, despite — or, rather, because of — the pain that they bring. The grapes are found in bunches of five or less and are extremely fragile, being as easy to squash as any natural grapes. They come from vines tended by spectres deep in the Labyrinth, and few would care to know what those vines are rooted in or what nourishes them.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity •;  
Drawback •• (Notoriety ••)

**IVORY BUTTERFLY (ARTIFACT •)**

Carved from ivory and studded with garnets and with a wingspan two feet across, this fragile butterfly can travel across the storm-driven wastes of the Underworld, carrying small items or messages. A single butterfly can carry up to three scrolls or scroll cases or items of similar weight and size. Up to four butterflies can cooperate to carry a larger object, if necessary. Ivory butterflies move unnaturally fast (with the speed of a raiton), but they require neither food nor rest and will continue to fly until they reach their target. They have no methods of self-defense but are capable of recognizing threats and dodging or taking cover, such as by hiding in a forest.

An ivory butterfly's owner must give it the item or items that it is to carry and tell the butterfly where to go and who to give the item to once it reaches that destination. She must impress a visual image of the target on the butterfly and name the location. If the target is not present when the butterfly arrives, then it will flutter around the place for three days and nights, before attempting to return to its mistress, bringing back any item that it was carrying with it.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback • (Component •, Notoriety •)



**JADE HARMONY NEEDLES (ARTIFACT •)**

These five thin, white-jade needles resonate with the energies of death and the Underworld and can be used in conjunction with a Hearthstone or a Manse to knit up wounds and restore health to one of the dead. The jade harmony needles must be inserted in a precise circle in the target's flesh — usually around the wound that is to be healed, though in the event of general damage, they can be slid into the flesh above the heart — and then exposed to the power of a Hearthstone or left to bask in the restoring energies of a Death-aspected Manse.

If a Hearthstone is being used, then it must be Death-aspected (any other aspect will burn out the needles and destroy them), and it must be removed from any other item that it is currently powering. The victim will recover a number of health levels equal to the Hearthstone's rating, at the rate of one health level per hour. If the target is inside a Manse, then he will heal at the same rate as above, recovering a number of health levels equal to the Manse's level. The needles may be removed at any time, but if removed early, the restoring process will also cease. They may only be used once on any victim until he has returned to full health. If he is wounded again after that, the needles may be used on him again.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback • (Component •)

**LABYRINTH DOORKNOCKER (ARTIFACT •)**

Sometimes an emissary of the Underworld may need to enter the Labyrinth on short notice — possibly because he is in haste to speak to his masters or possibly because he has a circle of Solars in hot pursuit. A Labyrinth doorknocker, reputedly invested with power by the Deathlords themselves, can help such an individual. It is the size of a man's fist, shaped from dark soulsteel, and looks precisely like an ornate doorknocker. When it is soaked with freshly spilled blood from a living being and placed against a flat surface of earth or stone, it pulsates rhythmically, and there is the sound of someone knocking on a distant door three times. The outline of a door then forms around the doorknocker, making it possible for its owner to take hold of the knocker and pull the door open. Beyond lies a passage to somewhere in the Labyrinth — somewhere in the territory of the Deathlord who empowered the item, though it may be on the very edge of that territory, and the holder will have no other guide once he enters.

The doorknocker cannot be removed from the newly created door. Once the item's owner has entered the door, it will automatically close behind him unless he holds it open. When he lets the door close, it will remain in existence for 10 minutes longer before crumbling into

dust, and then, the doorknocker itself will rust and disintegrate with a wailing of destroyed souls.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness •••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**MIRROR OF LIFE (ARTIFACT •)**

This comparatively simple artifact can come in various sizes, from full-length sheets of obsidian to small hand-mirrors edged in silver and inlaid with cool white jade. When any ghost looks into one, he sees his face and form reflected as they were in life, with none of the stigma or shades of death: ruddy cheeks, bright eyes and body full of health and vigor. Abyssals are reflected as they were before they were Exalted — and in the case of former Solars, unlikely as it may be that they will come in contact with such a mirror, they are shown with their former Caste Marks and animas.

While simply owning or using this tool has no deleterious effects, it can encourage obsession among those already fascinated with their past lives (Temperance check for each hour spent looking into one). Some kings and queens of the Underworld have had rooms entirely paneled with such mirrors, so that they can be surrounded with images of their living selves. Such fancies can lead to a yearning to live again, dark bargains with the Deathlords or spectres and similar unfortunate character traits.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**PILLOW OF GRASS (ARTIFACT •)**

This pillow is made from woven grass, stuffed with the down of pyre hawks and embroidered with silk taken from graveclothes. When a ghost lies down with his head on the pillow, as though composing himself to sleep, he can spend Essence in order to hear what is happening near where his dead body lies (or where it lay before the elements reclaimed it). A single mote of Essence lets the user hear what is happening within earshot of his grave, and 2 motes let him hear everything that is going on within a mile of his grave, while 3 motes let him hear what is going on within five miles of his grave. The effect lasts for a maximum of an hour, and the pillow must be left for a day before anyone can use it again.

Not all the dead have been given proper burials. Fortunately for such ghosts, the pillow can function even in these cases, focusing on the spot where the body in question was left to rot unburied. In the event of multiple conversations or noises occurring in the area of effect, the player of the pillow's user must make a Perception + Awareness roll, difficulty 5, for his character to filter out any one particular conversation, which he can listen to for (the number of

successes scored x 10) minutes. Some ghosts who are paranoid about grave robbers use these pillows constantly, unwilling to risk leaving their gravesites unattended.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**ROBE OF LIFE (ARTIFACT •)**

This simple white robe is woven from plain linen, rather than costly silks, and smells of spring breezes and fresh rain rather than funeral incense and grave dust. When donned, it causes its wearer to appear as she did while alive and in the flush of youth, removing all evidence of her method of death and even effacing the stains of the Great Contagion. This effect only lasts for as long as the wearer keeps the robe on. Once she removes it, all her marks of death and age reappear. This robe does not affect artificial post-death changes in the ghost's form, nor will it restore soulsteel.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback • (Notoriety •)

**SCROLL OF UNENDING STORIES (ARTIFACT •)**

In the silence of the Underworld, tales and legends can be all that hold a ghost back from the final long plunge into Oblivion. By concentrating on one of these scrolls and spending a mote of Essence, its holder can imprint a story on it and have it permanently recorded there, though at the cost of losing it from his own memory — he will not remember the events which took place, if it was a real event that happened to him, or the facts of the tale, if it was imaginary. The story, however, remains imprinted on the scroll for as long as the scroll survives.

When unrolled, the scroll is a simple piece of blank, ivory-tanned leather, detectable to aficionados as dried human skin. The holder (who must be attuned to it) must know the subject of the story that he wishes to call up. If so, it will appear in dark brown lettering on the scroll, and as the scroll is unrolled further, the story continues down it until its end. There is no practical limit to what a scroll of unending stories may contain, though when they include multiple different versions of the same story, it takes that much more time and effort to find a particular one.

While these artifacts may seem purely for entertainment, spies have used them to carry secret messages, by embedding such a message within a story and then recording it in the scroll. As the messenger is then left with no memory of what the message *was*, this method can be very effective. There have also been cases where very old scrolls contained stories that had factual accounts of First Age devices, Charms or spells. For this reason, the Deathlords themselves have been known to collect these scrolls for

research purposes. Their truest value, however, is to isolated communities of ghosts, desperate for some break in the endless monotony of eternity, for stories that will give them some emotions to experience once again.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**STALLION-THRASHING WHIP (ARTIFACT •)**

This whip must be prepared with hide taken from a dead stallion, a lash woven from his mane and a haft reinforced with bones from the stallion's body. When properly prepared and ensorcelled, a single crack from the whip will summon the stallion's ghost to serve the owner. The horse rises from the ground in a crack of thunder, its mane and tail streaming and its eyes bright with rage and bloodlust, eager to be racing into battle.

The stallion has the statistics of a noble horse (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 20), though it lacks the full intelligence of the latter. It may only be summoned by the whip that was crafted from its body, and if that whip is destroyed, the ghost passes into Lethe. Unlike those ghosts who follow their masters after being sacrificed as part of their funeral rites, the stallion has no allegiance to anyone except the person who currently holds the whip, and it will obey that person's verbal commands or physical directions unhesitatingly. If slain, it fades away into shadows and may be resummoned by cracking the whip at the next dark of the moon.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**STEEL PEN OF REFINEMENT (ARTIFACT •)**

Parts of the Underworld have their bureaucratic aspects, just as do many parts of Creation, and not every soul learned how to express written requests politely during life, let alone with the touch of elegance and authority that can catch a superior's eye. This quill is modeled on a pyre hawk's plume, cast in soulsteel, and it must be fed with a drop of blood and a mote of Essence to function. Once this is done, the owner of a steel pen of refinement gains a bonus dice to all Bureaucracy, Performance and Craft rolls involving writing (with the steel pen of refinement) until the end of the scene. His handwriting flows more beautifully, his prose is terse yet stylish, elegant yet not overly presumptuous, and his poetry displays a knowledgeable refinement.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback • (Component •)



**STONE OF TEN THOUSAND TEARS (ARTIFACT •)**

By capturing the strong emotions of the living in specially prepared crystals, the dead can experience those emotions and feel briefly as though they were living again. A stone of this sort can hold a single memory, taken from a living person, which must be associated with strong passions — possibly love or joy, but more usually, grief, pain and/or hatred. To fill the stone, the living subject must place it against her forehead and willingly recall the memory in question. The memory rushes into the stone in a flurry of colors, causing the stone to glow with strange shades of nacre and crimson, and leaves the living donor forever. She will no longer be able to recall the event, even if she is reminded that it happened to her, but neither will she suffer any emotional trauma from it. For this reason, there are always people willing to sacrifice their own memories to these stones, to be free of them once and for all.

If a ghost wishes to use one of these stones, she places it against her own forehead and promptly relives the event in question, feeling all the panic, the passion and the pain associated with it. While happy and positive emotions are briefly sweet, the letdown afterward makes most ghosts avoid them. Most ghosts prefer memories of torture, near-death and tragedy. Once used, a stone is wiped clean and may have a new memory implanted in it. A living person can also use one of these stones and will experience the memory just as a ghost would. If the original memory donor uses the stone, she will regain her memory of the event.

A thriving trade in these stones has sprung up among the dead, and many unscrupulous dealers go so far as to secretly haunt, torture or kill the families of potential memory donors, before approaching them with the offer of removing their tragic memories. In some areas, such as the lands of the Bodhisattva Anointed by Dark Waters, placing memories in these stones is considered just another duty that the living owe the dead. The living willingly sacrifice their memories and their associated passions, leaving themselves blandly happy and void of painful thoughts that might disturb them.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Notoriety ••)

**STORM-RUNNING BOOTS (ARTIFACT •)**

These boots were made to take advantage of the storms that sweep across the Underworld. Sewn from savanna lion skin and set with soulsteel rivets, they draw on the raw energies of the tempests, and give the wearer the ability to run through a storm while not being affected by it, so long as he travels with the storm and does not stop.

The wearer of the storm-running boots must first commit 3 motes of Essence to attune himself to them. Once this is done, if he is within an area of the Underworld

that is currently being hit by a storm, he may run at full speed without growing tired and without being in any way affected by the weather. This effect only works for as long as he is actually moving (walking round in small circles won't work) and within the storm. If he reaches a calm area, or if he stops, the enchantment ceases, and all travel is as it would normally be.

Someone wearing storm-running boots can carry another person, assuming he is physically capable of lifting her, but he cannot share the enchantment with other people next to him or holding his hands. Such fellow travelers will grow tired and suffer all the inconveniences of Underworld storms. The weather itself is left to the Storyteller's discretion, and the storm may not always be blown across the plains of the Underworld in the direction that the character might desire.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback ••• (Component ••, Notoriety •)

**STORM-WARDING PARASOL (ARTIFACT •, •• FOR THE LARGE VERSION)**

This parasol of black silk is set on an ebony frame and embroidered with human hair and soulsteel thread. When raised, it protects its owner from the storms that wrack the Underworld, shielding her from rain and blood and hail and bone alike. She will hear the pattering of whatever substance the storm is composed of against the parasol and observe it raining down around her, but she will not feel any impact other than that of a gentle rain against the black silk.

It is possible to obtain larger versions of this artifact (Artifact ••) that seem the normal size at first but expand to a circle five yards wide when raised and can thus shelter several people at once. Again, all those beneath the shelter of the storm-warding parasol remain dry and safe from the weather, however vicious and dangerous it may be beyond the area magically protected by the parasol. It bears noting that a storm-warding parasol does not protect its user against dangers of the landscape. If torrential rain causes a flood or a landslide, then the parasol's user must deal with that herself.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback ••• (Component ••, Notoriety •)

**THIRST-QUENCHING PITCHER (ARTIFACT •)**

When fed with the blood of the living, this pitcher pours forth any drink that the holder has tasted and can remember, from the finest wines to grace the Empress' table to bitter ales from the Far North. It cannot produce poisons or drinks that are poisoned, but it will replicate high-quality alcohol that will allow the dead to forget their woes for a

little while. A single health level of lethal damage will provide enough blood for one glass of the pourer's choice of beverage. She must place the blood in the pitcher and then pour it out while concentrating on whatever type of drink she wants. Dried blood is ineffective, and blood more than a day old will produce a drink that has a faint patina of age and no longer tastes wholly fresh.

Thirst-quenching pitchers come in many different shapes and sizes, from small porcelain jugs that will fill a single glass to large onyx urns that can provide drink for a dozen feasters. In some mighty households, it is as important to have a servant or chamberlain who has sampled numerous vintages as it is to have a pitcher, so that a sufficient variety of drinks is available. To drink blood from a pitcher without bothering to change it to some other liquid is seen as either gauche, or as making a daring statement of personal fashion, depending on the social position of the person doing so.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

### THE TONGUE-BINDER (ARTIFACT •)

When donned, this thin soulsteel chain lies closely around its wearer's throat and seems no more or less than any other necklace, and the pendant hanging from it is merely an elegant, inch-long, stylized representation of a snake. However, the tongue-binder's true potency comes into effect when it is invoked by its owner to bear witness that she speaks the truth. The serpent-pendant begins to slowly writhe, and the chain wriggles against her flesh. If its wearer *knowingly* tells a lie of any degree, the serpent breaks loose from its chain, digs into the flesh of her neck, wriggles up inside her throat and bites off her tongue. This will cause a level of lethal damage to the wearer and is also immensely obvious to any onlookers.

Nothing stops the wearer from removing this necklace. However, in the treacherous world of the dead, it is often worn by ghosts and humans living in shadowlands so that they can prove that they are speaking the truth. It must be deliberately invoked in the name of Oblivion to cause it to function, and it will only work if the wearer knowingly lies. If she honestly recounts a fact that she does not know to be false, the serpent will not react, and she will not be harmed.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness ••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

### WHIP OF THE DEAD (ARTIFACT •)

This whip is made from leather flayed from the corpse of a leviathan, with soulsteel barbs on the end and soulsteel wire wound around the butt. Any ghost or animal creature of the Underworld will instinctively fear it and will make

an extra effort to please its wielder and fulfil his wishes. Carrying this whip gives an extra dice on all Ride rolls, while actively using it on one's steed gives the rider two extra dice for that particular Ride roll but inflicts a level of bashing damage to his steed.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback ••• (Component ••, Notoriety •)

### BAG OF HARVESTED PLAGUES (ARTIFACT ••)

The illnesses that have slain the dead can, in turn, be let loose upon the living once again. This black silk sack is three handwidths across and is embroidered with the names of sicknesses from across Creation with black silk thread and the hair of those who died from contagious fevers. It has two main functions: to "trap" a disease and to "release" it. To "trap" a disease, the bag must be held to the mouth of one of the dead who died from such a disease, and the owner of the bag must spend a mote of Essence. This has no effect on the dead himself. Up to five different diseases may be held within the bag at any one time, but multiple applications of the same disease have no effect.

To "release" a disease, the holder opens the bag and shakes it in the direction of a living person, from a distance of five yards or less. The victim's player must make a separate Stamina + Resistance check for each of the diseases in the bag, as they cannot be released one at a time, but must all be discharged together. Should the victim's player fail his check against the Virulence of a particular disease (see **Exalted**, pp. 319-321), then the victim contracts it. No other living people nearby will catch anything from the bag, though they are at normal risk of infection from an illness-ridden victim. This artifact *cannot* trap or release the Great Contagion. Nothing less than the Well of Udr could hold such a thing, and any attempt to trap the Great Contagion in a bag of harvested plagues will destroy the bag.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

### BONE BRIDGE (ARTIFACT ••)

This chain of human vertebrae, linked together with dried human sinews, is flexible enough to be worn as a belt or coiled around a forearm. Its true purpose, however, is to form a convenient bridge over rivers, marshes, or gaps in the ground. The owner must attune to it, which requires committing 5 motes of Essence, but once this is done, she can use it freely. All that she needs to do is to cast it down in front of her, over a river or chasm or soft ground or similar gap, and the chain of vertebrae will grow and arch into a curved bone bridge three feet wide. The bridge can span a gap of up to 100 yards, but no further. It will remain solid and in place until its owner places her hand on it and





wishes for it to resume its smaller form, and she can do this from either side of the bridge — or even while standing on it. It will then shrink, returning to being a chain of vertebrae in her hand. If people should still be on the bridge at this point, they will fall.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**BONE HARPOON (ARTIFACT ••)**

This barbed harpoon is carved from the bones of a dead behemoth, inlaid with soulsteel, and is paired with a soulsteel gauntlet. Most of the time, only the gauntlet exists, but at a moment's notice, the wearer of the gauntlet can summon up the harpoon. The harpoon may be used in hand-to-hand combat, and it has the statistics of a dire lance (see *Exalted*, p. 342) under those circumstances. However, it has another use.

If thrown so that it strikes a target (the throw must connect, and the target must suffer at least one level of damage), then the user can spend a mote of Essence to invoke the harpoon's true power. A soulsteel chain shimmers into existence between the gauntlet and the harpoon, and it promptly tightens, dragging the target to a mere three feet away from the harpoon's owner, at which point the chain vanishes, leaving the butt of the harpoon in the owner's gauntleted hand. The harpoon may be thrown again, or it may be used in hand-to-hand combat, as the owner wishes.

In order to drag the target to him, the Harpoon's owner must oppose his Strength + Melee to the target's Strength + Endurance. If the player of the harpoon's owner scores equal or more successes, then the target is dragged across to the wielder of the harpoon, though this does not cause additional damage. This takes a full combat turn. If the target's player scores more successes, then the target can remain where she is standing, though the harpoon is still in her flesh and the chain still exists. The harpoon's owner may attempt to drag her to his feet again next turn, or he may choose to let the chain vanish and retrieve the harpoon at his leisure.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**BRACELETS OF PASSIONATE ARTISTRY (ARTIFACT ••)**

These hammered soulsteel bracelets are several inches wide, stretching halfway up the forearm, but always precisely fit their owner, however large or small his arms. They raise the owner's Craft, giving him a bonus of one die to all rolls involving works of art or craft that he creates while wearing

them. If he is working in an area where he actually has a specialization (such as Soulsteel or First Age Weapons) then he gains a bonus of two dice, as the bracelets respond particularly well to directed and focused passion for crafting.

The bracelets are made of soulsteel that has been hammered from the ghosts of craftsmen and is unornamented other than the single small soulfire crystal which is set in each bracelet. When their owner is working, the bracelets croon in wailing occult harmony as they remember their joy in craftwork. The bracelets can be separated, but they must both be worn to be effective. If one is destroyed, the other immediately shatters and falls to dust.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness •••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**CANDELABRUM OF REMEMBERED KIN (ARTIFACT ••)**

Sometimes, the dead wish to see how their living kin fare. And, if they are willing to pay the price, there are ways of doing so. This slender, five-branched candelabrum is made of soulsteel, set with garnets and onyx from the mines of the Underworld, and it offers the dead the chance to briefly see their families again. When candles of a certain formulation are placed in the candelabra and lit in a certain way, the smoke rises from the holders on the four outer arms and the innermost socket and forms a circular window in the air. This window, which is a full yard in diameter, will display the particular family member of whom the candle-lighter was thinking, for as long as the candles burn, even if the family member moves around during that period. The power of the artifact can be protected against by countermagic or by spells that block scrying and sorcerous spying.

The candles must be made from a particular mixture of pounded ash, juniper berries and melted wax from used funeral candles, with wicks of linen taken from the shrouds of members of the family in question. Another family member must light the candles and must be directly linked by blood to the descendant (or ancestor, if still alive) who is the target of observation. The candles will burn for a maximum of half an hour. If blown out before that time is over, they can be relit and reused. The candelabrum itself may be used a maximum of five times a day, assuming that the owner has sufficient candles for his wishes. Those who are observed through it may, on a successful Perception + Occult roll at a difficulty of 7, smell juniper and ash in the air and see a faint shadow of smoke hovering where no smoke should be.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •••• (Component ••, Notoriety ••)

**CHAIR OF GUILTY SORROWS (ARTIFACT ••)**

This throne-like chair is carved from solid black marble and ornamented with silver and white jade and starmetal. When one of the dead sits in it, the chair glues itself to him, clinging to his legs and buttocks and back with a supernatural strength and forcing him to remain there. Once it has a victim trapped, serpent heads carved on the arms of the chair open their mouths and begin to intone a list of all the victim's crimes in life, drawing on the victim's own feelings of guilt and shame. Once they have gone through a full list of all the victim's wrongdoings, they begin again. These "crimes" are those for which the victim actually feels personal guilt, rather than any sort of universal moral truth. If the victim's Essence + Willpower is 10 or more, then the chair cannot read his guilt and will not trap him.

In order to remove himself from the chair, the victim either must confess to each crime as it is listed by the chair or must be forcibly torn from it. If he confesses to all the crimes, then he can simply get up and walk away. If he tries to rip himself loose or to have friends rip him loose, then all those involved in the attempt may combine their Strength + Athletics (by adding it together) and will need to score five or more successes against a difficulty of 7. For each success less than a total of 10, the victim takes a die of lethal damage due to parts of his body remaining stuck to the chair (natural soak only), and he always takes at least one level of lethal damage. Sapphire or Adamant Countermagic will also break the chair's hold, but only for a minute. After that time, the chair attempts to reassert its hold on the victim, and if he has not been removed, it will clasp his flesh again.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback ••• (Component •, Notoriety ••)

**CLOAK OF VERMIN (ARTIFACT ••)**

This rich cloak of black fur is, in fact, composed of the ghosts of hundreds of plague rats, woven together by sorcery and still metaphysically rife with malice and hunger. With a single word, the wearer of the cloak can transform it into a seething mass of yellow-toothed rats and set the rats on his enemies. Particularly sadistic wearers of this cloak in the past have even pretended that the cloak was a gift to a friend or lover and waited till it was set around the other person's shoulders before calling forth the rats of the cloak to devour her. The rats can be directed at a particular target, but they only know how to attack and cannot perform any complex maneuvers.

Treat the swarm of rats as a single creature with the statistics of a great cat (see *Exalted*, p. 316) but automatically doing both biting and clawing attack every turn to a single target. Even if the rats are slain, the cloak will still

reform at the owner's wish and will be fully functional again at the next dark of the moon. Only flame, sorcery or Charms can permanently destroy it.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**ESSENCE DICE (ARTIFACT ••,****••• FOR HEALTH LEVELS)**

These dice have been carved out of bone, inlaid with ebon shadow taken directly from the pupils of the eyes of helpless ghosts and treated with Arcanoi that allow those who use them to transfer Essence between each other through a bet. This works for both the living and the dead. Wagers must be between the owner and another person or between two people with the owner standing as arbiter, and the owner must state the terms of the wager clearly before the dice are thrown. The dice absorb Essence from those who have made the wager, using a form of Filling the Precious Vial (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 247), and then, they restore it to the person who wins the wager. Any Essence that the winner cannot hold is lost. The dice are found in sets of two to ten, but they need not all be used at the same time. A maximum of 5 motes of Essence can be wagered on any one bet.

A much rarer form of this artifact can also hold health levels of lethal damage as part of the wager, so that ghosts can bet their very existences in hopes of winning more Essence or healing their wounds. A ghost who destroys herself in this way, by gambling away all her health levels, automatically casts herself into Lethe unless restrained with soulsteel chains or otherwise destined for Oblivion.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback ••• (Component •, Notoriety ••)

**FINGERBONE BRACELET (ARTIFACT ••)**

This pale bracelet is woven from fingerbones, which are, in turn, linked together with thin dry sinew and tanned human skin. To make it work, the wearer puts the heel of her hand against a lock that she wishes to open, and spends a mote of Essence. The fingerbones pry themselves loose from the bracelet and wriggle down her hand to the lock, where they attempt to open it. The bracelet is thwarted by magical locks, but it can open any normal lock, from the complicated settings on a Guild strongbox to the simple padlock on a shed door. It takes one minute to open a lock, assuming that the artifact is not thwarted by magic, however complex the lock is. Once the lock is open, the fingerbones return to the bracelet and cling there once again. In the event there are several locks on the same door, multiple applications of the bracelet will be





necessary to open them all. The fingerbone bracelet is quite a well known type of artifact, and people who openly wear such a bracelet are often suspected of larcenous intentions automatically, whether or not such suspicions are justified.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety ••)

**HAIRPIN BLADE (ARTIFACT ••)**

This slender, white-jade hairpin is, on closer inspection, an artfully carved miniature model of a full daiklave, though a mere five inches long. If its owner commits 5 motes of Essence to it, she can use the hairpin's full powers and, at a moment's notice, lay her hand on it and expand it to a full daiklave — as such, it has all the normal statistics for a jade daiklave (see *Exalted*, pp. 340-342), though it does not have any sockets for Hearthstones. The hairpin blade remains at full size for the rest of the scene or until the owner chooses to shrink it back to hairpin size again. It may also be concealed elsewhere in the body beside the hair, if the owner so chooses, or even carried in a piercing of the flesh.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback • (Component •, Notoriety •)

**HILT OF THE BLOODY SWORD (ARTIFACT ••, ••• IF HEARTHSTONE SETTING)**

This is a hilt without a blade, a carved masterwork of white jade veined with dark crimson. To transform the hilt into a full sword, the wielder must dip the hilt into freshly spilled blood. The Hilt will suck up the blood and form a blade of dark-red, shimmering crystal. This requires a quantity of blood equal to a health level's worth of lethal damage, which may come from the hilt's wielder or from any other donor, willing or unwilling. The resultant sword has the statistics of a jade daiklave (see *Exalted*, pp. 340-342). It returns to its normal form at the end of the scene or whenever its wielder so desires, the blade dissolving back into blood again, leaving only the hilt. Some of these hilts have a setting for a Hearthstone, but they are far rarer than the normal sort.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**INKBRUSH OF THE HEART'S DESIRE (ARTIFACT ••)**

This delicate, white-jade inkbrush contains a variant on the Arcanos Extension of the Friendly Gaze (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 251). To use it, its owner must have an uninterrupted line of sight toward the target — though she

may be at a distance of up to 100 yards away and the target need not know of her presence — and must spend an hour painting the target on a blank surface, using the inkbrush. The player of the painter must then roll her character's Perception + Craft (with any modifiers for painting) against a difficulty of the target's permanent Essence. The number of successes scored is the number of the target's Fetters that appear around him in the painting. In the event of only some of the Fetters appearing, then the strongest appear first until the total number of successes is reached.

The Fetters appear as they were in the target's memory of them, rather than as they may currently be in the world of the living. Any clear surface may be used for this art, from expensive silk to plain canvas or leather to the wall of a room. Once the painting is complete, it does not change and is as durable or as fragile as the surface on which it is painted.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**THE LOOM OF COBWEBS (ARTIFACT ••)**

Though the Sidereals would deny it, this loom surely owes something to the pattern spiders. The frame of the Loom of Cobwebs is carved from ivory and inlaid with chips of human bone, and the shuttles — which move by themselves, on command — are ebony spiders with deep garnet eyes. When fed with bobbins of raw silk and human hair taken from corpses, the Loom produces a tapestry showing the future of a given target, who must be either dead or an Abyssal. It depicts an event from the target's future, which will occur within a year. The owner of the Loom has no control over when or where the event will be, and if he attempts to read the same target's future again, he may receive the same tapestry as a result or a complete different one.

The Loom does not require too much in the way of ingredients, and a single head's worth of hair is sufficient for one tapestry. The resulting tapestries can be removed from the Loom and may be kept for as long as the owner wishes, though they are as fragile, as one would expect items woven of hair and silk to be, and are extremely flammable. The Loom takes a whole day to weave a tapestry, but it may be used continuously if the owner has sufficient raw materials. Incidentally, Abyssals react rather poorly to having other people attempt to divine their futures without permission, even using so simple a tool as the Loom of Cobwebs, and investigate rumors of such artifacts with extreme prejudice.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**ONYX SOUL WINDOW (ARTIFACT ••)**

Carved from obsidian and bound in place with crimson ribbons, this circular lens is set in front of either the left or the right eye, and requires a commitment of 5 motes of Essence for attunement. Once it is set in place and attuned to, it provides automatic *and constant* use of the Spirit-Catching Eye Technique Arcanos (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 248) and use at will of the Sensing the Delicate Strands Arcanos (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pp. 252-253) at the usual price for that Arcanos. Wearers often choose to conceal it, while keeping it at hand for quick use, by wearing an eyepatch over it. This artifact does have one important flaw, however. Its wearer will always be visible to other ghosts as though they were using Spirit-Catching Eye Technique, however much he tries to conceal himself. The only way of preventing this is for the wearer to remove the onyx soul window from his eye. Even though he remains attuned to it, he can now go unseen.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback ••• (Component •, Notoriety ••)

**PATCH HIDE ARMOR (ARTIFACT ••,**

**••• FOR NO LOSS OF APPEARANCE)**

There are many ways for a ghost to armor herself in the Underworld, and this is one of them. The wearer has the skin peeled from parts of her body, and raw hide torn from spectres deep in the Labyrinth is fastened in its place with soulsteel rivets that pattern their way across her body. This process may render the ghost surprisingly attractive, if the hide was taken from a pallid alabaster-skinned spectre, or it may make her vile and unappealing, if it came from some scaled, rotting creature of foulness. In either case, it makes her tougher. In return for a permanent commitment of 3 motes of Essence, and a great deal of pain, the ghost gains a bonus of 6L/4B to any other soak she may have. It also most often results in an Appearance penalty of -2, due to the abhorrent resulting patchwork appearance. Versions without the Appearance penalty are Artifact •••.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**RING OF FLIES (ARTIFACT ••)**

This chased garnet band is, on closer inspection, carved with the tiny figures of thousands of blowflies crawling over one another. By spending 5 motes of Essence, the wearer of the ring can manifest in a shadowland, or even in Creation itself, as a throbbing swarm of blowflies. While this swarm can use Arcanoi or spells, it has no solid substance and cannot make any physical attacks or use any weapons. It can, however, travel freely and rapidly, moving at the speed



of a fast horse and can deform its shape sufficiently to enter under a door or through a partly open window or anywhere else that flies can travel. It can also speak with a droning voice composed of the buzzing of its members.

This manifestation is extremely weak. The mass of flies is treated as having the normal Strength, Dexterity, Stamina and Dodge of the character, but if a single blow connects with the swarm, the flies will be scattered and the ring's effect broken. Sorcery, fire or Charms connecting with the swarm will also break it asunder. Normal winds are insufficient to scatter the blowflies, but gale-force winds will do so, unless the swarm can find cover first. When the ring's effect is broken, the wearer is forced to return to his natural state as a ghost. If currently in a shadowland, he is safe enough, but if in a living part of Creation, he is cast into the corresponding part of the Underworld and cannot use the ring again until the next dark of the moon.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**SACRIFICIAL GEM (ARTIFACT ••)**

Sometimes, the dead wish to intervene to aid the living, especially when they see their living kin or lovers suffering from the resentments of little gods. One of these gems will allow a ghost to bear some form of minor curse or spell that has been directed at a living person whom he wishes to protect. The effect cannot be more than a single dice roll's worth of penalty in a particular area or the persistent loss of a single Attribute point. The ghost who is using the Gem suffers all the effects of the penalty that would otherwise be inflicted on its natural victim. This ceases if the ghost chooses to restore the curse to its natural owner (though he cannot then sacrifice himself a second time) or if the curse or magical effect is somehow lifted from the *original* victim, such as by the little god forgiving her for her offense.

Sacrificial gems are faceted gems the length of a woman's finger, clear when not in effect and obsidian-dark when working. They are usually set in some form of jewelry, such as a bracelet or necklace or belt buckle. To take effect, they require an arcane link to the person currently suffering from the magical effect in question, an emotional or familial link of some sort between the ghost and the victim — a ghost cannot sacrifice herself for a target for whom she knows or feels nothing — and full knowledge of the curse that is currently affecting the target. If the curse is too serious for the gem to transfer, then nothing happens.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**SHADOW GLOVES (ARTIFACT ••)**

These gloves are of thin black leather, strangely warm to the touch. When donned, their wearer can use them to shape shadow itself into a solid form. While what the gloves produce will only last for a short time, it may remain whole for long enough to be of crucial value in a crisis. The elegance of the object produced depends on the wearer's abilities, but crudely functional items are easy to shape — assuming that there's shadow in the vicinity.

If the wearer wishes to use the gloves, he must be wearing them, and he must spend 3 motes of Essence for any object that he wishes to create. He then reaches into the most convenient area of shadow and pulls out a length of darkness as though it were clay. His skill in producing the desired result depends on the number of successes his player garners on a Perception + Craft roll against a difficulty of 5, but the character cannot benefit from more successes than he has points of permanent Essence. The number of successes required for whatever the user wishes to create is up to the Storyteller. A single success creates a rough bar of iron, a shapeless mass of dark cotton or a plain clay urn. Three successes create a well-balanced weapon, a helm or cuirass of dark iron or a necklace of onyx gems. Five or more successes could create perfectly crafted steel weapons, armor that kings among the living would beg to wear or a statue so beautiful that scholars would marvel at the artist's skill. Items of up to the user's size may be created of any material (except the Five Magical Materials), so long as they are black. All items vanish after 24 hours, whatever is done to preserve them.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**SHADOW PEACOCK EARRING (ARTIFACT ••)**

When a ghost wants to influence others, he frequently wishes to do so without obviously using any artifacts or employing Arcanoi to change their way of thinking. One of these earrings — an inch-wide black opal disc, in a pale silver setting — can be worn and used inconspicuously, but has impressive effects on a victim.

When the wearer chooses to spend 2 motes of Essence, the earring begins to sparkle darkly and hypnotically, with shadows like eyes flickering inside the gem. It imperceptibly draws the attention of the person to whom the wearer is speaking and lulls him into a vague and suggestible state, making whatever the wearer says sound very reasonable. Plausible suggestions, such as, "We're private emissaries here to see the Deathlord," will be accepted, as will statements such as, "We're not the fugitives. They must have gone that way." The victim's player should make a Will-power roll against a difficulty of 5 each turn, gaining a +1 for each turn of exposure to the effect. If the player gains 10

cumulative successes, then on the next turn, his character's Willpower returns to normal, and the earring loses its influence. He will remember what the wearer of the earring told him as being the truth, assuming that it is not inherently implausible or contradictory. Bystanders will probably not notice any sorcery in progress (requires five successes on a Perception + Occult roll against a difficulty of 4 to notice that the earring is sparkling oddly) but may notice that the victim is behaving in an oddly suggestible fashion. What they choose to do about it may depend on the situation — soldiers on patrol are unlikely to directly question their captain, for instance.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback •• (Component •, Notoriety •)

**THE SPEAKING DAGGER (ARTIFACT ••)**

This dagger is soulsteel work, with all that that implies. It is set with a star ruby in the hilt and forged so that the crossguard is shaped like a closed mouth. It can be used to steal the voice from a dying enemy and then to speak with it. To use it, the wielder must slay the target (or at least deliver the fatal blow) with the Speaking Dagger, and then place the dagger in his victim's mouth. The Speaking Dagger will devour the victim's tongue and, together with it, the knowledge that the victim held in his dying moments. It cannot devour the tongue and knowledge of a being who had Essence •••• or greater.

At any point afterward, the Speaking Dagger's holder may feed it with his own blood or ghostly plasm (one level of lethal damage) and 5 motes of Essence and command it to speak. The lips on the dagger's crossguard will open, and it will truthfully answer any question that it may be asked, based on the victim's knowledge and opinions, to a maximum of three questions. After that, the Speaking Dagger falls silent and cannot be questioned about that particular victim again. The Speaking Dagger can only hold one person's tongue at any given time but can hold it for an indefinite period. If ordered to devour a new tongue, any previous knowledge that it held is discarded. If simply used in battle, it has the normal statistics for a dagger forged from soulsteel.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback •••• (Component ••, Notoriety ••)

**WHISPERING FAN (ARTIFACT ••)**

Made of charcoal and red feathers, with etched soulsteel struts, this fan can be used to send messages across the Underworld. Its holder raises it to his lips, unfolds it, murmurs a name to it followed by a message of 13 words or less and then waves the fan away from him. The message

will speed the length and breadth of the Underworld and will be whispered into the ear of the recipient, who will hear it at that moment as clearly as though the whispering fan's holder were standing beside him.

Unfortunately, while several of these fans exist, they are limited in power. Any sort of magical protection surrounding the person for whom the message is destined will prevent the message from reaching him, whether it is centered on him or merely around his vicinity. These fans can also only be used three times a day, and after the third use, they will shut themselves with a click and cannot be reopened until the next dusk. They will carry a message to someone who is currently in a shadowland if it is night in Creation and will work anywhere during Calibration. The feathers that compose these fans are taken from pyre hawks, who will attack anybody seen bearing a fan unless prevented from doing so by some other means.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness ••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity •••;  
Drawback ••• (Component ••, Notoriety •)

**WORM-RIDDEN VEIL (ARTIFACT ••)**

This item, much in demand among those of the dead who wish to disguise themselves, appears to be a simple length of rotting gray silk, fraying at the edges and with its white embroidery stained and dirty from wear. However, when it is wrapped around the face and body and the wearer spends 3 motes of Essence, the veil swells and billows to become a draping shroud that manages to conceal the wearer from head to foot. The cloth itself, though smeared with cobwebs and apparently alive with grave-worms, somehow always falls at just the right angles to conceal the face and hands and any weapons smaller than a dire lance or a grand daiklave.

All that the onlooker can tell is that the person before him is roughly large, small or of medium size — everything else is hidden in the wind-blown folds of shadowy silk. The wearer's voice is also modulated by the worm-ridden veil, distorted to a rasping hiss like the voice of a spectre. While Charms or sorcery can pierce the veil's concealment, no mere mortal vision can do so. However, if the wearer of the veil launches an attack on someone or directs sorcery at anyone other than herself, then the enchantment is broken. On the turn after the attack, the veil shrinks and falls away to the ground, leaving the wearer as he would appear normally. If not dispelled by an attack, removed by force or deactivated by the owner's own desire, the veil resumes its normal state at the end of the scene.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••;  
Drawback ••• (Component •, Notoriety ••)



**BATH THAT WARMS (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

For those dead who wish to be reembodied and to walk among the living again, a way may be found, if they are willing to pay the price — or, more accurately, to have others pay it for them. If they tire of shivering in the eternal cold of the Underworld, driven before the stormwinds and chilled by the constant breath that emanates from the mouth of Oblivion itself, they can acquire temporary bodies that will serve for a brief while in the living world. There is a bath carved out of black marble and onyx, with soulsteel channels leading into it, more than large enough for a single person to recline at ease. If the bath is filled with a large quantity of human blood and a ghost immerses herself in that blood, or if she lies there while the blood is poured over her, then the magics within the bath will combine to recreate, in the full beauty of its youth, the body she had while she still lived.

The minimum amount of blood needed to use the bath is seven health levels of lethal damage, which can come from one victim or several victims. This blood will create a body for the ghost that will last a single day. More blood will create a body that will last proportionally longer. Once the allotted time is over, the body falls to dust, forcing the ghost to flee to wherever can sustain her. If she retires to the bath before her body deliquesces and immerses herself in fresh blood, then her body is renewed for a number of days appropriate to the amount of blood. The blood itself must be fresh (taken within the last 15 minutes) and still warm. The body will be a normal human specimen, breathing and warm, and the ghost may use any Arcanoi she possesses while embodied in this way.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

**BELL OF THE ENDLESS CARAVAN (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

This dark bell, the size of a grown man's fists put together, is carved with strange symbols and runes of journeying and is set on an ebony handle. Its clapper is a camel's tooth, inlaid with soulsteel. When the bell is not being used, silk packing is stuffed inside it to stop it sounding accidentally. These bells are prized possessions among traders and travelers who want to cross the vast deserts in the South of the Underworld, but they are also valued by military leaders for scouting parties and spying missions.

When a bell of the endless caravan is rung, a low peal echoes out across the desert, and the ghosts of a dozen camels rise from the shadowy sands, each harnessed and bearing a bundled tent on its back. These camels will serve the bell's holder and have the base statistics and intelligence of a normal camel, though rather more docility. They are not trained for battle, but will remain where they are told to stay in the event of fighting and will not be

panicked into running away. The tents on their backs are of black silk and contain all the normal equipment that a traveler would find necessary. The camels and tents remain in existence until the bell is rung again or until the next Calibration, whichever comes first. If one of the camels is slain, then it will be replaced, together with all its equipment, the next time the bell is rung.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

**BOAT OF BONES (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

This small boat sails in the sky, above the endless storms of the Underworld and beneath the strange constellations of the world of the dead. It is constructed entirely of bones and tanned leather, with the skeletal wings of a huge spectre attached to either side of the ship so that it can fly through the air above. It has no sail, for none is necessary, and the figurehead is a human skull, whose bony jaws clatter together when the boat's owner gives it orders. These orders may either be given verbally or mentally with one hand placed on the boat's figurehead. All Dodge attempts against aerial attacks or misfortune are made using the Dodge Ability of its owner.

The boat itself travels at twice the speed of a raiton and may journey at any height from just above the ground to above the clouds themselves, depending on the owner's wishes. However, given the storms of the Underworld, it is often safer to travel high than low. The boat must be fed with a health level's worth of blood in any month that it is to travel, and this blood must be poured over the skull-figurehead. If this is not done, then the boat will simply stay sitting on the ground, and the jaws of the skull will clatter mockingly and hungrily. The boat can continue flying or remain floating in the air for up to a month. However, if it is kept in the air for this long, it will need to rest for a full day afterward and to be fed with twice as much blood as usual.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●;  
Drawback ●●●● (Component ●●, Maintenance ●, Notoriety ●)

**BOW OF SCREAMING DOOM (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

The soulsteel chasing of this powerbow is worked with screaming faces and twisted bodies. On attunement to the bow and commitment of 7 motes of Essence, the owner will find that it functions as a soulsteel long powerbow (see *Exalted*, p. 343). By spending additional Essence and exercising his will, the owner can also fire arrows that will cause the corpses of his slain victims to rise as feral walking dead. Each time that the wielder fires an arrow of this



nature, the mouths of the screaming faces embossed in the bow's soulsteel will open their mouths and howl in agony.

If the wielder chooses to spend 5 additional motes of Essence, then the bow will taint his next shot with the corruption of the walking dead. Should the victim of the shot be slain by it, then he will arise as an undead creature controlled by a hungry ghost. The resulting creature has the physical statistics and abilities of the victim who was slain but has an essentially animal intelligence, as the hungry ghost seeks only to slaughter those around it. It will, however, obey the commands of the bow's wielder. The body of a possessed victim falls to pieces and deliquesces a full day after combat. If the victim does not die from the wound, then he is safe for the moment — from this fate, at least — and the wielder's spent Essence is wasted.

The bow can only create one feral zombie per turn. While it can be used in Archery Charms, or even Combos, multiple arrow strikes cannot create feral zombies. That requires an individual shot and the expenditure of 5 motes of Essence.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●●, Game Impact ●●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

**CHART OF THE FINAL LANDS (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

Penned on white grave-linen with ink made from corpse-ashes, and always pallid and clean however dirty its surroundings, this map is woven with enchantment. It requires an investment of 5 motes of Essence for the owner to attune herself to it, but once this is done, it can not only show the owner's location and surroundings but can also track other people across the Underworld.

In order to identify her own surroundings, the owner must unroll the Chart of the Final Lands and spend another 5 motes of Essence while concentrating on the scale she desires; yards, miles, leagues, tens of leagues or hundreds of leagues. The Chart will ripple and then redraw itself in shadowy lines, showing the owner's location at the center. Her surroundings are marked on the map in the scale that she desired, with 50 units of the desired scale in each direction. Features of the landscape are clearly marked, but buildings only have their outer limits indicated on the Chart. The exception to this is if the owner is currently inside a building and has asked the Chart for the smallest possible scale. In that case, the rooms around her will be marked, and any secret doors not hidden by magic of any circle that prevents scrying will also be evident on the Chart. No actual names are written on the Chart, except for the five rivers of the Underworld, and Stygia itself, should either be within range.





An arrow at the top of the map indicates the direction of Stygia. Some people claim that this is proof that the Chart was first created in Stygia, on the orders of the Dual Monarchy. Others point out that the arrow points equally at the Well of the Void and murmur of darker origins.

If the owner wishes to use the Chart to locate someone else, then she must have an arcane link of some sort to that person: part of the target's body or a small amount of his blood or an artifact belonging (and attuned) to him. She feeds the Chart 5 motes of Essence, as before and places the body part or artifact against it or pours the blood out onto it, while concentrating on the scale of the map that she desires. The Chart then displays a map of the target's location, unless he is shielded by Celestial Circle magic or above.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●●● (Component ●, Maintenance ●, Notoriety ●●)

### THE CODEx OF THE DAMNED (ARTIFACT ●●●)

This hefty tome is made from pages of flayed human skin, bound with soulsteel, inscribed in blood and marked with sigils of power. Even the most casual onlooker can tell that it is powerful and dangerous. The first few pages promise great might and skill to a reader who dares to claim it as her own. Later portions of the book cannot be opened, as the pages stick together as though glued by the blood that oozes from them. The whole book pulsates like the flesh of a man in the throes of passion, and the skin of the pages seems to stir and shiver to the touch.

An owner of the book must spend 5 motes of Essence to attune to it. Once this is done, the pages flutter open, and she can now read further in the work. However, she is now as bound by Oblivion as any wearer of grave-prison chains and will be dragged to it if she should suffer the destruction of her form while attuned to *The Codex of the Damned*. In return, she will find the secrets of Moliation, Pandemonium and Soulforging laid out before her. She automatically gains a dot in each of the three Craft Abilities, in addition to any Ability she may already have, to a maximum of 3. What is more, she can sacrifice her Fetters to *The Codex of the Damned* in return for more skill yet. Each Fetter that she chooses to give up will grant her another point in one of the three Abilities, to a maximum of 5 in any Ability. These gains in skill last for as long as she is attuned to *The Codex of the Damned*. Should she lose it or break the attunement, she also loses the Ability dots, though she does not regain any sacrificed Fetters.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●●● (Component ●●, Notoriety ●●)

### THE CRUSHER OF SOULS (ARTIFACT ●●●)

This great obsidian statue was built by spectres, designed by a powerful nephwrack of ancient heritage. It depicts a huge spectre, kneeling with clawed hands cupped in front of it, with a niche carved in its forehead like a third eye. When the Crusher of Souls is properly fed with Essence and ghosts (or spectres) are placed in its cupped hands, it will grind its palms together and crush all those within in a ghastly sacrifice to the Lords of the Underworld, so that plasm and blood and other fluids run out over the Crusher's fingers. Once this is done, an Essence-containing gem grows in the niche in the Crusher's forehead and can be removed and used for other purposes.

The character activating the Crusher of Souls must pay 10 motes of Essence to begin the sacrifice. The Crusher's fingers then slowly begin to close, taking five combat turns to do so and trapping anyone who cannot escape from the great cup that the fingers form. A prisoner with free arms and legs could easily scramble out — which is why prisoners for sacrifice are usually chained, drugged, mutilated or some combination of the above. The sacrifice of five or more of the dead produces a 1-mote gem, while 20 or more sacrifices gives a 2-mote gem, and 50 or more sacrifices gives a 3-mote gem. The Crusher cannot produce a gem of more than a ●●● rating. It can also only produce one gem a day, though it can operate multiple times in a day, if its owner so desires.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●, Game Impact ●●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●●● (Component ●, Maintenance ●, Notoriety ●●)

### EYES OF THE PYRE FLAME (ARTIFACT ●●●)

Pyre flame is known and feared throughout the Underworld. This artifact allows a ghost to exchange his eyes for a pair of crystals that not only see normally, but also allow him to blast his enemies with pyre flame five times a day. The eyes of the pyre flame appear to be very dark star rubies, with an odd greenish ripple of air around them. To use them, the ghost must rip out his own eyes (he must do this himself) and then insert the gems into his bleeding eye sockets. If he is already missing one or both eyes, then it is sufficient to rip out a single eye, if one remains, and scour healed sockets until they bleed anew. The eyes will take a full day to accustom themselves to their new user and will give him horrific nightmares and flame-filled visions during that time. It is a good idea for friends to restrain him in case his violent convulsions put him in danger.

Once the user has grown accustomed to the eyes, they will provide perfectly normal vision. However, when he wishes to smite an enemy (or an object) with pyre flame, he should focus on that object and spend a number of motes of Essence to fuel his desire. An expenditure of 5

motes of Essence will produce pyre flame equal to the contents of a small jug (splash radius of two feet, three levels of aggravated damage), while 10 motes of Essence will produce the equivalent of a medium jug (splash radius of five feet, seven levels of aggravated damage). The victim may attempt to dodge this by having her player roll the character's Agility + Dodge against the user's Perception + Awareness. These two gems must be used as a pair. If separated and inserted on their own, they have no effect.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●●;

Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

**FIRE-BELLY CENTIPEDE (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

This artifact could be described as an extreme tool of persuasion. It is a small soulsteel model of a centipede, shaped with extreme delicacy and skill though barely three inches long, and it has a wider bulb at its end that contains a portion of pyre flame. At its master's command (and on an expenditure of 5 motes of Essence, plus a mote of Essence for each month which it is to lie concealed), it will burrow into a victim's flesh in a variant on the Six Demon Bag Arcanos (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 249) and lie concealed there. While it is buried in the victim's body, it will do no harm for the number of months that its master has commanded and spent Essence to achieve. When that period runs out, the fire-belly centipede retracts its scales, directly exposing the pyre flame to its victim's innards. This does an automatic two health levels of unsoakable lethal damage per turn of exposure. If the victim dies, then the centipede will crawl out from her remains and curl up in a dormant state, waiting for its master (or some new owner) to collect it.

Should anyone attempt to cut the centipede from the victim's body, before or after it has exposed the pyre flame that it contains, then the victim takes an automatic three health levels of unsoakable lethal damage. The centipede itself explodes, spattering the would-be surgeon with pyre flame (three automatic levels of unsoakable aggravated damage) unless her player succeeds at an Intelligence + Medicine roll with difficulty of 5. However, the master of the centipede can, at any time, feed the centipede more motes of Essence by touching the victim's body over where the centipede rests, which will cause the centipede to remain dormant for longer. He can also summon the centipede out of the victim's body, leaving her free and unharmed.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●●, Script Immunity ●●;

Drawback ●●●● (Component ●●, Maintenance ●, Notoriety ●)

**GIRDLE OF SKULLS (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

From a distance, this elegant girdle seems to be studded with pearls. However, on closer inspection, each "pearl" is revealed to be a miniature skull, perfect in every detail. A girdle of skulls requires a commitment of 5 motes of Essence, but once that is done, it fits the wearer perfectly, whatever his age, size or state of personal decay. The Girdle is made from ivory laced together with the hair of old women and clasped with soulsteel, but the skulls which ornament it are dry bone polished to a nacreous sheen.

On a word of command, a dozen skulls detach themselves from the girdle and grow to full human size, floating in warped patterns around the girdle's owner with strange lights glowing and fluxing in their eyes. They function much like the Dolorous Reflection spell (see **Exalted**, pp. 220-221), catching missiles in their teeth or deflecting them away, though never hurling the missiles back at those firing them. The skulls do not attempt to interfere with hand-to-hand combat. They continue to float around their master until he commands them to return to the girdle or until the end of the scene.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●●;

Drawback ●●●● (Component ●●, Notoriety ●●)

**THE HAMMER OF THE DAMNED (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

This giant goremaul of white jade was crafted by a Dragon-Blooded mastersmith who was horrified by the existence of Oblivion and swore that he would give the last of his existence in an attempt to destroy the grave-prison chains used by the Deathlord. While he has not been heard of for centuries (though some claim to have seen a shield with his screaming face embossed on it in the Silver Prince's armories) his work endures.

Not only does this jade goremaul function as a normal weapon in battle, but it is also capable of shattering grave-prison chains. If the owner uses it to crush the five stones that ornament the shackles, then the chains themselves fall from the prisoner's neck, wrists and ankles. Each stone requires that the wielder of the Hammer of the Damned succeed in an attack on the wearer of the chains and do at least one level of bashing damage to the victim, who can choose not to dodge or activate any sort of automatic defenses. If this reduces the victim to zero health levels in the process, then at least she goes to Lethe, with the chains broken.

**Artifact Traits:**


Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●●, Script Immunity ●●●;

Drawback ●●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

**HAND SNARE CHAINS (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

This fragile-seeming tangle of soulsteel chains encircles the wrist like a bracelet, with thin links running to





rings that circle each of the fingers, seeming no more than an exotic decoration. If the owner commits 5 motes of Essence to attune herself to it, she will find that it fits her perfectly, whatever her size or build. More importantly, at a moment's notice, she can point at someone within 10 feet and have the chains jump from her hand to wrap around the victim and snare him.

The victim's player may attempt to roll his character's Perception + Dodge against the wielder's Dexterity + Occult in an attempt to evade the chains, with appropriate penalties for already being restrained or for being taken by surprise. If the target is caught by the chains, they thicken to the size and thickness of grave-prison chains (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 257) and wind around him in order to immobilize him, with a single length of chain going back to the wielder's hand. Like grave-prison chains, the hand snare chains prevent the victim from spending Essence or using Arcanoi. The chains return to their normal size and free their captive in an hour's time or whenever the wielder may desire it before then.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

**MIRROR THAT LOOKS UPON ITS TWIN**  
(ARTIFACT ●●●)

These hand-mirrors are always linked in pairs: One of the pair is black iron ornamented with pallid orichalcum, while the other is solid gold chased with glistening soulsteel. They form a convenient two-way link for communication between the Underworld and Creation. When they are activated, the holder of the first mirror can see and hear all that is reflected in the second mirror, and vice versa. They are fine tools for the spies, ambassadors and assassins employed by Deathlords.

To activate his mirror, the holder smears his blood onto the mirror's surface in the shape of the sigil embossed on the back of the mirror. This act, together with an expenditure of 5 motes of Essence, opens a channel to the other mirror. The holder may see everything that is currently reflected in the other mirror and hear everything in its vicinity. Of course, if the other mirror is in a bag or a sealed chest, the view is somewhat uninteresting. Spies using these mirrors often arrange set times to communicate, in order to ensure that someone will be waiting by the other mirror of the pair. The black-iron mirror must always remain in the Underworld or in a shadowland during night or Calibration, while the gold mirror must always remain in Creation. If either is brought across into the area that is antithetical to it, both mirrors crumble into dust. Likewise, if one mirror is destroyed, the other, wherever it may be, also flies into shards.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●●, Notoriety ●)

**NIGHT MOTHER DOLL (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

The first of these artifacts was made for a princess who died while still very young, whose grieving parents wanted her to be cared for in the Underworld until they should join her there themselves. Others have been produced since, but they still remain rare commodities and are highly priced in Sijan or similar communities. A night mother doll looks like a normal large doll when inactive, with its face and hands carved from articulated jade and its body swathed in long drapes of silk. These dolls are always adult females and can normally be identified as belonging to a particular culture or background.

When called on by their owners, they grow to the size of an adult and have the statistics of a jade effigy (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pp. 20 and 21), though they carry no weapons. They will obey any command given by their owners. While a night mother doll is capable of fighting, it can also cradle its owner in its arms and hold her through the night or sit by her bedside and watch patiently over her. A doll can also carry its owner while traveling or lift her over obstacles. It can remain in full adult form for as long as is necessary, even for centuries on end. However, if its owner enters Lethe or falls to Oblivion, the doll returns to its small form and remains that way till claimed again.

A doll can only be owned by a ghost child who lived less than 10 years, however long he or she may have been dead and in the Underworld. However much an older ghost may attempt to attune to a doll that falls into his hands, it simply will not work.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

**PALE BEES OF THE GHOSTLY HIVE**  
(ARTIFACT ●●●)

These bees are creatures of darkness, striped with shadow and pale gold like nightmare ghosts of real insects. While dormant, they dwell inside a honeycombed piece of white jade the size of a man's fist. When they are called upon, they come swarming out of their hive in a flurry of dark wings, buzzing like a death-rattle, and rip at the flesh of their opponents, before carrying the remnants back with them to the hive. They do damage as would a casting of the spell *Death of Obsidian Butterflies* (see **Exalted**, p. 217-218) except that the user rolls Perception + Awareness (rather than Perception + Occult). Attacks on the swarm have no effect. The Hive itself must be destroyed to kill them, and it requires five levels of lethal damage to shatter it.

The bees return to their hive with imperceptibly tiny pieces of ghostly flesh, storing these remains deep inside the hive's twisted passages. When they have collected 20 health levels worth of lethal damage, the remnants inside the hive distil into a rich onyx liquor that works only upon the dead but will restore five health levels of damage instantly when it is drunk (it can be divided into separate doses). This liquid can be tipped out of the hive and stored elsewhere. The bees will not produce another dose until the first one has been removed. While the bees may be called as often as required, they must be called at least once a month, or they will turn on each other in a cannibalistic frenzy and slay one another, and the hive itself will wither and fall to dust.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••••;  
Drawback ••• (Component •, Maintenance •, Notoriety •)

**PHANTOM MANTLE (ARTIFACT •••)**

This translucent mantle is barely visible. Woven from wool as pale as crystal and clasped with an onyx brooch, it covers the wearer from head to foot, whatever his height. When it is donned and the brooch clasped, if the wearer chooses to expend 5 motes of Essence, he becomes immaterial for the duration of the scene. He can pass through wood and metal and rock alike, but is balked by jade (or by any of the other Magical Materials). He is also affected by Charms and sorcery and by fire. He is as immaterial to the Underworld as a ghost normally is within Creation.

A person wearing a phantom mantle is still visible and audible, even if he has activated its magical powers. He can choose to end the effect before the scene is over, if he so desires. While he can walk through the ordinary dead, he cannot pass through one of the Abyssal Exalted — and is, indeed, advised not to try. The mantle is too thin and fragile to serve as armor and is destroyed by three or more levels of bashing damage.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •••, Usefulness ••••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••••;  
Drawback ••• (Component •, Maintenance •, Notoriety •)

**RAZOR TEETH (ARTIFACT •••)**

In its unused form, this artifact seems to be a necklace strung with carved soulsteel incisors, modeled to resemble a shark's teeth. When claimed and placed against a would-be wearer's mouth, it painfully burrows into the flesh of her gums, displacing her natural teeth and filling her mouth with razor-edged soulsteel. This attunement process requires 5 motes of Essence, which are permanently lost. Not only does this give the wearer a bite attack (Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5L [and Rate 1 for Exalted Power

Combat]), but it also allows the wearer to consume the flesh of her enemies and strengthen herself in the process.

For every five health levels of lethal damage that the user of the teeth manages to consume from her prey, she gains a bonus of one die to her next roll involving Strength or Stamina, to a maximum bonus of three dice. She must actually consume the flesh of her opponents, and not simply rip them apart, in order to gain this bonus. This requires an extra combat turn to eat the flesh that she has torn apart in her latest attack. Once the bonus is spent, she can begin to accumulate dice again. These bonus dice cannot be saved beyond the end of the scene.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •••, Usefulness ••••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity •••••;  
Drawback •••• (Component •, Maintenance •, Notoriety ••)

**ROSARY THAT FEEDS ON SOULS (ARTIFACT •••)**

The rosary that feeds on souls is a long necklace of pearls that can be wound around the neck several times, with a single soulfire crystal dangling as a pendant from it. It is a valuable tool for warriors who run short of Essence mid-battle, as it can gather Essence while they are slaying their enemies and store it in the soulfire crystal for later use. Each time the wearer of a rosary slays another living being who has at least one dot of permanent Essence, a mote of Essence enters the soulfire crystal until it reaches its maximum. This Essence may only be used by the wearer of the rosary and is automatically Death-aspected, like all Essence stored in soulfire crystals. Victims must be slain with weapons or Charms or bare-handed strikes and must be within 10 yards of the wearer of the rosary, or no Essence will be gained from their deaths.

The amount of Essence that can be stored in the soulfire crystal depends on its size. Since these rosaries are lightweight and designed to be worn around the neck, the attached soulfire crystal usually stores 5-10 motes, though ones large enough to hold 10 motes of Essence are very rare and somewhat cumbersome. As the crystal fills, the pearls of the rosary shift from pale luminous white to dead black in proportion to the amount of Essence in the crystal, until, at last, the crystal is full, and the pearls are all as black as the Abyss.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact ••, Script Immunity ••••;  
Drawback ••• (Component •, Notoriety ••)

**SCOURGE OF THORNS (ARTIFACT •••)**

This scourge is forged from soulsteel and modeled like a multi-stranded whip, but with each strand of the whip braided from knotted wires and each wire contorted into spiky knots. Its butt has a setting for a Hearthstone, and it has statistics of Speed +3, Accuracy +1, Damage +3L,





Defense +0 and requires a minimum Dexterity of 2. (If using Exalted Power Combat, it is Speed +6, Accuracy +2, Damage +4L, Defense +0 and Rate 2.) If the scourge is shaken and a mote of Essence is spent by the holder, its strands brush and scrape against each other, producing a hideous whispering sound that causes fear in all mortals within earshot (-1 die on attack rolls to all those with Essence 1 or less).

If the scourge of thorns is cast to the ground (a reflexive action), it springs up as a bush of steely black brambles, which promptly encircles its user and all those within five yards of him, rising in a dome five yards above their heads. This hedge is impervious to fire or non-magical weapons, has a soak of 4L/8B and requires 10 levels of lethal damage be administered to hack a hole in it in order to reach those within. (It does not, however, protect those within it from fire, sorcery or adverse weather conditions.) Anyone coming into contact with the hedge takes a level of soakable lethal damage. The butt of the scourge remains protruding from the ground at the center of the circle. If its owner takes hold of it and pulls it from the ground, the scourge resumes its usual form, and the hedge vanishes. The scourge itself is not damaged if someone hacks through its thorns to reach those inside while it is in hedge form.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●●;

Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

**SHADOW-CASTING GEM (ARTIFACT ●●●)**

This black diamond is as dangerous to the wielder's allies as to his enemies. When he exposes it to the air and pronounces a word of command, a brilliant light flares from the jewel, causing all those within 20 yards except the wielder to cast a well-defined shadow against the wall or floor. These shadows promptly come to life and attack their owners, either barehanded or wielding shadows of their owners' weapons. The gem's wielder cannot control the shadows in any way or spare anyone within the area of effect, such as nearby allies.

The shadows have the same Physical Traits as their owners, but no thought other than the urge to attack blindly. They wear armor and carry weapons of the same *type* as their owners, but without any *powers*. A shadow of some mighty enchanted daiklave would simply be a daiklave — though it would still have edge and weight, it would not gain Magical Material bonuses or anything more than its basic combat statistics. Each shadow has as many health levels as the gem's wielder has permanent Essence. The shadows cannot use Charms or sorcery and do not possess the Ox-Body Charms of their casters. A shadow vanishes if it kills its owner or if it is destroyed itself. The gem can only be

used three times in a single day. It flickers oddly if it is not stored in absolute darkness.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

### STOMACH-WEIGHTING POWDER

(RESOURCES ●●● FOR A POUCH OF 5 DOSES)

This artifact is one of the quicker and nastier ways that have been devised to force one of the dead to remain where she is. In its latent form, it is a small pinch of dark powder, easy to swallow if taken with a little wine or water. If it has been mixed into a drink that is given to an unwitting victim, the victim's player may roll his character's Perception + Alertness against a difficulty of 6 to see if she notices anything odd about the taste. On one success, she notices a slightly bitter taste; on two successes, she perceives that there is a foreign substance in the drink; and on three or more successes, she can tell that there is a powder of some sort mixed in the drink. Many slavers lie while administering the powder, finding some sort of plausible story to persuade the victim to drink it. When swallowed, the powder swells to the size of a man's head inside the victim's stomach and becomes 10 times as dense and heavy as iron. The victim is pinned to the ground by its weight, unable to rise, let alone walk away.

There are three known ways of removing the stomach-weighting powder. The first is to drink a solution of nettles, ash and Underworld grapes (at least three successes are required on an Intelligence + Medicine roll for a character to remember the correct proportions). This concoction causes the powder to shrink and crumble and the victim to vomit it out. The second method is to wait. Twelve hours after being swallowed, the powder will shrink once more, and the victim will vomit it out and be free once again. The third method involves using a sword or knife to cut the victim's stomach open, causing three health levels of lethal damage. Once removed from inside the victim's body, the powder will fall to dust. This substance is usually found in pouches of five doses.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●, Usefulness ●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

### TAMING MUZZLE (ARTIFACT ●●●)

Sometimes, the Deathlords not only wish to chain their slaves, but also wish to enforce absolute subservience on them and deny them even any chance to dream of freedom. This twisted muzzle of pitch-black soulsteel is bound around a victim's face and across his mouth. Soulfire crystals glint on either side of it, though they are usually dark gray. A prisoner wearing a taming muzzle loses all

ability to take independent action. He is in a trance state, numbly obedient to his master (the owner of the muzzle), though lacking the energy or capacity for thought to do more than follow or stand still as he is ordered.

The taming muzzle has two states, however. In the first state, the wearer is passive as described above, but in the second state, the soulfire crystals glow bright scarlet, and the wearer goes into a berserk state, attacking whoever his master may order. A prisoner of the muzzle may use physical attacks or weapons but lacks the capacity of thought to use Arcanoi, Charms or sorcery. He can remain in combat mode indefinitely while attacking his designated targets, but if he goes for more than 10 minutes without fighting, he relapses back into his trance state.

The taming muzzle is locked, and can be released, with the touch of an engraved soulsteel ring that is created at the same time as the muzzle to match it. Victims with Essence ●● or less have no chance of breaking free. Victims with Essence ●●● to ●●●●● may try to break free if they see some person to whom they feel a strong emotional connection or if forced to watch scenes that they are strongly opposed to or to do battle at their master's command. They do so by an effort of will, their players rolling a number of dice equal to the characters' totaled Virtues against a difficulty of their master's Willpower. If their players score five or more successes, the muzzles come loose and fall from them. A taming muzzle cannot hold victims with Essence ●●●●● or more.

There is another way of removing a taming muzzle, though scarcely anyone knows of it. If another person (willing or unwilling) presses her lips against a muzzle in a parody of a kiss, the muzzle comes loose and reknits itself around the other person's head, freeing its previous wearer.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●●, Notoriety ●)

### THIEVING HARNESS OF SERVITUDE

(ARTIFACT ●●●)

Jade effigies are among the most valuable artifacts in the Underworld — is it surprising, therefore, that they are targets for theft? This harness is plaited from thin black silk rope and buckled with a soulsteel clasp, set with an Essence-containing gem. If he fastens it around a jade effigy's chest and over its shoulders, the owner of this harness can compel the effigy to obey him instead of its proper owner. Naturally, ownership of an artifact such as this is looked on extremely poorly by any organization (such as the Dual Monarchy) that commands and depends upon jade effigies.

The owner must place the thieving harness of servitude on the target jade effigy and pour a pint of his own blood or plasm over the gem at the center of the Harness.



The gem then begins to glow darkly red, and the jade effigy will obey him as it would previously have obeyed its proper owner. Activating the harness requires one level of lethal damage, though if the Harness' owner wishes, he can drain off some of his blood or plasm beforehand (up to a day before) and save it in a container of some sort. He must thereafter continue to feed the gem with a pint of blood every week, though the blood need not necessarily come from him in the future. Should he omit to do this, the gem stops glowing, the harness falls from the effigy's shoulders, and the effigy itself returns to its prior allegiance.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity ••;

Drawback ••• (Component ••, Notoriety •)

**URN THAT VOIDS DARKNESS (ARTIFACT •••)**

With this artifact, the owner can summon a vast darkness, which will come spilling out of the open mouth of the urn like smoke, filling any room in which it is opened within a single turn. All natural lights (torches, candles, lanterns) are extinguished. Sorcerous lights are dimmed to half their normal strength if affected by Sapphire Countermagic or are extinguished for the duration if susceptible to Emerald Countermagic. Stronger works of

sorcery are unaffected. Solar anima flares and Caste Marks burn with their usual strength. The room remains filled with darkness for as long as the lid is off the urn. Once the lid is restored, the darkness ceases, and any lights burn again or return to their normal strength.

The darkness does not go beyond the boundaries of the room, however large or small the room may be. The artifact can fill a single tiny attic with darkness or steal the light from a great royal hall. If the urn that voids darkness is opened under other conditions, such as in a maze of corridors or outside under the open sky, then it will simply fail to function. Anyone looking inside under such conditions will see that the urn appears to be full of unpierceable darkness that cannot be poured or emptied away.

The urn itself, a small thing only one foot wide and two feet high, is carved from onyx and inlaid with soulfire crystals and is surprisingly light to carry. It is also fragile, and if broken, it is utterly destroyed. Should this happen, a great gout of shadow comes rising out of the shattered remains and hangs in the air for a moment, a plume of darkness more than a mile high, before vanishing.

**Artifact Traits:**

Power •••, Usefulness •••, Game Impact •••, Script Immunity •••;

Drawback ••• (Component ••, Notoriety •)



## THE WHITE SNAKES THAT HUNGER (ARTIFACT ●●●)

In its most neutral form, this item seems to be a white-jade oval the size of a small woman's hand. On closer inspection, it becomes obvious that this artifact is cunningly carved to resemble two snakes coiled smoothly on themselves. To use it, the owner casts it to the ground and spends a mote of Essence to activate the artifact. The snakes uncoil, and one of the snakes moves to attack any indicated target, while the other gives birth to a new snake, spitting it out of its mouth. This process continues in successive turns, with half the snakes attacking any indicated target, while the other half of the snakes give birth to new offspring. Any given snake has the statistics and poison of a coral snake (see *Exalted*, pp. 243, 315 and 316).

The snakes continue to multiply and attack for up to half an hour, unless ordered to cease by the artifact's owner. They will not leave their owner's presence, and will not pursue fleeing enemies beyond that area, or follow orders that would take them into another room and out of sight. After the half-hour is up, or when their owner commands it, the snakes all turn on each other. They swallow each other until there are only two snakes left, which then coil around each other and reform the artifact in its latent state. It cannot be used again till the next day. If all the snakes are killed, then the last snake to die coils in on itself and resumes the latent form of the artifact. Thereafter, it cannot be used again for a year and must be bathed in fresh blood first. If it is destroyed while in its neutral form, as a stone oval (three levels of lethal damage), then it is permanently destroyed. Some scholars have noticed similarities between this artifact and the serpent-and-egg earth elementals (see the *Exalted Storyteller's Companion*, p. 72), leading to speculation that the creation of one of these artifacts requires an egg from a serpent-and-egg, but there is little evidence one way or another.

### Artifact Traits:

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●●, Game Impact ●●, Script Immunity ●●●;  
Drawback ●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●)

## KEYSTONE OF THE STAIR INESCAPABLE (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

This pallid moonstone is buried under the bottom step of a flight of stairs. It has no effect until someone begins to climb the stairs, but once this occurs, the artifact's enchantment comes into force. It makes it impossible for the climber to leave the stairs unless he pronounces the keystone's name. Otherwise, the climber finds the stairs elongating to infinity in either direction when he tries to leave them: He can never quite reach the top, the bottom is always a few paces too far away, and if he tries to jump off to one side or to break through the wall, then the stairs somehow stretch, leaving him always those few inches away from the edge of the stairs or the wall. Many who place a keystone to form a stair inescapable do so with a spiral staircase or some other long, twisting stair that will not otherwise have its true nature become immediately obvious. Inescapable stairs are often littered with the skeletons of those who perished from starvation while trapped there.

There are three known keystones, created by a smith among the dead whose name was erased from the books of Stygia, due to his trafficking with spectres and the Yozis. The keystones' names are Arishapetel, Domnozoarni and Kalaritazan, though only the learned would know this (five successes on an Intelligence + Lore roll). The three keystones loathe each other with an instinctive abhorrence, and bringing one upon a stair ruled by another causes the second keystone to become inactive for as long as the first is there, making passage possible. However, naming the *wrong* keystone on a stair ruled by another causes the entire stair to scream aloud in fury, audible for up to a mile away.

To be sure, there are ways to circumvent the trap of the stair inescapable besides naming its keystone. Anyone of 6 or more permanent Essence can ignore its effects and simply walk up the stairs as though they were normal. Adamant Countermagic will also allow passage, and Charms that alter the normal flow of space, time and fate may also permit exit from the stair. (As characters are likely to find novel uses for them, the Storyteller is urged to rule on a case-by-case basis, according to the requirements of play.)

### Artifact Traits:

Power ●●●, Usefulness ●●, Game Impact ●●●, Script Immunity ●●●●;  
Drawback ●●●● (Component ●, Notoriety ●●●)









## CHAPTER FOUR CREATIONS OF BONE



The Deathlords have at their disposal tactics and resources that are inconceivable to (or forgotten by) the denizens of Creation. With each necromantic insight, with each Abyssal Exaltation and with the establishment of each new shadowland, the defenses protecting the living from the dead hold less firmly than they did before.

This chapter sheds light on a few of the grave menaces the Deathlords are amassing in the Underworld in preparation for their assault on Creation. It begins with a look at the armies of the dead and then details the necromantic war machines created by the Deathlords and deathknights to wreak widespread havoc on the living.

### ARMIES OF THE DEAD

As horrific as an army of the walking dead might be, that alone still would not be enough to triumph against the armies of Creation. The unmodified dead have their limitations. The Deathlords, particularly the First and Forsaken Lion, are keenly aware of this, and for this reason, they have taken stock of their resources, and they have innovated. They have optimized their advantages with cunning strategies. They have honed (and disseminated) their new techniques for centuries through ongoing skirmishes with one another. And now that the final piece of the puzzle is in place — in the form of the Abyssal Exalted — they stand ready to test their malevolent tactics against the living.

### ZOMBIES

More plentiful, more replaceable and more disposable than either ghosts or mortals, the walking dead are the Deathlords' preferred shock troops. They cause great carnage, they're potent weapons for destroying morale among mortal troops, and they have the convenient epiphenomenon of afflicting those they injure with disease. The main disadvantage of zombies is that they don't heal. While ghosts and mortals both heal in their own ways, zombies rot away even if left alone and do not recover from wounds suffered in combat. The Deathlords were not blind to this flaw, and over the course of several skirmishes they fought among themselves, they learned how to minimize the weakness.

### BATTLEFIELD SUPPORT LABS

A zombie that has been destroyed (i.e., lost all its health levels) is inert (or reduced to uncoordinated twitching), but having once been infused with necromantic energies, it still has necromantic vibrations resounding through its tissues and can be reanimated should it become part of a workable frame again. The magic only dissipates entirely if the corpse is hacked to small pieces or burned.

Dead flesh responds well to the skilled and loving touch of a necrosurgeon the way metal responds to the hammer of a smith. It can be cut, sewn, molded, sculpted



and made better (or at least more useful) than it was. A true virtuoso of the art can make undead flesh do things it never did (nor was meant to do) in its living days. A surgeon can take parts from one source and augment another corpse with them. An arm originating on one body need not stay on that body, especially if the rest of that body has been destroyed. It can be sewn onto another body and put to work again.

Any large fighting force assembled by a Deathlord will include at least one mobile battlefield support lab, comprising several ghosts, loyal mortals and/or higher-functioning zombies and at least one “resurrection pit.” These labs are units deployed behind the front in which necrosurgeons gather the hacked and battered remains of zombie forces and assemble them into composite zombies (sometimes known as meat golems). It would be a misnomer to say that these teams repair the zombies. Rather, the teams *consolidate* the zombies by taking undamaged pieces from multiple destroyed zombies and sewing, screwing and lashing them together to create meat golems. Such composite zombies are indistinguishable from zombies except for the sutures, ropes and pins holding them together.

The parts for the composite zombie must be painstakingly gathered by ghosts or mortals armed with bone saws or similar implements. Fallen zombies are often

quite damaged, frequently beyond salvage, but many often have at least one or more undamaged limbs (or other chunks) that can be recovered for further use. Parts of zombies that have been crushed or severed can be recovered, but zombies that have been severely burned cannot be reused. Ten health levels worth of viable dead flesh have to be gathered and stitched together to create a meat golem (even if they’re only extras). Some necromancers have been known to use the spell *Exquisite Undead Aide* (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 226) to generate tireless assembly lines of undead necrosurgeons to perform the actual stitching together of the zombie parts. Through this technique, a necromancer could create several teams skilled at constructing composite zombies. Once the necrosurgeons have the necessary parts to create a meat golem, they cut the pieces to fit together and then assemble them. Bones are connected with rods, pins and screws, while muscle and skin are connected with sutures and small hooks. The hardware used in these operations can be soulsteel (for rare masterworks), but more often, it’s less valuable metal such as iron or brass unless the final product needs to channel Essence particularly well. Stitching a composite zombie together requires five successes on an Intelligence + Craft (Necrosurgery) roll, which is typically performed as an extended action, with one roll made every hour. A

botch on this roll ruins the flesh, leaving it fit only for carrion eaters, and new cadavers must be acquired.

Once the pieces of the meat golem have been assembled, the surgeons throw the patchwork creature into a (sardonically named) resurrection pit. Resurrection pits are cylindrical pits of thick soulsteel, eight feet in diameter and fifteen feet deep and weighing three to four tons (some Deathlords have much larger permanent models near their citadels in the Underworld). Powered either by Hearthstones (of at least rating ●●●) or by several soulfire crystals or Essence-containing gems, they are etched with vile necromantic glyphs and filled with a repulsive broth of blood and assorted necromantic reagents brought from the depths of the Labyrinth. Maintaining a resurrection pit on an ongoing basis requires Resources ●● or better. The pits consume 1 mote of Essence per hour, and the soulfire crystals and Essence-containing gems must constantly be refilled by ghosts using Filling the Precious Vile (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 247). Pits powered by Hearthstones, obviously, are much less trouble to maintain.

Transporting a resurrection pit is no small undertaking, but they are often loaded into wagons drawn by animated yeddim corpses or carried on vast palanquins that require scores of zombies to move. Once they reach their destination, resurrection pits are usually set into the ground, but they can be assembled above ground, in which case they are surrounded by scaffolding and ladders to allow easy access to the pits. Deathlords and their deathknights typically deploy battlefield support labs as close to combat as possible.

Once ghosts and mortals have recovered enough parts for a composite zombie, the necrosurgeons assemble them into a whole creature and toss it into the resurrection pit. The foul broth in the resurrection pits causes the parts to merge into each other, linking the components with a kind of thick scar tissue that's often tougher than the original flesh. An assembled composite zombie must be left to soak in the pit for at least 24 hours to allow the pieces to fuse properly. Once the parts have fused, the necromantic spark reignites and the composite zombie pulls itself from the pool, ready to be deployed again against the forces of Creation. If any piece of the composite corpse had not been previously animated by necromancy, the corpse will not mend and cannot be animated except through direct necromancy.

While these battlefield zombie labs are unwieldy and difficult to deploy, a force running low on zombies can often reclaim 20 to 40 percent of its casualties by making the fallen into composite zombies — without the need for a necromancer.

Resurrection pits count as Artifact ●●●● or ●●●●● devices, depending on the size. The smaller of the two types can hold and process around 20 meat golems at a time; the larger Artifact ●●●●● version holds around three times that. All of the Deathlords have at least one and some, such

as the First and Forsaken Lion, have dozens. Currently, resurrection pits work only in the Underworld and in shadowlands, but the Deathlords are aggressively working on a version that functions in Creation.


## ZOMBIES AND MORTALS

It is an unnatural state of affairs for zombies and mortals to work together, but in cases where mortals are necessarily present, a determined necromancer can integrate the two fairly easily, at least on a small scale. This is likely to occur if mortals from a shadowland make up a majority of a necromancer's fighting force, for example, or if the necromancer needs mortals to serve in battlefield support labs. This happens a fair amount, as mortal troops are popular with the Deathlords. Not only do they learn twice as fast as ghosts, but they can be made to learn faster yet with Hardened Killer Training Style (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 178). And when mortals die, they frequently provide more troops in the form of ghosts, hungry ghosts and zombies. Moreover, the living don't need Essence to be effective in living Creation proper and work well in battlefield formations. Oblivion-tainted idealism aside, most Deathlords are practical enough to incorporate living forces into their ranks.

A more expensive variant of Soul Brand, a simple Shadowlands Circle spell (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pp. 225-226), lets the necromancer create an amulet or talisman identifying a mortal as an inedible ally for a cost of 30 motes. The amulet is typically implanted under the skin on the recipient's sternum so it cannot be lost. The same spell can create talismans that can be carried freely, but these can lead to problems and are deliberately kept rare. These talismans last indefinitely in the Underworld or in shadowlands, but disintegrate after a year in Creation. Likewise, these "artifacts" are not artifacts in the truest sense of the word, and Sapphire Countermagic destroys them instantly. While they count as a level-2 artifacts, they can also be given to those with Backing (Deathlord) ●●. There's also a black market for these amulets, especially near shadowlands, and they typically cost Resources ●●●●. When the bearer of one of these amulets falls in battle, the amulet is typically cut from the corpse, cleaned and inserted in a new host as a means of preserving resources.

Some necromancers also know a 20 mote Labyrinth Circle spell, Black Investiture, that grants mortals limited control of zombies (on top of the benefits of Soul Brand), allowing those mortals to serve as lieutenants in the necromancer's army of the undead. This appears as a tattoo, like Soul Brand, but it may also, for 40 motes and a Willpower, be committed to an amulet. Amulets made with that spell are more powerful than those that simply identify mortals as allies, and they contain some of the necromancer's Essence. A mote of Essence must be committed to the amulet, and in so doing, the necromancer





confers some of his authority over the dead to his mortal minion. Should the mortal ever turn on the necromancer, the latter can reflexively withdraw his committed Essence, effectively de-authorizing the mortal. Given the power of these amulets, and their potential for abuse, they are *always* implanted under the bearer's skin (although that's not necessary for the magic to work), usually beneath the skin over the brow or under the scalp. Nemissaries sometimes use these items, but they must be obtained with Artifact ●●●, Backing ●●●● or Resources ●●●●●.

## DISEASE

Zombies are terrors on the battlefield. Not only are they repulsive and hard to destroy, but their putrefaction makes them bearers of disease. Wounds inflicted by the necrotic touch of a zombie is far more likely to become infected and fester than most other wounds sustained on the field of battle. Resisting infection from normal battlefield wounds requires a Stamina + Resistance roll against difficulty 3 (see **Exalted**, pp. 233-234). Resisting infection of wounds inflicted by zombies, on the other hand, requires five successes. When mortals close in battle with zombies, the mortal army suffers two kinds of casualties: those the zombies kill outright and those who fall victim to infection after being wounded. Treating such wounds with alcohol, fire or other sterilizing agents within a few minutes of being wounded is the key to surviving wounds delivered by zombies as it reduces the difficulty of the Stamina + Resistance roll to 2. The fire damage necessary to sterilize the wound is equal to one level of lethal damage.

Those of Creation's armies that encounter the walking dead more than once develop tactics for dealing with the infection caused by zombie wounds. Many of the living have discovered that pure grain alcohol is worth its weight in jade to the living combatants. Not only does it counter the gangrenous touch of the zombies, but its highly flammable nature makes it ideal for creating firebrands to wield against the walking dead.

## GHOSTS

With a few notable exceptions, ghosts play a far smaller role than the walking dead in the war between Creation and the Underworld. They are far less involved than zombies and hungry ghosts unless the living dare attack the dead in their spirit realm. Garrisons of war ghosts *are* quite useful in the shadowlands, however. Though they can't easily engage during the day, as soon as night

falls, the army materializes from whatever perfect strategic location or flanking position they have secured. Marching into the shadowlands and waiting for nightfall is suicide. The ghostly forces see attackers coming and the attackers can't see them, and when the living are tired, the ghosts are ready to spill and drink their blood.

The cost of materializing in Creation is prohibitively expensive (nearly half of the average ghost's Essence pool), particularly given that ghosts don't easily regain Essence outside the Underworld. That said, ghosts can certainly receive offerings of blood, prayers (in the form of Ancestor or Underworld Cult ratings) and other forms of sustenance. After major battles, Deathlords typically execute livestock and prisoners, dumping the blood of the sacrifices into vats offered to the dead hordes in terrifying victory celebrations.

Despite their limitations, there are some ghosts whose particular skills make them especially well suited to deployment in the world of the living.

## HUNGRY GHOSTS

Even in Creation, hungry ghosts are naturally material at night and need not spend Essence to affect the living — a powerful advantage among the undead. This makes them at least moderately useful to the Deathlords, despite the hungry ghosts' feral tendencies. Hungry ghosts are at least on par with zombies — and possibly far more powerful, depending on how powerful the hungry ghost was in life.

The forces of the Deathlords often make use of hungry ghosts by employing the tactics of strategic violation to increase their armies. A single slain mortal whose body has been carefully desecrated will yield two soldiers for the Deathlords: the animated fleshly remains in the form of a zombie and the corpse's hungry ghost.

More than once, the armies of Creation have been duped into believing they were confronting a modest force of zombies, when, in fact, their enemies' numbers doubled with the setting of the sun. While the Deathlords don't like to use this ploy too often lest it lose its value, it remains one of their favorite tactics.

At the very least, hungry ghosts are key agents in establishing ancestor cults in Creation, as the living can see for themselves what happens when a corpse is not given proper burial.

For more on hungry ghosts, see **Exalted**, pages 300-301, and **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pages 61-62.

## A STORM OF HUNGRY GHOSTS

The necromancy spell Shade Prison Amulet (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 225) allows a necromancer to capture hungry ghosts within a piece of engraved bone. The hungry ghost is freed only if the etched bone shard is destroyed. This necromancy spell is a relatively common one, and many necromancers accumulate large collections

## THE ZENITH PROBLEM

Because of their innate abilities to affect the undead, no enemy causes trouble for armies of the Deathlords like Solar Exalted of the Zenith Caste (see **Exalted**, p. 121 for the specifics of the Zenith anima powers). Of all the Exalted, the Hammers of Heaven (and sometimes Fire-aspected Terrestrials) are singled out for early destruction in any conflict between the living and the dead.

The Resplendent Suns can prevent the creation of hungry ghosts and zombies by burning the bodies of the fallen with a touch. The corpses of the walking dead can be similarly destroyed to prevent the Deathlord's battlefield necrosurgeons from harvesting them for parts. The player of any ghost (including mortwights) whose body is thus consecrated to the Unconquered Sun must make a successful reflexive Willpower roll, or the ghost is pulled immediately into Lethe and freed forever from the grasp of the Deathlords (and their masters). The difficulty of this roll is 7, -1 for every point of the ghost's permanent Essence, and the ghost's player may add an extra die to the roll for every two dots of Fetters she has.

For Example: If Skyhammer, a Solar of the Zenith Caste, finds the withered mortal remains of Crimson Petal and uses his anima flare to destroy those remains and consecrate the spirit to the Unconquered Sun, Crimson Petal, a powerful ghost with an Essence rating of ●●●●, would need to get at least three successes on a Willpower roll or fall instantly to Lethe.

In theory, a Zenith could use this power as a powerful bargaining chip with the dead, but in practice, few Resplendent Suns would do anything *but* return a soul back to the great cycle if he knew it had not found its own way to Lethe. Still, the Unconquered Sun is pragmatic, and Zeniths can be as well.

What's more, the Zenith can appear as a blazing and terrifying incarnation of the Unconquered Sun himself (as the Dawn anima flare on page 119 of **Exalted**, but only against undead, demons and other creatures of darkness). Zombies are not affected by the fear elicited by this ability (as they always succeed on Valor rolls), but they still cannot withstand the shining visage of the sun and cannot go near him. The walking dead may ignore the Zenith using his anima in this way, surround him or bypass him entirely, whichever's easiest, but they cannot safely approach closer than his Essence in yards. Walking dead who enter this radius fall to the ground inert until the Zenith leaves the area or his anima fades away.

Worse, the Zenith can inflict damage on undead troops with a glance, like the Unconquered Sun himself. The Zenith anima flare causes grievous wounds to ghosts, hungry ghosts, walking dead and Abyssals alike and automatically destroys any undead extra. Only deathknights, their Deathlord masters and the Infernal Exalted can resist the power of the Zenith anima flare. To do so, the deathknight spends 5 motes of Essence, and her player rolls the Abyssal's permanent Essence rating. Every success subtracts one success from the Zenith player's roll. This counts as a reflexive action.

Nemissaries possessing host corpses never take more than one level of damage from the Zenith's anima flare. If the Solar does more damage than that, the remainder affects the nemissary's host body, but not the possessing ghost itself. The power works differently against a ghost or demon possessing a living body, in which case the host takes one level of bashing damage from the Zenith flare and the invading spirit takes the remaining successes as levels of aggravated damage.

Any war machine composed wholly or in part of the remains of the dead, that is animated by necromancy or that is fueled by soulfire crystals, Essence-containing gems or an Underworld Hearthstone takes full damage from the Zenith's anima flare. Soulsteel retains its usual invulnerability, but the black metal shrieks in agony.

Those using the Void Circle spell Abyssal Aegis (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 228) are completely immune to any and all effects of the Zenith Anima flare. The Deathlords always don such protection on the rare occasions when they must personally do battle with the Resplendent Suns. Although it is not common knowledge, the armor of the First and Forsaken Lion has such an enchantment built into it, though this offers scant consolation to the Deathlord trapped within its riveted plates.

of these amulets almost by reflex. During times of war, they make use of them, often as siege weapons.

These amulets are placed between two large, flat rocks that have been tied together and are carefully launched from a catapult. The rocks crush the amulet upon landing,

releasing the hungry ghost. Several such amulets can be sent with even a single launch, and the Deathlords' engineers have formulated ways of launching an entire offensive force into a city with just a few large boulders. Depending on how many amulets and how many catapults the besieging party



controls, hundreds of hungry ghosts can be launched into a city in the space of a few hours. The Deathlords have worked out many, many versions of this tactic (and other tactics using Bauble of the Captive Soul). Some involve raitons dropping amulets from high above the city, while others involve sending in ghosts who can possess the living (to open gates, for instance).

The catapult operators learn quickly how *not* to launch these “ghost boulders” as well. Improper launching crushes the amulet prematurely and frees the hungry ghosts on the catapult’s operators (although Soul Brand tattoos and amulets protect against this eventuality).

## MOLIATED GHOSTS

The Arcanoi of the Shifting Ghost-Clay Path let a ghost modify her form — radically in many cases. Some of these changes make the ghost far more lethal in battle and therefore more worth the great cost they pay to materialize in Creation. Talented moliators are well worth their pay to their masters and often receive benefits beyond what their standing would normally offer. When quick surgical strikes on Creation are called for, a cadre of materialized moliated ghosts can serve as excellent shock troops, softening up the resistance in preparation for nemissaries and deathknights.

The modifications a ghost can make to her plasm using Ghost-Devil Form are nigh unlimited. Some are

listed in **Exalted: The Abyssals** on page 237. Others are given below:

**Huge Size:** The character is over nine feet tall and gains two extra -2 health levels.

**Maw:** The ghost has an enormous mouth with rows of sharp teeth, and on a successful Brawl attack, he inflicts Str + 4 lethal damage.

**Prehensile Tail:** As with Extra Arms

**Spikes:** Any successful hand-to-hand attack on the ghost inflicts three lethal health levels of damage on the attacker.

**Suckers:** Like the suckers of an octopus, these can be on the ghost’s body, arms or even tentacles (stats same as those of Extra Arms). They give the ghost an extra four dice on all clinch attacks.

Ghosts skilled in the Shifting Ghost-Clay Path can also manifest their Ghost-Devil Form without materializing by possessing a mortal with Puppeteer’s Masterful Hand and altering the mortal’s body (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 249). Combined with the tactics mentioned above, this ability can be used to devastating effect. This tactic does not work on possessed corpses, but nemissaries have many other options.

As another option, it’s worth noting that the Labyrinth can warp ghosts just as the Wyld mutates the living (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 66). While relations



between the Deathlords and neph racks aren't always cordial, a persuasive Deathlord might be able to borrow a few hundred (or thousand) suicide commando mortwights that are barely recognizable as humanoid. Marching into Creation with such a force doesn't require the ghosts to know Molation, and it *will* take a serious toll on the morale of Creation's defenders. Of course, doing so would likely give all the Deathlord's mortal soldiers nightmares for a week, but such is the price of using the acolytes of the Neverborn.

## NEMISSARIES

Nemissaries, those ghosts that can possess the bodies of the living and the dead, are by far the most frequent ghostly recruits in the war against Creation. They are capable of entering Creation in an assumed body — and for far less Essence than it takes to make their own ghostly forms solid or to seize the flesh of the living. Their abilities in reconnaissance, diplomacy and war with the living are invaluable to the Deathlords' plans. Before the appearance of the Abyssal Exalted, nemissaries occupied the most favored position in the Deathlords' hierarchy, and they channeled vast resources into the creation of stealthier, stronger and more highly trained nemissaries. In the last few years, however, that favored position has largely been usurped by the Abyssal Exalted, and some Deathlords are making much less use of nemissaries in favor of the more powerful deathknights. This is not the case across the board, however. Some Deathlords (such as the First and Forsaken Lion and the Mask of Winters) still favor nemissaries, if only for their relative plentitude.

That said, there still tend to be a handful of the *old* guard lurking around the citadels of the Deathlords. These creatures include centuries-old neph racks, steeped in bizarre Malfean Arcanoi and placed into Artifact ●●●● war-bodies. Ghosts such as these are as lethal as a young or even moderately powerful Abyssal and could easily annihilate a recently Exalted deathknight who presumed too much. Soul Mirror (see **Savant and Sorcerer**, p. 43) was made for a nemissary, after all, and few among the dead are as terrifying as a well-equipped and ancient war ghost.

On the whole, the arrival of the Abyssal Exalted has been a boon for the nemissaries. They now have some very capable field commanders, and the deathknights' skill at necrosurgery has also benefited the nemissaries immensely, as they now have access to much more skillfully customized fleshly vessels.

Still, some nemissaries have grown bitter at their perceived displacement by the Abyssal Exalted. While few nemissaries would be so rash as to engage a deathknight in direct combat, even with the finest war body, lone Abyssals would be wise to watch their backs around groups of the ghostly puppeteers.

## CUSTOM CORPSES

Any nemissary can possess a common cadaver, so long as it's reasonably intact. If it really comes down to it, a skilled nemissary can make do with any corpse, whether it be scavenged from a battlefield, a graveyard or from the embalmer's table. Unless the nemissary decides otherwise, chance alone dictates what pallid face she wears until the stolen flesh rots away and she must jump to a new host.

But many nemissaries would prefer not to comport themselves like common body thieves. They are highly trained and proud ghosts. Nemissary's Ride, the Arcanos that gives them the ability to possess dead bodies in the first place, is an advanced Arcanos, and the ghosts who learn it are respected for their skill and dedication. There is prestige to be had among nemissaries by possessing the strongest, the prettiest or the most lethal vessel, and the corpses they run across by chance alone are unlikely to suit them, unless they are *trying* to look like a common zombie for stealth purposes (or just slumming). Nemissaries often seek out the best corpses they can find until something better (or better suited to a specific mission) comes along.

Ghosts in service to an Abyssal Exalt (or to one of the Deathlords, of course) usually have better options, receiving bodies carefully harvested and specially modified for a specific mission. These bodies, called "transcendent revenant vessels," are carefully chosen corpses augmented through a combination of necrosurgery, alchemy and necromantic enchantment. No two of these dread artifacts are exactly alike. Instead, each is custom-built for a specific task. Models exist for diplomatic assignments, for covert scouting and assassination and for open warfare.

There are two ways of obtaining a transcendent revenant vessel. Taking the Artifact Background lets the ghost have a vessel that's entirely hers. She can do with it as she pleases, but the responsibility for maintaining or upgrading it is also hers. Alternatively, the Backing Background can be used in place of the Artifact Background, in which case the revenant vessel is on loan from a Deathlord. In this case, the vessel may be taken away at any time if the nemissary displeases her master. At the same time, she may occasionally be issued other vessels (with the same rating) for use in particular missions.

A nemissary can upgrade her transcendent revenant vessel by paying a necrosurgeon to perform the augmentation. The cost for this process is exorbitant (see below) but results in a more powerful tool. A nemissary using one of the Deathlords' revenant vessels can gain access to better vessels by improving her Backing rating.

Depending on the level of power invested in them, transcendent revenant vessels range from Artifact ● to ●●●●. Such vessels are *never* extras. All versions possess the following characteristics:

**Decay Resistance:** Vessels do not rot while possessed, but slowly decay if left uninhabited. For every three days of rot,





all physical actions taken by a nemissary attempting to use the body suffer a one-die penalty. When this penalty reaches ten dice, the body's advanced putrescence renders the artifact completely useless. Nemissaries can avoid this outcome by using bindings of eternal preservation (see p. 92-93) or any of several other means of preserving their transcendent revenant vessels.

**Enhanced Physique:** Vessels have a Strength and Stamina of 3, a Dexterity and Appearance of 2 and the seven standard health levels of a mortal. They have a natural bashing and lethal soak equal to their Stamina. Nemissaries inhabiting one of these bodies may use the higher of their own Attribute ratings or those of their vessel, but they must use the Appearance and health levels of the body.

### REPAIR AND ENHANCEMENT

Transcendent revenant vessels do not heal on their own. Advanced nemissary Arcanoi (i.e., Instauration of the Fleshly Vessel, p. 92) may be used to mend the revenant vessel, although necrosurgery and magical restoration are both alternatives if the nemissary does not have that Arcanos.

Surgical repairs require a Dexterity + Necrosurgery roll, with each success fixing one level of lethal damage or two levels of bashing damage. The surgeon also needs components costing Resources •• and a number of hours equal to the accumulated successes. The Abyssal Charm Form-Restoring Touch (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 188) instantly and perfectly restores the vessel, although convincing a deathknight to use it on any but his most favored lieutenants could prove challenging, given its cost.

While the cost of modifications is likely to vary depending on the quality of the necrosurgeon, the base Resources cost of any modification to a revenant vessel after purchasing the Artifact is half of the augmentation's point value, rounded down.

Skilled necrosurgeons, Abyssal Exalted in particular, command premium prices for their efforts, but some nemissaries have formed into cabals to study the techniques of necrosurgery. They swear a pact of mutual assistance and modify one another as needed. Alternatively, a ghost familiar with necrosurgery can always pilot his vessel into the Underworld and perform the surgery himself (and avoid going broke in the process).

### GENERAL AUGMENTATIONS

In addition to the powers listed above, a transcendent revenant vessel receives a number of bonus points equal to its ([Artifact rating - 1] x 10). These points may be allocated to purchase any of the following enhancements or others designed by the Storyteller, adhering to any applicable prerequisites or special requirements denoted in parentheses. Some of these augmentations are the product of basic necrosurgery, while others represent the occult technology of Oblivion: alchemical processes performed on the corpse, necromantic glyphs etched into its

bones, necromantically resonant objects sewn into the body, et cetera.

**Attributes (4 points per dot):** The vessel receives additional dots to further improve its Physical Attributes or Appearance according to Enhanced Physique. Dots purchased in this way stack on top of the standard stats for nemissaries on page 301 of **Exalted**. No Attribute may be raised above 6 dots.

**Decay Immunity (5 points):** Even in the absence of the nemissary, the vessel does not decay.

**Dedicated Attunement (4 points):** Once possessed through Nemissary's Ride, the Embalmer's Art or any subsequent Stringless Puppeteer Arcanos, the vessel serves as an extension of the ghost within and cannot easily be taken from her. Add the nemissary's Essence rating to the difficulty of any roll to displace or exorcise her. If another ghost tries to possess the vessel while the attuned nemissary is elsewhere, the corpse's very ambiance is hostile to the invader — add the vessel's Artifact rating to the difficulty. Even if the Arcanos used in the invasion attempt doesn't normally require a roll, it requires a Strength + Compassion roll in this instance (difficulty 3). If another ghost *does* manage to steal the revenant vessel, the attunement remains intact for one full lunar month. During that period, subtract the attuned ghost's Essence from the difficulty of all rolls to displace the invader. If the result is less than one, the body's attuned owner automatically ejects the invader. These bodies can still be stolen by a necromancer with access to Labyrinth Circle spells, but it prevents the vessel from being stolen by any random ghost.

**Hidden Enhancements (6 points):** All of the vessel's enhancements function without visible sign, such as armor plates implanted under the skin or reinforced musculature that looks scrawny despite its Strength 6. Enhancements that could not possibly function while remaining hidden may be deployed or retracted into the body as a reflexive action.

### OPTIONS PACKAGES

The Deathlords use nemissaries for *all* kinds of duties in Creation. No vessel can be optimized for all of the tasks a nemissary might be called upon to perform, so most nemissaries specialize in one area or another. A ghost is likely to choose the abilities of her transcendent revenant vessel based on her own particular skills and interests. A diplomat will not want to possess a war body any more than a violent warrior will want to be stuck in a body made for entertaining. The categories below are very general. While a player may mix and match from these categories — after all, some of these modifications might be useful regardless of a nemissary's specialization — most nemissaries prefer to hone their revenant vessels for a single function.

The augmentations below represent but a sampling of those a skilled necrosurgeon can provide a nemissary.

Players and Storytellers are encouraged to come up with their own, using those listed below as guidelines.

### The Warm and Pleasing Cadaver

Diplomacy, seduction and deception are invaluable assets to nemissaries infiltrating the living. These subtle agents of the Deathlords are capable of passing among the living with none of their victims even knowing that the dead walk among them. Alternatively, a nemissary with these augmentations may be a known representative of the dead but may wish to put the mortals she's associating with at ease by appearing to be one of them.

**Eat/Drink (5 points):** A ghost without this augmentation cannot consume anything, as the corpse's stomach will hold neither food nor drink. This does not grant the ghost the ability to digest food (that is a luxury reserved for the living), but it allows the ghost enough control of its vessel's innards that it does not immediately regurgitate everything that passes its palate. The body can take in two large meals or three smaller ones before the ghost needs to empty the vessel's stomach.

**Essence Parasite (10 points):** Enchantments etched on the vessel's bones allow the ghost to absorb Essence from other Essence channelers, including Exalted, God-Bloods, materialized spirits and gods. For every two hours the nemissary is in close contact with the Essence channeler (within 10 feet or closer), the ghost drains 1 mote of Essence. Since most Essence channelers gain more than that during that time frame, the theft frequently goes unnoticed. Essence Parasite can sap motes from more than one Exalt at a time, so sharing a bed with three Exalted (for example) would provide the ghost with 3 motes of Essence every two hours. This method is an agonizingly slow way to replenish Essence, but it's better than nothing, and it stacks with Essence-Measuring Thief Arts (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pp. 245-247). It's possible to use this augmentation on mortals, but the mortal in question suffers one unsoakable bashing health level per hour, which manifests as exhaustion and anemia.

**Lifelike (10 points):** Owing to the familiarity of the ghost with his assumed body, the vessel betrays no outward visible sign of its undead state apart from its ashen or pallid complexion. A nemissary inhabiting the body can spend 5 motes of Essence to simulate all signs of life — from breath to a pulse to faint warmth to basic sexual responses — for one scene. It takes three successes on a Perception + Investigation roll to discern that the vessel is a possessed corpse. This seeming is only cosmetic. Any test for actual life will easily discern the corpse's true nature.

**Sculpted Physiognomy (10 points; if target face is more attractive than Appearance 3, player must also buy additional points of Appearance):** Sometimes, a ghost doesn't just need to pass for living, but must appear like a particular living individual. With this augmentation, the nemissary's facial bone structure and overlying flesh are sculpted to look

like a particular individual. There's only so much even the finest necrosurgeon can do, however, so anyone well acquainted with the individual the ghost is mimicking (sibling, lover, old friend, arch-nemesis) needs only two successes on a Perception + Investigation to detect subtle but pervasive differences in facial features and expressions.

### The Corpse Made Stealthy

It behooves the Deathlords to know what the living, and the armies of the living in particular, are doing. Some nemissaries choose revenant vessels appropriate to scouting and reconnaissance missions. These bodies are augmented to allow the ghost to make long forays into Creation and to bring information back to the Underworld. They are the Deathlords' eyes, spies and military intelligence operating in Creation.

**Built for Speed (5 points):** They say the dead travel fast. In this case it's literal — and dead flesh never needs to rest. The revenant's leg and pelvic bones have been modified through necromantic artifice to enable the corpse to run at three times its usual running speed (see **Exalted**, p. 227 for movement rates) for entire days on end. Spending 5 motes of Essence lets the nemissary sprint at full speed for up to one full day.

**Repellent to Animals (3 points):** Such a miasma of death and horror surrounds the nemissary that even carrion eaters avoid her. No animal will go near the augmented body without being magically commanded to do so. Four- and five-dot familiars will do so, but only if their masters' players get three or more successes on a Manipulation + Presence roll. This augmentation requires a rotten raiton's head be sewn into the revenant's chest cavity and subtracts two dice from all the nemissary's Social dice pools.

**Repugnant to the Mind's Eye (10 points):** The corpse is ritually scarified, and small nodules of soulsteel are placed under the skin to produce horrific patterns of bumps that are repellent to the living mind. It is possible to *look at* the nemissary, but the mind does not want to accept what the eyes are telling it and truly *see* the nemissary. One of the living passing a transcendent revenant vessel with this augmentation is likely to experience a fleeting moment of disgust, pity, horror or indignation followed by instant denial of his own senses. The moment the nemissary is out of sight, the witness' mind instantly, gratefully, turns to *anything* else rather than acknowledge the revenant's presence. In situations where a mortal can easily talk himself out of believing what he just saw — a dark forest, a busy street at night, in the midst of a mad rush — subtract three successes from all Perception rolls to see and truly recognize the revenant body for what it is. In situations where the revenant's presence is not so easily ignored — he's the only one on a deserted street in broad daylight or in a well-lit room with people looking directly at him — subtract two *dice* (not successes) from the perceivers' dice pools.



**Shadowland Sense (2 points):** This gives the nemissary a kind of “compass of the dead” that gives her an intuitive knowledge of her position relative to the nearest shadowland. Spending 1 mote of Essence allows the ghost’s player to make an Intelligence + Survival roll for her character. Even one success lets the ghost know in which direction the shadowland is located and how far away it is. The nemissary can use this sense to find her way home or simply as a means to get her bearings, provided there’s only one shadowland in the area.

**Transmitting Sense (4 points):** The nemissary transmits all information from one of her five senses back to one individual in the Underworld. The recipient of this information is usually a Deathlord, but it could just as easily be an Abyssal Exalt or even another ghost. The recipient must be carrying a specially wrought amulet on his person in order to receive these transmissions. To begin transmitting sensory information, the nemissary spends 5 motes of Essence to establish the connection, at which point the recipient’s amulet grows unnaturally cold to the touch. The recipient then grasps the amulet and spends 5 motes of Essence to receive the nemissary’s sensory transmission. There is no “narration” involved; the ghost cannot explain what it is he’s sensing. He can only transmit the sensory information and hope it makes sense. The Deathlord (or whoever holds the second amulet) can activate this link any time he chooses by grasping the amulet and paying all 10 motes of Essence. This augmentation must be purchased separately for each sense. Wards that stop scrying prevent the use of this ability. Nemissaries wishing to explain what they are sensing may use a mirror that looks upon its twin (see p. 74) to speak directly to their superiors in the Underworld.

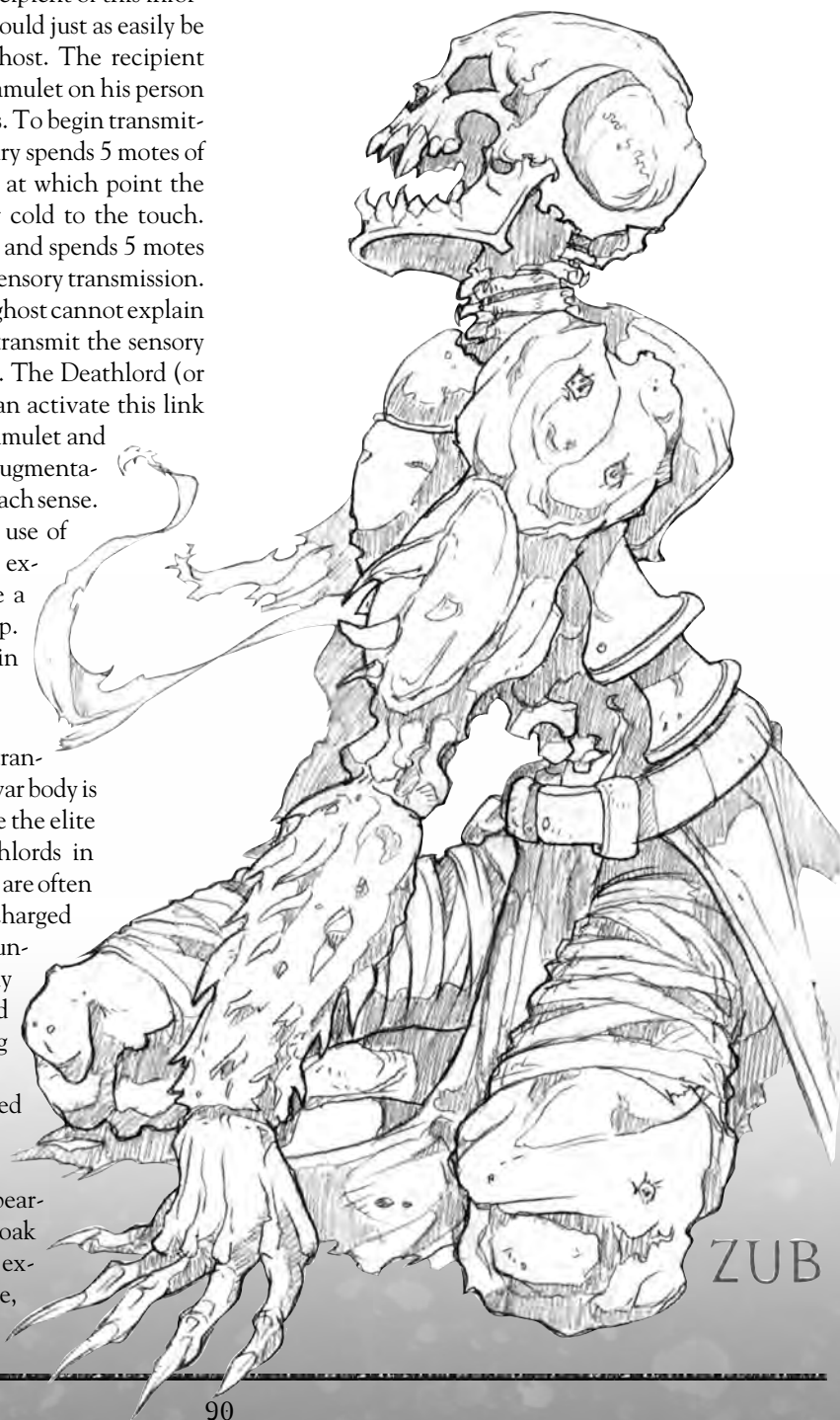
#### A Body Built for War

By far the most common type of transcendent revenant vessel, a powerful war body is a trophy among nemissaries. These are the elite shock troops deployed by the Deathlords in their assaults on Creation. War bodies are often the lesser officers of the Deathlords, charged with directing rampaging zombies or hungry ghosts. Unlike zombies, these highly trained and extensively augmented nemissaries are expected to be cunning tacticians as well as brutal killers.

**Armor (2 points per 1L/1B):** Riveted plates of metal and bone increase the vessel’s durability. Vessels with this enhancement cannot have an Appearance higher than ••. The additional soak provided by a vessel’s armor cannot exceed its Stamina rating. Despite its name,

this enhancement counts as part of the vessel’s natural soak rather than armor. Nemissaries benefiting from this enhancement may only wear armor specifically fitted to their bulky frames.

**Claws/Blades (4 or 6 points):** For four points, the vessel has razor-sharp talons of bone or metal extending from its fingers or the back of its hands. These enable a slashing attack with Speed +1, Accuracy +1, Damage +1L, Defense +1 (Rate 4 if using the Exalted Power Combat rules). For six points, the vessel has scythe-like blades extending from one or both forearms as desired with the same statistics as any type of one-handed sword the player selects.



**Paralytic Touch** (4 points): The war body is soaked extensively in an array of plant toxins until it is so saturated with poison that its touch is venomous. The player of any character touched by (or touching) the nemissary with bare flesh (e.g., most Brawl or Martial Arts attacks, for instance) must successfully roll Stamina + Resistance, difficulty 2, or have his character be paralyzed for the rest of the scene. If the war body draws blood with its natural weaponry (fangs, claws), the difficulty rises to 4.

**Spikes** (5 points): The vessel has riveted spikes of bone or metal protruding from its flesh. It inflicts +1L damage with clinches it controls, while anyone holding or crushing the vessel with a clinch suffers 3L damage per turn. Vessels with this enhancement cannot have an Appearance greater than ••.

**Stench of Rotting Offal** (3 points per purchase): Not that the dead ever smell good, but war bodies augmented in this fashion are soaked extensively in a brew so foul it could gag maggots. The stench within 10 feet of the nemissary is so revolting that a successful Stamina + Resistance roll must be made for other characters, or they vomit until they can get away from the stench. Those whose players succeed lose one die from their attack rolls for each time this augmentation was purchased due to watering eyes and the urge to retch.

**Toughness** (4 points per -2, 6 points per -1, 8 points per 0): The vessel has been partially mummified, been reinforced with metal or had its bulk augmented with extraneous dead tissue from another corpse. Whatever the reason, it has additional health levels.

## NEMISSARY ARCANOI AND WONDERS

Once a ghost learns how to possess a dead body, entire new avenues of power open up to her. Not only can a nemissary learn to possess larger and more powerful forms, but she learns how to maintain and augment the bodies she possesses.

The nemissaries' great utility as spies and warriors in Creation has tended to place them a step above most other ghosts in the eyes of the Deathlords. The added prestige of being a nemissary has resulted in many such ghosts channeling vast amounts of time and energy into refining the nemissary's art.

Below are some of the many Arcanoi used by nemissaries or by ghosts who intend to become nemissaries.

### INTANGIBLE GUARDIAN PRESENCE

**Cost:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Type:** Special

**Minimum Compassion:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Mortal-Shadowing Technique

This Arcanos is a type of Ox-Body Charm that works only on vessels the ghost is riding or possessing. While it doesn't add anything to the *ghost's* health levels, it dramatically fortifies all vessels she is skinriding using Mortal-Shadowing Technique, Nemissary's Ride or subsequent Arcanoi in the tree. Some ghosts skinride mortal descendants to protect them in battle, while others augment possessed corpses to increase their own battlefield prowess. When a ghost departs the vessel she was riding, the extra health levels are crossed off, whether they held damage or not. Each purchase imparts one -0 and one -1 health level on the ghost's vessel. A ghost can buy this Charm as many times as she has dots in her Compassion rating. Storytellers should note that a ghost's own Ox-Body Technique does not fortify hosts, only her own plasm.

This Arcanos is particularly helpful when the ghost is riding a smaller animal, such as a raiton, which usually has far fewer health levels than a human being.

### THE EMBALMER'S ART

**Cost:** 15 motes (committed), 2 Willpower

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 3

**Prerequisite Charms:** Nemissary's Ride

With this Arcanos, a nemissary refines her ability to possess and animate dead flesh. She may automatically commandeer a corpse as if using Nemissary's Ride (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 250) but requires no roll to do so. Such possession lasts until the ghost withdraws the Essence committed to the Arcanos. Finally, a body possessed using the Embalmer's Art does not decay. Any existing decay from prior to possession remains, and the body resumes decomposing normally if the ghost leaves it.

Furthermore, the nemissary may fortify the vessel it's riding with Essence. For every 4 additional motes of Essence the ghost commits to the vessel, it gains a -2 health level. The ghost can impart up to its Compassion rating in additional health levels on a vessel this way.

Nemissaries wanting to develop their powers even further can purchase a superior version of this Arcanos called the Embalmer's Enduring Triumph. This Arcanos functions exactly as The Embalmer's Art, but requires Compassion •••, Essence •••• and the Embalmer's Art as a prerequisite. However, the Embalmer's Enduring Triumph costs only 10 motes and 1 Willpower to activate and 2 motes per -1 health level, *and* the Willpower cost is waived if the ghost is in a shadowland.



## INSTAURATION OF THE FLESHLY VESSEL

**Cost:** Varies

**Duration:** Instant

**Type:** Reflexive

**Minimum Compassion:** 3

**Minimum Essence:** 4

**Prerequisite Charms:** The Embalmer's Art

Among the most powerful — and sometimes most painful — Arcanoi used by nemissaries, Instauration of the Fleshly Vessel allows a ghost to repair damage to a body she is possessing, whether that damage was caused by rot or combat. Many ghosts dislike this Arcanos because of the pain it causes them, but it provides the nemissary with options for keeping a war body useful well beyond its usual duration.

The first technique in this Arcanos repairs rotting damage. Every 4 motes of Essence the ghost channels into this Charm undoes all rotting damage sustained over the course of a single day. In most climates, an unprotected corpse will last from six to eight weeks before it becomes structurally compromised. At that point, the vessel loses two permanent health levels per day until it reaches zero health levels, at which point it is little more than a jumble of bones and necrotic goo.

A nemissary using this Arcanos can take control of a vessel that may have gone untended a bit too long and render it more habitable. Bodies rot at a different rate depending on the climate. In the extreme North and South, bodies are mummified by the cold or arid climates and last for several months before ceasing to function. In warm, humid climes, a corpse may last only a couple of weeks before falling into a putrescent gray mass, and a nemissary may need to use this Arcanos frequently to keep her vessel intact. The Storyteller determines how often this Arcanos needs to be used on a body to keep it in good repair. Repeated uses of this Charm on even extremely decayed flesh can, eventually, result in a body that looks as though it's only moments past its final breath. Once the ghost has repaired a possessed body with this Arcanos, she may use the Embalmer's Art to preserve the corpse's improved state indefinitely.

The other use of this Charm heals damage taken by the nemissary's vessel, but at the expense of her corpus. For 1 mote of Essence per health level, the nemissary bleeds her own integrity into the vessel to restore it. She suffers one unsoakable level of damage per level regenerated, with the type of damage appropriate to the type healed. She may heal bashing or lethal injuries in any order. Ghosts with the Ox-Body Technique Arcanos (a Conviction Arcanos with no Prerequisites and an Essence and Conviction minimum of 1 that gives two -2 levels per purchase, up to a limit of the ghost's Conviction rating — see the **Exalted Players Guide**, pp. 83-84) are far more capable of using this Charm than other ghosts.

This Charm cannot heal damage caused by fire, aggravated sources or magic specifically designed to inflict deleterious effects on the undead (such as that caused by the Zeniths' anima flare or the Charms Solar Spike or Blazing Solar Bolt).

## DRIVE THE NECROTIC COLOSSUS

**Cost:** 10 motes, 1 Willpower, 1 experience point

**Duration:** One day

**Type:** Simple

**Minimum Compassion:** 2

**Minimum Essence:** 4

**Prerequisite Charms:** Nemissary's Ride

Nemissary's Ride allows a ghost to possess and animate a shell as large as a very large (eight feet tall, 400 pound) human. To animate corpses larger than that (or the multiple connected corpses of some necromantic war machines), the ghost must know Drive the Necrotic Colossus. This Charm allows ghosts to animate the bodies of even the largest natural animals and war machines up to the size of a large temple. If the shell to be animated is larger than that (as the largest war machines and behemoth corpses are), then multiple nemissaries must work in concert to animate it.

Once the player spends the experience point, the character no longer has to commit Essence to the Charm. At that point, the nemissary stays inside the war machine she's "piloting" until she decides to leave.

The 30 nemissaries that propel Mask of Winter's Juggernaut do so through the use of this Charm.

## BINDINGS OF ETERNAL PRESERVATION

(RESOURCES •• OR •••)

Any number of alchemical processes can fend off the rotting of a corpse. In the First Age, mummification was considered unnatural and immoral throughout most of Creation, a perversion of the natural cycle. Since the Great Contagion, however, emotion has more and more frequently overcome wisdom, and arguing with the bereaved has grown more difficult. In the Second Age, there exist a myriad of alchemical processes that suspend rot altogether, most of which involve mummification.

While these methods are more than enough to fend off rot from a nemissary's host body, most practitioners of the Stringless Puppeteer Arts have better things to do with their time in Creation than to soak in baths of pungent herbs and alchemical salts. Bindings of eternal preservation are linen or leather wrappings soaked in the chemicals used in mummification. The mummification solution soaks into the dead flesh, suspending the rotting process for as long as the bindings are worn. So long as they're wrapped around the corpse with no more than an inch of exposed tissue between bindings, the corpse is sufficiently protected. While the bindings of eternal preservation won't

reverse decay that's already set in (that's the function of magic, not alchemy), they will prevent a corpse from decaying any further once they've been applied.

Cloth bindings are somewhat expensive for what they are, requiring Resources •• to purchase. They are more common, but they're only effective for one year, and they aren't appropriate for a corpse that's likely to see combat. Each level of lethal damage severs the bindings in two places, and they must be retied thereafter. For each health level of lethal damage the corpse takes while wearing cloth bindings, two turns must be taken to retie them, lest the bindings unravel and fall off. Once a corpse wearing cloth bindings takes a cumulative total of 10 levels of lethal damage, the bindings are considered ruined.

Leather bindings of eternal preservation require Resources •••. They're less common and harder to come by generally, but they're much better suited to corpses of the more martial variety. Leather bindings have to soak in preservative elixirs for a much longer time before they're properly saturated, but they retain much more of the fluid than cloth bindings and, therefore, may preserve a body for up to a century. Leather is much more durable than cloth and adds 2L/1B to the wearer's soak. Furthermore, the leather bindings are resilient enough that they only need retying if the wearer takes aggravated damage. Some Deathlords have tried to stave off the rotting of zombies by wrapping them in bindings of eternal preservation, but these creatures show little concern for the wrappings, and they rarely last more than a few hours, with the zombies themselves sometimes ripping the bindings off.

It's possible to use bindings of eternal preservation to fend off rot in war machines, but the cost is prohibitive. For a size class 3 war machine, the cost increases by •. For a size class 4 war machine, the cost increases by ••.

### SARCOPHAGUS OF RESTORATION (ARTIFACT •••)

Carved of two heavy slabs of black marble joined with hinged bands of soulsteel, these baroque coffins boast ornate filigree wrought in Labyrinthine sigils. The dead and those who fall beneath the shadow of death while yet living — the Ghost-Blooded, Abyssal Exalted and their Half-Caste progeny — find the sarcophagi aesthetically pleasing and gently cool to the touch. All others feel an ominous chill of dread at the site of the morbid artifacts.

The effects of a sarcophagus of restoration depend on what manner of being sleeps in it. If a ghost lies within the device, the spirit immediately falls into Slumber as though the coffin were a Fetter (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 36). When the ghost awakens, she receives one extra success on her player's Stamina roll for the ghost to heal. An Abyssal Exalt who rests within a sarcophagus of restoration falls into a deep torpor like the Slumber of the dead. For eight hours, all vital signs fade, and the deathknight hovers at the cusp between life and death. At the end of this period, the Abyssal loses one dot of Resonance. A

deathknight without any accumulated Resonance instead adds one success to his player's Conviction roll for the Abyssal to regain Willpower. Furthermore, the player receives a roll for the deathknight to regenerate injuries like a Slumbering ghost, substituting Essence for Stamina. Ghost-Blooded and Shadewalkers receive the same benefits as Abyssal Exalted, save that they never have Resonance to lose. Other living beings also fall comatose within the coffins, but the experience is extremely unpleasant. Horrific nightmares plague their sleep, draining one point of Willpower and forfeiting the usual Conviction roll to regain Willpower. Worse still, such beings must fight to hold onto their sanity in the face of such horror, gaining a derangement if their players do not make a successful Willpower roll. The difficulty of this check starts at 1, but cumulatively increases by 1 with each additional night spent in the artifact (resetting back to 1 after a full month avoiding the coffin). Derangements imposed by these artifacts tend toward psychosis and extreme moral degeneration. On the upside, living beings heal as ghosts do, with a Stamina roll after each night of slumber. A mortally wounded character placed within a sarcophagus will not deteriorate any further for as long as she remains sealed within, but she must still heal back up to Incapacitated through the regenerative power of the device. Finally, the sarcophagus can actually mend the flesh of reasonably intact corpses placed within it, siphoning away the touch of Oblivion to reverse decay and other trauma. After every eight-hour period, roll two dice as if for Slumber. Rot should be treated as lethal damage and always heals first, with the number of levels of damage assigned by the Storyteller based on the condition of the corpse. A nemissary who Slumbers within heals its borrowed body first, and does not mend its own corpus until the flesh is fully repaired. Bodies stored in a sarcophagus of restoration obviously do not decay further. Resisting the sleep imposed by one of these coffins requires a successful Stamina + Resistance roll, difficulty 3, every turn.

As long as it is housed within a Manse in the Underworld or a shadowland, a sarcophagus of restoration requires no additional power to function. Elsewhere in the lands of the dead, the device requires a Hearthstone of any level set in its lid to operate. Substituting a soulfire gem works just as well, but each eight-hour use drains 3 motes from the gem. Within Creation proper, a sarcophagus must have a level-3+ Hearthstone socketed on its lid or else an Essence-channeling being must touch the socket and spend 10 motes in preparation for every cycle of Slumber.

### LOATHSOME OSSEOUS SHELL (ARTIFACT •••)

Developed by the Mask of Winters as his answer to the gunzoshu fielded by the Seventh Legion, a loathsome osseous shell similarly protects and enhances the combat prowess of its wearer. The Deathlord usually issues these devices to nemissaries or elite mortal troops created through brutal applications of the Charm Hardened Killer Training Style. The Mask of Winters has sold the designs to



several of his peers, although none of them have yet fielded units equipped with the artifacts.

This frightening necromantic armor takes the form of a metal and bone exoskeleton that automatically resizes itself to the measurements of its master when first donned. A steel-reinforced spine and sternum support white ribs curved around the chest, while rigid bones extend like grotesque splints along the legs and arms. A skull-helmet fits snugly over the wearer's head, its gaping sockets fitted with lenses of smoky obsidian that hide all traces of life or empathy. Finely articulated gauntlets transform the wearer's fingers into skeletal claws. Throughout this elaborate framework, plates and hinges of blackened steel and enchanted alloys cover all vital areas. The design exposes more flesh than prudence would advise, but enchantments in the armor give the wearer's skin the ashen pallor and leathery resilience of the walking dead. Each loathsome osseous shell is an undead creature animated by the spell *Walking War Machine*, a necromantic symbiont that coordinates its movements and monstrous strength to improve the wearer's physical capabilities. To facilitate its connection with a wearer, the armor inserts a slender metal spike into the back of her neck, siphoning Essence to forge an arcane link.

**System:** Once a character dons a loathsome osseous shell, the control spike inserts itself into his neck. The puncture itself is minor and inflicts no actual damage, but the spike drains one Willpower point from mortals or 5 motes of Essence from magical beings. This cost remains committed for 10 hours, after which, the armor drains and commits new energies to sustain the link. Each new commitment of Essence or Willpower replaces the previous cost, allowing recovery of those expended energies. If the wearer cannot pay this mandatory cost, the armor leeches power from the wearer's own life force, inflicting one level of unsoakable lethal damage.

As armor, the artifact provides 9L/9B soak with a mobility penalty of -2 and a fatigue value of 0. In addition, the wearer's Strength rating increases by 2 and his Stamina rises by 1. These bonuses apply to all rolls. More impressively, the armor completely negates all fatigue from other sources or encumbrance (such as a shield), but the character remains unable to carry more than his augmented Strength permits. If he exceeds the lift value of his adjusted rating, he still feels no fatigue but can only stagger short distances under the heavy burden. The character can perform hard manual labor or walk tirelessly for as long as he wears the armor, dramatically increasing his effective speed over long marches. The same magic also negates all dice penalties for pain or wounds, although injuries still affect his movement rate normally. The only limit to this unnatural endurance is the device's regular upkeep, which eventually drains his soul and finally kills him if worn too long. Characters wearing loathsome osseous shells cannot sleep and, therefore, receive no opportunity to recover Willpower through Conviction, but magical beings can

still rest or meditate to respire Essence. As a final benefit, the character's horrific visage adds an extra die to all intimidation-based Social rolls.

Although a loathsome osseous shell incorporates trace quantities of soulsteel in its frame, it does not receive the augmented soak rating normally conferred by that metal. Conversely, any Exalt or magical being can wear such a suit without paying the double surcharge. The intricate components and enchantments of an loathsome osseous shell are quite durable, but the armor still requires maintenance after every 120 hours of operation. After 20 hours of missed maintenance, the armor loses its ability to negate pain and fatigue and gains a fatigue value of 1. This value cumulatively increases by 1 for every further 20 hours of missed maintenance, until the armor's joints stiffen and refuse to move after 100 missed hours. Characters performing the maintenance need a relevant Craft (e.g., Necrosurgery or Armoring), Lore and Occult rating of ●●● each. Such repairs take one hour and cost Resources ●●.

## ENGINES OF ANNIHILATION

The war engines of the Deathlords are a varied lot. Each Deathlord, as well as his or her Abyssal Exalted, have different approaches to the necromantically animated monstrosities they deploy in their war of attrition against the living. Some, such as the Mask of Winters, depend heavily on fewer but more powerful war machines. Some, such as the Bodhisattva Anointed by Dark Water, make little use of war machines at all, preferring to rely largely on either zombies, Moliated ghosts or nemissaries. And still others, such as the First and Forsaken Lion, use *everything* at their disposal in amassing a massive integrated fighting force.

Some of these choices are determined by strategy alone: The First and Foremost Lion is somewhat more prepared to war on his fellow Deathlords than on Creation because he has never had the opportunity to field-test his tactics in the realm of the living (or at least not on a large scale as of yet). Likewise, the Mask of Winters realized when he happened upon the colossal rotting corpse that became Juggernaut that he had an unprecedented windfall of dead flesh on his hands. The Deathlord transformed Juggernaut into a key piece in his incursion into Creation, providing him with a beachhead the other Deathlords could only envy — of course, if Juggernaut were somehow removed from the picture, the Mask of Winters' operations in Creation would be severely compromised.

Other choices regarding the use of war machines are dictated by circumstance: An island isn't a practical place to store land-based war machines that will only take up space until they are deployed, so those few war machines that the Silver Prince *does* employ are all stored and deployed in or under the water.

Still, nearly all the Deathlords make *some* use of necromantic war machines. They're too effective *not* to



use, even if only for their ability to rapidly crush the enemy's morale.

The following system allows characters and Storytellers to generate their own necromantic war machines from the ground up. It lists the cost in resources (in terms of both money and corpses) required by the various types of undead siege engines as well as the type of necromantic magic and Essence cost required to make the engine work.

## NECROSURGERY

Abyssal Exalted (and their masters, the Deathlords) possess an unsurpassed ability to craft great and terrible works of mismatched flesh. Those Abyssals who have mastered necrosurgery (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 130) and Bone Graft Technique (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 188) can use those abilities to assemble horrible necrotic concatenations of sculpted bone, twisted metal and sutured flesh. By itself, necrosurgery allows a practitioner to fuse human tissue (living and dead) and animal tissue (living and dead) into horrid sculptures of flesh. When augmented with Bone Graft Technique or similar magic, it can incorporate iron and soulsteel elements as well.

More horrible yet, those with enough mastery of necromancy can animate even the most unnatural abominations through the use of the spell Walking War Machine

(see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 226) and its subsequent techniques. Alternatively, an Abyssal (or a Deathlord) can order a nemissary to possess his sculpture of flesh, animating it that way.

With enough time and resources, an Abyssal Exalt could use necrosurgery combined with Bone Graft Technique (and possibly Walking War Machine or its more powerful versions) to do any of the following:

- Graft several heads (or eyes) onto a single body to create a guardian who can't be surprised.
- Forge giant metal spider legs and attach them to a (sturdy) animal corpse, and animate the result with necromancy.
- Graft huge bone or metal spikes onto the skeleton of a zombie to make it more formidable in combat.
- Connect hundreds of bodies together to create an enormous meat golem.

Mortals, Abyssal Exalted and Deathlords alike have come up with any number of ways to slow (or arrest entirely) the rotting process in order to extend the useful duration of these abominations. The Charm Decay Resistance Preparation (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 188) is available to Abyssal Exalts, but many methods exist, including a wide range of alchemical mummification procedures.



## FRAME AND COMPONENTS

Undead flesh never tires, never feels pain and never knows fear. Those three reasons alone make reanimated servitors worth the effort. A zombie slave can go top speed for weeks on end and not need rest. It may rot. It may wear out. It may emit a stench that makes the living puke. But undead flesh is nothing if not steadfast.

And it is plentiful. Corpses are common, and if they're not, deathknights and nemissaries can easily make more.

The reanimated dead all possess the same characteristics, and those characteristics are the given the necromancer has to work with. What varies is how that flesh is arranged, combined and fused into a larger whole. As with all things, there are more and less effective ways of combining dead bodies into engines of war.

Determining the engine's base frame is the first stage in designing a walking war machine.

### HUMANOID

Animating a single human corpse is nothing to a master of necromancy. It is neither a challenge nor any particular advantage in battle. Cleverly fusing several of them together, however, and animating the monstrous result (e.g., spine chains) suddenly makes the process both more interesting and more tactically advantageous. Accretions of human corpses can be some of the more disturbing war engines. Merely witnessing the physical blasphemy of a walking war machine or seeing dozens (or more) corpses — perhaps friends or acquaintances — systematically integrated into a siege engine can be traumatic and deeply demoralizing for the denizens of Creation.

It's one of the reasons the Deathlords do it.

A skilled practitioner can combine human bodies in a myriad of ways using the techniques of necrosurgery. The muscles and bones of two different bodies can be connected to fuse the bodies into a single grotesque body. Alternatively, parts of several corpses can be sewn into or onto a single cadaver.

**Resource Cost:** None

### ANIMAL

The corpses of large animals make excellent additions to a necromantic war machine. They're sturdy, they're terrifying, and they can form the basis for the larger types of war machines. Reanimated hybrocs, mammoths and yeddim make excellent war machines even without modification. It stands to reason, then, that once properly stitched and grafted together they can easily turn the tide of a battle.

**Resource Cost:** Usually none, but for more exotic specimens, it may require the necromancer to assemble a hunting party, with all the costs pertaining to such an endeavor.

## A-HUNTING WE WILL GO

The monstrous siege engines of the Deathlords make use of any and all dead tissue that can be scavenged. Human, animal, fresh, rotten, large or small, it makes no difference when the final product is an abomination the size of a building.

The greater destructive capacity (and increased intimidation factor) of larger siege engines makes them popular with the Abyssals and Deathlords. That requires either larger corpses or many smaller ones. In some cases, large normal animals suffice. There are times, however, when building the perfect undead siege-beast requires components of a more unusual variety. In these cases, forces from the Underworld may gather a hunting party in a shadowland — led either by an experienced nemissary or an Abyssal, depending on the quarry — and launch into Creation to bring back the necessary raw materials. Hunting parties are called mainly to bring down extraordinarily tough or dangerous prey. Cachalots, siaka, river dragons, hybrocs and beast men are common targets. Wyld mutants constitute a large portion of what such hunting parties go after. The variety of mutant flesh allows the necrosurgeons to add components to their war machines that might be impossible to get in the Underworld (or elsewhere in Creation). From time to time, very large and heavily fortified hunting parties also go in search of behemoths, if they have some indication of one's whereabouts. Since the fall of Thorns, some Deathlords (particularly the Mask of Winters) have been sending out hunting parties to bring back bodies of the Dragon-Blooded. War machines using the Terrestrial Exalted are much more durable than those made with mortals alone. A war machine that uses bodies of the Dragon-Blooded for at least half of its flesh gains an additional -1 health level, although this number can go up. A creature that was made exclusively of young, vital Earth-aspects might add a -1 and two -2 health levels.

Mortals living near the shadowland may actually feel that the hunting party is trying to defend them in some way by taking down large and dangerous creatures. They typically stop feeling that way quickly when they see the beast come back as part of an undead war machine.

### BONE

Possibly the most favored substance in a necromancer's arsenal, bone is beloved as much for its hardness and versatility as for its reactivity to necromancy. Sigils, glyphs and runes



etched into bones are often the anchors for necromantic magic, the means by which the magic grips the corpse (flesh is poorly suited to this due to its excessive malleability and tendency to rot). Necromancers employ a wide range of techniques for fusing, shaping and sculpting bone.

**Resources Cost:** None to ●●●, depending on the rarity of the bones. Human bones are common and omnipresent. The bones of the largest cachalots, on the other hand, are both popular in war machines and hard to come by and therefore carry a Resources ●●● price tag.

### METAL

The basic frame of a necromantic siege engine doesn't even need to be made entirely from the bodies of the dead, as long as they're cleverly incorporated into the device. The Abyssal Charm Bone Graft Technique allows a necrosurgeon to fuse flesh, bone and metal into one smoothly functioning whole. Metal may be little more than a practical embellishment on a walking war engine, like hooks or blades fused into the war machine's bones. Alternatively, the siege engine could be made almost entirely of metal and incorporate the walking dead as its method of propulsion. In some cases, corpses are incorporated into large metal wagons used to carry passengers or in odd variants of the rickshaw or palanquin.

**Resources Cost:** This is where walking war machines get expensive. The costs in the table below represent the cost for metal embellishments on a war machine of the appropriate size. If the actual infrastructure of the war machine is composed of the material, double the Resources cost below.

### NECROTIC PROPULSION

Some war machines incorporate the walking dead only as source of power. Like slaves rowing a barge, the dead take their places at oars, chains or drive shafts and row, pull or turn, as appropriate. Entire corpses aren't needed for this. As little as one joint — a knee or perhaps a shoulder — can be enough to animate certain simple devices.

**Resource Cost:** None to ●, depending on how the corpses are integrated into the device.

### SIZE

The phrase "walking war machine" is, in some instances, misleading. It brings to mind images of colossal horrors of fused flesh, bone and metal. In some cases, this

is accurate. The enormous fortress-corpse Juggernaut and the horrors of the thousand-corpse war frame (see p. 105-106) are only two of many applications of necromancy, but the range of sizes varies immensely. The weapon of mephitic desolation (see p. 108) requires only five bodies and can potentially wreak havoc on a vast scale. While necromancers don't think in terms of "size class 2" or "size class 4" war engines, it's a convenient system for keeping track of game mechanics.

### LESS THAN HUMAN (SIZE CLASS 1)

Devices used in war don't always have to be enormous and obvious. A severed hand has enough mobility that it can be dropped near its target and scuttle closer on its own, committing small acts of espionage or sabotage. Augmented with (or powering) a metal frame (a head atop limbs grafted to eight soulsteel insect legs, for example), these small war machines make excellent drones and citadel guardians.

Such devices are also more affordable and easier to animate.

### ON A HUMAN SCALE (SIZE CLASS 2)

Many war engines aren't necessarily as big as the term "war engine" might suggest. Creature on this scale range from the size of a single human to the size of a large horse. Many necromantic creations this size are very similar to the transcendent revenant vessels used by nemissaries in their work in Creation (see p. 87-91), single corpses highly augmented with metal, bone and parts from other bodies. Also in this categories are other devices of moderate size, such as those comprising two or three augmented bodies grafted together. Spine chains (see **Exalted**, pp. 299-300) and the weapon of mephitic desolation (see p. 108) fit into this size class.

### BIG AND DEAD (SIZE CLASS 3)

Ranging from the size of a small wagon to that of a moderate building, these are the walking war machines that people imagine when they hear that phrase. These are the self-propelling bone golems, the highly augmented reanimated yeddin with soulsteel exoskeletons, the iron wagons propelled by the labors of hidden dead flesh and so on. War engines of this size can only be animated by the Labyrinth Circle spell Spurring the Beast of War or stronger spells (see p. 98-99).

Metal	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Iron	●	●●	●●	●●●
Jade	●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●●
Soulsteel	●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●●
Other (Brass, Steel)	●	●●	●●●	●●●

## COLOSSAL (SIZE CLASS 4)

This category includes those vast sculptures of reanimated corpses larger than the size of a moderate building. The thousand-corpse war frame (see p. 105-106) falls into this category, as does the Mask of Winters' Juggernaut and the web is the spider (see p. 107). These war engines represent necromancy on the very largest scale. While they are immensely powerful and appropriately feared, creating and maintaining such walking war machines is an enormous challenge. If one is making use of mortal corpses, hundreds or thousands of corpses must be obtained, treated in order to slow decay and painstakingly fused together using sutures, hooks, bone screws, Charms and necromancy. Animating creations of this size can only be done using the Void Circle spell Incomparable Destruction Engine (see p. 99).

### WEAPON MOUNTS

War machines of classes 4 and 5 can carry weapons, either First Age weapons such as implosion bows or weapons of Oblivion that spray bolts of pure annihilation. Building weapon mounts into the war engine increases the base cost by Resources •.

### PASSENGERS

Larger war machines are capable of carrying passengers or cargo. Juggernaut carries an entire fortress on its back. More undead passengers can generally fit into a mobile war engine than living ones, because the dead don't care if they're jammed in and unable to move. Only the living worry about luxuries such as comfort. The dead can just as easily be hung from hooks or compacted for transit in bone shells.

## ANIMATION OPTIONS

Before a necromancer builds a war machine, he needs to be certain that he can animate it. Dead flesh won't move itself no matter the necromancer's virtuosity in combining corpses. Though it's the most popular means of animating war engines, necromancy is not the only way.

### NECROMANCY

Incredibly powerful in dealing death and channeling the power of Oblivion, necromancy is also the key to deploying the engines of death that are so popular among the Deathlords and their deathknights. One spell is responsible for most of the devices used in Creation, but two additional spells exist in the lore-troves of the Deathlords that can animate even larger monstrosities.

#### Iron Reanimation

The most basic of the spells that animate dead flesh, Walking War Machine (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 226), is simple Shadowlands Circle Necromancy that can animate up to a ton of dead flesh, equivalent to around 10

### BY WAY OF CLARIFICATION...

Necromancers are great fans of complexity, in their nomenclature as well as their craft. They use certain terms interchangeably in ways that might confuse those who are not privy to their secrets.

Walking War Machine is Shadowlands Circle Necromancy and is also known as Iron Reanimation.

Spurring the Beast of War is Labyrinth Circle Necromancy and is also known as Onyx Reanimation.

Incomparable Destruction Engine is necromancy of the Void Circle and is also known as Obsidian Reanimation.

to 15 bodies. Walking War Machine is a very forgiving spell. It not only animates the mass of flesh, but fuses undead tissues, correcting and adjusting for small errors in necrosurgery and thereby attaching muscle to bone more effectively and optimizing the animation of the composite war machine. So long as the necrosurgeon building the machine had a Craft (Necrosurgery) rating of •• or more, the device animates without difficulty.

Initially crafting the device to be animated requires one success per hundred pounds of flesh on an Intelligence + Craft (Necrosurgery) roll. Each roll in an extended action represents eight solid hours of work. Walking War Machine animates weapons of size class 1 or 2.

While unusually simple or unusually complex war machines may require less or more Essence, Walking War Machine typically requires (8 - the necromancer's Essence rating) motes of Essence per success on the necrosurgery roll, representing the difficulty of animating larger weapons.

This spell provides the war machine with the following basic stats, although these may be modified based on the specifics of the weapon animated:

**Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other rolls.

**Abilities:** Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Endurance 1, Melee 2, Resistance 2, Stealth 1

**Base Initiative:** 5

**Soak:** Highly variable due to size and armor options, but not less than 3L/6B

**Health Levels:** For each success on the initial necrosurgery roll, the walking war machine has two -0, two -1 and two -2 health levels.

#### Onyx Reanimation

The Labyrinth Circle grants access to a yet more powerful version of Walking War Machine. At this level, the spell is called Spurring the Beast of War. A war machine of this type requires a minimum Craft

(Necrosurgery) rating of ●●●●. Each roll represents two solid days of work.

Like Walking War Machine, Spurring the Beast of War requires (8 - necromancer's Essence rating) motes of Essence per success on the necrosurgery roll. Animating larger creatures therefore costs a great deal of Essence, but this increased cost reflects the greater difficulty of animating larger death engines.

War machines animated with this spell have the following stats:

**Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other rolls.

**Abilities:** Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Endurance 3, Melee 3, Resistance 3, Stealth 1

**Base Initiative:** 7

**Soak:** Highly variable, but not less than 4L/8B.

**Health Levels:** For each success on the initial necrosurgery roll, the walking war machine has two -0, two -1 and three -2 health levels.

### Obsidian Reanimation

The most powerful spell for animating war machines is the Void Circle spell Incomparable Destruction Engine. A necromancer cannot even attempt creating one of these war machines without a Craft (Necrosurgery) rating of ●●●● or more. Each roll represents three full days of work.

The minimum Essence cost of Incomparable Destruction Engine is equal to the number of successes needed on the necrosurgery roll, although the Storyteller may double that in the case of truly colossal war machines (such as Juggernaut).

The war machines animated with this spell have the following stats:

**Attributes:** Strength 8, Dexterity 3, Stamina 7, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Virtues:** Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other rolls.

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 6, Dodge 2, Endurance 4, Melee 4, Resistance 5, Stealth 1

**Base Initiative:** 8

**Health Levels:** For each success on the initial necrosurgery roll, the walking war machine has three -0, three -1 and four -2 health levels.

### NEMISSARIES

With the right force of skilled ghosts, necromancy isn't even strictly necessary to animate a war machine. Nemissaries animate bodies just as well and slightly more dexterously than necromancy. A nemissary animating a war engine must know Nemissary's Ride (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 250) or Drive the Necrotic Colossus (see p. 92). Some Deathlords and many Abyssals are less fond of

this technique because nemissaries are, among other things, somewhat difficult to keep fed in Creation. Furthermore, many Deathlords and deathknights take a slightly dismissive tone toward nemissaries, whom they see as "mere ghosts." The real problem with using nemissaries, of course, is that they have minds of their own. A necromancer knows that a construct animated with Walking War Machine will follow his instructions no matter what. Using nemissaries to animate his war machine detracts from that certainty.

Nemissary-animated war machines will have stats appropriate to the size of the creation (as described above under necromantic reanimation, but use the nemissary's Mental and Social Attributes (excepting Appearance).

### DEFENSE

Without defenses, the walking war machines of the Deathlords would fall before Creation's defenders before accomplishing their missions. The Deathlords have learned how to make the most of the size and power of these creations, but certain weaknesses in the basic design (such as their susceptibility to fire) have yet to be overcome.

### VANGUARD

Not actually a part of the war machine proper, a vanguard is a contingent of undead troops that swarms around the war machine, defending and supporting it. The monstrosities of the Deathlords are fearsome and powerful, but speed and maneuverability are not known to be their primary strengths. The point of the vanguard is to make up for this weakness by providing quicker and more maneuverable troops to neutralize (or at least slow down) any forces that might be able to damage or destroy the war engine before it has been fully unleashed. This vanguard may contain zombies, but it will *definitely* include nemissaries augmented for war, and it will be charged with defending the war machine. Most support troops follow in the wake of war engines, but larger or more crucial war machines will have at least a few necrosurgeons (if not full on necromancers) to make repairs, should they prove necessary. These combat necrosurgeons could be Abyssal Exalted, but more often they will be nemissaries or exquisite undead aides (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 226), as the deathknights are too rare and too prized to act as mere backup.

### ARMOR

There are as many different ways to armor a war machine as there are engineers devising them. Enormous plates of iron, soulsteel shielding, alchemically hardened flesh, bone carapaces and even more terrifying forms of armor are used to harden these undead horrors.

The following stats are for war machines that use large plates of the named material as armor. These plates are *at least* half an inch thick and cover important joints, sockets or vulnerable areas. In size class 3 and 4 war machines,





these plates are especially thick near the ground, up to a height of 10 feet.

### TOUGHNESS

The war engines of the Deathlords are notoriously difficult to damage. Dead flesh is already tougher than living flesh (as represented by common zombies and nemissaries having 10 health levels [see *Exalted*, p. 299] instead of the seven possessed by most mortals), and it can be further hardened through mummification. The war machines of the Deathlords can also be fortified through the reinforcement of bones or through sheer size. A war machine's base health levels depend on its size and the spell animating it. A necromancer can also imbue its creation with extra health levels by spending extra Essence during the animation. The formula for this is: Every 2 additional motes of Essence spent on toughness, above and beyond the basic reanimation costs, provides the war machine with (size class x 1) -1 health levels and (size class x 2) -2 health levels.

War machines animated by nemissaries don't gain this advantage, but they can benefit from the Intangible Guardian Presence Arcanos (see p. 91).

### REPAIR

Not defense in the purest sense of the word, repair is an after-the-fact way of dealing with the damage inflicted on walking war machines by a Deathlord's enemies. In addition to any combat necrosurgeons in the machine's vanguard, the support crews that follow in the wake of most such war machines will have nemissaries, exquisite undead aides (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 226) or deathknights capable of making necrosurgical repairs. Abyssal Exalted who also possess the Charms Form-Restoring Touch or Bone Graft Technique (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 188) are especially well suited to these repair teams. If the mending process is particularly demanding, the deathknight may need to cannibalize zombies in the war machine's vanguard for parts.

Material	Hardness	Soak (L/B)	Resource Cost
Bone	3	5/6	None
Iron	4	8/8	Equal to Size Class
Jade	7	14/14	Size Class x 3
Soulsteel	9	18/18	Size Class x 3

## OBLIVION'S PANOPLY

The rarest, and by far the most effective, form of armor plating used in the defense of walking war machines is a substance called Oblivion's Panoply. It is formed of the soulsteel that results when a Deathlord personally soulforges the substance of a hekatonkhire. This extraordinarily rare material is then repeatedly lacquered and polished until it's as smooth and black as obsidian. Over that substrate, necromantic engineers apply a layer of alchemical binding agents. Lastly, necromancy is used to apply a fine layer of pure Oblivion. This thin layer of unbeing nullifies physical force, drains energy and chills attackers. These panels are incredibly light, weighing far less than their size and composition would suggest.

**Chill:** The Oblivion coating absorbs heat as well as life force from living attackers. Any time an attacker hits Oblivion's panoply, roll the character's Stamina + Resistance, difficulty two. Failure indicates that the attacker has lost body heat and has lost a point of Dexterity due to numbness. Only orichalcum weapons insulate against this effect.

**Energy Drain:** Plates of Oblivion's panoply drain Essence-channelers of 5 motes every time they make a successful hit with bare hands or with normal or soulsteel weapons, and mortals age by two years with every strike. Weapons made of Magical Materials other than soulsteel insulate the wielder from this effect. Flames that touch Oblivion's panoply, including the anima flares of Fire-aspected Terrestrials, are instantly extinguished (although Exalts can spend Essence to reignite once they're away from Oblivion's panoply). Water that hits the panels freezes and slides off.

**Force Nullification:** The glossy black surface of Oblivion's panoply devours physical force aimed at it. Because of this, it has an effective soak of 15L/20B (hardened soak if using Exalted Power Combat). An attacker hitting a panel of Oblivion's panoply won't even feel like her weapon made contact; the weapon simply stops when it meets the black panel, its force completely devoured by Oblivion. While the front of the panel is well guarded, the back of the panel has no hardness at all and possesses a soak rating of only 2L/4B. For this reason, panels of Oblivion's panoply are securely set in soulsteel frames so the backs are not accessible.

Oblivion's panoply is extraordinarily difficult to create, and only those with access to Void Circle Necromancy can even attempt it. This makes it rare and enormously valuable. Creating Oblivion's panoply requires soulsteel forged from the plasm of a hekatonkhire. While a handful of the Deathlords have some few ingots of this darkly glittering metal in their citadels, it is extraordinarily rare, but of the absolute highest quality. The creation of Oblivion's panoply also requires alchemical agents costing Resources •••••. The creation of Oblivion's panoply costs the necromancer 1 mote, committed, for every five square feet of the stuff she creates. For this reason, Oblivion's panoply is used only where absolutely necessary, and walking war machines — crucial ones — are one of the few places where such large expanses of material are practical.

The process only works on large, perfectly flat and highly polished panels. No panel with a surface area smaller than 25 square feet has ever been created, and no panel less than two feet at its thinnest has ever been worked into Oblivion's panoply, and neither has the layer of Oblivion been made thicker than fraction of a hair's breadth. In theory, a thick enough layer of pure non-being could absorb weapons (and their wielders) entirely, but even the most advanced scholars of nihilistics have yet to discover that secret.

The Deathlords (along with their loremasters, engineers and occult scientists) have long sought a means of coating smaller or less regular surfaces with a coating of Oblivion (individual suits of armor, for example) but it seems that, while Oblivion sits stably on large flat surfaces, smaller or less regular surfaces are not suitable substrates, as the black Essence of Oblivion either flows off of the surface and back to the Void or devours the object entirely.

A character wishing to obtain panels of Oblivion's panoply must have Artifact •••••. For every point of Liege he has on top of that, he may gain access to one five foot by five foot panel to use as shielding on a war machine, or however he sees fit, pending approval by his Deathlord (i.e., the Storyteller).

Because of their facility both with Craft and necromancy, the two most important skills in the creation and maintenance of walking war machines, Daybreak Caste Abyssals are often the commanders in charge of these engines of destruction (and the forces supporting them).

## OFFENSE

It is not for their phenomenal defenses that the walking war machines of the Deathlords are feared. As the premier death engines of the forces of Oblivion, walking war machines possess immense destructive capabilities of



all varieties. Some are simply mechanical, others mimic the powers of First Age artifacts, and still others harness the power of the Void.

### MECHANICAL

Almost all walking war machines have some kind of common weapons implanted in the flesh or screwed into bone. Barbed hooks, bone spine arrays and blades spinning on axles are all common on larger war machines. Most of these cut or skewer, but some are meant to crush — a solid iron metal drum attached to the front of an engine or war, for example.

### ARTIFACT

The weapons built by First Age warriors were designed to fight the Primordials and had to work in a myriad of spirit realms. As a result, they work just as well in the Underworld as they do in Creation. The problem with these weapons is that the war machine's builder must actually get them, a process that can be difficult or, if not difficult, extraordinarily expensive.

Few artifact weapons from the Shogunate period (or later) work in the Underworld. The realm of the dead is a spirit realm with its own principles and its own set of rules, and the builders of that time slowly began forgetting (or never learned or didn't have the power to achieve) the techniques for making artifacts work in radically different theaters of war.

That said, the First and Forsaken Lion, a master of First Age weapons, has modified some powerful artifact weapons to work in the Underworld, powered by the Hearthstones of Underworld Manses or by Essence-containing gems. It is known that he has Underworld equivalents of at least some powerful artifact weapons — ghosts have seen him deploy pyre-flame lances and implosion bows that focus pure entropy at their targets — and it is suspected that he has much more than that. The other Deathlords, while not so knowledgeable as the Lion, may have tricks up their sleeves as well, although what artifact weapons they have been able to retrofit to work in all theaters of battle remains to be seen.

### NECROMANTIC

The Deathlords may not have much in the way of First Age weapons, but what they do have is necromancy. The ability to channel the destructive abilities of the Void is easily the equivalent of many First Age artifacts. The Deathlords have weapons that wither crops, curse those who see them, cause disease, sicken and kill livestock and taint water so that it will never be potable. Some of these they install in their war machines, while others, such as the weapon of mephitic desolation, *are* the war machine.

### THINGS FALL APART

For all its many strengths, dead flesh is not an ideal substance for war engines. Flesh may be tough, but it rots quickly. Bone is weak compared to soulsteel. Knowing

### VOID CIRCLE NECROMANCY SPELL:

#### OBLIVION'S AVATAR

**Cost:** 10 motes (committed) per power, or 40 motes and 5 experience points per power to make the effect permanent

**Target:** One war machine

Animating a war machine is sometimes just the first step in creating a truly devastating weapon. Oblivion's Avatar invests a walking war machine with a portion of the power of the Malfeans themselves, granting it the ability to carry pure entropy into Creation, which might manifest as a black nimbus of destruction akin to Crypt Bolt or (Material) Withering Method (see **Exalted: The Abyssals** pp. 191 and 187-188, respectively), the ability to spread disease or some other form of direct channeling of Oblivion into the realm of the living. The prayer-blocking ability of the weapon of mephitic desolation is a product of this spell. Other examples of the power of Oblivion's Avatar are listed in the sidebar "Necromantic Weaponry" on page 109.

how to maintain the war machines of the Underworld is at least as important as knowing how to create them.

### ROT

A carefully constructed, perfectly lethal battle engine can decay beyond repair in just a few weeks in a warm, moist environment. Human sized and smaller devices of reanimated flesh can be protected from rot fairly easily. The Deathlords have long since plumbed the depths of mummification lore, and they've learned to keep smaller war engines in alchemically prepared preservative baths. Larger war engines are typically kept in silos full of preservative tallow. It is likely that the larger war engines have all benefited from the Abyssal Charm Decay Resistance Preparation (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 188), and many nemissaries use advanced Arcanoï to suspend, halt or reverse rot in the engines they animate.

### WEAR

When dead flesh and metal come into conflict, the metal wins, and the flesh needs to be mended or replaced. This is just as true when the metal involved is part of the war machine itself as it is when the metal is an enemy's daiklave. Simple, standard operations such as walking take their toll on war machines. Dead feet get worn down to frayed and splintered shins, turning gears amputate poorly placed arms, and any kind of repetitive percussion can ultimately pulverize a zombie. A size class 3 war engine wears out the equivalent of a zombie's worth of flesh in a

day. A size class 4 war engine wears out at least three times that and often much more, depending on its size.

### NECROMANTIC REPAIR

War machines can be repaired, and on a regular basis, they *must* be. For every week a war machine goes without repair, it loses (size class) health levels. This obviously gives larger war engines more latitude, but a colossal war engine that goes for too long without routine maintenance takes an enormous amount of time to repair. Each health level lost to wear requires three successes on an Intelligence + Craft (Necrosurgery) roll to repair.

#### Replacement

For every health level a war machine loses, the necromancer must find good flesh to replace it with. Healthy living donors are, by far, the best sources of repair flesh, as they're untouched by decay, but any relatively fresh or mummified flesh will do provided its intact and not weakened by rot.

#### Repair

Dead flesh doesn't heal. It must be repaired. Necrosurgery alone can't repair basic tissue attrition. After a while, there's just not enough there to sew back together. If a necromancer doesn't have replacement flesh to mend the war machine with necrosurgery, he can attempt to mend it through other means.

The Abyssal Charm Form-Restoring Touch (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 188) allows a deathknight to fully repair a war machine with a touch. The version of the Charm listed in the book will instantly repair a war engine of size class 1 or 2. Fixing a war engine of size class 3 doubles the Charm's cost (20 motes, 2 Willpower, two lethal health levels), while repairing a war machine in size class 4 *triples* the cost.

Nemissaries have Arcanoi that can suspend rot and mend dead flesh. Instauration of the Fleshly Vessel (see p. 92) allows the ghost to heal a possessed body (including a war machine), albeit at the expense of his own corpus.

Some artifacts can stave off wear or even repair dead flesh, but the cost tends to be relatively high. Bindings of eternal preservation can fend off rot, even in a war machine, while a variant of the sarcophagus of restoration (see p. 93) repairs undead flesh entirely. Many of the pits and silos used by the Deathlords act as gigantic sarcophagi of restoration, but such vast creations are unquestionably Artifact N/A (although a character with Liege or Backing [Deathlord] might have closely monitored access to one).

## WAR MACHINES OF THE DEAD

When the denizens of Creation talk, fretfully, of the Mask of Winters' invasion of Thorns, it is not his armies of zombies that occupy center stage in their tales. The armies of the dead are less known — and *much* less feared — than the terrifying siege engines deployed by the Deathlord. Whoever has heard of Thorns and its fall to the Mask of

Winters has heard tales of Juggernaut, his vast and slowly rotting siege engine of undead flesh or the centipede-like spine chains that devastate even the tightest phalanges. Those, however, are but two manifestations of the forces of war that the Deathlords can bring to bear on Creation.

The repulsive art of necrosurgery, when enhanced with certain Abyssal Charms and the dark miracles of necromancy, grants the Deathlords and the Abyssal Exalted a nearly endless capacity to sculpt bone and suture flesh into lethal abominations of the natural order.

### OBLIVION'S WARSTRIDERS

Creation was once alone in wielding the terrifying machines of war called warstriders, but no longer. The First and Forsaken Lion has a keen eye for items possessing an extraordinary capacity for death and destruction, and he has found the power of warstriders to his liking. His are driven not only by engines of First Age design, however, but by the blacker powers of necromancy as well. Unsurprisingly, the primary metal used in necromantic warstriders is soulsteel, but other materials can provide the armor with other benefits. The First and Foremost Lion's warstriders, therefore, are often made of unorthodox materials — bone, wood, onyx and other, grislier substances — but the necromancy that holds them together makes them at least as durable as the better known constructs of Creation, even when working in Creation.

A handful of warstriders made their way in to the Underworld in the First Age when they were buried as part of a great king's grave goods. These match First Age design specifications exactly, but they are now objects of the Underworld and would disintegrate if the light of the sun ever fell across their gleaming black surfaces outside of a shadowland.

Two examples of the Deathlords' warstriders are listed below, but they have many designs beyond these, some of which would be indistinguishable from Creation's warstriders if not for their grisly design motifs.

### DEATHLORDS

Each Deathlord's use of warstriders is unique. The First and Forsaken Lion uses warstriders extensively in his Legion Sanguinary, and the Mask of Winters has sizable numbers — most worn by warghosts — as well. Conversely, the Deathlord sometimes known as the Silver Prince has constructed only a handful of warstriders, preferring to concentrate his efforts on warships. To date, the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible and Eye and Seven Despairs have shown no inclination to field warstriders. Those who build warstriders for their Exalted nearly always have noble or royal warstriders constructed





in their name, using secret techniques thought lost since the Usurpation that result in war machines of surpassing might.

The only known examples of royal warstriders forged since the Contagion are grim apparitions of soulsteel, iron and bone, and they are among the most powerful and most feared weapons in the arsenals of the Deathlords.

A number of Abyssal deathknights use these massive battle machines, mostly those more interested in raw destructive power than in any kind of subtlety, and when they do, they frequently make use of great soulsteel blades that are truly terrible to behold.

The dead may only control warstriders in the land of the living while materialized or inhabiting the body of a corpse — and they pay double normal Essence commitment to attune to warstriders not made of soulsteel. Hungry ghosts normally lack the control and discipline necessary to control a warstrider — even those with an Intelligence of 2 or higher are not completely in control of their bestial nature.

### GHOSTS IN THE SHELL

Ghosts may not be able to regain Essence easily in living Creation, but as spirits, they have large Essence pools relative to their permanent Essence rating. That comes in handy when piloting warstriders.

What's more, some warstriders are built with enough bone and cables of carefully mummified sinew in the frames that nemissaries can possess them directly just as they do corpses.

It is rumored that deep in the Thousand, the First and Forsaken Lion trains a force of nemissaries that are so trained to manipulate great bone warstriders that they wouldn't even remember how to manipulate their own corpora were they to leave their great war machines. And possessed as they are, they still have piloting cabins for commanding deathknights, so even if their deathknight is wounded, the great animated warstriders can fight on or deliver their occupant to safety.

### PITS AND SILOS

When not being used in battle, the necromechanical warstriders of the Deathlords are maintained by teams of highly skilled nemissaries. These ghosts use advanced Arcanoi to maintain and repair the dead tissues of these enormous necrotic panoplies. Necrotic warstriders, like most war machines of the Deathlords, are kept either in aboveground silos or in sunken pits near their Deathlord's citadel. These "hangers" are filled with a foul lubricating gel of blood and human tallow that thoroughly permeates these horrors, preventing rot and frequently resulting in a faint greasy appearance when the warstriders are deployed. Some of these silos are enormous versions of the sarcophagus

of restoration (see p. 93) and maintain the war machines without the use of nemissaries.

### BONESTRIDER (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

Made entirely of bone and soulsteel, the bonestrider doesn't look anything like a warstrider from Creation, but it performs the exact same functions. Bonestridders are animated by Labyrinth Circle Necromancy, but their stats are the same as a common warstrider (see **Savant & Sorcerer**, pp. 148 and 154), and they are often outfitted with similar weapons (albeit the Underworld's equivalents).

No one who sees a bonestrider has any doubts as to its composition. Bones of enormous creatures are sculpted into the necessary shapes and connected on a barbed soulsteel frame. Enormous scapulas guard the chest, while bone plates set in soulsteel guard the back and abdomen. The bones still possess the fluid curves of bone, but given the range of creatures the bones have come from and the degree of sculpting that's been performed on them, it's impossible to discern the origins or the original function of the bones used.

### THE INSIDIOUS EBON XOANON (ARTIFACT N/A)

The Insidious Ebon Xoanon was designed and built by the First and Forsaken Lion, who insisted on having a device that was the equal of any warstrider in Creation. Its shape, function and composition were all based on warstriders the Lion had seen in Creation but modified to better channel Oblivion.

Unlike most warstriders, the Insidious Ebon Xoanon is not forged from metal, but crudely carved from Essence-hardened ebony. Where the Xoanon needs to be flexible, the joints of a dead giant have been set into the wood and animated with necromancy for mobility. Aside from the joints, the rest of the creature is more comparable to an enormous wooden golem than a warstrider. Odd though it is, it fulfills exactly the function of the warstriders of Creation. The Insidious Ebon Xoanon is the equivalent of a royal warstrider (see **Savant and Sorcerer**, pp. 149 and 154) in size and strength, with certain necromantically added advantages.

The heavy wood of the Xoanon is crudely carved, and all surfaces of the creature are covered with the unholy glyphs of necromancy. It's as much a primitive totem — the kind worshiped by nephacks in the depths of the Labyrinth — as it is a suit of armor. Part idol, part armor, the Ebon Xoanon is carved in the shape of some unspeakable horned horror, possibly one of the Malfeans, possibly... something... else.

The midriff, forearms and shins of the Xoanon are thickly wrapped with human skin stained deep black from exposure to Oblivion. This leather wrapping is held in place with dozens of soulsteel studs. Ridges of sharp bone shards extend down the device's spine and up the sides of the arms.

The device is as lethal as it is terrifying. In addition to its other advantages, the Ebon Xoanon may also carry

necromantic weaponry powered by Oblivion's Avatar (though it has to forego the use of traditional warstrider weapons to do so, owing to size constraints). Perhaps the most loathsome aspect of the Insidious Ebon Xoanon is its ability to steal Essence from Solar (and only Solar) Exalted. All Chosen of the Unconquered Sun within direct line of sight of the Xoanon lose a mote of Essence every turn to the monstrosity's soulsteel Essence collectors. This Essence is channeled directly to the Xoanon's wearer, making it much easier for nemissaries and Abyssals to function in Creation.

Furthermore, the fists of the Xoanon are potently Oblivion-tainted and drain the life force of those they damage. For every health level of damage the Xoanon inflicts on Essence channelers, it inflicts an additional wound level on its target with its chilling touch (i.e., all damage inflicted against Essence-channeling beings is doubled before being applied to their health levels). Each health level of damage inflicted in this way also steals away an additional 2 motes of Essence. The stolen Essence helps to power the Xoanon, especially when it's fighting in Creation and cannot gain Essence through any other means.

The First and Forsaken Lion has worn the Ebon Xoanon himself in battles in the Underworld, but it is most often worn by his favored Abyssal Exalt, Walking on Laughter.

Like the warstriders of Creation, the Xoanon needs maintenance. Every 50 hours of operation, the joints of the Xoanon must be tended by nemissaries using Instauration of the Fleshly Vessel to counteract their decay. The joints must also be greased with the rendered tallow of a sentient creature, or the machine suffers disabilities like any other warstrider (for more on warstrider maintenance and the disabilities caused by overdue maintenance, see *Savant and Sorcerer*, p. 153).

## THE THOUSAND-CORPSE WAR FRAME

Both a troop transport and a war machine, the thousand-corpse war frame is a miracle of monstrosity. Absent zombies, the war frame is nothing more than a 40-foot-tall skeleton of soulsteel with enormous metal fists and 10-foot-diameter disks at the terminus of the "legs." Looking closer, however, it's clear that the frame has been designed with thousands of handholds, footholds and random poles spiking out from the frame at regular intervals. This is where the war frame's soldier-passengers hold on.

When preparing for deployment, hundreds of zombies swarm up the length of the war frame, taking their positions on the metal frame, each a single muscle fiber in the horrific whole. They are coordinated by a nemissary stationed in the war frame's chest cavity. This ghost's commands are conveyed through the soulsteel armature and translated for each zombie into a kind of language of clenching and relaxing. A mixed crew of just over a thousand zombies and nemissary war bodies man the war frame when it's fully loaded. The zombies hold onto the frame (although some fasten themselves to the armature more securely by lashing themselves to the framework or impaling themselves on enormous thorns that stick out from the skeleton at strategic points) and onto each other, abandoning their individuality to become small parts of a whole. Holding onto the frame and meshing with one another, the zombies become the frame's rotting gray musculature. Through their concerted effort, the frame comes alive and begins to move. When a joint needs to flex — to bend the gigantic elbow or to lift the war frame's leg to take a step — tens or hundreds of zombies heave in unison, straining against metal, gravity and each other to make it happen. As the last phase of deployment preparations, enormous leather straps and soulsteel bands are wrapped around the mass of interconnected bodies at strategic points to give the whole greater structural integrity. Fully loading a thousand-corpse war frame takes an hour, after which the thing begins walking with 20-foot strides to wherever it's being deployed. The tortuous creaking of leather and dead flesh mingles with the groan and shriek of grinding metal with every step this nightmare takes.

The thousand-corpse war frame is neither fast nor stealthy, but it is incredibly powerful. The impact of one of its enormous mailed fists can open up a hole in even a stout castle wall. The enormous disk feet crush everything in a 10-foot-diameter circle. Anything caught beneath the foot of the thousand-corpse war frame is crushed for 30 levels of bashing damage.

Even approaching a thousand-corpse war frame puts one at risk of attack by the hundred malicious limbs of the creature's component zombies. The bottom 10 feet of the horror's length (essentially, it's "shins") has a layer of outward-facing zombies, lashed to the armature alternating right-side up and upside down. The zombies of this bottom layer typically have metal plates screwed into their flesh to increase their soak.



### OBLIVION'S WARSTRIDERS

Type	Soak (L/B)	Strength	Mobility Penalty	Fatigue Value
Bonstrider	22/22	14	-4	4
Ebon Xoanon	24/24	18	-2	2

Warstriders on this table are presumed to have hardened soak equal to *half* their lethal/bashing soak. This means they ignore all attacks whose raw damage is less than their hardness rating.



Once the war frame arrives at its destination, it may maintain its gestalt form and attack, much like a giant warstrider, or it may be abandoned as its component zombies swarm away from the war frame to attack their enemies individually.

While a fully loaded thousand-corpse war frame moves slightly over 1,000 zombies, a skeleton crew of only 100 zombies can animate it enough to make it walk, although the zombie crew is all but helpless when doing so as the thing moves too slowly to be used in combat.

Thousand-corpse war frames can take enormous amounts of damage without being adversely affected. The frame itself is incredibly durable, and it's protected by several layers of undead flesh. Even the zombies doing the majority of the work in animating the war frame are covered by several other bodies. If a key zombie is destroyed, its fellows immediately swarm in to jettison the ruined zombie and take its place in the chain of bodies.

The enormous strength of the war frame comes from the hundreds of zombies animating it. As they are destroyed, the colossus grows weaker. Every 10 health levels of damage sustained by the war frame lessens its Strength by 1. When enough zombies have been killed to take its Strength to 0, it can no longer propel itself, and the remaining zombies scuttle down the war frame to attack separately.

Trying to crawl up a functional war frame requires four successes on a Strength + Athletics roll (see the rules for

climbing in *Exalted*, p. 252). Climbing a slick surface that moves and claws at you is challenging, however even for one of the Exalted. The flesh of zombies, especially in warmer climes, is immensely slippery, and they will be clawing, biting and kicking at the character as she climbs. They may pull items — like greaves, jewelry or spare weapons — off the character while her hands are too busy to stop them. Five zombies get to attack the climbing character each turn with two bonus die to their attack pools. For her part, the character is at a pronounced disadvantage with regard to combat, as all but the strongest characters will need to anchor themselves with at least one arm (and both legs). Characters climbing a war frame suffer a -10 initiative penalty. If two or more zombies succeed on a Brawl attack in one turn, they will attempt to pull the character entirely into the writhing mass of zombies. A character swallowed up by the mass of the war frame's zombies suffers a -4 penalty to all dice pools and a -10 initiative penalty, *and* she may be attacked by 10 zombies per turn. Zombies may use Brawl for a clinch attack instead of doing damage.

If the character is climbing the front of the war frame and falls, she will not only take falling damage (see *Exalted*, p. 253), but she must successfully dodge or be trampled by the war frame.

As mentioned, a nemissary usually directs the movement from a compartment in the chest of the war frame, but one can also do so from inside the metal dome of its "head."

## BATTLE SNAKES

Toward the end of the First Age, a hunting party of Solar Exalted ventured into the far south to hunt down the behemoth Seshasa, the Primal Basilisc. In all, Seshasa was nearly two miles long, and her body was 20 to 30 feet in diameter along most of its length. The Solars, content with taking the Primal Basilisc's head as a trophy, left the rest of the vast body to desiccate in the hot Southern winds.

When the Deathlords were looking for more effective means of transporting their undead troops, it was the Malfeans who whispered Seshasa's name into their ears.

The mummified remains of the Primal Basilisc remained more or less intact. The thick, scaled hide protected the bones from eroding away in the hot sandstorms, and each immense rib arced up 20 to 30 feet to the Primal Basilisc's spine. Several Deathlords took vast lengths of Seshasa's remains for their own purposes, and they use them in the Age of Sorrows as a common form of troop transport in the Underworld.

Each rib of a battle snake bears five soulsteel bands along its length. From each of these bands project three hooks to which a zombie or a nemissary's war body is attached, folded into fetal position. Fully loaded, a single rib can hold as many as 15 of the walking dead. Thus, a full segment holds 30. A 50-yard length of a battle snake comprises 50 segments and can hold 1,500 walking dead soldiers.

Few battle snakes are made solely of Seshasa's ribs any more. Some integrate ribs from cachalot, sea dragons or enormous land-bound behemoths or Wyld-spawned monsters. Ghosts or deathknights can use necrosurgery to combine segments from different creatures in a single battle snake, so there's little limit on how long a battle snake can be.

The movement used by battle snakes to cover ground, halfway between the gliding motion of a snake and the coordinated walking of a millipede, lets the war machine cover a wide range of ground, from the deserts of the South to the icy wastes of the North.

## DREAD BRACHIAL SAPPING ARRAY

A complex and specialized siege engine, the dread brachial sapping array comprises between 50 and 100 arms, all joined at the shoulder. Using Bone Graft Technique (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 188), each finger is tipped with a sharp iron chisel. When set in place on the ground, the fingers and hands begin desperately clawing at the earth beneath them.

The dread brachial sapping array is not especially fast, digging through only one yard of earth (or one foot of stone) in an hour, but given time, it can tunnel through anything but metal and the hardest basalt.

Creating a dread brachial sapping array requires the use of Walking War Machine (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 226), requires the arms of 25 to 50 individuals and one success on the necrosurgery roll per five arms. The dread

brachial sapping array is not particularly effective in direct combat, but it could certainly rip apart an unarmored mortal without much difficulty.

## THE WEB IS THE SPIDER

Aesthetics rarely play any part in the creation of undead war machines, but sometimes, the Deathlords meld beauty and lethality with the same finesse they exhibit when fusing soulsteel and flesh.

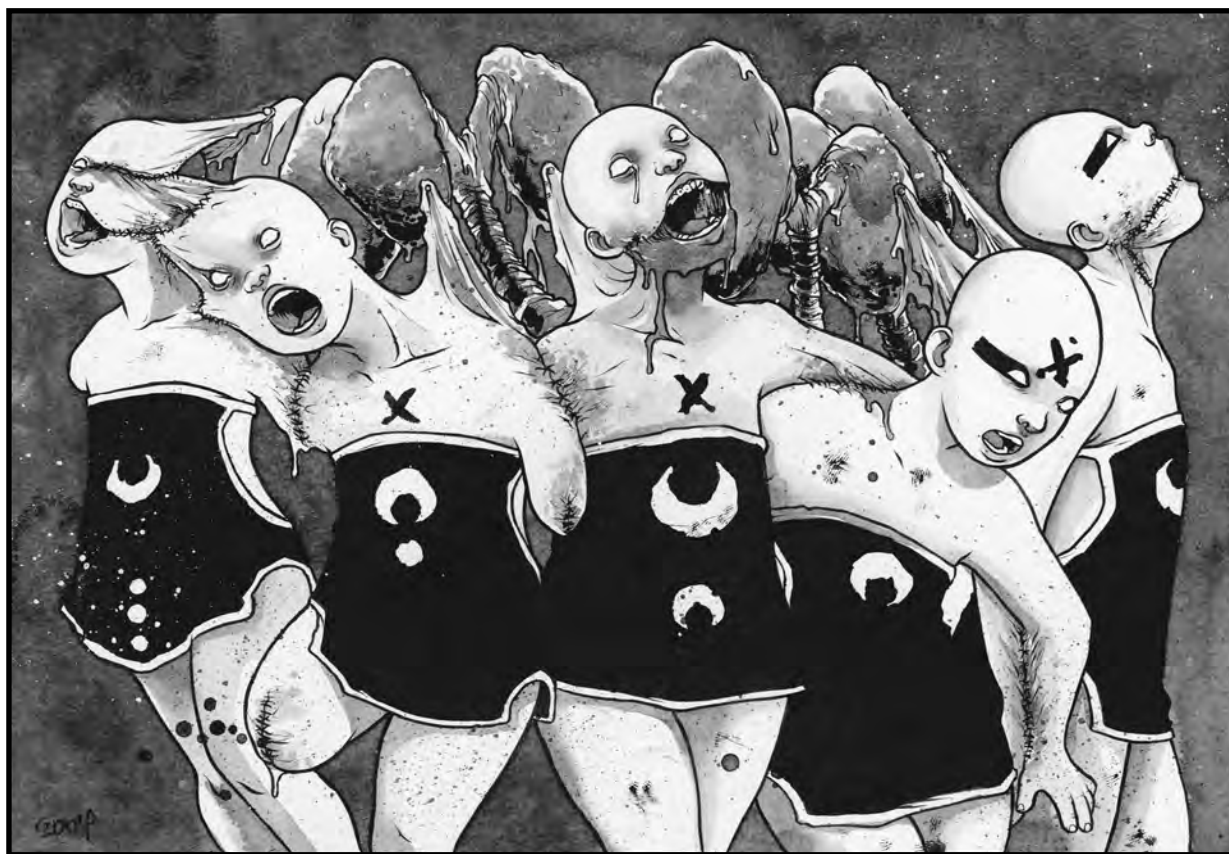
The titanic war machine called the web is the spider looks like a vast spider web comprising yards of silvery sinew and thousands of foot-long sections of smooth soulsteel. It is animated by a thick, meaty tracery of undead flesh, limbs and muscles harvested from hundreds of bodies and carefully sutured together into one vast device. Thicker lengths of muscle and sinew connect the center, where the device bears the most strain, while fine filaments of gray sinew animate the cruelly sharp and delicate outer joints.

Eight main spokes, each 60 feet long, radiate from the war machine's central hub. When it walks, it arches its "back," raising the hub high in the air, and uses its eight main spokes as legs. By extending or contracting its component rods, the web is the spider can double or halve its normal diameter of 120 feet.

This war machine serves a myriad of purposes: It's a portable bridge, a living net and a siege ladder for zombies. Most importantly, it's an Essence source for ghosts operating in Creation. The device has a hollow soulsteel barb at every intersection for draining blood from the living. The bodies of the wounded and recently dead are hung on these barbs and exsanguinated. For every two health levels of blood the web is the spider consumes, it accumulates a point of Essence in one of the eight brilliant-green Essence batteries set into the disk at its hub. Each of these spheres holds 60 motes of Essence when full. Ghosts or Abyssal Exalted may drain off this Essence if the web is the spider permits them to do so, but it takes one turn for every 2 motes absorbed in this way. On those rare occasions when a Deathlord rides into Creation personally, the Essence accumulated in these storage devices is reserved solely for the Deathlord's use, and anyone attempting to poach this proprietary Essence is severely punished or, more likely, destroyed and sent screaming to Oblivion.

Labor-intensive and costly, creating the web is the spider is an enormous task requiring a huge amount of soulsteel as well as the muscle and sinew from no fewer than 60 corpses. It is easily the equivalent of most First Age engines of war. It is considered a size class 4 war machine and requires Resources for a soulsteel frame and a sufficient Artifact rating for the eight Essence-containing gems in its central disk. Assembling the web is the spider is unusually difficult, since it requires the necromancer to filet all the corpses used. It requires two successes per corpse used on an Intelligence + Craft (Necrosurgery) roll.





### WEAPON OF MEPHITIC DESOLATION

The Malfeans, though dead, are not static creatures. When the Princess Magnificent with Lips of Coral and Robes of Black Feathers was routed by the gods of Great Forks, the dead Primordials realized that the gods, while in disarray, were still a force with which to be reckoned and that any significant penetration into Creation would need to take that into account. The weapon of mephitic desolation does that, while taking a terrible toll on the mortal population.

Creating a weapon of mephitic desolation involves particularly difficult necromancy. Five healthy children no older than 10 must be ritually slain and their lungs taken out through the back of their rib cages and stitched together into a large bellows. Their throats must then be ritually desecrated and carefully tuned to the quavering disharmonies favored by the Malfeans, and on each of their small teeth must be etched one of the 97 glyphs of annihilation. The bodies are then stitched together in a circle facing out from the lung bellows and animated through the necromancy spell *Walking War Machine* (or better). Necromancy is required in this instance. Nemissaries will not do. The necromantically animated lung bellows pushes air through the dead throats, and five ghostly musicians possess bodies and take up soulsteel forks with which to torment the small bodies into singing threnodies for all Creation. On those cursed and trembling voices is carried the horror of disease.

The song of the weapon of mephitic desolation, in essence, exposes everyone in a half-mile radius to smallpox (see *Exalted*, p. 319). All who hear it, human or animal, must resist, survive or succumb to it. The effects of the plague song, obviously, depend on where the weapon is being played.

The weapon has another, darker, purpose, however. The sound of the desecrated voices drowns out prayers, spoken and otherwise, increasing the difficulty of all prayers (including prayer strips) by three. The afflicted area is like a numb spot to gods with worshipers in the area. All living spirits in the afflicted area with Essence of 3 or more fall prey to a kind of lassitude (subtract five dice from their Perception dice pools).

If the weapon of mephitic desolation is played within 10 miles of a Gateway to Yu-Shan, the Bureau of Humanity and the Division of Endings (within the Bureau of Destiny) will instantly go on high alert, and divine retribution of some sort is a foregone conclusion, though it remains to be seen if the Deathlords are aware of this consequence yet.

Creating a weapon of mephitic desolation takes an extended Intelligence + Craft (Necrosurgery) roll to achieve 10 successes with one roll being made for every eight hours of solid work. Using *Walking War Machine* to animate a weapon of mephitic desolation requires [(8 – the necromancer's Essence rating) × 10] motes of Essence in addition to the Essence required to invest it with power using Oblivion's Avatar (see p. 102).

## NECROMANTIC WEAPONRY

The Void Circle spell Oblivion's Avatar grants a necromancer an immense degree of latitude in investing necromantic weaponry with the energy of death. Any of the weapons described below can be mounted on a walking war machine in place of more conventional (or artifact) weapons. Necromantic weapons are *not* artifacts, but forms that shape and channel the energies invested by Oblivion's Avatar. Removed from the war machine they're bound into, necromantic weapons break, becoming wholly inert.

The weapon effects listed below are relatively common, but Storytellers are encouraged to come up with others as well. The effects of these weapons operate constantly within their areas of effect unless otherwise stated.

The weapon of mephitic desolation uses two applications of Oblivion's Avatar, one to spread disease and one to impair prayers. Other effects that can be invested in a war machine include:

- **Chill of the Abyss:** The weapon sucks away all warmth from around the weapon in a 10-yard radius, consigning it to the Void. Those in the area take environmental damage as per a supernatural ice storm (see "Environmental Damage," in *Exalted*, p. 244). This effect is an ongoing one, fueled by the Essence invested in the siege engine by the necromancer who built it.
- **The Dread Black Beacon:** A black unlight shines from the weapon. Visibility for the living within a 50-yard radius becomes equal to a foggy night (see the rules for visibility in *Exalted*, pp. 237-238). The dead (and the Abyssal Exalted), on the other hand, gain one die to all attack pools, and hungry ghosts become material, as though it were night (regardless of what time of day it is).
- **Fortune's Inauspicious Nadir:** The machine bears a pylon topped with an enormous black pearl. The pearl taints daylight with the gray-green shades of tornado clouds. The living within 100 yards of the device suffer extraordinary bad luck. In game terms, this is represented by raising the target number on dice from 7 to 8. Tens count as a single success.
- **The Puissance-Arresting Eye:** The weapon is attached to the war machine either as a tentacle or a small lighthouse-like tower. Either has a green flame focused by a concave mirror of polished soulsteel and a lens located at the tip. The beam of green light, usually focused on the biggest threat on the battlefield, has a dice pool of 10 dice to land on a chosen target. Those hit by the green beam are reduced to a Strength of •. Lost points of Strength return at the rate of one dot

every two turns. The beam of green light can be Dodged, but only orichalcum weapons can parry it. Immunity to Everything Technique (see *Exalted*, p. 179) renders a target wholly immune to the effects of the puissance-arresting eye.

- **The Rallying Chime of the Invincible Dead:** This device is a tubular bell of soulsteel that has been mounted on a war machine invested with the power of Oblivion's Avatar (see p. 102). Adding such a bell to a war machine increases the cost by Resources •••. Every turn the chime is struck, the dissonant black tones of Oblivion radiate out from the war machine. All zombies, corpses inhabited by nemissaries, materialized ghosts and Abyssal Exalted within a 20-yard radius regain one lost lethal health level per turn. The clapper of the chime is extraordinarily well protected, ensconced beneath layers of shielding or, sometimes, inside the war engine itself. If removed from the war engine, the chime cracks and cannot be used again.

- **Revealing the Well-Hidden Devils:** Black fog drips from the war machine and covers the ground in a 30 yard radius. Within that area of effect, the Essence cost of Weighted With the Anchor of Flesh (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 237) is halved, and the Willpower cost is waived entirely. Materialized ghosts leaving the area of black fog must pay the Essence difference to stay corporeal, but not the Willpower.

- **Severing the Bond With Home:** The flux and flow of Oblivion energy around the weapon disrupts all Essence flows. All Creation-based Hearthstones within 10 yards of the weapon lose their connection to the Manses that fuel them and cease functioning. Hearthstones function normally once a character leaves the area of effect.

- **The Softening Rains:** The war engine sports an enormous puffball mushroom. When it squirts its spores, a feat it can perform once per day, the resulting gray cloud causes all humidity in the air within a 100-yard radius to fall as rain that instantly rusts the armor of all living targets, halving their soak. This rain does not affect armor made of the Five Magical Materials.

- **The Touch That Calls Them Home:** Players of all characters within 100 yards of the weapon must successfully roll Stamina + Resistance against difficulty 5, or their characters' every wound becomes infected. (See the rules for infection in *Exalted*, p. 250).

- **The Wailing Engine of Fear:** The weapon makes a horrible wailing noise, possibly by screaming out of several animated mouths. The players of those within 50 yards of the war machine must make a Valor check with a two-die penalty for their characters. Those whose players fail flee but stop at the edge of the effect. Those whose players botch flee and keep on going.



## NECRO-DRONES

These are hardly war engines at all but, more often, devices used in strike or reconnaissance teams. They are often a means for necromancers to get rid of the spare parts (including random bone and metal components) remaining after larger necrosurgical works. Drones are nearly always size class 1 and never larger than size class 2. They typically require only one or two successes on a necrosurgery roll to create and never more than five. Since raising a single drone at a time is a waste of good necromancy, they are generally built in interconnected batches and cut apart after animation. Walking War Machine can animate up to 10 drones at a time, although Spurring the Beast of War and Incomparable Destruction Engine can animate increasingly larger swarms of necro-drones (20 and 40 at a time, respectively).

Alternatively, nemissaries can pilot the drones, but if this is the case, the drones won't get the advantages of the more advanced necromancy (as represented by the higher Attributes, Abilities and health levels).

Necro-drones can be deployed from any manner of troop carrier, and a bone spider lotus (see below) can carry twice as many of them as it carries zombies.

Deathknights have been known to use necro-drones, the lowest and least capable of them, as creeping, scuttling guards and cleaning devices in their citadels.

Under some circumstances, necro-drones may be extras.

## BONE SPIDER LOTUS

Looking somewhat like a black spider with long white legs, a bone spider lotus is a form of armored personnel carrier for the troops of the dead. The main platform is a very crude soulsteel disk to which eight large bones (eight feet in length or longer) have been attached using necrosurgery. Some necromancers break with tradition and build segmented legs from smaller bones and sinew, but enormous ribs are the norm.

Running on its rib-legs, a bone spider lotus can reach speeds of up to 70 miles per hour and maintain such speed for up to two weeks before requiring maintenance.

Suspended like a corpulent black underbelly beneath the disk is an enormous mass of thick, black

necrotic jelly that hangs there like a glossy toxic fruit. This jelly acts as armor and confers protection to the things inside it (4L/10B, in addition to the "passengers" own soak). Once the bone spider lotus has reached its destination, it flips over, putting its bone legs in the air. The skin of the repulsive fruit quickly dehisces, and black jelly runs off. The bone legs spread like the petals of a lotus revealing the undead soldiers within, now freed from their necrotic broth.

A bone spider lotus can carry 20 zombies or nemissary war bodies curled into fetal position, or half that, if the passengers are standing.

Bone spider lotuses can also carry weapons and serve as mobile weapon mounts or strike platforms, in which case they can only carry five passengers. They may be outfitted with First Age or necromantic weapons. If more than one necromantic weapon is on a single strike platform, or if several platforms are near one another, the effects of the necromantic weaponry stack (see the "Necromantic Weaponry" sidebar, p. 109).

Standard bone spider lotuses are simple to make, requiring only that the necromancer attach the bone legs to the soulsteel disk platform with joints of gristle. They require five successes on a necrosurgery roll. Walking War Machine is enough to animate a bone spider lotus.

## AIRSHIPS

Dead wings don't fly well. Nemissary Arcanoi can slow, prevent or heal the rot of wings, and while that makes winged creatures fit for reconnaissance missions, it still doesn't allow for feasible combat.

Below are two examples of airships currently in use by the Deathlords and a third that remains incomplete, which could prove to be a decisive weapon in the campaign against the living.

## SKY EATER

A flying abomination stemming from the mix of soulforging, Molation and necrosurgery, sky eaters are the high-mobility transporters of the First and Forsaken Lion's army. Most are squat, sinewy affairs looking vaguely like large thickened shuriken when they're not in flight.

### SAMPLE NECRO-DRONES

- An animated dog's corpse with iron jaws (attack)
- A child's corpse with extra metal limbs sticking out of its back (attack)
- A head on a metal spider's body, animated by dead limbs (recon)
- A head with three sets of wings sutured to it (recon)
- Blade burrowers, headless torsos augmented with extra flesh and metal limbs that burrow into the ground and leap out to attack when a living being approaches (attack)
- Two forearms fused together to create manacles (restraint)

Creature	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Willpower	Health Levels	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/ Soak	Abilities
Battle Snake	6/3/5	0	-0x2/-1x2/ -2x3 per segment	N/A	5/5L/6B	Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Endurance 3, Resistance 10, Stealth 1
Bone Spider Lotus	6/3/5	0	-0x5/-1x5/ -2x7	N/A or by weapon type	7/5L/6B	Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Endurance 3, Resistance 10, Stealth 1
Dread Brachial Sapping Array *	4/2/3	0	Varies	Claw: 5/4/4L	4/Varies	Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Endurance 1, Melee 2, Resistance 2, Stealth 1
Necro-Drones**						
Thousand-Corpse War Frame (fully manned) ***	30/3/20	Spec.	-0x100/ -1x100/ -2x100/-4x50/I	Punch: 9/5/30Bp, Trample: 4/6/30B	4/20L/30B	Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Endurance 10, Resistance 10
Weapon of Mephitic Desolation #	4/2/3	0	-0x20/ -1x20/-2x20	N/A	-/3L/6B	Performance 4
The Web Is the Spider ##	8/3/7	0	-0x360/ -1x360/-2x480	Leg Strike: 5/9/12L	5/8L/10B	Dodge 2

\* The health levels of a dread brachial sapping array depend on how many arms comprise the thing. It requires five to ten successes to create and can be animated by Walking War Machine, which grants it five to ten health levels. Soak likewise varies. Unarmored brachial arrays have soak of 1L/3B. Armored brachial arrays, fortified with the equivalent of bracers have a soak of 3L/6B.

\*\* Necro-drones animated with Walking War Machine (or by nemissaries) have the stats of a two- to four-segment spine chain (see *Exalted*, p. 299). Those raised with more powerful necromancy use the stats appropriate to the spell that raised them, based on the one to five successes gained on the necrosurgery roll that assembled the pieces.

\*\*\* The war frame has the Willpower and other Mental Attributes of the nemissary controlling it.

# Once the weapon of mephitic desolation has taken half its health levels in damage, it can no longer sing.

## The web is the spider gets two jabbing leg attacks per turn. If it does five or more health levels damage, the target is impaled and envenomed. That character's player must make a successful Stamina + Resistance roll, difficulty 3, or his character is paralyzed, after which point the web is the spider will suck Essence from the character at the rate of 5 motes per turn and then health levels (of blood) at the rate of one per turn.

### WAR MACHINE EXALTED POWER COMBAT

Weapon	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate
Dread Array Claw	4	5	4Lp	5	1
War Frame Punch	12	5	30Bp	5	2
War Frame Stomp	9	6	30B	6	1





The exterior of a sky eater — when it is not airborne — is smooth black soulsteel occasionally broken by small smooth lines or dimples. The vehicle can carry up to 12 passengers, or six without crowding. As the sky eater flies through the skies of the Underworld, it travels at speeds of 80 to 120 miles per hour.

When the sky eater takes flight, it is the product of a nightmare. The lines and dimples in the soulsteel plating open into dozens of gaping, toothless mouths. Those along the vehicle's top side inhale the sky above them as dozens more open across the bottom to scream it out below. The voices are carefully tuned and resonate together like a choir of the damned.

Creating a sky eater requires hundreds of ghosts to be painstakingly Moliated and soulforged together so that they share one "lung" that surrounds the passenger compartment. The Lion himself sees to it that the ghosts whose mouths appear on the top of the vehicle constantly feel like they're drowning. Those on the bottom are always in fine-tuned agony. Ghosts the Lion particularly dislikes are slated for inclusion in his next sky eater.

Sky eaters have a stealth mode as well. Instead of consuming the air above them, the mouths on the top surface of the sky eater consume any and all light to keep the airship aloft. When it uses this mode, the sky eater is absolutely silent, but the sky above the ship is rendered

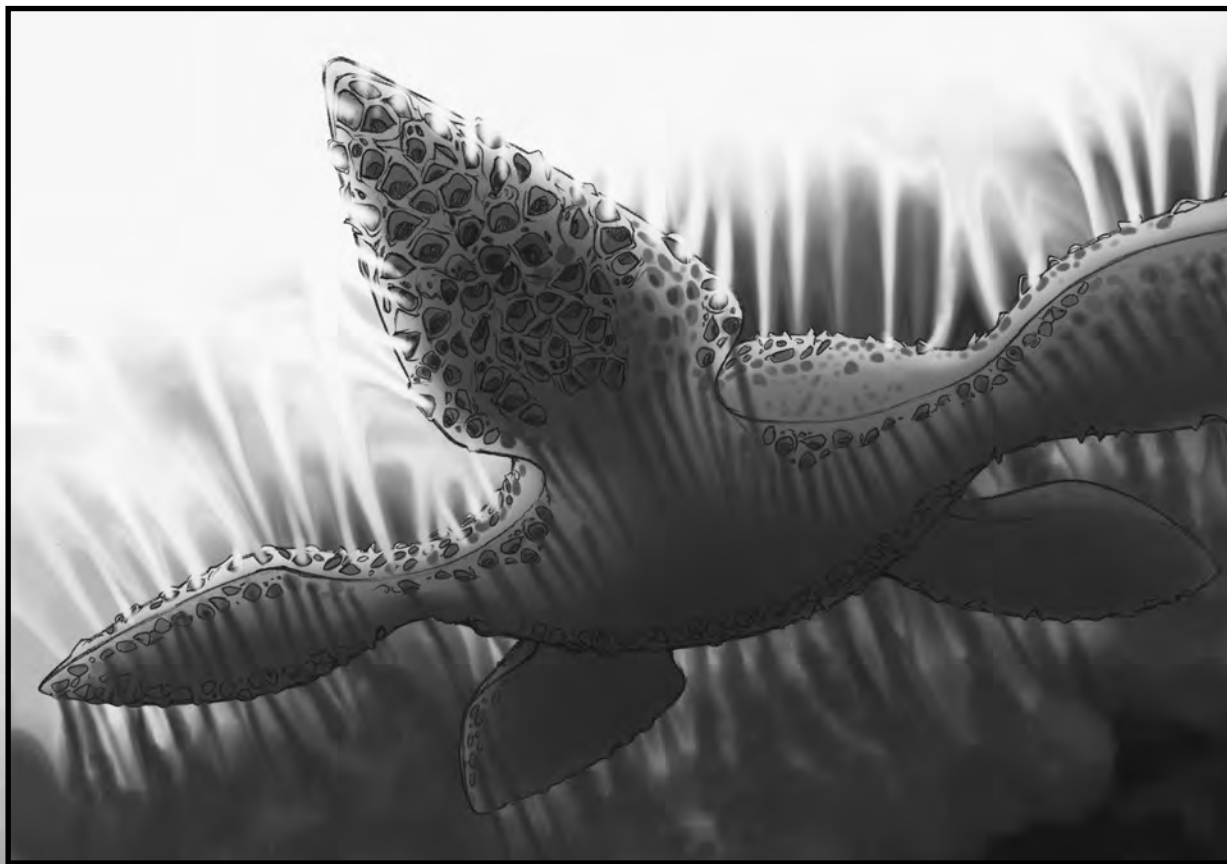
absolutely black, and the gaping mouths on the bottom of the vehicle exhale a faint black mist.

Sky eaters also have an attack mode. The vehicle hovers over its targets, no farther than 20 feet overhead, and at the operator's command, the voices on the bottom become both louder and shriller, and the cacophonous dirge grinds apart the bones of those underneath (along with non-magical ceramic, stoneware and glass).

The First and Forsaken Lion has deployed sky eaters outfitted with manifestation engines, to allow the vehicles to function in Creation. While he has not done this a great deal, he has done so enough to establish that the vehicle works as well in Creation as in the Underworld.

### MAELSTROM BARGE

Sky eaters are relatively quick methods of travel, but they accommodate only a dozen passengers at the most. The Deathlords, especially the First and Forsaken Lion, often need to transport larger numbers of troops and large pieces of cargo. A fully loaded maelstrom barge carries 500 ghosts or four to five tons of cargo and can reach speeds of up to 100 miles per hour. The Deathlords tried variants of the sky eater, reanimated flying behemoths and other strategies for moving cargo rapidly, but nothing worked reliably. A few of the Deathlords still have such flying devices, but every one of these strange prototypes is unique



**MANIFESTATION ENGINE (ARTIFACT ●●●+)**

The result of centuries of necromantic research and experimentation, a manifestation engine grants a ghost (or, with larger engines, any contiguous ghostly mass) substance in Creation. Manifestation engines consist of several nested spheres of soulsteel filigree. Each sphere is painstakingly engraved with necromantic runes of immense power. A personal manifestation engine is a sphere the size of a fist and can be worn around the neck, albeit somewhat awkwardly. It must directly touch the corpus of the ghost using it. Rumors abound throughout the Underworld of immense manifestation engines, 10 feet in diameter, that will maintain the solidity of even large war machines when the Deathlords make their move on Creation.

When the wearer of a manifestation engine exits a shadowland in Creation, the runes glow faintly blue, and the nested spheres of the manifestation engine begin spinning, each in its own direction and at its own unholy frequency, emitting a high-pitched drone as they do so. A ghost wearing a manifestation engine remains solid in Creation, just as if using the Arcanos Weighted With the Anchor of Flesh (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 237).

Manifestation engines require immense amounts of Essence to function. Even the smallest contains an Artifact ●●● Essence-containing gem at its core. While these normally lose their power in Creation, the casing and shielding of the manifestation engine prevents the ambiance of Creation from touching and destroying the gem. The strength of this shielding is 5L/3B per level of the manifestation engine's Artifact rating, and it can take two health levels of damage per level of Artifact rating before cracking. If the engine is cracked or the seal otherwise disturbed, the engine's entire Essence reserve is instantly depleted with a deafening shriek. A manifestation engine typically contains enough Essence to allow a character (or war machine) to remain solid in Creation for 24 hours. If a manifestation engine runs out of Essence at night, the wearer simply fades out of Creation and into the corresponding area in the Underworld (itself a possible hazard). If the device runs out of energy during the day, it devours its wearer's Essence, then Willpower and, finally, health levels, all at the rate of two per hour and fades into the Underworld immediately thereafter. If the manifestation engine is exposed to the light of the sun while it's feeding on its wearer, it explodes, dealing 10 health levels of lethal damage to everyone in a 10-foot radius. The Essence-containing gem at the core of a manifestation engine can be filled using the Arcanos Filling the Precious Vial (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 247). Alternatively, they fill themselves while in the Underworld or within death-aspected Manses at the rate of 1 mote of Essence per day. The smallest manifestation engines require 15-mote gems, while the largest ones, those in the Deathlords' war machines, take 75 motes or more.

Only the Deathlords and extremely powerful, highly skilled ghosts can create manifestation engines. Those the Deathlords create, they hoard in preparation for their assault on Creation. The black market value for manifestation engines is astronomical, as there is no shortage of ghosts who want to take care of unfinished business in Creation.

Rumors are circulating through the Underworld that the Deathlords are looking for a way to create manifestation engines that run off the Hearthstones of Abyssal Manses in Creation. Such a device would give them sustained access to Creation and a means of waging an extended war on the living. No such device has been fielded yet, but a handful of fragile but functional prototypes exist. Currently, the devices are far too delicate and unstable for battlefield use, but savants labor tirelessly to perfect them.

and effectively irreplaceable. Most such designs proved unduly cumbersome or relied on exotic components they couldn't mass produce — until the First and Forsaken Lion came up with the notion of exploiting not just the powers of death, but the proclivities of the Underworld itself. Maelstrom barges are enormous pentagonal platforms, 50 yards across. Around the perimeter of the maelstrom barge is an array of vast white rib bones, vertical and horizontal, ranging from 10 to 30 feet long, serving both as spars and stable posts for tying cargo. The horizontal ribs radiate out from the barge in perfect symmetry, though their purpose is unclear until the vehicle sets sail.

When a passenger commits 15 motes of Essence into the maelstrom barge, howling Abyssal winds, black with spectres and flaying sand, begin blowing from beneath the platform. When the sails of soulsteel mesh are unfurled between the horizontal spars, the entire platform becomes airborne.

Stability Charms embedded in the platform keep it from bucking on the surging storm winds, in part by furling and unfurling the soulsteel sails as necessary.

From below, the platform looks like a broad and impossibly dark void broken only by intricately engraved glyphs glowing a faint blue or violet (when it can be seen



## SOULSTEEL MESH

The finest soulforgers in the Underworld can fashion long threads from the corpus of other ghosts. When these threads are woven together, they create a fine black metal mesh that is all but unbreakable. A net of soulsteel mesh, for example, could hold a creature with a Strength of up to 20. Certain behemoths and warstriders may be able to break soulsteel mesh, but even the Exalted are hard pressed to escape such a net with only brute strength. Soulsteel mesh is very fluid and drapes like silk, but it possesses a bashing soak of 30 and a lethal soak of 15.

The Deathlords have nets of soulsteel mesh attached in the center to a cord of woven soulsteel threads (these nets count as Artifact ●●●● items) that they fire from large bone tubes. Capturing targets in these nets is tricky, requiring a Dexterity + Archery roll, difficulty 3, and the net captures all those in a five-foot radius (enough space to capture up to five people if they're standing close together). Characters caught in such a net lose 1 mote of Essence per turn. Escaping one of these nets involves doing five health levels of damage to the net, which is difficult, as the net has a lethal soak of 15 and a bashing soak of 30.

It's possible to make chain swathing of soulsteel mesh, but the weight is such that only Essence channelers who attune themselves to the armor can wear it (and avoid its Essence-draining effects). In addition to the standard benefits of wearing soulsteel, soulsteel swathing imparts a hardness of 4, a soak of 13L/16B and requires Resources (or Artifact) ●●●●● to purchase.

at all through the black winds of Oblivion). It's a sight that no one in the Underworld ever wants to see.

While underway, maelstrom barges (or, more accurately, the storms that drive them) cause strange fluctuations in the entropy levels in the countryside beneath them. These fluctuations strongly resemble the black miracles visited by the Malfeans upon those in disfavor. Light payloads are unlikely to trigger this effect, but a fully laden maelstrom barge will, without a doubt, trigger events that mimic 2-4 point Resonance effects (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 149) in a quarter-mile radius out from the barge's flight path.

Maelstrom barges aren't combat capable, but they don't especially need to be given the nature of their propulsion system. The raging winds around a maelstrom barge add 4 to the difficulty of all Archery and Thrown attacks made against those in the maelstrom barge (assum-

## OBLIVION'S TERRIBLE WAKE

The violent tempests generated by the maelstrom barge are not storms as an inhabitant of Creation would think of them, nor are they even the tainted storms of blood and plasm more familiar to those residing in the Underworld (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pp. 18-19). A maelstrom empowered by the forces of pure Oblivion is nothing less than the fist of the Abyss, a gift from the Malfeans, a titanic storm of destruction and a tidal wave of madness and disaster inhabited by shrieking hungry ghosts who ride the storm winds like frenzied steeds.

Anyone caught in a storm generated by a maelstrom barge takes damage akin to that of a supernatural ice storm (see **Exalted**, p. 244). On land, players of denizens of the Underworld can make a difficulty 3 Intelligence + Survival roll for their characters to avoid taking damage, but those on the Sea of Shadows are almost certainly doomed, as the difficulty increases to 5.

Over land, the stability of the Underworld itself keeps the worst of a maelstrom high above land, and the storm subsides soon after the passing of a maelstrom barge, but over water, these catastrophic storms can last for days after the maelstrom barge has passed overhead.

A number of ghostly scholars have noted one particular aspect of maelstrom occurrences that concerns them most: As the Deathlords gain power, so do the maelstroms summoned by their necromancy.

ing it's even in range and not hundreds of yards above the ground). Storm-running boots and storm-warding parasols (see p. 62) will both protect their users from the storm effects generated by a maelstrom barge but do not negate Archery or Thrown penalties, nor do they grant protection of any sort from the black miracles generated by a maelstrom barge's passing.

## Final Maelstrom

The First and Forsaken Lion remembers the great aerial fleets of the Solar Deliberative with perfect clarity. He remembers commanding armies from the deck of colossal vessels that shaded whole acres in their passing. In death, he has watched the steady decline of such artifice with frustration and contempt. The Terrestrial usurpers squandered the fleets of their betters in petty squabbling, and even the best engineers among them could only barely maintain the least of these wonders. The Great Contagion

## THE GRAVEST THREAT

Much is made of the Mask of Winters' invasion of Thorns. For those who are even aware of the event (news does not travel across Creation all that efficiently), the Mask of Winters is the only one of his kind, and if he's *not* the only one, surely he's the most powerful. Regrettably, they are wrong.

There are only a handful of truly great, truly epic generals in all of Creation or beyond. Fewer still of these command forces capable of fulfilling their commander's vision. The First and Forsaken Lion, the oldest of the Deathlords, is one of these. Armed with immortality, mastery of necromancy and unmatched martial prowess, this Deathlord's hunger for power and vengeance has assembled one of the mightiest and most terrifying battle forces the Underworld has ever seen.

The First and Forsaken Lion is megalomaniacal and arrogant, a dread tyrant who even dared to challenge his masters once. Like all of his ilk, he is insane, but his insanity does not in the least diminish his cold genius. Unlike some of the other Deathlords, the Lion has little of the showman about him. He does not simply capitalize on a few spectacular necromantic marvels (a charge he often levels at the Mask of Winters). On the contrary, in addition to his armies, he has assembled a vast and highly integrated force of necromantic war machines supported by legions of ghosts skilled in combat Arcanoi, siege engine repair and necrosurgery.

His tactics are not the children's swarm tactics of the Realm's degraded Dragon-Blooded, neither does he stoop to using the glorified guerilla tactics popular among Creation's ragtag Exalted warlords. The First and Forsaken Lion is a general from the First Age, intimately familiar with the details of military science. He is a scientific general, and only the Seventh Legion can match his stores of magical weaponry, but not for long. With every passing year, the irreplaceable arsenals of Lookshy dwindle. Meanwhile, the General of the Legion Sanguinary only grows in might.

Despite being the most ancient of the Deathlords, the First and Forsaken Lion remains unknown in Creation only because his Malfean lord has relegated him, for whatever reason, to the Thousand, far from the nearest shadowland and farther still from the nearest *useful* shadowland. The Lion is entertaining several different schemes for ripping his way into Creation, most of which include making his own shadowland.

For the moment, the First and Forsaken Lion trains his ghostly armies, plots his strategies and bides his time. He has options. He can afford to be patient. When he *does* make his move, his deeds will be *far* more infamous across the face of Creation than anything the Mask of Winters has ever done.

erased even this, leaving the Seventh Legion the sole custodians of this military legacy. But the First and Forsaken Lion remembers, and he dreams of commanding that power again.

The core of this dream lies half completed in its Underworld hangar near the Deathlord's citadel. It has no counterpart among the living or in history, but harkens back to the elegant designs of the First Age. The prized Juggernaut of the Mask of Winters stretches three times its length, but the *Final Maelstrom* still dwarfs the flagships of Lookshy to insignificance. Its hull is glossy black as if grown from organic obsidian, the hollowed carapace of a behemoth that stumbled into the Underworld through some shadowland ages past and died forgotten. To that ovoid, insectile shell, the Deathlord has affixed vast struts and plating of jade and soulsteel, building according to inauspicious geomantic principles that should allow the vessel to tap the power of the Underworld — even within Creation. The First and Forsaken Lion has spared no expense to import components from the living world and incorporate only those elements of the Underworld that can endure the light of

the Unconquered Sun and remain solid outside the lands of the dead. The enormity and complexity of this task has slowed the construction effort to a crawl.

The First and Forsaken Lion commissioned the *Final Maelstrom* nearly a century ago, and he did not anticipate completion for several more decades. Of late, he has grown more optimistic, using the skills and power of his deathknights to hasten the project. The Deathlord now believes he can finish within nine years, perhaps less. He has learned much watching the Mask of Winters and his clumsy use of Juggernaut. When the *Final Maelstrom* flies at last, bristling with spires of pyre flame lances and entropic implosion bows, its master will not depend upon the ship as a crutch. First and foremost, the earth will shake beneath the warstriders and terrible machines of his army, while the dead of the Legion Sanguinary conscript to their ranks through unremitting massacre. The *Final Maelstrom* is only a piece of the First and Forsaken Lion's strategy, but it is a significant piece. For now, it remains a secret, even from the other Deathlords, a surprise he will unveil in due time to the collective horror of all.





VEDDER



# CHAPTER FIVE NECROMANCY



Just as with sorcery, only a select few in or out of Creation can manipulate the Essence necessary to use necromancy. The Celestial Exalted, the Deathlords, select hekatonkhire and God-Blooded (Ghost-Blooded and Abyssal Half-Caste) make up the short list of beings able to control the Essence of the Underworld on such a scale, and only the Abyssal Exalted and the Deathlords can achieve mastery over the Void Circle.

Powerful death-tainted artifacts may allow limited necromantic power, whether by simulating a spell's effects or granting access to much of the Shadowlands Circle. Such items are phenomenally rare and seldom have any power in Creation, leaving these dark wonders among the hoards of the Deathlords and a few of the mightiest nephwracks in the Labyrinth. Such artifacts are dangerous for any but the favored of the Malfeans to use: The player of any mortal attempting to channel such power must roll her Essence with each attempt. A failure tears away her life and automatically raises her spirit as a mortwright. The player of a ghost who dares to abuse the power of the Abyss must roll each time as though the ghost has been touched by the Whisper of Oblivion (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 284).

The Malfeans may also be capable of granting their most devoted servants such power by direct investiture, though such extraordinary gifts invariably corrode sanity and soul.

## NECROMANTIC INITIATION

Learning to cast necromancy is, as with sorcery, a mind-opening experience. Potential necromancers begin to perceive the world in an entirely new light, shadowed by the truths of the Underworld. For those who have already become initiates of sorcery, the sister process for necromancy is eerily familiar, yet a world apart. Those who are unfamiliar with sorcery find the process as difficult as that for sorcery.

Although the power of necromancy comes from a negative source, the use thereof is not a negative thing. Learning to use necromancy includes a set of five tasks much more similar to those of sorcery than the average mortal ghost-hunter or exorcist might expect.

It is also worth noting that people cannot simply “discover” necromancy and initiate themselves through accident and the beneficence of nature. While necromancy was, in the beginning, discovered and not taught, this was done by powerful and brilliant Twilight Caste Solars who already had centuries of experience with sorcery of all stripes. It was their exploration of and experimentation with the Essence of the Underworld, the Labyrinth and the Void that led them to discover this dark mirror of sorcery. No mighty Salinan sorcery (see **Savant and Sorcerer**, pp. 17-18) remains in place to teach a would-be necromancer through fortuitous happenstance.



## NOT QUITE NECROMANCY...

The masters of the shadowy powers of the Underworld aren't the only ones who raise zombies and skeletons or speak with the dead. Mortal thaumaturges (see the **Exalted Players Guide**, Chapter Three, for more information) can, with much effort, achieve some similar effects.

The most common method for imbuing a corpse with a semblance of life and the ability to obey one's instructions is to use the Art of Summoning to conjure a nemissary. Knowing whether a specific ghost has the ability to manipulate dead flesh is generally a matter of experience, but it may be represented with a difficulty 2 Intelligence + Occult roll. A thaumaturge may instead attempt to summon any ghost with a nemissary's abilities. This adds 2 to the difficulty of the summoning, as the summoner is casting a general call into the Underworld and fishing for the most qualified ghost.

### JAWBONE ECHOES (RITUAL •)

Jawbone Echoes is used to speak with the dead — not with spirits, but with the corpses themselves. Its influence is weak and fleeting, however, and the thaumaturge willing to use this ritual to speak with a corpse at length is often a lone thaumaturge. The ritual requires a single mote of Essence or one Willpower, spent as the name of the ritual is repeated face to face with the body. The thaumaturge then kisses the corpse, straining to kiss ever more deeply until a sickeningly sour taste hits the tip of his tongue. The thaumaturge may then ask one question of the corpse and get one answer. The corpse knows only what it experienced in life and what happened to it after all potency left it with its hun and po souls. The jawbone must be present and in one piece for this ritual to be effective, and the ritual can work even if only the jawbone is available.

### GARROTE AND MURDER MANSION (RITUAL ••)

The thaumaturge must begin this ritual by carefully making chalk from the bone of the subject corpse. The chalk is used to lay out the floor plan and make a rough image of the body's former house, home or haunt. The thaumaturge must know and whisper one hundred fondnesses that the corpse's former hun held while she forms the images, making this ritual expensive in knowledge, if not in silver or jade. The ritual takes approximately an hour and costs one Willpower. The body will then animate and follow the thaumaturge's commands. Use the template for the common zombie (see **Exalted**, p. 299), except that a zombie raised by Garrote and Murder Mansion constantly exhales air from an unknown source. An ear laid close to the zombie's mouth will hear the thaumaturge's voice whispering the one hundred fondnesses, repeated ad infinitum.

The chalk drawings are gradually blown away by an intangible wind, disappearing entirely over the course of a

week. As the week of unlife nears its end, the zombie begins to slow and stumble, indicating to its master that the time has come to reinvest it with life. Reinvestment is the same ritual as the original animation and takes the same amount of time. The only limit to the number of times an individual body may be reanimated is the amount of bone that may be ground to chalk without reducing the subject beyond all usefulness.

There is another ritual called *Obstinate Crumbs* (Ritual •••). It centers around the once-favorite foods of the corpse's hun. The animated servant is constantly leaving crumbs of these foods where it walks, though they can provide no nourishment. Zombies created with this ritual last for 20 days before they must be re-imbued, but lose a dot in all Attributes each time they're imbued, to a minimum of •.

Any Charm or spell that influences the command of an animated corpse preempts the thaumaturge's meager power.

## SHADOWLANDS CIRCLE

The magic of this, the weakest circle of necromancy, pulls at the threads and timbre of the Underworld to move it in accordance with a necromancer's whim. The necromancer is a figure of mysterious power in the sunless lands. Ghosts simultaneously respect and fear him, desire what he can give and tremble at the retribution he can affect. He is something of a contradiction to the dead spirits, for he can be the door to their freedom or their imprisonment.

### BANISH GHOST

**Cost:** 12+ motes

**Target:** One ghost

This spell is yet another example of the total power an experienced necromancer can wield over the inhabitants of the Underworld. Like its sorcerous counterpart and the various countermagics, *Banish Ghost* is a quick spell that goes into effect immediately once the necromancy Charm is activated and the Willpower and Essence are spent. The necromancer and his target enter a contested Essence + Willpower challenge, their players rolling each turn until one of them manages to accumulate a number of successes equal to the other's character's Essence. If the ghost is triumphant, she remains where she is and the necromancer may not attempt to banish her again until the Calendar of Setesh has marked the passage of three days. If the necromancer is triumphant, he may do one of the following:

- Banish the ghost from Creation to the analogous point in the Underworld. The ghost is physically unable to return to Creation until the Calendar of Setesh has marked the passage of three days.
- Banish the ghost into her tomb, body or place of death for a similar period of time. She is physically unable to leave the confines of her tomb (be it plot or mausoleum) or body or to stray farther than five yards from the place of her death.

- Banish the ghost from his presence for a similar period of time. If the ghost is seen by the necromancer before the banishment expires, she suffers one bashing health level per turn until she escapes his gaze.

The necromancer may spend extra motes at the casting in increments of 3 motes, reducing the ghost's dice pool by one die per 3 motes spent.

Particularly cruel necromantic masters will banish a loyal servant from their sight through the use of this spell while still expecting flawless service.

### BLACK CANDLE VISAGE

**Cost:** 18 motes

**Target:** One ghost

Fixing a nearby ghost with his deadly gaze, the necromancer takes total command of a ghost's body. Pulling at his target's ghost flesh from a distance as a puppeteer pulls at strings, the necromancer can make superficial or completely reconfiguring changes as desired. Alterations require a Dexterity + Craft (Moliation) roll and can achieve the same effects as the *Arcanoi Nine Terrors Visage* and *Ghost-Devil Form*. Such effects require similar preparation as detailed in *Exalted: The Abyssals* (pp. 235-237). Should he so choose, the necromancer can forego such sophistry and simply cripple his target, distorting the ghost's limbs and body beyond all use. This can reduce the ghost's Dexterity or Strength by one dot per success on an immediate Dexterity + Craft (Moliation) roll.

Furthermore, the necromancer can lock the ghost into the form he shapes. Roll the necromancer's Conviction + Willpower against the ghost's Conviction. Every success that the necromancer achieves over the ghost's total successes indicates one week that the ghost is locked into the form. Ghosts whose players botch their Conviction roll may be bound to the new form as long as the necromancer desires. Ghosts may choose not to resist the transformation. However, this choice is a dangerous one because it gives the necromancer full control over the duration of the change.

A ghost successfully bound into her altered form takes on a black, burnt-wax color while she is under its effects. Ghosts familiar with *Black Candle Visage* will recognize the telltale sign of necromancy.

There is a *Labyrinth Circle* version of this spell entitled *Willful Flesh Commands*. With this spell, a necromancer may reshape the form of a willing target into anything he desires over the course of a six-hour, hands-on manipulation of the ghost's corpus. This process is inevitably very painful for the subject. During this process, the necromancer may alter the target's Attributes, decreasing one Attribute to raise another on a one-dot-for-one-dot basis or adding dots at an additional mote cost of 5 per dot, to a maximum of (the ghost's Essence + 5) for an individual Attribute. The necromancer may also create such effects





as he may when using Black Candle Visage, without the requisite days of planning. Deathlords use this spell to create barghests from among their willing servants.

A ghost subject to Willful Flesh Commands retains possession of her Arcanoi and may use them despite her finale form. Her corpus is, however, henceforth proof against Arcanoi that alter ghost flesh, whether used by herself or another. The effects of this spell are permanent and can only be reversed by countermagic or an additional use of this spell. Willful Flesh Commands costs 24 motes of Essence.

### BLESS THE RAPINE SOUL

**Cost:** 16 motes

**Target:** One living creature

The necromancer with this spell is every ghostly puppeteer's friend. Strapping a single living person to the worktable, the necromancer invokes a ritual of knives and blood, of spiritual lashings and the ghostly rack. The spell stains and subjugates the victim's soul, making all but the most strong-willed cower before even the most meager assault. Victims killed without an opportunity to recover from this harsh treatment almost never enter the Underworld as ghosts, so timid are their spirits.

The result of this spiritual abuse is a vast magnification of the effect of body-controlling Arcanos, such as Puppeteer's Masterful Hand (see **Exalted: The Abyssals** pp. 249-250). A ghost invoking this Arcanos upon a human prepared with Bless the Rapine Soul enjoys the following benefits: He gains a number of extra successes to the initial possession roll equal to the necromancer's Essence, and the duration of the Arcanos is extended to one week. Other Arcanoi related to the possession of living creatures receive similar benefits at the Storyteller's discretion.

A victim of this spell typically recovers most of her will following a month free of possession, after which the treatment needs to be reapplied. Some necromancers insist that repeated applications become permanent, but only the joyless victims of the Fair Folk truly never recover from the abuse of this spell. Exalted and other magical beings with a soul are not immune but recover after a week of freedom.

There is a similar spell called Consorting with Devils. Also of the Shadowlands Circle, for the cost of 10 motes, a necromancer using that spell can create a bond between one ghost and one mortal. The ghost must be possessing the mortal when the spell is cast and must commit 3 motes for the spell to be successful. Thereafter, the ghost may possess the mortal victim more easily, as with a subject of Bless the Rapine Soul. If this bond is broken, through countermagic or through the mortal's death, the ghostly puppeteer loses a dot of permanent Willpower.

Abyssals who prefer consorting with the dead but tire of their concubines' pale and cold flesh often arrange for consorts who permanently wear a mortal's lovely flesh. One who does not care which ghost possesses her play-

thing might use Bless the Rapine Soul, while one who desires to make love to a specific spirit might use Consorting with Devils.

### BLESSED DEAD FOOLS

**Cost:** 13 motes

**Target:** Several ghosts

Song begets song. In search of lovely, gentle music, the necromancer croons a short and disturbing melody while forming thin staves of Essence and binding them with cords of the same. Finished after nearly a half-hour, she stands the haphazard flagpole in the Underworld and binds it with a kiss. In response, a flag bursts into being at the top of the staff, one formed of pale blue flame and visible for leagues.

Ghosts who know and curiously foolish ghosts alike are drawn to the burning flag. Each ghost who hears the signal is gifted with instant knowledge — the flag is a request and a binding oath, which any ghost may accept. A ghost who agrees to the bargain is given a gift of skill — he is blessed with a Performance of ●●●● — and a gift of knowledge — he knows when and where he is to perform. The oath requires him to be there at the proper time and properly attired, and it binds him to never speak of the event or anything he may learn there.

The return to the ghost is great: The parties of necromancers are grand and gaudy affairs, and many maskmakers or peddlers of dreamstones make their fortunes through networks forged at such parties. Additionally, the music played is as vivid and vibrant as anything the ghost might have heard while alive — the strength of these sensations can even be enough to create addicts among the dead. Even when not addicted, most ghosts are very grateful for the opportunity to experience such a thing.

Until the event, the ghost may use his newfound skills to improve his lot in other ways. Afterward, the skill fades. After the sixth ghost touches the flagpole and binds himself to the necromancer, the flame atop the staff gutters out, and the Essence-built sticks crumble. The same occurs if the flagpole still stands when the event actually begins.

### BLOOD MIRROR SPEECH

**Cost:** 10 motes, 1 lethal health level

**Target:** One creature

Mirrors are objects of strange nature and natural metaphor. They are often enchanted for use with various magics and purposes, and in the Underworld, it is common for even mundane mirrors to display some strange properties, whispers of what once was or shadows of what might be. Strange things hide in mirrors.

In casting this spell, the necromancer must face a mirror and keep a short message in mind. When ready, he cuts his palm with an obsidian knife and flings the spray of blood onto the reflective surface, where his message is spelled out in blood before it dissolves into its own reflection.

The next time the target of the spell looks into a mirror, the message comes flowing out of it to be read. Once the bloody words are understood, they lose cohesion and begin to run down the smooth surface of the mirror. At this time, if the target of the spell chooses, she may wipe clean the mirror and lightly cut her fingertip. Using it as a stylus, she may write a short message on the mirror, and it will be seen by the necromancer when next he looks in a mirror.

There are additional spells of the three necromantic circles that take advantage of mirrors' strange qualities. Invisible Doorway, of the Shadowlands Circle, costs 18 motes of Essence and a lethal health level. It allows the caster to open a doorway between Creation and the analogous position in the Underworld through any reflective surface. Anointing it with his blood, the crimson becomes the shining quicksilver blood of the Malfeans and the surface becomes a portal, which remains open for three turns. After this use, mirrors shatter, ponds boil and silver tarnishes. White Shard, a Labyrinth Circle spell, costs 28 motes and allows the necromancer to communicate face-to-face between two specially treated mirrors. The communication afforded by White Shard lasts for up to half an hour. The Barless Gate is of the Void Circle and costs 42 motes to cast. With it a necromancer may step between any two mirrors in the Underworld in a form of instantaneous travel. Invoking the Barless Gate violently shatters all spiritual or physical wards barring such travel at the recipient's gate.

### BONE PUPPET DANCE

**Cost:** 16 motes

**Target:** One creature

Considered requisite among those who wish to be known as masters of the walking dead, this spell is completed by the utterance of a single syllable of command, the sound of which burns through the air to brand itself invisibly on the center of its target's ribcage. Once the brand is made, the necromancer commands complete obedience from the skeleton, and any living flesh around that skeleton is in for a nightmarish time.

The skeleton will immediately begin attempting to enact the necromancer's will, moving to attack its owner's friends, bearing a message to the East or performing back flips for the necromancer's amusement. The inherent difficulty in controlling another being causes any action attempted by the skeleton — who otherwise acts with its host's dice pools — to be at a dice penalty of the host's Essence.

If the host does not wish to be the necromancer's servant, as is likely, he must to act against the actions his skeleton is carrying out. He may exert control over his body with little mental effort, but even as he drives his body through force of will, his skeleton is resisting. His bones burn and scream, unable to perform as their necromantic master demands. Every action taken by the host is at -1 die, and every turn in which he wrests control from

his tormented frame, he suffers two levels of lethal damage as his bones blister his muscles and claw at him from within. This damage can only be soaked by natural soak (and is unaffected by hardness ratings that do not reasonably affect wounds coming from within the body).

The effects of this spell last for a number of hours equal to the necromancer's player's successes on a Charisma + Occult roll. Trying to control a body that resists requires more of the spell's available power, so every turn in which the host painfully controls his own body reduces the remaining hours of servitude by one. When this number reaches zero, the spell ends. If the host is killed as a result of attempting to remain in command of his body, the skeleton claws its way free of the flesh which restrained it and becomes a permanent zombie under the control of the necromancer (see *Exalted*, p. 299).

A necromancer can cast this spell upon an already extant skeleton to animate it as a permanent servant, or she can target a skeleton that is already animate, ripping control from its current master. This technique is so spiritually abusive that it inflicts the caster's Essence in dice of bashing damage, soakable only with Stamina, to the necromancer from whom she took the skeleton.

### BONFIRE VISIONS

**Cost:** 13 motes

**Target:** One bonfire

Although abysmally rare in the Underworld, the bones of a creature that once lived must be collected before the necromancer may cast this spell. Splintering the bones and piling them on the ground, the necromancer hurls a ball of blue flame into the pale white kindling, which bursts into flame. The fire is large but controlled and always burns a pale blue-white. The light is drowned out by the strong rays of the sun, and in Creation, the fire will soon go out. But in the Underworld, the light of the bonfire burns brightly. Ghosts can see the clear light for miles through the dreary Underworld, and they are drawn to it.

Any ghosts who peer into the flame during the hour in which it persists can look in upon any of their Fetters with perfect clarity, without the requisite Arcanoi. This is often a boon for which ghosts are willing to pay, either in goods or in services.

### DEATH FLIES TWO SAILS


**Cost:** 14 motes (seven committed)

**Target:** One sailing vessel

There is no safety in sailing upon the Sea of Shadows. Spectres float on the boundless black waves, vile shadows are able to seep in with the smallest leak, and hekatonkhire lurk in the depths and do not always slumber. A necromancer with this spell need fear none of those things.

Standing with her feet in the lapping waters of the Underworld's dark ocean or its murky rivers, she sings an eerie lullaby to the depths. After seven minutes, the song is





finished, and the strange ghosts who rule the depths of the ocean are appeased. In response, they send forth a sailing ship long dead and repaired. The ship is small and of a dark wood, but its mast stands tall. It is obviously a sunken vessel returned to service: The black sails are patched with tanned human skin, and holes in the hull are closed with pale white bone. The prow bears a figurehead—a living spectre, bound there to sing softly as the ship sails.

The ship moves as the necromancer wills and requires her presence on the ship. The craft can comfortably contain two passengers, but five can fit with effort. As the ship sails, it leaves a wake of bile-tainted blood. This and the lullaby of the figurehead act together to calm the savage inhabitants of the Sea of Shadows and ease the necromancer's passage. Storytellers should make an effort to reduce the difficulty of challenges inherent to travel on the Sea of Shadows. For instance, if a social roll is required to navigate an obstacle, add three dice to the relevant pool, independent of any Charms or stunts.

The ship lasts as long as the necromancer leaves the Essence committed. If she desires, she may cast this spell at night on Creation's seas and rivers at twice the Essence cost (the Essence commitment is not doubled). However, the shadowy wood of the ship boils away to nothing if the sun's rays strike it, losing one health level each turn, and the spectre shrieks as it disappears beneath the waves. Treat the ship as a fast courier (see *Savage Seas*, pp. 51-53) with respect to speed and appearance, and give the vessel 8L soak and 8/16 health levels. Also, treat shadowlands as the Underworld for the purposes of this spell, even when the sun is shining.

There exists a Labyrinth Circle version of this spell called Funerary Misted Vessel. The vessel summoned from the dark sea bottom is greater and able to carry up to 20 able bodies comfortably, 50 uncomfortably or 80 of the walking dead, carefully packed. In addition to the properties provided by Death Flies Two Sails, the ship travels obscured by a thick fogbank. This fog is transparent to anyone on the ship but nearly opaque to all others, and this effect spreads out from the summoned vessel for a number of miles equal to the caster's Essence. This fog serves to protect the ship from harmful daylight—when under the Creation's sun the ship suffers a loss of half its soak but is not destroyed. Treat the ship as a marine assault bireme (see *Savage Seas*, pp. 60-62), with 14L soak and 16/32 health levels. The ship need not be manned by the one who summoned it—the Silver Prince has three of these ships that patrol the waters around his island realm. Funerary Misted Vessel costs 22 motes to cast and requires 11 to be committed; the cost is doubled in Creation, but the committed Essence is not.

### DEATH INVERSION LOOP

**Cost:** 18 motes

**Target:** One ghost

So horrible is the moment of death for most ghosts that they are loath to think back to it or to visit the place where it occurred. Most who leave haunts behind avoid those tableaux with great vigor. A necromancer can cast a ghost into the Death Inversion Loop, a harrowing experience wherein the spirit relives her death just as she first experienced it, leaving his victim drained of will.

The caster targets a single ghost within 50 yards. When the spell is cast, the ghost freezes, all muscles rigid, before collapsing to the ground as her mind is trapped in a repeating replay of her death. These images are accompanied by the numbing knowledge that she can in no way change the outcome of the events that she is reliving.

The outward effects of Death Inversion Loop last only a moment. Those who watch the unfortunate ghost will see her collapse one moment and rise the next, shivering with effort and fright. Only she will have lived through an immeasurable length of time that has sapped her will to continue on.

When the spell is cast, the necromancer's player rolls his character's Willpower + Essence against the ghost's Willpower. The difference in successes between the two is the maximum number of loops the caster can force his victim to endure. If the roll for the ghost turns up more successes than the roll for the necromancer, she has proved stronger than he, and the spell turns upon him instead. After each loop, the target ghost loses one dot of permanent Willpower, and her player rolls that value against a difficulty equal to the Essence of the necromancer. Success frees the ghost, while failure dooms her to another cycle. After the number of loops chosen by the necromancer, or after the ghost's player succeeds on the Willpower roll, the ghost returns to her consciousness and can act. In terms of combat time, the ghost is paralyzed for only a single turn. A ghost reduced to zero Willpower by this spell dissolves, becoming a haunt of the scene that killed her.

This spell *can* be cast on living targets, and it casts them into a vague and disturbing vision of their own deaths. Savants are unsure if this is prophetic in nature. The vision occurs in an instant and does not incapacitate the victim for a full turn. Instead, disturbed by the vision, she suffers a one-die penalty to all attacks for the turn in which the spell is cast. This effect also occurs when the spell rebounds upon a living necromancer who chose to punish too strong a spirit.

### DEATH MASK

**Cost:** 14 motes

**Target:** Caster

Before a necromancer can first cast this spell, he must personally oversee the painful sacrifice of a living mortal. As his victim's life flees her, he must invoke Death Mask. The mortal's hun is caught as it escapes the failing corpse and is rent of any sentience by the casting of the spell. What

remains of the hun is no more than a shell, a cloak of plasm, which the spell hides Elsewhere. Most necromancers take a petty pleasure in the knowledge that nearly all victims of this treatment rise as hungry ghosts afterward.

When he casts the spell in the future, he spends 10 minutes in meditation before spending another 10 gently pulling the fragile cloak out of Elsewhere and carefully donning it. Once complete, only the most perceptive ghost will see anything other than a fellow spirit in the necromancer's place. Each time the necromancer dons the mask, his player rolls Essence + Craft (Moliation). The result is the difficulty a ghost's player's Perception + Awareness roll must overcome to see through the caster's deception and recognize that he is an impostor ghost. Mortals and living creatures cannot see the Death Mask at all. The use of Essence-viewing magic can reveal its presence but will not provide a clear view of the disguise.

If the necromancer is attacked while wearing the ghostly shroud, count any lethal or aggravated damage done to him as damage done also to the spirit. If the cloak suffers more than four health levels of damage, it has been reduced to such tatters that it falls off of the necromancer then and there. Up to that point, his disguise is intact, and his identity is safe from ghostly eyes. If the damage to the cloak is any less, it will regenerate one lethal health level per week Elsewhere, once removed. If a necromancer's cloak is destroyed, he will have to acquire another before he can cast the spell again.

When worn in Creation, the ghostly cloak only takes damage from attacks that can harm spirits.

### DRAWING BLIND EDGE

**Cost:** 20 motes

**Target:** One ghost

Breathing a frigid mist upon her hand, the necromancer's palm and fingers grow pale with rime. With a white glow in her eyes, she plunges her frosted hand into the pale corpus of a nearby ghost and slowly draws from his body a translucent blade, dancing lightly with blue flame. The ghost's corpus dwindles as the blade is drawn until it disappears with the unsheathing of the point, entirely transformed into a deadly edge. If the spell isn't discharged upon the corpus of a ghost, the rime inflicts one unsoakable level of bashing damage upon the necromancer every 10 minutes as it slowly spreads over her body and freezes her to death.

The necromancer must, after casting the spell, successfully strike her target with her bare hand. Once done, nothing can prevent the unsheathing of Blind Edge. The weapon's statistics are chosen by the necromancer at the blade's inception. She may distribute one point among the blade's speed, accuracy, damage and defense for each dot of her victim's permanent Essence; until so bolstered, the weapon's stats are identical to those of a reaver daiklave. None of the weapon's stats may be raised above the

necromancer's Essence + Occult. (If playing with Exalted Power Combat, the weapon's rate is equal to the necromancer's Essence.)

The blade inflicts only half damage, calculated before soak, against living creatures. Against ghosts and other dead spirits, Blind Edge deals aggravated damage and can strike even immaterial ghosts. Should it deal a fatal blow, the slain ghost is drawn into the blade with a shriek and a burst of blue flame. No dead spirit destroyed in this manner will ever see the Underworld again. Its Essence is consumed by the blade.

Each ghost absorbed into Blind Edge allows the necromancer to distribute additional points across the blade's attributes, one for each point of permanent Essence it devours. While there is no limit to the number of ghosts that may be drawn into the weapon, the necromancer can add to the weapon no more points than (her Essence x 5). Blind Edge remains until dismissed, until struck by countermagic or until the sun of the Underworld next dawns. Whatever the cause, the bluish-white blade then flashes stark black, and it howls with the voices of the captured ghosts as they are hurled into the Abyss.

### DUSK EYES

**Cost:** 10 motes

**Target:** Caster

Blood is one of the borders between life and death. A surfeit of blood plagues the living and keeps them alive, while the dead suffer from an endless thirst for it. A wise necromancer can use this very fluid boundary to peer across the curtain between the living and the dead.

Lightly pricking a finger, he touches it once to each eye and closes both, letting the blood settle. When he opens his eyes, they are a dark crimson and he can see from the Underworld to the bright world of Creation, or his vision can reach from the living worlds into the realm of the dead. A necromancer using this spell can only see one world at a time. If gazing into the other world while engaging in a complex activity, such as combat, he suffers the two-success penalty of acting blindly in the world he inhabits.

This spell can be defeated by wards and spells against scrying. The effects of Dusk Eyes last for an hour as marked by the Calendar of Setesh and confer no benefit in a shadowland.

### EASING THE FORSAKEN MEMORY

**Cost:** 12+ motes

**Target:** One haunt

A traveler through the Underworld is constantly confronted by the lost memories of the dead, images and emotions frozen at a moment of abject terror or pitiful loss as the victim ended his mortal life. These foul tableaux can be cleansed from the bright world of Creation with rituals of exorcism and, if given time, will fade. Their counterparts in



Creation's smoked mirror are hardier, bolstered by the negative Essence of the Underworld, and resist efforts to remove them.

The Deathlords are particular beings and have specific tastes. When one desires to raise her fortress *here*, no pitiful spirit's echoing cries against death are going to disrupt her choice of locale and decor. Easing the Forsaken Memory can completely erase a single haunt of the caster's choice. For an additional cost of 1 mote per mile, the necromancer can relocate the haunt to a location of her choosing.

There is a similar spell, Congealing the Last Thought, that can create haunts for those necromancers who appreciate them as a motif. The haunts created by this spell can be taken from the mind of a cooperating ghost or can be constructed out of whole cloth from the necromancer's imagination. Haunts created by this spell in Creation last a month per permanent Essence of the caster, while those created in the Underworld are near-permanent. Congealing the Last Thought costs 12 motes.

### EMPEROR'S CHAINS

**Cost:** 16 motes

**Target:** Varies

The necromancer claps her hands, and the world resounds with that sharp sound. As it reaches ghosts' ears, their corpora become sluggish and unresponsive. All ghosts within 50 yards of the necromancer find their movement rates halved, and the costs of all movement-related Arcanoi are doubled.

The necromancer may choose, instead, to focus the spell's effect on a single ghost, who must be within 20 yards when the spell is cast. That ghost is rendered unable to move at all, and any movement-enhancing Arcanoi cost triple the Essence to use.

### FACES OF THE DEAD

**Cost:** 16 motes

**Target:** Caster

Casting the spell with two fingers together, the necromancer brings them apart and draws out a wire of shimmering silver. The wire appears to fold outward, growing additional dimensions and facets until it becomes a thin-shafted silver mace with a perfectly forged, 12-faced head.

The silver mace is of excellent quality and balance, and beneath the stars of the Underworld, it winks with reflected light. Against a ghost, the weapon inflicts additional damage equal to the caster's Essence. If a blow with the mace deals a number of health levels of damage equal to or greater than a ghost's permanent Essence, the mace and ghost flash with a bright blue light as the ghost is captured in one of the faces of the weapon's head. The faces of all ghosts captured peer out from the surface that holds each.

Once an hour has passed, the necromancer forfeits use of the weapon as the shaft dissolves into dust and blows away on a phantom wind. The mace's head becomes a jar

of transparent rock crystal, holding all the spirits that were captured within. The jar has 12L/12B soak and can suffer up to 20 health levels of damage before it shatters, freeing any trapped ghosts. Effective countermagic violently shatters the jar automatically. Only the necromancer can open the jar without forcing it. A ghost freed from the jar by whatever method is bereft of Essence.

Faces of the Dead was a tool used in first days of the First Age, as the inquisitive Solars and Chosen of Secrets began exploring the mysteries of the Underworld. Its use was eventually viewed as distasteful and discontinued. Abyssals use it today to collect souls for the forging of soulsteel, as the ghosts are quite pliable once removed from the crystal jar.

Weapon	Speed	Acc.	Dmg.	Def.
Silver Mace	-1	+2	+5L	+0

### FIELD OF FELL DREAMS

**Cost:** 16 motes

**Target:** Area of effect

The caster drops to one knee and channels the heat of thousands of decaying dead into the earth or stone at her feet. As the spell ends, the necromancer removes her palm to reveal a brand in the shape of her hand. At that instant, skeletal hands burst forth from the dirt, the cobblestones or the marble floor and begin to latch with the strength of the dead onto any who come within their grasp.

Any person other than the caster is forced to dance and dodge about to avoid being grabbed by the grasping claws — he has his Dexterity reduced by one dot while within 50 yards of the brand and his Dexterity reduced by two dots with respect to calculating movement. Additionally, anyone moving through the Field of Fell Dreams suffers one attack for every five yards he moves. Each attack is a clinch attempt made at an accuracy of (the caster's Essence + 5). The hands have a pool of seven dice when attempting to maintain clinches, and they never attempt to inflict damage, only to contain their victims. The bony hands may be destroyed easily — they cannot dodge or parry and are relatively fragile — but a new one takes the place of any hand smashed or severed. The hands can grasp immaterial ghosts as easily as mortals, and ghosts caught by the hands are forced to spend a mote to manifest.

The hands' animation flees them at the stroke of midnight, as measured by the Calendar of Setesh.

### FIVE GIFTS

**Cost:** 12 motes

**Target:** One ghost

Every ghost is afflicted with the mind-numbing blandness of unlife. When foods taste as dust and the rainbow is different shades of gray, when a ghost cannot even dream



Exalted

of the vivid sensations he used to have, rapidly fading memories are all that remain.

This spell was crafted in the First Age as the Exalted began to explore the Underworld and its then-sparse inhabitants. While many spells of sorcerous origin could do little to relieve the ghosts' dreary existences, the discovery of necromancy gave the curious sorcerer-priests a second opportunity.

A ghost affected by this spell experiences the world as he used to in his previous life. Blood appears a bright scarlet instead of a faded pink, and wracking sobs echo and ring in a pleasantly abominable din. The dull foods of the Underworld are given taste, and the sacrificed foods of the living taste as sweet and savory as they did before the ghost's death. These are pleasures otherwise unknown to the residents of the Underworld. In the Age of Sorrows, this spell is often a blessing bestowed on much-prized servants of the Abyssals or the Deathlords. Ghosts of moderate means may humble themselves to purchase what is, to them, bliss, and necromancers in negotiation with the dead can use this spell as a powerful bargaining chip. There is no danger inherent in the spell, which makes it an attractive alternative to risking one's corpus in a world of ghost-hunters, Immaculates and exorcists.

Five Gifts lasts only until the next sunset, but it is a strongly reaffirming experience. It reminds ghosts of the world they are refusing to leave, and when the spell is cast,

the target gains points of temporary Willpower equal to the successes on a roll of his highest-rated Passion. This may temporarily raise Willpower above the ghost's maximum. When the spell begins to fail, the ghost can feel it fading. It is very difficult for a ghost to peacefully let go of mortal pleasure. Roll the ghost's Temperance when the spell ends. A failure results in the loss of a single point of temporary Willpower. All Willpower in excess of the ghost's normal maximum vanishes with the effects of the spell.

Although there is no physical addiction, ghosts who receive the pleasures of this spell multiple times find themselves yearning for it more and more often, making them more pliable, even slavish, if it will get them the sensations they crave.

## FLESH AND BONE WINDS

**Cost:** 18 motes

**Target:** Caster

With the final syllable and gesture of this spell, the ground around the necromancer glows a soft, pearly white. After a moment, the earth or stone is ruptured by sharp, shattered bone and soft ribbons of flesh. The materials spin around the caster at ever-increasing speeds, obscuring him and picking up the flesh and bone of the dead that lie in the necromancer's path, tearing them to pieces and adding them to the storm.



The Flesh and Bone Winds howl around the caster one yard from where he stands. At its base utility, the spell adds a difficulty of 1 to all melee attacks made against the necromancer and a difficulty of 3 to all ranged attacks in or out of the shell of skin and marrow. Additionally, anyone apart from the necromancer who steps into the maelstrom automatically suffers three dice of lethal damage each turn she is exposed to the tearing bones and flesh.

Those slain by the winds are shredded as they die, their flesh and bones ripped apart to strengthen the fury of the storm. Corpses already fallen, if brought within the radius of the spell, will also add to the debris of the dead. Each body added to the storm increases its radius by one yard, and every two bodies absorbed increase the difficulties of ranged attacks by one. A maximum of (the caster's Essence x 2) corpses can be added to the spell's fury.

### FLESH-SLOUGHING WAVE

**Cost:** 16 motes

**Target:** Area of effect

Originally a utility spell with the purpose of cleansing the dead of their flesh and leaving only the bones, useful for constructing the war machines of the Deathlords or legions of the necromancer's own, the Flesh-Sloughing Wave has begun to see use as a dangerous attack spell in the world of the living.

As the spell coalesces, the necromancer shapes an ivory ball of Essence in her hands above her head. It throbs slightly with a white light as she caresses it into a sphere, and any visible bones nearby glow in time. Any living nearby feel a pull in their bones, waxing and waning in time with the pulsing of the spell.

When complete, the ivory ball is hurled to the ground, where it shatters, releasing a wave of translucent ivory light out to a range of (the caster's Essence x 5) yards. As the dome of light expands, it carries with it the flesh from the bodies it passes. Flesh from a corpse is torn away instantly, as is dead flesh on a living creature. Those bearing living flesh endure a second of pain as the spell tries to peel away their skin, muscle and fat to leave only the pale white bones beneath.

All living creatures within the radius of the spell except the caster must soak twice the caster's Essence + Occult in lethal damage. Creatures who somehow have no flesh have nothing to fear from the Flesh-Sloughing Wave.

A Fair One killed by this spell dies in a blinding flash of chaos, as the ordered prison that held it is torn away by the spell.

### GATHERING A GHOST'S STRINGS

**Cost:** 10 or 20 motes

**Target:** One ghost

With a gesture and a twist of the hand, the necromancer swiftly learns all she needs to terrorize a ghost of her choice. Targeting any ghost she can clearly see, the necro-

mancer gains brief visions of the ghost's Fetters and of the ghost's Passions. Each Fetter and Passion is a unique vision that takes a full turn to complete, together bestowing upon the necromancer clear details of the ghost's each and every Fetter and Passion.

While the knowledge presented by this spell does not give the caster any inherent power over the ghost, any being with this sort of detailed knowledge will have at her disposal endless sources of blackmail and threats.

If the necromancer chooses to spend an additional 10 motes after seeing her victim's Fetters and Passions, she may overwrite them. Concentrating on images of her own, she may exchange each Fetter or Passion for one of her own design of the same rating. This can seriously alter a ghost's lifestyle and drives, but the spirit is constantly aware that necromancy is forcing him to act contrary to his subsumed desires. The representations of the ghost's old Fetters act as the representations of his new Fetters. The changes fade after one month per point of the caster's permanent Essence.

Puzzle Box of Love is a spell of the Labyrinth Circle that allows the necromancer to completely rearrange a ghost's Passions and Fetters. She may choose any combination of new Passions to fit the ghost's Virtues and may reshape the ghost's Fetters in any manner she desires, so long as the number of dots in Fetters is not greater after the transformation than it was before.

This spell is permanent, but the player of a heroic ghost bound by Puzzle Box of Love may roll his character's Willpower plus the strength of any Passion lost during the transformation against a difficulty of the necromancer's Essence once per year, on the day of his death. Victory allows him to return to his previous life but comes with no guarantee of safety from retribution or repeated imprisonment.

### GENTLE CALL OF LETHE

**Cost:** 13 motes

**Target:** One living creature

The necromancer traces a simple mark with her hand on the target's forehead. After the caster is finished, the symbol shines with a bright light for a few short moments before disappearing. There is no other visible effect. The symbol is visible to creatures using Essence-sight and ghosts using Aura-Reading Technique (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 24), and many such individuals recognize the power of the rune.

When a creature affected by this spell dies of whatever cause, he is barred from becoming a ghost. Whether the spirit enters Lethe or Oblivion is a matter determined by the temperament of the soul. The most furious and hateful disappear into the Abyss, while most spirits peacefully dissolve into Lethe, drawn by the power of the spell.

Gentle Call of Lethe and Rune of Sweet Passing are incompatible spells and may not both be cast upon the

same individual. Until broken through countermagic, the first enchantment prevents the second from being laid. Ghost-Blooded cannot be affected by this spell unless they possess the Unchained Soul Merit (see the **Exalted Players Guide**, p. 71).

A variation of this spell by the same name can be learned and cast by sorcerers of the Sapphire Circle. The Celestial version costs 20 motes and requires 10 minutes to cast.

### MASTER PUPPETEER'S KNIFE

**Cost:** 14 motes

**Target:** Area of effect

Splaying his fingers wide and drawing any sort of blade beneath her hand in a swift cutting motion, the necromancer cuts the threads of dark energy that allow an otherwise-senseless corpse to function and move. A specialized form of countermagic, this spell is very quick and takes effect as soon as the necromancy Charm is activated and the Willpower is spent. All animated dead in a 90-degree arc of the caster's choice and within 10 yards collapse without fanfare, nothing more than corpses once again. The zombies must be extras, like those most commonly created with the spells Raise the Skeletal Horde and Arisen Legion (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 225).

The Master Puppeteer's Knife can be used to destroy the more proficient animated dead, such as those created by Exquisite Undead Aide (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 226), by focusing the power of the spell upon one at a time.

The Master Puppeteer's Knife cannot affect undead war machines, animated as they are by more eclectic collections of necromantic magic.

### MIDNIGHT SHADOW SUN

**Cost:** 8 motes

**Target:** Shadowland border

One basic limitation of travel between Creation and the Underworld is that the doors only move one way at a time. When the sun is in the sky over a shadowland, any who exit find themselves in Creation. When the night sky looms, those who leave a shadowland will find themselves in the Underworld. The necromancer who knows Midnight Shadow Sun never has to wait.

Casting this spell upon the border of a shadowland weakens and confuses it, forcing it to deposit those who cross into whichever realm the necromancer wishes. Up to twice her Essence in yards of the border are affected, and they remain so for five minutes, long enough for several dozen creatures to pass through in an orderly fashion.

There exists a similar spell of the Void Circle called Folding Midnight. This curse forces a shadowland to become a one-way portal into or out of the Underworld at all times of day. A mortal who walks into a shadowland so cursed may never be able to walk back out into Creation





— or an unlucky ghost may find himself unable to return to the Underworld. Folding Midnight costs 46 motes and requires that the necromancer walk a path around the shadowland in question during the time of day appropriate to her desired effect.

### MOTHER DARKNESS

**Cost:** 12 motes

**Target:** Area of effect

With a grimace and a snap of the fingers, the necromancer can make herself more comfortable by changing the local environment to suit her. Over the next minute, the sky perceptibly darkens, the flora grays, and fauna either leave the area or become sullen and surly. Landmarks of note take on a devilish cast, and hills seem to carry with them threats of something lurking on the other side. Some of the changes are more overt: Glistening white bones are more easily found lying about, and small stones become glittering obsidian. A dirge floats lightly on the wind.

Creatures of the Underworld find themselves more at ease within the one-mile reach of Mother Darkness. Those beings who can normally respire no Essence while in Creation find that they recover 1 mote per full day spent within the shadowed area. Mother Darkness is considered a significant fraction of the “trappings of death” required for an Abyssal to shed Resonance.

The area affected slowly returns to normal over the course of a week, except when cast within the Wyld. The settling influence of necromancy act strongly upon the lively Wyld. When cast upon a Wyld area, Mother Darkness reduces the strength of the Wyld by one (Middlemarches to Borderlands, Borderlands to Creation — see **Exalted: The Lunars** for more information on the Wyld), and the trappings of death remain until the Wyld sweeps over them again. In some cases, this can be a long time.

The spell cannot be successfully cast upon a Demesne, as the flow of aspected Essence already colors the environment too strongly for the effects of Mother Darkness to take hold.

### PIERCING THE HEEL

**Cost:** 17 motes

**Target:** One ghost

*Requires an arcane link*

This spell cannot be cast unless the necromancer has access to her victim’s body, which acts as an arcane link. Ritually piercing the body’s tendons with iron nails above the heel of each foot, the necromancer invokes this spell and speaks the name of the ghost who once inhabited the body. Thereafter, the ghost finds himself unable to enact any physical harm upon the necromancer’s body. Should he ever attempt such, he immediately falls lame and unable to move until he abandons the intention.

This binding may be broken by counter-magic cast upon the ghost or by removing the iron nails from the

### ARCANE LINKS AND THE DEAD

As the study of performing sorcery — and necromancy, once it was discovered — upon the inhabitants of the Underworld progressed, the Exalted learned that ghosts who refused to move on had several natural arcane links: their Fetters. A sorcerer or necromancer who is aware of her target’s Fetters can use one in place of an arcane link to the spirit. Standing in the ghost’s tomb is usually enough to create a bond between the sorcerer and spirit. Passions with clear physical representations — a family that must be protected or a construction the ghost wishes to see completed — can also be used in this manner.

In the Age of Sorrows, the Deathlords have found another such link. The bond between an Abyssal servant and his Monstrance of Celestial Portion allows his liege to spy upon him, speak with him and inflict displeasure upon him in the form of Resonance. It is also, as has been discovered, a permanent arcane link to the Abyssal and yet more leverage for the Deathlords. Most Deathlords have kept this advantage, as they have kept many others, secret from their Exalted servants.

body’s heels — but the ghost is bound not to attempt this, and if the body has decayed to the point where the nails have fallen from the heels on their own, the ghost’s only hope lies in counter-magic.

If the body is too decayed for the piercings to be removed to end the spell, it is too far gone for this spell to be effective.

### RINGING HUN REBUKE

**Cost:** 19 motes

**Target:** Caster

Pulling two iron rings out of thin air as might a master of legerdemain, the necromancer puts one on the middle finger of each hand. He then claps his hands, striking the two black ornaments together and letting them resonate. Each emits a slightly different tone and continues to do so for the next hour.

While these rings continue to sound, ghosts have difficulty approaching the caster. In order to approach within five yards of the caster, a successful Willpower check must be made for the ghost against a difficulty of 3. And even then, she finds it abhorrent to strike him — the necromancer has an effective additional soak of 2L/3B against all blows a ghost attempts to land. Ranged attacks made from without the five-yard radius are unaffected.

If the necromancer walks into a ghostly crowd while this spell is in effect, he finds that ghosts move out of his

path nearly unconsciously — this is as a result of the distinctly unpleasant sensation that the ghosts feel when too near the resonating rings. The player of a ghost who actively decides not to move as the caster draws to within five yards must successfully make a reflexive Willpower roll, difficulty 3, for her character not to step out of range, just as though she had moved into it.

There is a greater version of this spell in the Labyrinth Circle called Brick-by-Brick Solitude. When cast, several dozen arcane symbols appear in a cylinder around the necromancer. Bright, as if drawn with pure sunlight, they expand rapidly to a radius equal to (the caster's permanent Essence x 10) yards. Any ghosts closer than that are pushed out to the boundaries by the expanding invisible wall. Ghosts are unable to pierce this boundary and, therefore, cannot make hand-to-hand attacks. Ranged attacks suffer a loss of half their successes before they reach the necromancer.

Brick-by-Brick Solitude does not increase the caster's Strength. While the boundary does move with him and will shove most ghosts out of his path with little effort, should he encounter a determined mob that desire to bar his way, he will not be able to push past more than three times his Strength rating in ghosts.

### SEAT OF DEADLY SPLENDORS

**Cost:** 15 motes

**Target:** Caster

Speaking several blasphemies to the local gods or ghosts and letting a drop of blood fall upon the earth, the caster causes the clawed, skeletal fist of a fallen giant to burst from the ground. The ivory bones creak as they settle and open into a massive throne for the necromancer to seat herself upon. While seated there, she finds that those around her respond more quickly to her will and that she sees more clearly into people's souls.

While her character sits in the Seat of Deadly Splendors, the necromancer's player gains a two-dice bonus to all rolls involving intimidation, persuasion or the perception of true motives and lies. Sitting on the throne also allows the caster to see dematerialized ghosts as though they were material, and she can force them to manifest at a cost of 2 motes. Add one to the spell's dice bonuses when applied to ghosts.

The magical effects of the spell only last for an hour. The hand of the dead giant, however, remains until hewn from the ground (treat as a stone statue, see *Exalted*, p. 239) and removed. If the throne is destroyed while the spell is still active, the magical effects immediately end. Seat of Deadly Splendors cannot be successfully cast if the necromancer is on a second floor, in a tree or otherwise distanced from the ground.

### SHATTERED VOID MIRROR

**Cost:** 20 motes

**Target:** One living creature

The necromancer throws his arm out toward a single target and, to the eyes of his victim, behind him towers the image of a great, black-robed necromancer with vivid purple eyes mimicking his motion. The victim is thrown into a stark relief, and for a long instant, the colors of her image appear inverted as her Essence is thrown against an exact opposite drawn out from the Void.

The inversion lasts only a moment, but it wreaks havoc on the target's physical and spiritual integrity. Her skin and bones crack as they resist being undone, her heart flutters, and her flesh grows cold and very pale. She may find herself short of breath for weeks or notice later that a lock of her hair has turned white. She suffers dice of raw lethal damage equal to twice her current remaining health levels, soakable only by her natural soak, and she loses a number of motes of Essence equal to twice her permanent Essence.

When the Shattered Void Mirror kills its target, the inverted image shatters into a thousand small pieces that fly away on the tired wind of the Underworld as the victim's corpse falls to the ground, drained of all color. This spell instantly slays extras.

### SILENT MASTER'S POLLEN

**Cost:** 18 motes

**Target:** One or two ghosts

With little fanfare other than a quiet invocation to the cycle of passing through Lethe, the necromancer causes to hover before her eyes a small point of gray-white light. This light represents a nigh-irresistible summons to rejoin the cycle of life, and it offers a sure and quick path to that end.

Once she has summoned the passage to Lethe, the caster of this spell may choose: Touching it once with each hand, she can let the pearly glow surround her fingertips, where she can apply it directly to the ghost or ghosts she wishes to affect. This requires a successful unarmed attack that directly touches the ghost's corpus. Alternatively, she may will the tiny point to launch itself at a single target, requiring a Wits + Thrown attack roll.

A ghost successfully struck by such an attack is immediately drawn far down the path to Lethe. As when the ghost's afterlife is in danger of dissolution, his player rolls the character's Willpower against a difficulty of 3. If the roll fails, the ghost silently slips into Lethe. During this process, there is no danger of falling into Oblivion — a botch is just another failure.

Whether or not the ghost actually passes on, there is an additional benefit to Silent Master's Pollen. Any ghost struck by it is freed of necromantic shackles and bindings — any spells or Charms that bind him shatter and release



their hold. This only affects spells of the Iron Circle and Charms of Essence 3 or less.

There are greater versions of this spell that affect more powerful necromancies and Charms. They are called Black Vial and Empty Night Future and are of the Labyrinth and Void Circles, respectively. Black Vial costs 24 motes and frees ghosts of bindings of the Onyx Circle and of Essence 4 Charms or weaker effects and manifests as a small crystal vial of a black liquid that appears to contain dim stars. The vial is thrown and bursts into a small cloud of stars that affects all ghosts within three yards of the point of contact. Empty Night Future costs 32 motes and rips apart all bonds of the Obsidian Circle and weaker or of an Essence less than the caster's, manifesting as a ripple of nothingness that rolls from the caster in a circle, affecting up to 10 ghosts within 10 yards. Both Black Vial and Empty Night Future have another difference — they drag ghosts into Oblivion. Players of ghosts must succeed at a Willpower roll for their characters to avoid this fate, at a difficulty of 4 for Black Vial and 5 for Empty Night Future. Any ghosts who succumb to these fates disappear silently, and their agony is absorbed and strengthens the caster, giving her 1 mote per soul.

### SMOOTHING THE CREASE-WORN MIND

**Cost:** 23 motes

**Target:** One creature

Laying a gentle palm on the nape of her subject's neck, the necromancer quietly soothes from him all mindfulness of the slumbering voices of the long-dead gods. The voices quiet to beyond a whisper before becoming silenced altogether.

This can have several effects: Ghosts afflicted with the Whisper of Oblivion (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 284) need not fear the contagion spreading while this enchantment lasts. Spectres are relieved of their overwhelming subservience to the Void and return to the state they held before they became as they are. For many spectres, their attitude resembles that of a healthy ghost — often, this spell can supply valuable, if temporary, guides through the Labyrinth. Mortwrights and other spirits who never knew a sane mind simply become quiescent. An Abyssal affected by this spell loses all ability to channel the Whispers of the Malfeans (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pp. 135-136) that usually babble in the back of his mind.

The spell's power must be communicated through touch. If the subject of the spell is not bound or willing, the necromancer must successfully strike her target with an unarmed attack made at an increased difficulty of 1. The attack does no damage. Smoothing the Crease-Worn Mind remains active for one day per permanent Essence of the caster.

### STONES WORN SMOOTH

**Cost:** 15 motes

**Target:** One ghost

The necromancer reaches out toward any ghost within 15 yards and tightens his hand into a fierce claw. The ghost's player must then roll her character's Willpower against a difficulty of the caster's Essence — if successful, the spell has failed. If the ghost is not strong enough, she hurtles through the air toward the necromancer, moved by an invisible force, until she is impaled upon his grasping hand. The necromancer then removes his hand from her chest, holding her pale, still-beating heart. The ghost screams as the caster tightens his hand upon the ghost flesh, crushing it into a black diamond about the size of an egg — the ghost, at this time, boils into translucent nothingness.

The black diamond acts as a Hearthstone of a level equal to the ghost's permanent Essence, drawing on the ghost's spirit and will and, through them, some of the ambient Essence of the Underworld. Although it offers no additional powers, it can replenish one's Essence if set into an attuned artifact. The Hearthstone remains for a day before it shatters and dissolves. The Hearthstone is not effective in Creation, and it shatters instantly if exposed to the light of the Unconquered Sun. The ghost does not attempt to resist the draw of Lethe or Oblivion until the Hearthstone made from its heart breaks.

### TROLLING THE DARK WATER

**Cost:** 10 motes

**Target:** Area of effect

While preparing this spell, the necromancer draws out threads of Essence that shine violet under the light of Creation. Tying several of these glistening threads into a tiny net of Essence, she throws the net into the air above her. The net expands and gently settles down to the ground, highlighting the presence of restless spirits of the dead.

Although the strands of Essence pass through living creatures, all ghosts within 25 yards are caught in it and are forced to spend a mote to manifest. At this time, the necromancer, who has kept a hand on the net, may choose to spend an additional 5 motes to force all ghosts caught within the net to materialize. The ghosts must spend the Essence necessary to materialize. If a ghost does not have enough Essence to materialize, he loses as much Essence as he possesses. Ghosts already material and ghosts unable to materialize are unaffected by this spell.

Trolling the Dark Water may be cast in the Underworld, but it has no effect, since ghosts are already material in the Underworld.

### WITHOUT PITY, WITHOUT SCORN

**Cost:** 18 motes

**Target:** Varies

Holding his hand above his head and channeling the black Essence of the Void into a sphere of coruscating power, the necromancer violently casts it to the ground with the conclusion of the spell. The ball shatters, releasing a burst of energy that stirs the dust of the Underworld as it passes. The

energy flows outward in the blink of an eye, the crest of its wave crackling with purple lightning. As it passes a ghost, that ghost is briefly surrounded by the same crackling energy.

Once the light fades and the dust settles, none are harmed. But the physical representations of the ghost's Fetters — any they happen to be bearing — are rendered inert. They no longer provide Essence on a daily basis. A Fetter representation is unable to be drawn upon for Essence for a length of time dependent upon the Fetter's strength:

Fetter Rating	Duration Inert
•	Two months
••	One month
•••	Two weeks
••••	Six days
•••••	Three days

Alternatively, the necromancer may hurl the bright and flashing sphere at a specific ghost within 15 yards with a Dexterity + Thrown roll. That ghost alone is caught in bands of glaring necrotic energy before it dissipates within the turn. Using the spell in this form permanently severs the ghost from all Fetters whose representations he bore. For both versions of the spell, any Fetters whose physical representations were secreted elsewhere are safe.

### NECROMANCY AND ARCANOI

Arcanoi are a set of powers that, in general, only a ghost can use. Necromancers can often also affect ghosts in manners similar to the effects of Arcanoi, but a necromantic spell will almost universally be more powerful than an Arcanos effect, so a spell that resembles an existing Arcanos will usually be more effective or combine multiple effects. See *Black Candle Visage* and *Bonfire Visions* in the text for examples. Most such spells are of the Shadowlands Circle.

## LABYRINTH CIRCLE

Only the darkest Solar necromancers grew powerful and learned enough to touch upon the powers available in the Labyrinth Circle. Their curiosity, however, exceeded their care. As they studied spells in the safety of their workrooms or the twisting veins of the dead gods' dreams, the Labyrinth, several of the dozen that practiced dark magics of this magnitude found themselves hearing strange whispers in the back of their heads. The voices grew stronger in the dark, during Calibration or whenever they were heeded. Two of those who now call themselves Deathlords began their journey toward submission to the Void by listening too closely.

### BANEFUL SUN

**Cost:** 22 motes

**Target:** One creature

### THE DANGER OF THE DEEP

Despite the vast number of necromantic spells that are intended solely to have utilitarian effects, binding or affecting the dead without harming them or raping their will, as necromancers explore the mysteries of the deeper circles they find that, in order to achieve their desired ends, souls are going to be abused or destroyed. Casting a Labyrinth Circle spell is manipulating the spiteful nightmares of the dead gods, and it is difficult to tease power from their dreamstuff without some of their hatred coming with it. Evoking the power of the Void Circle draws directly from Oblivion itself, bypassing the whispers of the Malfeans and reaching directly for the Essence of the Void. It is nearly impossible to cast a spell of that magnitude that does not, in some way, inflict suffering and pain on the spirits of the Underworld.

It is within the power of the Labyrinth Circle to place upon a creature's soul a taint that resonates violently with the spiritual timbre of Creation. When in the sunlit realm, the victim of this spell feels a shivering weakness and vaguely ill. If he remains there for too long, he begins to decay as the disharmony in his soul tears him apart from the inside. After too long, he dies.

Mechanically, the affected individual is at a one-die penalty when in Creation, for it is inimical to him. For every month that he remains there, he is struck with an unsoakable level of aggravated damage that will not heal by any means. Eventually, this will kill even the most resolute of heroes. Should the victim retreat to the Underworld, he at once feels at ease. His unhealable wounds fade at the rate of one every month, and they can be healed no faster.

If this spell is cast upon a heroic character, the necromancer's and the target's players may both roll their characters' Essence and compare successes. If the necromancer is victorious, the target is struck with the effects of the spell until tended by countermagic or until the necromancer chooses to lift the curse.

Baneful Sun was used originally near the end of the First Age. The sorcerer-kings had begun wielding necromancy with abandon and cursed those who offended them to wander the Underworld or die slowly. Today, the Deathlords use it to bind ghosts away from their worldly Passions, punishing them. Some use the reverse spell, *Baneful Shadow*, to curse ghosts to forever wander Creation where they can regain no Essence or to banish heroes from the Underworld so they can do no harm.

A being cursed by either spell can travel the shadowlands without penalty.





## CLAMORING SHACKLES

**Cost:** 21 motes

**Target:** Two creatures

Holding his hands cupped as though around an invisible sphere, tiny motes of darkness flow from the necromancer's palms to slowly form a thin black shaft between his shaping hands. As the spell concludes, the shaft sprouts fletching and a dangerous point that glints in the available light. The caster then chooses a target, and the arrow fires itself with the speed of his dark thought.

The necromancer's player rolls Wits + Archery for his attack roll. The arrow inflicts a base damage of (Occult x 3) lethal and ignores the effects of Arcanoi or ghostly artifacts that increase the target's soak. If the target is reduced below Incapacitated by the arrow, she is assaulted by a swarm of dark spots, until she appears only as a miniature storm of flickering light and dark. Then, black chains of soulsteel burst from the tempest, locking around the wrists, ankles and neck of another ghost of the necromancer's choice. Treat these shackles as Artifact •• grave-prison chains (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 257).

The necromancer can spend 6 experience points at the moment of casting to make the resulting grave-prison chains permanent and to strengthen the spell to shatter only when struck by Obsidian Countermagic. Otherwise, the chains created by Clamoring Shackles remain for one day per point of the caster's permanent Essence. The shackles made by this spell are shaped by the will of the caster, and necromancers who use this spell repeatedly may have their handiwork recognized.

There is a Void Circle version of this spell called Blackstorm Wagon. For a cost of 48 motes, the necromancer summons a rain of these arrows. He makes a single Perception + Archery attack roll that is applied to all available targets within a 100-yard radius of a point within 500 yards, chosen by the caster. Arrows that strike only earth, stone or metal quickly dissolve into an acrid black smoke. Any ghost that is slain by an arrow suffers the same fate as one slain by Clamoring Shackles, and the chains reach out to imprison the nearest ghost not slain by the attack. Two shackles will not latch onto the same nearby ghost.

The grave-prison chains created by Blackstorm Wagon cannot be made permanent, but they last until they are removed or until a month has passed, whichever occurs first, before dissolving into the same acrid smoke as arrows on the battlefield.

The arrows created by either spell inflict only half damage, before soak, on living targets.

## CRYSTAL GHOST SHARD

**Cost:** 15 motes (committed)

**Target:** Caster

Taking a step into the air as the spell is completed, the necromancer's body becomes encased in a blackly opaque

crystal as the air freezes around him. The darkness crystallizes around him, and as it crawls over his face and eyes, he sends his higher soul from his body. There is a moment of blackness before the caster regains consciousness. He is standing before himself as a ghost. He appears as a simple spirit, utterly unremarkable.

The necromancer's loosed spirit has Appearance •• and cannot be recognized as himself by visual inspection alone. All other Attributes and Abilities remain the same. While wandering as a ghost, the caster cannot access any of his natural Charms. Martial Arts Charms beyond the Form Charm are similarly unusable. The necromancer recovers Essence as a ghost does and may learn Arcanoi as a ghost if he has experience available. These Arcanoi cost normal experience to purchase and Essence to use, but they may not be used except while the necromancer has encased himself in the Crystal Ghost Shard. Those of the Moonshadow or Eclipse Castes may use any Arcanoi they have learned outside of the use of this spell at this reduced cost.

The necromancer may remain outside his body as a ghost indefinitely. As long as he does, the Essence used to power this spell remains committed, and his body continues to float, the cocoon lightly shedding a dark smoke and protecting his body from averse spiritual and physical intrusions. No spell of the Terrestrial or Shadowlands Circles can penetrate the crystalline shell, and when attacked physically, it has a 30L/20B soak — any attack that deals raw damage under half of these values does no damage. If over 20 levels of damage are dealt to the ghost shard, it cracks. A full 40 levels will shatter the crystal to pieces, pulling the necromancer's spirit back into his body violently and dealing two levels of unsoakable aggravated damage to the caster.

If the necromancer's spirit is slain while projected from his body, his consciousness snaps back into his body in a blur, the raw Essence of the world around him tearing bits and pieces of his awareness off until he is only raggedly seeing, and he is bleeding through his thoughts. His cocoon shatters as he awakes, bereft of one dot of permanent Willpower.

## DEAD MAN'S VOICE

**Cost:** 18 motes

**Target:** One creature

*Requires an arcane link*

There are more effective, and more disturbing, ways to communicate in the Underworld than merely speaking, though some weak-hearted mortals grow faint enough at the thought of being addressed by a ghost. When this spell is cast into the joyless night, the necromancer sends his consciousness aloft and buoys it with the dark Essence of the least wakeful Malfeans. In short order, guided by the arcane link the caster holds, his mind hovers over his target. The necromancer can view all that goes on around

her, and he may choose a single mortal or ghost nearby to seize and use as his mouthpiece or may simply dive into his target and steal her will.

The above is a form of scrying and can be blocked by normal wards. If the subject or the area around the subject is warded, the necromancer may only attempt to control the creature whose arcane link he holds.

Once the necromancer has a secure hold on his chosen victim's mind, he may begin to communicate. He can see and hear with the victim's faculties and speak with her mouth, but he may not manipulate her motor skills or make her move in any way. This spell is used for effective real-time communication between powerful necromancers and their henchmen or their enemies.

This harsh use does not treat the vessel well. The victim's eyes burn with black power and soon begin to bleed. As the palaver continues, her skin turns pale, even as she begins to involuntarily shudder with chills and sweat blood. After half an hour, the victim's hair has become thin, her teeth and fingernails have yellowed, and her muscles have withered beneath her skin. The force of the necromancer's will is eating her alive and decaying her from within. Most mortal creatures die shortly after the half-hour mark, but at this point the will of the necromancer keeps their bones locked and mouths moving until the spell wears thin and snaps as the hour turns. Ghosts fare no better, but as they grow nearer to dissolution, their forms lose cohesion, melting and flowing like hot butter before their plasm boils away when they die.

Necromancers utilizing this spell must decide: If they cast it through an arcane link with the person to whom they wish to speak, wards may waste their efforts. On the other hand, bearing a link to a patsy means that it will be more difficult to use — one must be sure the victim is in the right place at the right time — but it allays any worries about wardings.

Only living creatures of Essence • or ghosts of Essence no greater than •• may be forced to speak with the Dead Man's Voice. Neither have any ability to resist the intrusion of the necromancer's consciousness. While bound by the spell, the victim suffers a single unsoakable level of lethal damage for every five minutes of discussion. Treat extras as though they have seven health levels for this purpose.

## DENYING THE CALL

**Cost:** 24 motes

**Target:** One creature, recently dead

Closing her fists, the necromancer grasps tightly the strings of the Underworld's fate. Pulling them as a master puppeteer, she can draw out of the sunless lands a soul that has recently died. Tying it tightly with cords of necrotic energy into its old body, death is temporarily averted.

The dead creature arises immediate and resumes its life — it remembers its death only briefly. As invisible





bands of necromancy are all that bind it to life, the creature gains a single health level above Incapacitated (usually at the -4 penalty), which can only be harmed by aggravated damage. Charms and weapons that inflict aggravated damage against creatures of darkness will inflict aggravated damage against a creature revived by this spell, despite any previous immunities or protections. Note that a subject of this spell is *not* an animated corpse; the spell truly returns it, albeit briefly, to its original life. The creature remains “alive” for a number of turns equal to the Essence of the caster.

This spell is very harsh on the spirit, which wants nothing so much as to leave its dead body. The target’s mind is very much aware that it was briefly dead, and reactions vary. Creatures of animal intelligence generally return to whatever they were doing before death, as do loyal minions and those canny enough to recognize an opportunity for revenge.

An individual cannot be affected by this spell more than once, nor will it work if the target has been dead for longer than one minute. There is an extent to how far a soul may go and still be called back. The rough treatment that the spirit is forced to endure under the spell’s yoke causes it to appear in the Underworld, when finally allowed to die, at half the normal health levels.

There exists a Void Circle variation of this spell, called Barred Tomb, which places a recently departed soul back in its body for up to an hour with a number of health levels equal to the caster’s Essence, binding it to obey the necromancer’s will for the duration. Like Denying the Call, these health levels can only be lost to aggravated damage, and this spell cannot be cast upon a target who has already been affected by Denying the Call or Barred Tomb. Once a spirit is released by Barred Tomb, it appears in the Underworld with only a single health level.

The spells Denying the Call and Barred Tomb represent the utmost limit that can be reached in the eternal attempt to deny death. Even the Obsidian Circle cannot return the dead to life.

### GOLDEN SHADOWS CAST IN FRIEZE

**Cost:** 30+

**Target:** One spectre

This spell was practiced only by those Twilight sorcerers before the fall of the First Age who were dark enough to teach themselves the Labyrinth Circle and influential enough to allay the suspicions of their peers. While often worked in the laboratory upon a captive spectre, it can as easily be cast in less ideal conditions against such a spirit in the wilds of the Labyrinth or the Underworld.

The necromancer forms from the stuff of shadows a palm-sized ball of golden mist and, with the completion of the spell, crushes it between her hands, casting a golden light out upon her target.

The player of the target of this spell is allowed a Willpower + Essence roll against a difficulty of 7 while scenes from the spectre's life before becoming tainted play out in shadow. The caster may purchase additional successes for him at a rate of 3 motes per, up to a maximum of her Essence. If the roll is a successful, the spectre has been separated from the whispers of the Malfeans and is freed of his obsessive obligations toward the Labyrinth, other spectres and Oblivion. He could, if he desired, return to his previous afterlife in the Underworld.

A spectre so severed from the Void retains all the memories and skills from his time as a servant of the Malfeans, and he will always after have a frightening insight into the minds of the dead gods. He retains the alterations made to his ghost flesh, and most rescued servants of the Void find operating in the societies of the Underworld difficult, at best, before severe reconstructive moliation.

When cast upon a ghost suffering from the taint of Oblivion's Whisper (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 284), this spell completely expunges from him that black shadow upon his soul. All his tainted Passions are cleansed.

The Twilights of the First Age utilized this spell to learn the secrets of the Labyrinth and of the Malfeans, using what secrets they could glean to develop further spells of necromancy. The most kind-hearted would occasionally enter the Labyrinth on missions of kindness, freeing as many spectres as possible before returning to Creation. In the Age of Sorrows, Deathlords have sent ghostly agents into the Labyrinth to become spectres with the knowledge that they can be recovered using Golden Shadows Cast in Frieze. This sort of reconnaissance against the masters of the Void is rare, even for the most paranoid and scheming, for most believe that the Malfeans can sense the loss of a spectre in this way.

### GRAY EYES SHIELD AND SHELL

**Cost:** 25 motes

**Target:** Varies

The necromancer crouches, and when she arises, she is rubbing her hands with the gray dust that is everywhere in the Underworld. Mixing it with a dash of spit and blood from her lip, she dabs her eyes with the concoction. When she next opens them, her eyes are both a dull gray in color, entirely unremarkable. More so, her entire image is struck by a pallor, anything vivid about her becoming less exciting, more drab.

Her shield of gray eyes bars a ghost from affecting her with any manner of Arcanoi. Skinriders cannot grasp a hold of her, the phantasms of the dead appear transparent and listless to her bored gaze, and ghosts cannot steal her Essence. A ghost's self-moliation is the only thing that can affect her, and even then, she is immune to any mental effects. It is only the great claws and teeth that can pull at her flesh. Ghosts who peer at the necromancer with the

Arcanos Aura-Reading Technique (see *Exalted: The Abyssals*, p. 245) see only a dull gray aura, meaningless and unreadable.

Alternatively, as the spell is completed, the caster may choose to instead expend its power in an instant. She casts her gaze upon a single pitiable ghost, and her gray eyes flash, glowing with the pearly gray light of the spell. Her player rolls Wits + Occult with an additional three successes — if the necromancer's victim fails to dodge, he is struck unable to use his Arcanoi. Any effects currently operating cease, and he is unable to begin new ones.

Either effect lasts until the Calendar of Setesh next marks midnight.

### INFINITE FOOTSTEPS

**Cost:** 26 motes

**Target:** One journey

Standing within the edge of the dead gods' dreams, the necromancer throws out her arm and splays her fingers wide. The Labyrinth around her bends and stretches, a small portion of the Malfeans' slow nightmares bending to her will. From her outstretched arm flies an infinite hallway of the Labyrinth's black stone, shored up by the shining white ribcages of long-dead giants.

The passageway is broad enough for seven of the animate dead to stagger abreast, and the echoes of footfalls disappear into the distance. This passage, carved by necromantic influence, directly connects any two points of the Labyrinth that the caster has previously visited or scried. No matter where they may be relative to the Underworld above, travel between the two points takes one full day of travel. Speedier methods of transport will not alter this time. The tunnel will remain for a number of days equal to the necromancer's Essence, after which it is as likely to disappear as any other portion of the Labyrinth. It may remain for a second or a century before it dissolves to make room for a new dream.

This spell causes a sizable rearrangement of the Labyrinth's physical and temporal representations. Although the effect avoids running through existing inhabited locations, it often comes shockingly close. The nephwracks and mortwights who call such places home may, at the Storyteller's discretion, take offense at such actions and attempt to make passage difficult.

### JOYLESS SPIRIT'S CORRUPTION

**Cost:** 30 motes

**Target:** One god

This spell is a ritual that completes a corrupt spirit's transition from being a god of the world of the living to a god of the land of the dead. Only the most foul and base spirits of decay or death ever choose to follow this route, but there are some exceptions who have made that choice: Fou Tung, Transcendence of Brigands' Passing, is the most notable





spirit to make this journey. Only a willing spirit can partake of this ritual, and each that does is fully aware that it means turning away from the Celestial Bureaucracy and the light of Creation and the Unconquered Sun for all time.

The ritual lasts six hours and must be timed to end when the sun of Creation and the sun set in motion by the Calendar are at equal declinations from the zenith. Among other foul actions, a mortal ridden by a possessing ghost must be sacrificed and the blood sipped by both necromancer and spirit.

Once the ritual is completed, the spirit has forsaken Creation and becomes a part of the Underworld's bare ecology. It regains Essence at normal rate in the Underworld and at half-normal rate in shadowlands (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, p. 25, for more details). In addition, the spirit and necromancer maintain a link. Once per year, as marked by the Underworld's Calendar, the necromancer may approach and request a task of the spirit. This task may require up to a month of the spirit's time and have nearly any object. Only if the request would demand more than a month of time or require the spirit to take an action inimical to its being may the spirit refuse.

### LINKS BORN OF TUMULT

**Cost:** 22 motes, 1 lethal health level

**Target:** Caster

Although usually cast in privacy, an observer to the hour-long ritual that Links Born of Tumult requires would see the caster appear to grow smaller and weaker, while his shadow swells and grows almost tangible.

The caster must use a silver wire forged from pyre flame and quenched in blood to draw out his lower soul, or po. Lowering the wire down his throat, hooking the po and pulling it up through his throat, the necromancer coughs up spirit and blood. It is a uniquely excruciating experience. Once done, the necromancer has placed his lower soul into his shadow. The shadow then has the statistics that the caster's hungry ghost would (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pp. 61-62, for the process for creating exceptional hungry ghosts).

The shadow will obey simple commands given by its master. The necromancer can also choose, at any time, to send his consciousness into the shadow to control it himself. When doing so he can use his Charms, Combos and spells through the shadow without complication, but his body lies powerless and vulnerable until he chooses to return to it.

Links Born of Tumult has no set duration. The spell ends when the caster voluntarily devours his shadow and lower soul, returning each to its rightful place. If the

shadow is destroyed, the necromancer's lower soul returns to him in a blurred tatter and rips through his consciousness in a fury. The necromancer loses a permanent Willpower as a result. If he is actively controlling the shadow when it is destroyed, the necromancer is stunned for an hour while he recovers from the shock.

### RATTLED BONES OF WAR

**Cost:** 22 motes (committed)

**Target:** Caster

The center of the necromancer's chest begins to glow with a glistening white light. Bones, one by one, burst forth from the ground around her, encased in the same luminescence. The bones, all shapes and sizes, fly through the air toward her and begin to surround her in a whirlwind of increasing size. The necromancer is soon deep within a storm of ivory bones and light, which lifts her from the ground. The hundreds of bone fragments lock together around her, forming greave and cuisse, vambrace and gauntlet, helm and visor and a cuirass that bears, in its center, the necromancer's personal sigil. The last of the bones come together to form an enormous dire lance.

When the necromancer casts this spell, she may choose whether to form a scout or a common warstrider. Whichever her choice, once encased in the massive construct of bone and iron, she is attuned to it as she would be to a normal warstrider — it responds to her actions, and attacks that pierce its thick armor will wound her spirit, manifesting as woundless injury. The warstrider remains for one hour or until the necromancer lets her commitment lapse, at which point, the assembled bones fall to pieces around her, leaving her on the ground, as she was before the spell was cast — although perhaps worse for the wear. This deadline can be extended at any time the warstrider is active if the necromancer spends 11 motes per additional hour. Wounds and, more importantly, fatigue gained while in the warstrider do not magically disappear with the machine's integrity.

An alternate Labyrinth-circle version of this spell, Walking Gore Titan, costs only 16 motes (committed). But before it can be cast, a number of sentient beings possessing a cumulative permanent Essence of at least 10 must be ritually sacrificed with an obsidian knife. Once the spell is cast from the center of the massacre, a crimson warstrider rises from the pooled blood of the slain and congeals around the caster. The Walking Gore Titan wields a dripping fighting chain of bile-black, steel-hard entrails. Apart from its garish design and slick, disturbingly organic semblance, the war machine conjured by this spell exactly duplicates one raised by Rattled Bones of War.

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense
Warstrider Fighting Chain	+3	-1	+4	+2

Void Cocoon Warrior is a Void Circle version of this spell. When cast, a burgeoning black nothing grows out of the necromancer's chest and slowly wraps itself around her legs, her arms, her chest and, finally, her head. Growing still, she pilots a towering 20-foot-tall machine made of black steel and the Void: a mighty noble warstrider or a massive juggernaut. Should the necromancer desire, she can sacrifice a lethal health level to the Void as the machine forms around her — the black warstrider takes on a ruddy red color and swells, until it is quite possibly the tallest thing on the battlefield, becoming a royal warstrider. The health level cannot be healed until the spell ends.

Void Cocoon Warrior is more flexible than Rattled Bones of War: It costs a minimum of 28 motes (committed), and the warstrider appears with a grand daiklave that hums softly as it sucks the air near it into Oblivion. It has the option of being summoned adorned with ancient artifacts of war. Any weapon that can be mounted on a warstrider can be summoned with a Void Cocoon for an additional cost (and commitment) equal to the amount of Essence that would normally be required to attune the weapon. Expendable ammunition for such weapons can be created out of dull-gray Oblivion for a single mote apiece. The Void Cocoon Warrior remains for only two hours, but the duration can be extended for an additional hour for a number of motes equal to half the originally cost. (See the appendix of **Savant and Sorcerer** for more details on warstriders and their weapons.)

## REBIRTH INTO DARKNESS

**Cost:** 25 motes

**Target:** One ghost

As this spell is cast, the ghost who finds himself its victim feels an invisible collar fasten around his neck. The sensation fades after a moment, and the ghost can continue with his regular habits. The next time the ghost is slain or suffers some other loss of form, the spirit feels the collar again, tightening around his neck to the point of suffocation. The strangling sensation persists until the ghost reforms. There is no opportunity for him to enter Lethe nor any danger of Oblivion, and when the spirit returns to consciousness, he finds himself in the presence of the necromancer who laid this spell upon him. Despite his best efforts, the ghost cannot manage to pass on. He will always return to his second existence only to find himself before she who cast the spell. Ghosts who suffer dissipation while possessing a permanent Essence of • do not lose that Essence if under this spell. Instead, the necromancer must immediately pay 10 motes to keep the ghost from dissipating forever. If a necromancer does not or cannot forfeit the cost necessary to maintain the ghost's existence, the ghost's collar drags him into Oblivion.

Deathlords and Abyssals commonly use this spell to repeatedly torture ghosts to "death" while ensuring that it is

not an escape. It has proved to be a less costly method than seeking out and guarding the victim's Fetters. The collar remains for two days as marked by the Calendar of Setesh.

## SEVEN VISIONS WISDOM

**Cost:** 34 motes

**Target:** One ghost

The necromancer holds his hand flat in perspective so it appears to him that his target is resting in his palm. He closes his hand and focuses thin flows of hot Essence upon the ghost now captured within. Short minutes later, he opens his palm to reveal a small medallion of soulsteel. The ghost's name is etched into the front.

Seven Visions Wisdom can capture any ghost within 100 yards and bind her into a medallion. This medallion qualifies as Artifact •• and requires a commitment of 2 motes to be used. Any person wearing it with such a commitment can choose to substitute any one of the captured spirit's Ability ratings instead of his own while performing a relevant task. Someone who "borrows" a rating in an Ability he does not himself possess (i.e., his rating is 0) still suffers the two-die penalty — his muscles and his mind are simply unable to perform with the familiarity the ghost's would have. Any Ability the ghost possessed may be used.

This spell can only be cast upon a ghost with an Essence less than that of the necromancer. The medallion loses its integrity when struck by countermagic or after a number of months equal to the necromancer's Essence. It blossoms over the next few seconds into the form of the ghost it once was, who is again in command of her own facilities. She remembers all actions that her Abilities were used to assist during her imprisonment, but little else.

The necromancer may, at the casting of the spell, spend six points of experience, making the enchantment permanent and rendering the spell immune to all but Obsidian Countermagic. Only one such medallion can offer its bearer wisdom at one time. If any more are worn simultaneously, the different intuitions and skills contradict with one another. These silent arguments cause all actions attempted by the one who wears them to suffer a two-die penalty, whether or not he intends to use the skill of either.

## SHADOW STONES TRAVEL

**Cost:** 24 motes

**Target:** Area of effect

As she completes the spell, the necromancer cuts her palm and lets a splash of blood paint the ground at her feet. Immediately, a stiff breeze blows outward from the stain of red. A few seconds later, a gust of wind that carries with it the scent of grave rot billows forth from the center. Scant seconds disappear before the breath of decay dies down, and as it does, the world ripples out from the center of the spell. Where the ripple passes, grasses become dead and



black, stones grow chalky, bright colors pale to near gray, and the sky becomes drained of all color.

The necromancer has opened a temporary shadowland around herself, encompassing a small portion of Creation with it. Its borders waver uncertainly as far out as the necromancer's power can hold it. After a short time, the borders snap shut about their center as Creation reasserts itself — but all sentient beings within the boundaries of the spell find themselves in the Underworld, their positions analogous to where they stood in Creation.

The spell takes a short time to affect the stability of Creation. The turn in which the spell is concluded lets through a breath of the wind that travels between worlds and Elsewhere. The next turn casts out the odor of the Underworld, and in the next, the wind dies away, and the world changes. In the third turn after the spell is cast, the shadowland spreads outward up to 50 yards, and the caster can keep the portal open for a number of turns equal to her Essence or let it snap closed after the first. The shadowland always becomes fully open on the same initiative as when the spell was cast and closes on the same. When it closes, everyone within the shadowland will be in the Underworld — so the necromancer must take care of whom she allows within its borders.

This spell, when cast in the Underworld, has similar but inverse effects. The wind between worlds smells sweet, and when the shadowland disappears, all within its borders find themselves in Creation.

### SHIELD OF SHATTERING BONES

**Cost:** 18 motes

**Target:** Caster

A common tactic for a necromancer to take when in battle is to divert the damage inflicted upon him into the enduring bodies and frames of the animate dead who fight for him. This spell enables such behavior.

Upon completion of the spell, the caster is momentarily surrounded by a blood-red halo that then bursts out onto the field of battle around him. Each skeleton or zombie touched by the expanding ring glows with a brief red cast of its own before the light fades. Thereafter, until the sun next rises in Creation, the necromancer can reflexively spend 3 motes to shunt the damage from a successful attack onto one of his targeted undead. The motes are spent before any damage is rolled but after soak.

No more than (the necromancer's Essence x 5) dead are so marked, and all must be within (the necromancer's Essence x 5) yards at the time of the casting. Only these may be called upon to take a blow for the necromancer, and the target must be within line of sight.

The effects of this spell are plainly visible. A blow to the necromancer's chest with a goremaul results in the collapse of a nearby skeleton's ribcage, and the cut of a scimitar closes up as the blade passes, opening instead in a

grinning zombie. All health levels of damage done to the necromancer are instead afflicted upon the unfortunate walking dead. Once the last marked zombie falls, the spell must be recast for it to have any further effect.

### SILENCED WHISPERED PRAYERS

**Cost:** 27 motes

**Target:** Varies

As the necromancer casts this spell, the whispered prayers of all who give her target worship and obeisance becomes audible, rising to a deafening pitch at the apex of the spell before the caster's eyes flash with white light and the prayers are cut off, replaced only with silence.

Victims of this spell find themselves severed from their followers, unable to dip into the flow of Essence provided by worship. Any Cult rating a ghost possesses, Underworld or Ancestor, drops to zero for the duration of this spell. Those who offer worship feel no difference and continue to give their prayers as always.

This spell may also be cast into an area. As the spell is released, all ghosts within 45 yards of the necromancer find the prayers upon which they draw grow audible before sharply dropping in volume. Each ghost affected loses one dot in any Cult he possesses.

Living creatures affected by the focused version of the spell lose half of their Cult rating, round down. The area-effect version does not affect living creatures at all.

This spell lasts until the sun has risen in the Underworld seven times.

### SWEET VOICE FAMILIAR

**Cost:** 32 motes

**Target:** Area of Effect

Crafted by the first Abyssal necromancer of the Labyrinth Circle, he created this spell to share with the world the words of Oblivion as they echoed in the back of his head. When a necromancer casts this spell, all his conscious motor control ceases. His body slumps downward, his legs bend, and he balances impossibly on the balls of his feet. His head lolls back and his jaw drops open, and from his unmoving mouth issue all the unending and mad words of the Malfeans, hideously magnified by the spell's power.

All ghosts within the caster's Essence in miles hear these maddening whispers, and the players of all who do must make a Willpower roll against a difficulty of (the caster's Whispers rating + 5). Any whose players fail have been poisoned by the sweet spell of Oblivion with all its black-honey promises — their minds will soon belong to the Abyss. See the sidebar on page 284 of *Exalted: The Abyssals* for more details. Players of mortals who hear this seducing insanity must roll their characters' Willpower against a difficulty of the caster's Whispers rating. For every success by which they fail, their characters lose a point of temporary Willpower. Mortals severely or repeat-

edly affected by this spell are more likely to become mortwights upon death.

If cast within the Labyrinth, the Sweet Voice Familiar echoes through the twisted passages and is repeated by the black stone there, effectively doubling the radius of the spell. If cast in Creation, the lively Essence of the world there inhibits the unsound and psychotic whispers of the dead gods, and the area of effect is reduced to 250 yards.

## VOID CIRCLE

The Circle of Obsidian was discovered only after the fall of the First Age — before the rise of the Deathlords, there were none to wield it. The necromancy of the Third Circle represents the utmost control over the dead and the world created by the fall of the Malfeans. When spells of the Void Circle are invoked, the tombs of the fallen Primordials shake with fury, so greatly is it able to pervade their grave slumbers.

## BIRTH OF SANITY'S SORROW

**Cost:** 10 motes, 1 permanent Willpower

**Target:** Caster

For the chthonic entities who slumber beneath the fruitless soil of the Underworld, their two most singularly defining characteristics are the silent and permanent horror of death and the sizzling fury of revenge. Without life, they hate all life. This spell embodies both concepts. It can only be cast once in the lifetime of the caster and only in the instant before death and with a purity of malice. The ability to cast this spell is the sign of a personal blessing from an individual Malfean, for only communion with one of the gods of Oblivion can endow a necromancer with this power.

Birth of Sanity's Sorrow takes a month to learn. The necromancer must sit in prayer, inside the tomb of the Malfean who has chosen to teach her, while the lord of nothingness guides her through the process. The result is a creature crafted from the most brilliant creativity of a powerful death-blessed necromancer and an insanely malefic dead god.

The basic statistics for this creature are as follows: Calculate the Attributes for the hungry ghost that would rise from the necromancer's corpse (see **Exalted: The Abyssals**, pp. 61-62) and add the necromancer's Essence to her Strength and Stamina. The form has (the necromancer's Essence x 5) -0 health levels and a single Incapacitated level. While in this form, the necromancer can use any of her Charms for a cost of 1 mote and can spend a single mote in place of Willpower.

A necromancer's form should also include three unique powers. These should cost between 5 and 10 motes to invoke and be vastly impressive — they can either imitate existing spells or be devised between a player and Storyteller.

## THE SHADOWS OF THE AGE

The rapid growth of the number of shadowlands in the Second Age can be attributed to several sources: The general ignorance of the populace in methods of prevention, the loss of the powerful Solar sorceries that were designed to eliminate such flaws in the Tapestry and the active participation of the Deathlords have all encouraged the number of shadows that lie upon the Age.

Forsaken Life Engine is a powerful, if costly, method for bringing the Underworld into Creation. In the interest of balance, its counterpart of the Solar Circle is presented here for those who wish to play the other side.

## CLEANSING SOLAR FLAMES

**Cost:** 50+ motes

**Target:** One shadowland

In the First Age, this spell was needed only after massive massacres attributed to the Fair Folk or rampaging behemoths, and the sorcerer was invariably protected by the rest of her Circle from the mad voices and obsidian claws of the nephwracks and mortwights. To those who can see Essence, the massing power of the spell is an amazing spectacle, observable from tens of miles away as the bright golden Essence piles ever higher toward the sky. As the spell concludes, the tower of near-solid sunlight bursts into reality and fills the world with a glow for several leagues around — the tower then falls, like a dam has burst in Heaven and let the sun shine over the region again. The darkness is wiped away, and Creation is again separated from the Underworld in that area.

Cleansing Solar Flames must be cast from the geomantic center of a shadowland, and the sorcerer must spend 10 minutes in supplication to the Unconquered Sun for every 50 miles of radius that the shadowland covers. The spell costs 50 motes, plus 10 for every additional 50 miles of radius beyond the first.

Birth of Sanity's Sorrow can only be cast, if known, at the instant in which the necromancer is reduced beyond Incapacitated. The spell can be cast whether or not she has already used a Charm in that turn and does not require the normal three turns of preparation. If the necromancer wearing her Birth of Sanity's Sorrow form is destroyed, she dies remarkably and irrevocably, her soul immediately devoured by the Void, without exception. If the necromancer survives the ordeal, the form and spell are



immediately scoured from her memory, and she is left with only her Incapacitated health level, gasping for life. The spell, once cast, is active only for one scene.

### BLACK FAITH

**Cost:** 30 motes, 1 lethal health level

**Target:** Caster

Screaming obscenities that glorify the Malfeans, the sole fathers of Oblivion, the necromancer cuts himself across his belly and lets his blood spill before leaping into the Mouth of the Void. This act is preceded by half an hour of silent worship and prayer, which follows immediately the sacrifice of one ghost's pain and corpus to the Abyss.

This spell represents the final effort of a desperate necromancer. His actions prior to his leap are meant to endear himself as much as possible to the sleeping gods of nothingness and to cause them to dream of him as he dives. His fall is nothing to be taken lightly — as the necromancer plummets toward the certainty of the Void, he slowly dies. His accoutrements are burned off by the sheer lack of flame, and his skin and bone peel away into shreds smaller than dust, as even dust dies. The last thing that remains is the corpus of his falling spirit; it boils slowly away as it blurs past the entrances to the Malfeans' tombs, Oblivion excruciatingly digging into the necromancer's soul until he is no more.

There is a single moment between the final loss of the spiritual vessel and the final dissolution. This is the time of judgment. If his actions have pleased the Malfeans and if his mission benefits them and if they are not angered to have their slumber disturbed so greatly, they revoke his dissolution. The act of being destroyed, too, is a thing which, if cast into the Void, can never have been. The necromancer who dared call so loudly into the nightmares appears, having never been destroyed. He is most likely in whatever place he needed so desperately to be, the Malfeans hearing his plea and letting it be so. Sometimes, the Malfeans decide that the necromancer would better serve them in another place, and he unexpectedly arrives there.

This rarely used form of transportation facilitates the necromancer's appearance *anywhere*, from the Labyrinth and the Underworld to the wide, bright world of Creation, spirit sanctums, Yu-Shan or Malfeas itself. Wards have no effect on his ability to arrive in any given location, since before being there he was, literally, nowhere.

Should the Malfeans fail to be impressed by the necromancer's performance before his dive, he has committed a rather inspired and complete suicide, and he is irrevocably dead. Use of this spell is very much a Storyteller device, and it is recommended that players discuss its use with their Storyteller before enacting it.

### THE CLAY OF WARPED DREAMS

**Cost:** 60 motes (committed)

**Target:** Area of effect

The necromancer stands in the Labyrinth with a minimum of three sacrificial ghosts behind him. As a 10-minute prayer to the Malfeans comes to a close, the caster's black will envelops the sacrifices and destroys them utterly, devoting the Oblivion of each to the dead gods whose slow nightmares define the place where the caster stands. Temporarily appeased, the unthinkableables that rest in tombs above the edge of the Void gift the caster with control over that small portion of their restless slumbers.

With the completion of the Clay of Warped Dreams, the necromancer gains total control over 10 square miles of the Labyrinth, in any configuration he desires. The landscape shapes itself to his waking dreams instead of the tortured malice-borne thoughts of the Malfeans. He can, with a successful Perception + Occult roll made by his player, be totally aware of any space within his power that he could not normally see. His ability to shape the Labyrinth can manifest as physical attacks — swarms of tarnished silver moths fly at his whim, stabbing stalagmites of bone and gouts of boiling brains. Such an attack is made with a Wits + Melee, Archery or Thrown (as appropriate) roll, with additional successes equal to the necromancer's Occult score. Additional effects, such as the creation of poisonous gases or dangerous beasts or imprisoning a victim, are possible at the Storyteller's discretion. Vastly dangerous creatures can be created by borrowing the Malfeans' nightmares, but it is time consuming, and such creatures are highly likely to be swallowed by entropy when those dreams are reclaimed.

This control endures as long as the necromancer commits the Essence or (at the Storyteller's discretion) until a dead god stirs enough to actively reclaim it.

Deathlords make use of this spell in their rare convocations of peers, creating vast and affluent palaces beneath the Manses they keep in Stygia. Often, only a grudging respect for the vast power a Deathlord's tentative allies have, the certainty that each has planned contingency and the expenditure of motes necessary to invoke the spell prevent the host at such a gathering from abusing his power.

### FORSAKEN LIFE ENGINE

**Cost:** 50+ motes

**Target:** Area of effect

With a simple wave of her hand, the necromancer conjures into being a vast engine, with cogs and levers of bone, pulleys strung with iron-reinforced spinal cords, oiled with blood and bile and emitting voluminous clouds of black soot. The engine, twice as high and wide as a yeddim, stands several dozen yards in the air, supported by heavy iron beams. In the bottom of the machine is a wide, dark hole. When this mysterious orifice is empty, only a pathetic trickle of smoke drips upward from the large and soiled pipes on the top. When a living creature is put in

place beneath it, the engine roars into life. Great black-iron claws grab the creature and shovel it into the engine's gaping maw, the gears turn, the levers creak, and the smokestacks belch thick black clouds. The creature, of course, is irrevocably killed, its life and soul used to fuel the creation of a shadowland in Creation.

The spell will create a shadowland centered around the Forsaken Life Engine with a radius of 50 miles, plus 50 miles for every additional 10 motes spent in the casting. A shadowland created by this spell is rarely a perfect circle; the shape of the shadowland is determined by the local dragon lines as the engine taints them with the death Essence released by the mass slaughter it requires to function.

When the spell is cast, the outermost boundaries of what will become a shadowland darken. The engine must then be fed a series of living creatures with a total permanent Essence of no less than 10 times the Essence spent creating the Forsaken Life Engine. With each life it devours, the engine becomes a little bit transparent and a little bit less real. Simultaneously, the outer borders marked by the spell expand inward. Once it has annihilated the final required life, the engine disappears entirely, and the shadowland closes beneath it, complete. If the engine is destroyed or if the process is not completed by the time the sun reaches its zenith, the spell fails, and the shadowland fades completely, as though it had never been.

Until the spell's conclusion, the engine is susceptible to attack. The Forsaken Life Engine is a robust creation; it soaks 22L/30B and must be dealt raw damage greater than its soak to inflict any damage at all. Damage that surpasses soak must be rolled. A full 60 health levels of damage must be inflicted to damage the machine enough that it cannot function. Obsidian Countermagic will destroy the engine instantly, while Adamant Countermagic will inflict 10 health levels of damage upon the machine per invocation. The engine can fight back; the two claws that shovel sacrifices into its body can be turned against attackers. If the engine is under attack and has no victims to attend, it will fight back. If there are sacrifices to process, the engine will only neglect its duty at the command of its creator. Treat the machine as a Strength ●●●●●, Dexterity ●●●●, Stamina ●●●●●, Perception ●●, Intelligence ●●, Wits ●●●● creature with a relevant combat Ability of ●●●. Treat the claws as weapons (see below).

If the Forsaken Life Engine is destroyed, it self-destructs in a series of fiery explosions that can launch fragments of bone and iron up to 500 yards and boiling

blood up to 50. Storytellers are recommended to simulate these using attacks at the engine's Dexterity and Ability until the important targets have escaped the dangerous region. After the engine's destruction, the burgeoning shadowland recedes outward, fading entirely by the next sunrise.

Up to five properly cowed creatures can be processed by the Forsaken Life Engine in one minute, or one every four turns. Resistance will slow the process, subject to Storyteller discretion. This spell has no effect when cast in the Underworld.

### GRANDMOTHER VOID

**Cost:** 40 motes, 1 lethal health level

**Target:** Several spectres

As the caster's silent entreaties to her masters end, she speaks two words in Old Realm: a brief summons. Once spoken, her mouth blackens to the color of the darkest starless nights. In a slow instant, the color spreads throughout the necromancer's body, clothing and equipment until her entire figure is little more than a silhouette. Then, to all who watch, she flattens. To all points of view, she has lost any depth she once possessed and is now an empty doorway into Oblivion. Then, the spectres come.

Skin shining obsidian in the ambient light, the spectres gather, entering the world of life through the caster's empty frame. Their claws drip red blood, and their teeth bear tatters of the flesh of men and ghosts. Each spectre is prepared to wreak havoc in the name of the Malfeans under the necromancer's command. While they fight, they whisper in the voices of the dead gods that they hear constantly in the back of their heads.

Once the spell has been successfully cast, the necromancer remains a flat and empty figure for a number of turns equal to her Essence. Each turn she is in such a state, two spectres are spawned forth from her being into the world. The spectres produced by this spell are fully material and have full Essence pools and health levels. The necromancer may dictate the statistics and advantages of each individually as it is spawned as though each were created as a starting ghost with additional experience equal to (the caster's Essence x 7). These spectres should never be treated as extras. The whispering words that the spectres constantly repeat are dangerous to ghosts — the players of any who hear them must roll Willpower + Essence against a difficulty of 5 to avoid their characters becoming tainted. See **Exalted: The Abyssals**, page 284, for more details.



Weapon	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Range
Engine Claws	-2	+3	+6L	+0	—	—
Fragment	—	+0	+7L	—	3	100
Blood	—	+3	+6L	—	1	25

While the caster is filled with infinite nothingness, she is immune to physical and mental assaults. Obsidian or Adamant Countermagic cast during this period return the necromancer to herself and end the spell, but they will not dispel any spectres that have already been brought forth.

### MOUTH OF THE VOID

**Cost:** 50 motes

**Target:** Area of effect

The necromancer intones dark words, and thick, cold shadows flare about her like the lashing tails of a hundred preying cats. As she speaks, her mouth yawns wide, and darkness pours out, pooling at the necromancers feet like an oil. It slowly ripples outward, filling a 40-yard radius over the casting of the spell. As the spell ends, the darkness becomes perfectly still for an instant before falling into the sky like a silent reverse waterfall, blotting out all light within its boundary.

To those within the inky blackness, it feels alive, clawing softly and grasping, whispering and nibbling, loving, smothering and always hating. A living creature in the seething shadow can feel a throbbing and painful malice that seeps into his body and tears, rips and removes parts of his innermost flesh and being.

After the shadow takes these things, it leaves with them, departing for the Void and the end of all life. Each living creature within its reach but the caster suffers 30 levels of aggravated damage. The earth that fell under its devouring shadow is rotting and pitted and strewn with large chunks of obsidian — the transformed remains of any creature the spell killed.

### PYRE-FLAME GUARDIAN

**Cost:** 50 motes

**Target:** Caster

As the casting is completed and the echoing words of power and the bright black of death fade, the necromancer is struck in a stark relief with his surroundings. He grows in dimension until he is twice his height. A dozen random ghosts die as they are torn, shrieking, into Oblivion, and their anguish crawls onto the caster's skin and fuses there, coating his entire body, face and hair with soulsteel. Finally, the caster bursts into a roaring green bonfire of deadly Essence-fueled pyre flame.

The soulsteel armor affords the necromancer +12L/+12B soak and ignores all attacks that do less than 12 dice of raw damage. He gains a bonus to his Strength equal to his Essence. The billowing sheath of pyre flame inflicts three dice of aggravated damage upon any who dare attack this vision of harrowing death barehanded, and any who attack armed using weapons not forged of stone or one of the Five Magical Materials come away with armament that is slowly being consumed and burning their hands. Even the powerful artifacts of the

Exalted need to be carefully treated, for while they will not be harmed, they will still carry the flame. Any warrior who continues to wield a weapon once it has been struck with flame takes one level of lethal damage each turn.

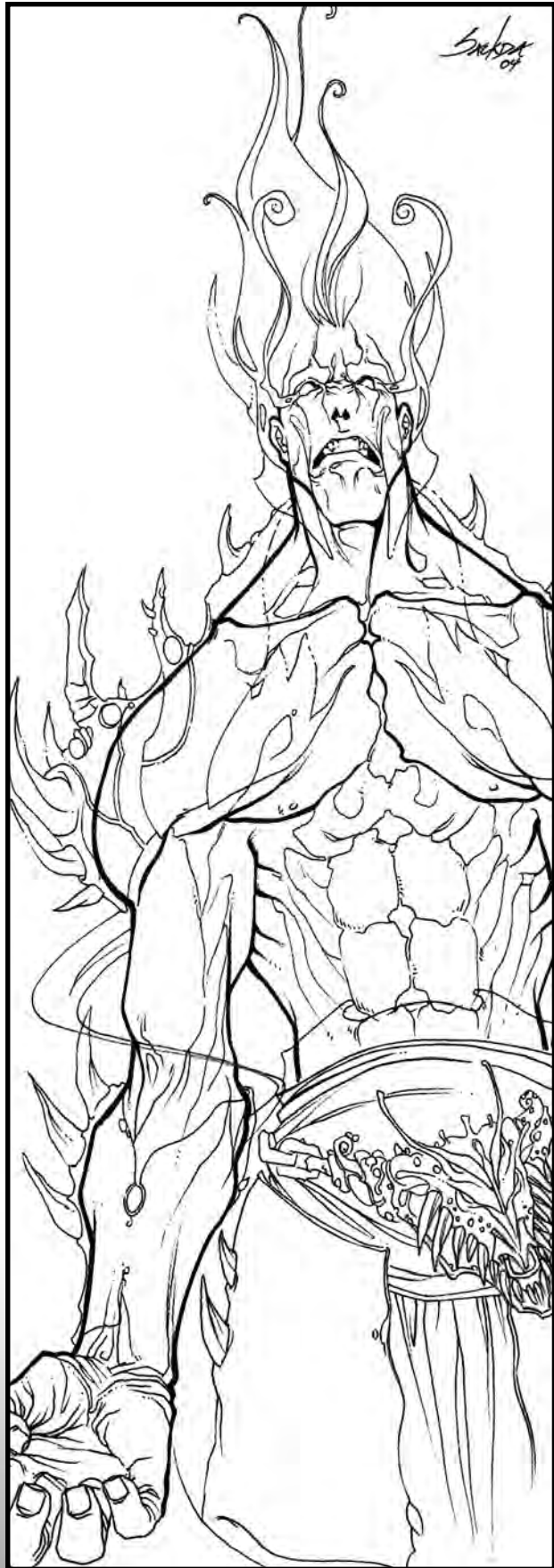
The necromancer can hurl great balls of pyre flame up to 50 yards as a dice action using his Thrown + Dexterity pool. This attack has an accuracy of the caster's Essence and inflicts three health levels of aggravated damage, plus one die for every extra success, and cannot be parried without Charms. Where these balls of flame strike, they leave circles and streaks of green-flaming scenery. Additionally, any successful barehanded attacks automatically inflict an additional three levels of aggravated damage, and where blows land, green fire blossoms.

Unless they are armored in one of the Magical Materials, in stone or in an armor formed completely of Essence, victims of the Pyre-Flame Guardian must scrape the flame off themselves or be continually burned. Those struck by the necromancer's burning fists must spend a full action doing so or suffer two levels of lethal damage for each turn the flame persists. Those enveloped by a hurled ball of flame suffer four levels of lethal damage each turn until the pyre flame is scraped off. Removing the pyre flame takes three turns of dedicated actions, but assistance from companions can reduce this time. Storytellers should consider allowing the obliterating flames to kill most extras automatically without bothering to calculate damage, unless the victims are extremely well armored or mystically protected against such a terrible doom.

This spell ends when the caster cancels it, when the Calendar of Setesh has marked out an hour of time or when struck by Obsidian Countermagic. Whatever the cause, when the spell ends, the necromancer's soulsteel skin explodes, shattering into a thousand pieces of screaming black shrapnel being traced out by green flame. All creatures within 30 yards of the caster suffer five levels of lethal damage and two levels of aggravated damage. Only a perfect defense can evade this debris.

The pyre flame created by this spell is normal pyre flame for all purposes. Pyre flame struck by sunlight in Creation evaporates within minutes and ceases its burning. If never struck by sunlight, the green flame burns itself out within a year. Within shadowlands, pyre flame dies out with the dawning of the sun and sparks into flame again after dusk. In the Underworld, the flame is permanent. See **Exalted: The Abyssals**, page 256, for more detail on the properties of pyre flame.

Name	Accuracy	Dmg	Rate	Rng
Pyre-Flame Ball	+Essence	+3A	5	30



## RISEN AND SCREAMING

**Cost:** 40 motes

**Target:** Area of effect

Focusing the dark energy that he channels inward, the Void Circle necromancer traces out a path around the fertile earth of Creation. As he walks, the soil beneath his feet blackens and dries, as if charred and salted. Once he rejoins his trail and completes the loop, the spell's effects seem to end. There are no further apparent effects.

In truth, the land within the circle has been sown with a lasting undead. The necromantic energy poured into the spell hides just beneath the earth's surface, waiting. Triggered by the sudden rush of spirit that accompanies any death, when a living creature breathes its final breath and falls within the boundary set by the necromancer's march, the ground crumbles beneath it. The creature sinks into the dirt, and when it rises, scant minutes later at the earliest, rotting skin hangs in tatters among bare patches of bone, the once-dead corpse animate and deadly.

The zombies created by this spell are under the control of the necromancer who cast it. If he is not there to command them, they remain stationary unless a living creature becomes visible to their dulled senses. Such unfortunates the zombies attempt to slay, propagating the undead. The risen zombies cannot leave the circle within which they were birthed. They will not try, and instantly become inanimate if they are forced outside the boundary.

The zombies created by this spell scream loudly when they see prey, and move at twice the speed of normal zombies. When there are no victims in sight and they are under no commands, these zombies bury themselves in the welcoming earth. A Perception + Awareness roll at difficulty two is required to notice a buried zombie, but such a zombie is perfectly aware of all creatures within 10 yards and can claw its way free as a turn's movement, assisted by the magic of the spell. The zombies are otherwise identical to the zombies in *Exalted* (p. 299) and are always extras. Although the path walked originally by the necromancer will never bear life again, the area enclosed by his path returns to normal after one week per point of the necromancer's Essence.

## SUMMON HEKATONKHIRE

**Cost:** 40 motes

**Target:** One hekatonkhire

The hekatonkhire are vast. They are myriad in shape and form. They are the memories of the things they once were, behemoths formed in any shape and of any whim the Primordials desired. These dead things retain something of their previous form and function, though they





bear the taint of their destruction and subsequent passage into the sunless realm. These are the hekatonkhire.

As the Primordials died and fell in flesh that spanned nations and encompassed the Wyld, their souls fell with them. Their souls became different as they fell into the altogether new realm of the Underworld. Living souls were forced to become dead souls; souls already slain reformed as things dead. These, too, are called hekatonkhire.

The Malfears dream. When they shift in their tombs as a man turns in his sleep, their nightmares come closer to the vague reality of the Underworld. The things they fear, the hopes they no longer have and their hatreds all surface, from time to time. Tearing at the dreamstuff and stone that binds them, these unthinkable creatures rip free from their unwilling mothers and become frighteningly real. They may also be called hekatonkhire.

This spell calls to the caster one of these great and fearsome beasts. The spell requires a six-hour ritual, involving the death of both a mortal and a ghost (or a single Ghost-Blooded, see the **Exalted Players Guide**), that ends at dusk.

Once a hekatonkhire is summoned, the necromancer and her would-be servant enter a contest of souls. Roll Willpower + Essence for each in an opposed test. During the casting, the necromancer may spend additional Essence in 7 mote increments to reduce the creature's dice pool; the hekatonkhire loses one die for each 7 motes spent. Roll the opposed test once each turn until either the necromancer or the summoned creature accumulates three more successes than the other. If the caster wins, the hekatonkhire will serve her loyally for a year and a day, or the necromancer can set it to a single task of indefinite duration. Should the beast win, it will most likely consume the body and soul of its summoner and return, lumbering, to the darkness it prefers to haunt.

Hekatonkhire are generally sleepy, like the dead gods that long ago made them. Although they resent being bound, they usually take joy in having motivation to wreak death and pain upon the world from which they have been severed. Some hekatonkhire feel animosity toward their summoners, but many even forget that they were called. Hekatonkhire are vastly varied in their might. The weakest may be defeated by a single Solar warrior or a sworn brotherhood of Dragon-Blooded, while the most powerful are able to stand toe-to-toe with some of the most potent beings in Creation or Malfears. Whether a match for Ligier or only members of the Dragon-Blooded Host, no hekatonkhire can truly die. If slain, they reform in some manner in the Underworld. Some become less powerful in the process. Others lose none of their power.

## SINS OF THE FATHER

**Cost:** 50 motes, 1 permanent Willpower

**Target:** One living person

The mighty necromancer who knows this spell can lay a curse of eternal servitude upon any living creature. As the spell concludes, the caster lightly brushes the victim with her fingers, which sear his face and form a scar that will never heal. With the aid of an arcane link, the necromancer can curse her victim from afar. During the casting, the chanting and burgeoning Essence about the caster become increasingly visible until the climax of the spell, when the caster touches him through the link and scars him. Using an arcane link for this purpose destroys the link.

The burn mark, most commonly placed on the face, never goes away, despite any attempts at mundane or magical healing, and identical scars appear on all of the victim's descendants. The curse inflicts no other miseries while one who bears the mark lives. Once a living creature so cursed dies, he infallibly becomes a ghost, and the mark now glows softly on the face of his corpus. Any person who becomes a ghost as a result of this spell automatically possesses the Passion Obey She Who Cursed Me at a rating equal to the new ghost's Conviction. The scar also acts as the representation of the Fetter Master of rating ●●●●●. Finally, a ghost bearing this mark has absolutely no choice but to seek out his new master immediately upon his death, and he must thereafter obey every command given him by that master.

Even the death of the caster does not free the cursed. They instead find themselves bound to the next incarnation of the necromancer's Essence, although they are free to take retribution on the original caster should she rise as a ghost. Obsidian Countermagic can free a single individual of the affliction — even if he is the son of the son of the person originally cursed, none of his cousins or brothers receive any benefit. But a victim cleansed is free of the necromancer at last, as are his future children. Adamant Countermagic, like Obsidian, will free a victim from this doom, but the target inevitably dies in the process.

The souls of the Celestial Exalted cannot be enslaved through the use of this spell. But they can be marked, and they pass the curse on to their children. Only through a petition to the Unconquered Sun assisted by a Zenith Caste priest and a Solar Circle sorcerer can free a victim of the Sins of the Father without killing the subject or resorting to the most powerful of dark magics.

Creatures without souls or creatures whose souls never enter the Underworld, such as Dragon Kings or the Mountain Folk, cannot be affected by this spell.



## SAMPLE HEKATONKHIRE

## LORAS, DEATH SUN

**Description:** Birthed from a Malfean's chilling nightmares, Loras is a man-shaped beast that stands 30 feet tall. His arms are too long for his body, hanging down almost to his calves, with six long fingers on each hand. On his back, he bears a giant blade made of writhing gold, which casts its own light and its own shadows in all directions. Draped in obsidian woven into cloth, Loras wanders the Labyrinth at a steady pace, resting when he wishes, devouring when he wishes. Few spectres frequent his halls, knowing that he makes no exception for them.

Loras feels a purpose deep in his black-oil bones, but he doesn't know what it is. He possesses many potent Arcanoi, and when he expends much Essence, he begins to shine in waves of white and black so bright that few can bear to watch him. When called upon by a necromancer, Loras willingly performs whatever service they ask. He is, after all, seeking his purpose, and who knows where it might be found?

**Attributes:** Strength 9, Dexterity 7, Stamina 10, Charisma 4, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5, Perception 6, Intelligence 5, Wits 7

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

**Abilities:** Athletics 6, Awareness 6, Brawl 6, Dodge 6, Endurance 6 (Walking +2), Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Melee 6 (The Pit +3), Occult 2, Stealth 6, Survival 2 (Labyrinth +1)

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 3 (Labyrinth Inhabitants)

**Supernatural Powers:** Eye of the Nightmare

**Base Initiative:** 14

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 14 Accuracy 13 Damage 9B Defense 13

The Pit: Speed 20 Accuracy 18 Damage 17L Defense 14

**Dodge Pool:** 13      **Soak:** 20L/22B (Cloth of obsidian, 15L/12B)

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

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

**Other Notes:** The Pit is Loras' great and writhing weapon. (In Exalted Power Combat, the Pit has an infinite rate.) His cloth of obsidian allows Loras to ignore all attacks that inflict less than six dice of raw damage.

Eye of the Nightmare is a special ability that allows Loras to learn the Charms of the Solar and Abyssal Exalted once they have been used in his presence. When such a Charm is invoked, Loras may reflexively spend 10 motes and one Willpower to study it with Eye of the Nightmare. He rolls Perception + Awareness at a difficulty of the permanent Essence required to learn the Charm. If successful, Loras has learned the Charm.

Loras may invoke any Charm that he has learned for its given cost. He may not use Charms whose prerequisites he does not meet, though he may learn them.

## EXALTED POWER COMBAT

**Attack:**

Punch: Speed 14 Accuracy 14 Damage 9B Defense 15 Rate 5

The Pit: Speed 20 Accuracy 18 Damage 17L Defense 14 Rate ∞

## EXALTED POWER COMBAT

These statistics are provided for individuals who use the Exalted Power Combat rules from the **Exalted Players Guide**.

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate
<i>Iron Circle</i>					
Silver Mace	-2	+2	+5	+0	2
Warstrider Fighting Chain	+12	-1	+4	+2	2
<i>Void Circle</i>					
Forsaken Life Engine Claws	+12	+10	+6L	+12	2





## CHAPTER SIX CREATURES OF THE UNDERWORLD



Ghosts fear the monsters of the Underworld, but their fright over the creatures' existence rise even above mere fear of known dangers. While they sometimes display some intelligent thinking through the way they behave and respond to changes in a given situation, these creatures are unable to act rationally in response to different circumstances, to comprehend emotions or to engage in communication. Instead, all these creatures can do is to perform their role, which was set at the moment of their creation, until the day when something obliterates them and sends them to Oblivion.

### PLASMICS AND SOCIETY

Many ghost savants have dedicated their existences to journeying across the realms in hopes of uncovering the origin of each type of plasmic and then cataloguing them in the archives of the Underworld, including the one in the Halls of Ebony and Bone, located 100 miles south of Stygia.

In previous centuries, their task was not an easy one, since each savant had her own theory on how these creatures came to be and what purpose they served in the Underworld. Eventually, the savants realized that it was futile since there are as many different origins as there are types of creatures.

Some rise as the embodiment of strange and mad-dened Malfean dreams, others are byproducts of failed sorcery, while the vast majority awakens without any

substantial explanation as to from whence they came. For ghosts in general, plasmics are nothing more than menaces to civilized undead existence, and if it looks strange or dangerous, it is destroyed and then examined.

### PLASMIC FAMILIARS

No Exalt or god has ever succeeded with the morbid attempt to bind their souls to the monsters of the Underworld. Charms and spells remain incapable of forming prolonged bonds between Essence wielders and these creatures. Scholarly oriented individuals are of the opinion that plasmics share the emptiness of a hollow soul only found in summoned demons of the Third Circle.

### PLASMICS OF THE UNDERWORLD

The Underworld divides into five major areas that mirrors Creation's outlook. Naturally, North, East, South and West constitute four of these five domains, with the fifth being the Isle of Stygia. Yet, there's a sixth, uncharted, area that is just as important to the ongoing conflicts and ancient mysteries that plagues the Underworld. It's an even

darker and more desolate place where loss of logic and rationality is commonplace. In one word, it's the Labyrinth.

This chapter presents plasmics from all six of these locations before taking on the fulfillment of the Mask of Winter's plans, the children of Juggernaut.

## EASTERN PLASMICS

The following plasmics have the Eastern Underworld as their natural habitat.

### CHAMELEON MONKEY

Chameleon monkeys are common creatures in the southeastern landscape. The creatures always dwell inside or just outside village (or city) walls, for they desire to be close to ghosts. Yet, they are extremely hard to detect (something which is reflected by their high Stealth score) and often pass unnoticed. This is not due to a special ability, but rather the creatures' inaptitude at rising with fully formed Essence bodies. They are merely translucent and decayed images of panic monkeys (see **Creatures of the Wyld**, p. 46), moving in large packs of at least 20 creatures.

In death, they are unable to sound the well-known chattering monkey laughter that they do in Creation. Instead, they are silent, somber beings that rarely engage in violent actions; preferring to cause chaos by stealing equipment from one individual and placing it with another's in order to gain attention. It is not unheard of that entire villages end up fighting due to their failure to realize that there are chameleon monkeys present.

### HURA

Each hura appears as an old woman, clothed in layers of green veils and death trappings. Underneath the veils, there is nothing but a pale, decayed female body. History records them as a humanoid race in Creation during the First Age, which was forced to flee into the Underworld during the Dragon-Blooded uprising against the Solars.

The huras' duty was to guard children from dematerialized dangers, for they possessed the talent to view the spirit world and strike back at incorporeal creatures. Driven insane by being trapped in a pale imitation of their once-beloved Creation, their purpose has switched, and all that drives them now is an intense hatred of the Dragon-Blooded. Yet, Dynastic ghosts are rare due to the practice of the Immaculate Philosophy on the Blessed Isle, so the Huras spend much of their time dreaming up terrible things to do to the rare ghosts that does fall into their hands.

Huras operate in groups of four; moving in after nightfall to steal ghostly children, who they bring to their abandoned ruins in the deepest East, where few are able to tread due to the heavy vegetation. Their captives never meet a final end and remain locked up in cages hanging high up in the treetops. Ghosts who have been captive for centuries eventually lose hope and fall into Oblivion or

Lethe after enough years without anyone arriving to answer their calls for aid.

These creatures are able to use what little winds blow to engage in slow flight up among the trees. This ability is never used to engage in fly-by attacks, only to lift Huras into safety or to move the battle onto the treetops. In combat, their veils also function as whips, and each Hura is able to perform one attack each turn against anything that is within the whip's reach (three yards) without suffering any dice pool penalties.

### LETHE SERPENT

**Exalted: The Abyssals** (p. 47) mentions serpents hiding in among the roots of the dead Eastern trees, waiting for ghosts to bite and infect with a poison that sends them into Lethe — these are the Lethe serpents. It's no secret to the Easterners that there are serpents with the power to enforce Lethe upon a ghost, and every dead with sense of self-preservation makes sure to cover their feet and legs carefully when entering densely vegetated areas.

The serpents are especially dangerous since they're easily mistaken for regular roots, but once their pale eyes and bodies shimmer in the sparse light of the forest, ghosts know that the end might well be near.

After being bitten, roll the ghost's Stamina + Resistance, difficulty 3. If the roll fails, the ghost immediately enters Lethe. A botch sends the ghost straight into the horrifying emptiness that is Oblivion. A successful roll makes the ghost immune to future encounters with the poison, although additional exposure may cause great discomfort in the form of weeping warts that cover the body (two-die impairment for two weeks).

While it's uncommon to spot more than a handful of Lethe serpents working together, they actually reside in large underground colonies that consist of hundreds of these plasmics. Should someone disturb an entire colony, the ghosts in the area would have a difficult time on their hands. Lethe snakes are also seen in the hands of assassins, who find their attacks a useful way to speed enemies to their rebirth.

### PULSE BLOSSOM

Underworld shamans and scholars interesting in the Eastern flora are familiar with pulse blossoms. They grow in the Northeast, close to the Empire of Aki, where ghosts clothed in gloves and armor attempt to harvest the plasmics in order to extract their liquid Essence and manufacture pulse draughts.

The actual flower consists of hundreds of gray and red colored petals attached in the form of a multilayered flower bowl with a luminescent black Essence liquid at the center. The pulse blossoms display a malevolent intelligence and will do anything to discourage ghosts from continuing the practice of harvesting them, even if it means dying. The



pulse blossoms are simply content to be a welcome sight and color change in the pale Eastern forests.

If a ghost touches a pulse blossom's petals, they bleed an oily substance that inflicts two health levels of lethal damage each turn (soak works normally). The blossom follows up on the attack by attempting to drench its opponent in the oily substance, inflicting 8L damage if successful. Ten turns after pulse blossoms start to bleed, they fade away until nothing remains but a shell of silk-thin fibers blowing in the wind. During those 10 turns, the bush attacks once per turn.

In order to successfully harvest pulse blossoms, the player of the one trying to do so must succeed with a Dexterity + Stealth roll, difficulty 3, in order for his character to avoid disturbing the creatures. This roll must be made with each new pulse blossom.

#### Pulse Draught (Alchemy ●●●)

The draught is bitter, but within two minutes after drinking the contents of the bottle, a ghost remembers how it was to have a pulse and breathe. This effect lasts a full day and is merely an illusion of the psyche. The ghost remains dead, but her senses perceive the Underworld as if it was Creation. Unfortunately, this effect only works once in any ghost's existence, so those who can afford the draught (Resources ●●●●●) save it for a special occasion.

#### SCAVENGER

Since they appear as gigantic skeletal vultures dressed in veils and death trappings, these creatures have become known as scavengers. They roam the entire region in search of new prey to destroy and steal from but prefer to remain close to centers of power such as Manses.

In combat, scavengers perform diving attacks using their beaks to knock their prey to the ground and tear him to pieces using their claws. Once their victims are no more, the scavengers devour any remains and keep something that the victim had with him for future ornamentation of their bodies.

#### SWAMP GOLEM

Swamp golems commonly awaken in marshes along the Eastern coast, rising as products of mud-mixed Essence flows, leaves, water and rotten animal remains. In their natural state, swamp golems appear as dark and oily leaf heaps full of withered toads and fishes. While they remain in this form, they are unable to defend against, or attack, opponents. Their smell is detectable up to a mile away, and while they never leave their home, they attack travelers without regret.

Changing into golem form takes one turn, but once they do, these creatures never cease attacking until



their opponents are destroyed. In combat, the swamp golem has a great advantage in that its attack is poisonous (treat as poison snake venom according to the chart on p. 243 of *Exalted*).

### WHITE ROBE

Sijan is known for its extremely professional mourners both in Creation and in the Underworld. They wear their sacred robes with honor while carrying the burden of grief that would otherwise only remain with the families of the dead. With all the emotions involved in burial processions, it is no wonder that white robes rise as a result of the imprint of this grief.

Exactly as the name implies, these creatures appear in the form of white robes that float through the air. Their gray and bronze ornamentations are symbols that constantly change depending on where they travel. Savants know that, properly interpreted, they display a map to the nearest Labyrinth entrance. Decoding the symbols require a successful Wits + Language roll, difficulty 3, and Occult ●●●.

White robes pose no threat to anyone by themselves, but other creatures and carnivores often follow in their wake due to the robes' power to paralyze those who are capable of feeling grief. In order to remain unaffected by the paralyzing grief the white robes emit in a 10-yard radius, players of victims must succeed with a Compassion roll at difficulty 2 or have their characters succumb to an agonizing and overwhelming sense of loss that renders them almost incapable of acting for four turns (mechanically, this inflicts a four-die penalty on all actions performed while under the robes' influence).

Normally, griefbees (see below) follow the white robes and surround them with an eerie green light. Seeing processions of at least 50 robes are not unheard of, but most white robes travel in groups of 20 or less and walk the roads from Sijan to Rathess.

### LESSER PLASMICS

**Fork Spider:** These spiders only exist in the areas around Great Forks and have received their name due to their forklike appearance. While the lower body is rather ordinary for spiders, each leg expands into three smaller legs at the bottom. Also, the spiders' lower head area divides into three separate sections, in essence providing the spider with a regular set of eyes but with three mouths. Fork spiders are of the same size as a newborn cat and, with a bite, can inject a poison that temporarily weakens an opponent by causing dizziness and lack of muscle control. Resisting the poison requires a successful Stamina + Resistance roll, difficulty 2. Failing the roll gives a character a four-die penalty for three hours. Succeeding gives a one-die penalty for one hour. There is no damage associated with the venom.

**Griefbee:** Griefbees share the appearance of any normal bee found in Creation, but unlike their living

counterparts, these lesser creatures do not feed on nectar, but on strong emotions, typically grief. The bees do not grasp the concept of emotions in any other way other than that it provides nourishment and allows them to give birth. When the bees feed on strong emotions, they emit an eerie, dark-green light similar in color to the corpora of those who died in the Contagion. Looking at the bees through that light makes it possible to see decayed tissue and small bone structures. Like the frostbites (see p. 158), griefbees immediately die if they are wounded.

**River Quadruped:** Many of the Eastern rivers are home to the river quadruped. These creatures seem to me made of partially decayed octopods, with every other leg hanging as dried skin. These four-tentacled horrors are carnivores and will devour anything they can drag into the water and crush. The quadrupeds work in small groups, often six or eight at a time.

### SOUTHERN PLASMICS

The following plasmics have the Southern Underworld as their natural habitat.

#### ASHEN NOMAD

Ashen nomads are humanoid plasmics with arms and legs composed of tightly packed sand, giving them a stonelike appearance. They have no facial features or eyes, and their torsos leave a trail of dust. A nomad's torso is kept together by densely packed, rotten muscles and decayed flesh.

Ashen nomads wander the deserts and decayed rainforests of the South, in search of a redemption they can never find (for being plasmics, they don't know what redemption truly means or why they seek it). This constant search is fuel for their aggression, which they display by attacking any humanoid life forms unlike themselves. After killing their victims, the nomads bury all the remains in sand (including clothing and equipment), and even if there's no substantial explanation as to why, savants studying plasmics believe it to be a gesture of homage to the desert from whence the nomads sprung.

#### BLACK GARDA

These suicidal birds only exist in the warmest areas of the South, where black fires may be seen beyond the horizon. If it were not for the fact that the core of the black cloud that makes up each black garda contains a glowing red skeletal outline similar in shape to the legendary garda bird, it would be impossible to spot the creatures.

Black Gardas wreak havoc by igniting themselves with Essence and plunging toward their prey. Upon impact, they engulf their targets in a black fire that warps and ruins mortal metals while severely burning the victims' bodies (16L raw damage).

Activating their attack costs 10 motes, and each bird has an Essence pool of that exact amount. If something

Plasmic	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will	Health Levels	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/ Soak	Abilities
Chameleon Monkey	1/4/2	1	-0/-2/1	Bite: 7/6/2L, Claw: 7/6/2L	7/1L/2B	Athletics 4, Awareness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Stealth 5
Fork Spider	1/3/2	1	-1/-2/1	Bite: 6/5/1L + poison*	3/1L/3B	Brawl 2
Lethe Serpent	1/3/1	1	-0/-1/-4/1	Bite: 6/6/2L + poison*	7/0L/1B	Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Stealth 4
Pulse Blossom	0/5/1	1	-0/1	Droplets: 5/8/2L	10/0L/1B	Archery 3, Dodge 5
River Quadruped	4/3/2	4	-0/-1x2/-4/1	Tentacle: 6/7/4L	6/1L/2B	Athletics 2, Dodge 3, Martial Arts 3
Scavenger	3/3/2	3	-0x3/1	Bite: 6/8/4L	8/1L/2B	Brawl 5, Dodge 5
Swamp Golem	5/2/5	2	-0x4/-1x2/ -2/-4/1	Punch: 7/5/5B	5/2L/5B	Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3

\* Further information exists in the creature's write-up.  
All creatures have Intelligence •, Perception •• and Wits •••, unless the description says otherwise.



steals motes from them and they become unable to fulfill their purpose for existing, they travel to the nearest volcano and sacrifice themselves in the lava. When doing so, the black gardas avoid Oblivion and are reborn after regaining their full Essence. This is the only fashion in which black gardas can regain Essence.

### BONE-ROAD WALKER

Plasmics are often of a nature that requires them to attack first and disregard whether or not their opponents pose a threat to them, but the walkers are not of that sort, even if they're capable of combat.

The prime threat the bone-road walkers pose comes not from their direct might, but from the legendary doom they trail. When the walkers appear in a place, ill luck and destruction is bound to follow. There are no rules for this, but the walkers are invariably the worst sort of omen.

Bone-road walkers appear to be quite dangerous beings, since they are half snake and half ox. A walker's torso and head is that of mutilated and decayed oxen, while its lower body is simply a long snake tail, which leaves a translucent slime trail in its wake. Normally, it would be possible to use the tail as weaponry, but walkers have no muscles or tissue left inside to perform such actions. However, they can crush their victims by butting them with their horns or can inject a poison with their bite (treat as a serious poison, difficulty 2, according to the rules on p. 243 of *Exalted*). They will defend themselves from attack, but the reality of bone-road walkers is that they are plasmics adrift on the currents of the Underworld's fate and that their procession is no more considered than the migration of birds in the world of the living.

### FIRE DUST PHANTOM

The volcanically active Underworld deserts of the Southwest play host to dangerous cloud-plasmics composed of fire dust. Their only purpose is to seek out and explode with anything that moves, whether it's another plasmic, an Abyssal, a living person or a ghost. Once a phantom senses movements other than its own, it surges forward to encompass the victim and confuse him. If the creature is successful at this, it leads its imprisoned victim toward the nearest source of heat or flames, where the cloud ignites and explodes within two turns. Needless to say, fire dust phantoms lurk on the edges of lava pools and other similar locations.

Whenever a phantom's dust cloud surrounds its victim, the victim's player should roll Perception + Awareness, difficulty 4, in order to see if it is possible to find the way out of the creature. Failure indicates that victims move along with the cloud and that the roll should be remade on the next turn. A botch removes all chance to find the way out except one, which Storytellers should allow in the moments before the cloud reaches its final destination.

If a fire dust phantom explodes, it inflicts raw damage of 20L, which can be soaked as normal. Terrestrial Exalted of the Fire Aspect suffer no damage at all. Fire dust phantoms have no health levels and can only be destroyed if ignited. Storytellers should keep in mind that all it requires to destroy a phantom without suffering damage is a flaming arrow from a distance of more than 20 feet away.

### HUNGRY MIRRORS

Hungry mirrors show up only in natural environments close to extremely warm sands and appear as tattered



and unshaped mirror shards. They are an Underworld manifestation of all the thrown away, well-used and sacrificed mirrors in Creation. Once someone looks into the shards, the shards make an attempt to entice the victim so they can drain their prey of her Virtues.

When hungry mirrors perform their attack, players of their victims' make an opposed Willpower roll, which can be supplemented with Temperance. Failure allows the hungry mirror to permanently consume one Virtue dot at the beginning of the next turn, while a botch indicates that the creature drained one dot in that instance in addition to next turn. Victims must resist each turn for as long as they have dots of Virtues left. When their four ratings reach 0, the hungry mirrors let them go and shatter into a thousand pieces.

The order in which the mirrors feed is: Compassion, Valor, Temperance and Conviction.

Hungry mirrors are responsible for the creation of vengeful exiles (see p. 163).

### LESSER ROCK DRAGON

Once upon a time, there was a risk that travelers all over the South would end up waking one of the lesser rock dragons. With the arrival of the Deathlords, the dragons' numbers have shrunk significantly to no more than a dozen.

Lesser rock dragons are so large that they can often be a mile or more in length. Their heads are constructed out of black rock-dust and half-formed heads and torsos, with the empty spots displaying only burnt muscle tissue still flickering with the blue flames if the darkest Southern Underworld, while the creatures' wings and claws are made out of glowing embers.

When attacking, a lesser rock dragon normally bites or claws its victims to death, but occasionally it sprays them with lava (30L) or simply devours them. If it devours a victim, it is often possible to see him burning to death inside the dragon's body. When rock dragons engage in combat, they do so without any sense of tactics. Only pure lust for destruction drives them.

Although lesser rock dragons are rare, and are normally only found in the hottest areas of the Underworld, more of them are showing up in areas around the First and Forsaken Lion's domain.

### LESSER PLASMICS

**Firefly:** Extremely tiny and only found in volcano active domains, fireflies are burning insects that are drawn to moving objects. Their bodies, made of gray fire, inflict damage on all the flies touch. As a result, Charms or artifacts that protect against fire damage or heat negates the damage inflicted by the flies. When engaging opponents, the creatures do so in swarms of equal size to those of the scorpion wasps (see below).

**Razorwing:** With their 15 feet wingspan, razorwings are one of the largest flying species in the South. They soar

through the sky above the pale Southeastern jungles, constantly watching for prey to bring back to their young ones. Much like the wind howlers (see p. 158), razorwings only attack from the air, moving in to behead victims with their razor-sharp skeletal wings. Although birds, they lack any distinctive features such as feathers or beaks. Instead, where there should normally be a beak, there is nothing but a dark hole full of red, rotten tissue. The creatures' bodies are extremely flat, almost like the mantas of Creation's Southwest. When feeding, razorwings attach their mouths to their victims and drain them of 4 motes of Essence per turn. When there are no motes left, the birds draw forth one health level per turn. Normally, however, they only feed on dead prey, as they are totally vulnerable (no block or dodge) when attached and attempting to feed.

**Scorpion Wasp:** Swarms of thousands of scorpion wasps exist in the regions close to Gem and the Font of Mourning. As implied by the creature's name, its body is that of a wasp, with a head and tail similar to that of a scorpion. Scorpion wasps constantly glow a reddish color that makes them extremely easy to spot from a distance. Scorpion sting poison cause no prolonged effect and simply attacks the areas where the skin was penetrated by its stinger. This means that scorpion wasp attacks inflict aggravated damage, which may be soaked normally but cannot be countered with a Stamina + Resistance roll. The statistics below indicate a swarm consisting of 1,000 scorpion wasps.

## WESTERN PLASMICS

The natural habitat of the following plasmics is the Western Underworld.

### ALGAL DRAGON

From the depths of the Sea of Shadows, the algal dragons rise to wreak havoc on seafarers and their ships. The creature's shape is that of a lizardlike dragon, but each one's body is entirely composed of rotten algae and body parts from its victims. An algal dragon has a gigantic maw that can spread wide enough for it to swallow a small sailing boat. Once one has sunk a ship and killed its crew, it uses the wreckage to build its nests in sea caverns, while the corpses are used to patch up wounds by simply allowing the remains to grow into the damaged parts of the body.

Algal dragons are known never to cooperate, but when the cargo ship *Unrelenting Anger* left the port of Onyx, heading for the Stygian island, a group of 10 dragons sunk the ship. The ship's cargo was vast amounts of weaponry and armor intended for the Silver Prince himself. Despite attempts to recover the missing treasure, none have yet succeeded.


### CORAL MASK

Coral masks grow in the reefs of strange, feathery coral outside the western coast of the Isle of Shadows. They're famous for their similar appearance to the deathmasks

Plasmic	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will	Health Levels	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/ Soak	Abilities
Ashen Nomad	2/2/2	3	-0/-1/-2/ -4x2/1	Punch: 5/4/2B	4/1L/2B	Awareness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Survival 4 (Desert +2)
Black Garda	1/3/1	4	-0/1	Fiery Crash: 6/8/16L + special*	3/0L/1B	Athletics 5 (Flight +3), Brawl 5
Bone-Road Walker	4/2/2	4	-0/-1x2/ -2x2/4/1	Bite: 6/3/1L, Butt: 5/2/4B	6/1L/2B	Dodge 4
Firedust Phantom	0/5/0	1	Special*	8/0/20L	0/0/0	—
Firefly	2/5/1	1	-2/1	Fiery Touch: 8/6/2L	7/0L/1B	Brawl 1, Dodge 2
Hungry Mirror	0/0/2	7	-0/-2x3/-4/1	Virtue Drain: 0/0/special*	0/1L/2B	—
Lesser Rock Dragon	15/3/20	5	-0x7/-1x4/ -2x3/-4/1	Bite: 6/7/15L, Claw: 6/7/15L, Lava: 6/7/30L	4/10L/20B	Archery 4, Athletics 2 (Flight +1), Awareness 3 (Personal Domain +2), Brawl 4, Dodge 1, Presence 2 (Intimidation +3)
Razorwing	3/3/5	3	-0x2/-1/ -2x2/-4/1	Wing Slash: 6/6/3L	7/0L/1B	Brawl 1, Dodge 2
Scorpion Wasp	3/2/3	5	-0/-1/-2x2/1	Sting: 6/6/1A	8/2L/5B	Athletics 4 (Flight +1), Awareness 2, Brawl 3

\* Further information exists in the creature's write-up.  
All creatures have Intelligence •, Perception •• and Wits •••, unless the description says otherwise.





worn in the city of Stygia, and despite the danger they pose, many attempt to kill them in order to take the creatures' corpses and form them into real masks. The masks are active swimmers and feed on other sea creatures that fit their tiny mouths, but they can also drain Essence and blood by using the local reefs as weaponry. Once another being comes into contact with the reefs, the coral masks can direct the coral to attach to the victim and drain her at the rate of 3 motes (or health levels, if the target has no motes) per turn. This damage is an environmental effect of being near the reef (see **Exalted**, p. 243), with a successful Stamina + Resistance roll, difficulty 2, required to resist. The victim loses only 1 mote if she successfully resists. The interval is one turn. This is the only defense the masks have against creatures that mean them harm.

As they grow in size, coral masks grow weary of existing underwater and realize that they actually need a larger, physical body to fulfill their growing passion for creating chaos. Once a mask decides to find a host, it plays dead (this ruse can be discovered by succeeding on a Perception + Awareness roll, difficulty 3, since small animals still won't approach the area where the coral mask is) and allows a collector to pick it up and reform it into a wearable deathmask. For this reason, coral masks sold in the city of Stygia must be sold with a certificate stating they were harvested from live, free-swimming specimens, and sellers must try them on before a sale.

Once someone — except for Exalted and spirit beings with an Essence rating higher than ●●●, since they possess far too much strength for a coral mask to overcome — wears the mask, the creature begins to expand and grow around the head and body of the victim until it has trapped the wearer and assumed control over her. Victims cannot be larger than an adult ghost and no smaller than a ghostly child.

When a coral mask attempts to assume control over its victims, the mask must succeed with an attack that inflicts at least one health level of damage. Once it has established itself as a parasite on the host, the victim and the mask engage in opposed Strength feats (masks gain a cumulative automatic success for each turn they remain on their hosts). If the wearer fails to remove the mask within five turns and her player fails a Willpower roll (difficulty 4), she becomes a slave to the mask's will. Interestingly, the plasmic's connection to the host's mind allows it to think rationally as if it had a human Intelligence rating of ●●●. Nonetheless, even coral masks possessing the most mannerly of individuals cannot suppress their primal urges, and they are ever driven to create chaos among the Underworld's citizens.

It is only possible to remove an attached mask by striking it or burning it for at least 14L damage. If struck while the victim wears it, the wearer also suffers the same effect.

## EBON WHALE

The shimmering ebon whales traffic the waters between the South and the Isle of Shadows. Driven by a hunger to consume, ebon whales are omnivores, eating ghosts, living flesh, fish and even other plasmics.

Sailors rightly fear the whales' attacks, since one blow with their tails can sink a large ship, leaving those onboard to fend against the hostile creatures of the Sea of Shadows, most significantly the giant, ghost-eating whale itself. Yet, many ghosts travel the Sea in hopes of bringing back the skeletal remains of an ebon whale. The bones are extremely useful in many necromantic constructions or simply as raw materials for ebony trappings.

## Eoi

The Western Underworld is the natural habitat for numerous races of birds that lack the ability to fly. One such creature is the deformed eoi — half seagull and half crab. Eoi live in cavities under the sand all over the Western isles. They sleep during the day and search for seafood after nightfall.

Due to their tough shells, batches of eoi will fetch a high price from artificers with expertise in armor manufacturing (Resources ●●●). Armor made of eoi has the statistics: +5L/+7B, mobility penalty 1 and fatigue 0 (and hardness 2, if using Exalted Power Combat). Such armor normally costs Resources ●●●● but can be found cheaper where the creatures are common.

## ULDRA

Uldra are land-based creatures appearing as humanoid sharks with extremely dry skin and eight tentacles sprouting from their shoulders. Unlike the sharks that plague Creation's waters, the uldra do not consume that which they kill. They merely thrive on the act of slaying another creature, even others of their kind. Upon encountering one another, the creatures engage in fierce combat until one of them is dead.

Witnessing these events is often exciting, since it involves not only direct combat between the two. There is also tracking and canny strategies involved since the uldra possess chameleon-like abilities (reflected by their high Stealth score). While it is possible to find them on any isle, the uldra refrain from constructing nests close to inhabited areas. If they did otherwise, they would lose the excitement of the hunt.

## SALTWALKER

Saltwalkers have been around the West since long before the Contagion. Water from the Sea of Shadows surrounds their lizard-shaped bone structure as flesh does around a living creature's bones, providing them with an excellent defense against weapons (they only inflict half of the rolled damage on an attack). Their small size, about the

same height and length as a normal cat, has caused many ghost children to attempt to keep them as pets, something that has always been in vain since their liquid form adapts to any bars or chains holding them. They are cute but potentially aggressive pests.

### LESSER PLASMICS

**Clam Turtle:** These large, four-legged, clamlike creatures wander slowly across the shores of the Underworld's Western isles, constantly looking for something to eat — generally, they leave their shells open, and various shoreline scavengers swoop in to feed on the rotting flesh within. Once a target enters or reaches into the clam turtle's mouth, it slams shut, and the creature begins to drain the victim of its Essence at a rate of 2 motes per turn. When a creature reaches 0 Essence, it loses health levels and, after losing its last, falls into either Lethe or Oblivion. If attacked from the inside, the clam turtles may only soak with half its normal rating but the victim is at a four-die penalty due to cramped quarters.

**Essence Maelstrom:** Essence maelstroms are white and gray storms, no larger a full-grown man, which attack anything that moves. Once one engages a victim, the creature moves to tear Essence out of him with bolts of black lightning.

Essence maelstroms store the drained power within themselves, and as soon as the combat ends, they withdraw, leaving a trail of black threads made out of Underworld Essence. When rolling for damage, the victim loses motes instead of health levels until he has no motes left to lose. The victim then loses health levels as normal.

**Shore Eel:** Shore eels have the ability to send electrifying bolts of pure Underworld Essence out to a radius of five yards. As a result, while they are relatively docile creatures, those who know of their existence always keep an eye out for these scaly, gray eels close to land. It is easy to detect the eels' presence due to the lack of creatures and smaller animals in the vicinity of a shore. Detecting them in the water requires a successful Perception + Awareness roll, difficulty 2.

### NORTHERN PLASMICS

The following plasmics make their home in the Northern Underworld.

#### CANNIBALIZED

Most mysterious of all plasmics are the cannibalized, so named after ghosts having identified a few of the creatures as sharing the appearance of loved ones sacrificed by the Varajtul tribe (see **Exalted: The Lunars**, pp. 48-49). What's startling about them is not only that they remind ghosts of dead family members, but also that they've retained some of the light found in Creation and locked it inside themselves and then reflect it once their bodies are hit by the tiny amount of light available in the Underworld.

Their bodies appear as beautiful and shimmering, yet horrifying, sculptures of ice that continuously warp into new sharp angles with each move. The random change in form provides them with the option to perform an attack and a parry action each turn without suffering dice-pool penalties.



Plasmic	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will	Health Levels	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/ Soak	Abilities
Algal Dragon	8/6/7	4	-0x3/-1x2/ -2/-4/1	Bite: 9/9/8L	8/3L/7B	Athletics 3 (Swim +2), Awareness 1, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Presence 4
Clam Turtle	2/2/7	1	-0x3/-1x2/1	Bite: 5/4/2L + special*	3/5L/7B	Brawl 2, Dodge 1
Ebon Whale	15/6/23	4	-0x10/-1x7/ -2x4/-4/1	Bite: 9/10/15L, Fluke Slap: 9/10/20L	6/11L/23B	Athletics 4 (Swim +2), Brawl 4, Endurance 5
Eoi	2/1/2	1	-0x2/-2/1	Claw: 4/3/2L	1/1L/2B	Brawl 2, Stealth 2
Essence Maelstrom	5/7/5	4	-0x4/-1x2/ -2/-4/1	Bolt: 10/11/ special*	7/2L/5B	Archery 4, Awareness 4
Saltwalker	1/3/2	3	-0x5/1	Bite: 6/6/1L	7/1L/2B	Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 4
Shore Eel	1/5/1	1	-1x2/-2x2/1	Shock: 8/10/1A	9/0L/1B	Archery 5, Dodge 4
Uldra	5/4/4	3	-0x2/-1x2/ -2/-4/1	Bite: 7/7/8L	8/2L/4B	Awareness 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Endurance 5, Resistance 5, Stealth 4 (Ambush +2), Survival 3

\* Further information exists in the creature's write-up.  
All creatures have Intelligence •, Perception •• and Wits •••, unless the description says otherwise.



## ENTROPIC FOG

Entropic fogs are plasmics that each consist of only a densely packed, gray-gold cloud with a decayed, humanoid fetus located deep inside its core. Each fog cloud covers a 30-yard radius while reaching almost 45 yards into the air, making it virtually impossible to locate the core of an entropic fog.

Despite their tenuous nature, entropic fogs can be attacked with mortal weapons, as there is no dematerialization in the Underworld. The fact that there is little to strike is reflected in the creature's relatively high soak.

Although the fog has no solid form, it can attack, using Willpower as its offensive and defensive Trait (the fog dodges, rather than parrying). Players of those trapped inside an entropic fog must succeed with a Valor roll for their characters to avoid total panic (three-die penalty on all rolls during the rest of the scene). If characters have Temperance ●●●● or higher, the Valor roll is not necessary. Any lost health levels do not cause victims to bleed. Instead, their muscles wither, giving the wounded a mummified appearance. For every four health levels of damage that the fog inflicts, permanently reduce the victims' Stamina or Strength (player's decision) by one dot.

## FERAL

Ferals are menaces to the barbarian tribes due to their feeding habits. Unlike other creatures, which feed on their victims, ferals leave their kills behind and devour the frost-coated forests of their habitat in the Northeast. Their insatiable hunger for bark and tree branches cause the tribes of the dead many problems since many barbarians keep their burial grounds hidden in vegetated areas. Still, despite their herbivorous feeding habits, ferals are extremely violent creatures and engage anyone they perceive as a threat to their existence.

Ghosts from outside the North often mistake ferals for carnivores since a feral looks like a cross between a decayed and moth-eaten snow lion (see **Creatures of the Wyld**, p. 19) and a reindeer. Using their sharp teeth and long necks, ferals have the ability to feed on branches as far as 30 feet off the ground. These creatures can also make hand-to-hand attacks as far as 20 feet away without exposing themselves to retribution, making lightning-quick jabs with their long necks.

## GLIMMER APPARITION

Glimmer apparitions exist only to act as bait to lure victims into a large nest of lethal plasmics (a nest of ferals, for example). However, many recognize the apparitions for what they truly are since stories of them spread across the tundra like wildfires in Creation. Indeed, since glimmer apparitions shine in a dimmed color spectrum that

mimics the northern lights seen in Creation, almost everyone recognizes them on sight.

These creatures are drawn to grave goods and items made of the Five Magical Materials and attempt to steal them. By engulfing its target, a glimmer apparition focuses its will to grasp the loot with a physical hand created out of its compact light. Should the item be in the hands of — or worn by — someone at the time that the creature attempts to steal it, the two engage in an opposed Strength check (where the apparition uses Willpower as its offensive Attribute). Glimmer apparitions are unable to carry items that have a higher weight than their Strength + Athletics permits, unless two or more of them cooperate.

In combat, note that, although glimmer apparitions are made out of light, it's possible to harm them with mortal weapons in the Underworld or in a shadowland at night. Also, some barbarian shamans have discovered that it is possible to imprison the creatures by locking them up in special containers made out of wind howler bones. Such cages cost Resources ••• or can be made if one has access to wind howler bones and commits 20 hours of effort to the project. This requires Occult ••• and a successful Dexterity + Craft (Carving) roll at difficulty 3. These cages are mainly used by ghostly shamans.

## LIVING TUNDRA

Not all creatures exist in a single place or are even capable of movement; living tundra is one such being. Living tundra are magically occurring phenomena in areas where agents of Oblivion use their dark powers in abundance (e.g., in prolonged combat or in long rituals). Shortly after the Death-aspected Essence flows have calmed down, the residue awakens the tundra and transcends it into a creature capable of devouring those who stand on top of it.

Living tundra has an extremely high soak rating, but it's contrasted by the fact that it's unable to inflict any damage on its enemies unless they're located on top of it. Spotting living tundra before it makes its presence known requires Survival ••••. The difficulty of the Perception + Survival roll is 3. All living tundra varies in size, but always range between 5 and 20 square yards.

When the living tundra opens its maw, avoiding it requires a successful Dexterity + Athletics roll, difficulty 2 (+1 difficulty per five square yards in size). Failure means that a victim clings to the edge of the hole. Unless she manages to find the strength to climb up from the edge (Strength + Athletics, difficulty 3), she plunges into the creature at the beginning of the next turn. A botch on the roll indicates that she immediately falls into the tundra and faces complete destruction, just like anyone who falls into the creature. Entombed characters may fight their way out before they suffocate. Players of entombed characters roll at a three-die penalty due to

friction on their arms. Treat the tundra as a stone wall (see **Exalted**, p. 239) for the purposes of absorbing attacks directed at freeing the trapped character. See page 243 of **Exalted** for rules on suffocation and holding one's breath.

## SHATTER

Despite all their might, even the Exalted fear shatters and their ability to insert mental blocks in their victims. These half-formed arachnids, with weak and damaged bones, tattered bodies and without the ability to spin webs, are of the same size as bear cubs. While there are two types of shatters — shatters and queen shatters — the only way they visibly differ is in size.

A queen is three times as large and inflicts aggravated damage when she strikes with her razor sharp legs. Only one queen exists in a shatter nest, which consists of at least 100 of these creatures. Also, unlike her minions, she has retained the ability to spin webs, which the nest uses for protection against intruders (use the same rules as being trapped by normal shatters).

Once shatters engage their opponent, they attack with the sharp edges on their legs while trapping the victim in a pool of unformed webbing that either leaks out of their belly or that they spit (often used in combat). Players of those trapped in the webbing must succeed in a reflexive Strength + Athletics roll, difficulty 4, or a Dexterity + Larceny roll, difficulty 3, in order to avoid their characters being immobilized for the next two turns before being allowed to try and break loose again. If shatters choose to spit their webbing, it has the appearance of a small, gray ball that cannot be parried, only dodged (note that the spit has a rate of 2). Weapons covered in it are immediately stuck to the hands that wield them and cannot be moved with the same grace as they normally could (subtract one success from all attack rolls).

Should the shatters manage to inject their poison, the effect does not occur until after a number of turns equal to the victim's permanent Essence rating. Use the poison rules on page 243 of **Exalted**. The difficulty of the Stamina + Resistance roll to resist the poison is 3. If the roll is failed, the victim's Mental Attributes drop to • until cured through magic or through a slow process of healing and rehabilitation (that is, spending experience). On a success, the poison imposes a one-die penalty to all mental actions for one hour.

Cures for their poison come in three known ways: through suicide (despite the risk of ending up in Oblivion), which is the most common; through the use of Charms or sorcery; and by drinking a brew made from the bones of a shatter queen (requires Alchemy •• to create).

Shatters exist all over the North, with nests in caverns and holes in the tundra, and they often nest close to living tundra.



## WIND HOWLER

The black mountains around Tzatli are home to wind howlers, plasmics that appear as gigantic, decayed, three-headed falcons.

Wind howlers engage their victim in pairs, approaching the target from different directions. Their attack is not physical, but works through a muted scream that affects all who can hear it. Resisting requires an extended Willpower roll, difficulty 15, that is rolled on the turn the character first hears the shriek and for five turns thereafter. Failing this roll permanently imposes one derangement from the list on page 281 of **Exalted** (player's choice). A failed Willpower roll during the six turns indicates that the following checks are at +1 difficulty (these penalties are cumulative). If a character is exposed to the howl again and again, reset the turn counter and the number of accumulated successes each time the character is exposed to the sound.

## YGDRA

These ash-tree creatures springs to life in the Northeast and are famous for trapping prey in their branches and then crushing their victims before devouring the corpses' Essence. By successfully performing a clinch attack (see **Exalted**, p. 239), the trees ensnare prey in their branches. Each turn, the trapped may attempt to escape. This action is reflexive and does not impose any penalties other dice rolls, but all non-Charm-based dodge and parry attempts fail. Ygdra may make up to three crushing attacks each turn, but they suffer normal dice-pool penalties. They may choose to not perform crushing attacks during two turns and make an attempt to drain Essence on the third. Each success on the attack roll drains 3 motes from the trapped being.

## LESSER PLASMICS

**Frostbite:** The frostbites are no larger than a grown human's fingers and almost impossible to discover in the snow (difficulty 5) before it is too late. Once a frostbite swirls in the wind and attaches to a victim's skin, its purpose for existing is fulfilled, and it melts. Being touched by a swarm of frostbites freezes the joints of both the living and ghosts. When struck by a frostbite, the target's player must succeed on a Stamina + Resistance roll, difficulty 1, in order to avoid a one-die penalty on all actions until she has recuperated by a fire for three hours. If hurt by a weapon, a frostbite perishes, since the creatures have no soak or health levels.

**Shadow Bear:** Although these plasmics have the appearance of bear shadows, they lack exact and rigid features as the shadows shift with each step they take. They possess no special magical abilities, but they are driven to locate living people that have strayed into the Northern shadowlands to feast on their warm blood, since even the amount found in a human child provides a shadow bear

with two *additional* -0 health levels for three days, while a grown human provides twice that number of health levels for a week.

**Yeti-Spawn:** The yeti-spawn gained their name due to their torso and head's similarity to those of the yetis of Creation. Their lower bodies have practically nothing left except for bent and broken bones. Their upper half also shows signs of decay, and underneath the matted gray fur, there is only rotten meat. Also, these creatures have only empty sockets where their eyes once were.

When engaged in combat, the yeti-spawn prove to be excellent blind-fighters, suffering no dice pool penalties due to their lack of vision.

## STYGIAN PLASMICS

The following plasmics have the Isle of Stygia as their natural habitat.

### ALAUN

Before the Dragon Kings came to be, when the gods were mere infants in the Primordial psyche, the ancients were served by birdlike humanoids. Their arms were covered in feathers, while their long necks would make it possible for them to stretch thousands of feet in the air so that they could listen more closely to their masters. Instead of mouths, they had beaks like that of any bird, but their winglike arms could not sustain flight. They were bound to the ground, and the Primordials remade them by giving them hands and fingers. In life, they served without the ability to question. In death, they are alone and confused.

After the Primordial War and the Underworld's formation, the alaun ended up on the southwestern coast of the Isle of Stygia — the place where they were first conceived. Always controlled by their masters, the alaun had little intelligence and wits to rely on, but they knew how to serve and how to construct simple things such as houses and tools.

At first the alaun lived in peace, but when the ghosts of those who slew their creators (and themselves) began to appear in the Underworld, the creatures were lost to madness and despair. Today, they have barricaded themselves inside a great stone fortress hidden among the southern mountains close to where one would find Lord's Crossing in Creation. They intend to defend themselves from *anyone* attempting to get close to their home, for they will not perish once again. They will fight to destroy anyone who threatens them or their now-dead masters.

Underworld alaun have retained the appearance that they had in Creation with the exception that their long necks have lost their muscles and are now dried and full of broken tissue, merely looking like ostrich or crane necks, and cannot stretch thousands of feet. The arms are covered in black feathers, contrasted by the alaun's long, twisted pale fingers. Their legs are extremely thin and easily broken, but

Plasmic	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will	Health Levels	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/ Soak	Abilities
Cannibalized	8/6/7	4	-0x3/-1x2/ x2x2/-4/I	Bite: 9/8/8L, Claw: 9/8/8L, Ice Sword: 9/12/10L	9/3L/7B	Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Melee 5
Entropic Fog	0/4/0	6	-0/-1/-2/I	Envelop: 9/6/ special*	6/6L/6B	Athletics 3 (Flight +1), Dodge 2
Feral	10/5/5	3	-0x2/-1x2/ -2/-4x2/I	Bite: 8/7/12L	7/7L/9B	Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Survival 4
Glimmer Apparition	0/7/0	5	-0x5/I	Special*	12/5L/5B	Brawl 3, Dodge 4
Living Tundra	0/0/25	8	-0x10/-1x5/ -2x5/-4x2/I	Special*	0/20L/33B	–
Shadow Bear	5/2/5	3	-0/-1x2/ -2x2/-4/I	Bite: 5/5/5L, Claw: 5/5/5L	4/5L/7B	Awareness 3, Dodge 2, Brawl 3, Presence 2 (Intimidation +2)
Shatter	3/3/3	4	-0/-1/-2x2/ -4/I	Bite: 6/5/3L + poison*, Spit: 6/5/special*	6/1L/3B	Archery 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3
Wind Howler	3/4/3	3	-1/-2/I	Scream: 7/9/10B + special*	6/1L/3B	Archery 5, Dodge 2
Yeti-Spawn	4/4/5	3	-0x2/-1x2/ -2x2/-4/I	Bite: 7/7/9L, Claw: 7/7/7L	7/3L/5B	Awareness 3, Dodge 2, Brawl 3, Presence 2 (Intimidation +2)
Ygdra	8/3/10	2	-0x5/-1x3/ -2/-4/I	Clinch: 6/8/10B	3/5L/10B	Brawl 5, Endurance 5, Resistance 5

\* Further information exists in the creature's write-up.  
All creatures have Intelligence •, Perception •• and Wits •••, unless the description says otherwise.



their many joints make them extremely dexterous warriors, and they typically fight with swords and warhammers.

### COBBLER

Cobblers stalk the entire Island of Stygia and pose a serious threat to those who travel there. Although humanoid in appearance, a cobbler's head is pierced with large, glimmering, black nails that have torn open both flesh and skull before healing into the body as part of it. Its decayed torso is, in part, ripped open, and the maggots that live inside them have closed the wounds by spinning a protective layer of silk over the hole. A cobbler's legs are bent and twisted backward but it remains standing by means of two large nails that extend through its kneecaps and act as secondary props for its twisted limbs. Due to this, these plasmics move extremely slowly, but when they hit their opponents with their hands and arms, which are also pierced by razor-sharp nails, they inflict lethal damage.

### MALFIC STALKER

Awakened in Malfeas and unleashed on the Isle of Stygia, the malfic stalkers are of humanoid size but lack a human's facial structure, arms and legs. They shimmer with a pale red-and-black light as they move across the

landscape on their five insectlike legs. The stalkers' faces are malformed, with the lower jaw elongated beneath their neck and dragged to both left and right, making it appear flat. The area around their hollow eye sockets is dark blue and extremely wrinkled, while the hair one would expect to cover their pointy heads grows instead on their shoulders. Rather than arms, they wield gigantic claws similar to those of crabs, which they use to crack the skulls of their opponents. Malfic stalkers often attack explorers traveling through the more remote portions of the Isle of Stygia.

### PORTEE DOG

Only ghosts of the Dynasty know of the Portee dogs (see **Exalted: The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 44) and desire to own one even in death. This desire is reflected in the Underworld by the emergence of these strange plasmics. Instead of being household dogs, they have grown to the size of bears with no one there to train them, and their bodies consist only of old silken threads bound together to form the appearance of canines. The Portee dogs roam the landscape around the kennel of Whitecloud and often shelter in caverns when they manage to find any. While they are brave creatures, they are completely feral and do not seem tamable.



## ROCK BIRD

These creatures nest in mountains close to Stygia itself. They rarely leave their domains unless they must go down to inhabited areas to find food for their young. Rock birds come in different shapes and sizes, but they always appear in the form of predatory birds such as hawks and vultures. They are extremely resilient due to their stone bodies, but their natural weapons are weak compared to those of normal ghost birds.

## WALKER OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

In their hatred of the children of the Unconquered Sun, the Malfeans stirred in their sleep, dreaming of the walkers of the midnight sun, plasmics that embodied the opposite of the Unconquered Sun's virtues of warmth and righteous justice. Then, as the dreams faded, these plasmics awoke with a hunger for injustice and chaos.

Walkers of the midnight sun are humanoids who dress in white robes and carry darkened symbols of the sun in

chains around their necks. Each one's head is covered in a dark cloth with a tattered symbol of the Solars' Dawn Caste. They view themselves as the righteous champions of the Malfeans and will do anything to set them free, even if it means destroying the entire Underworld in the process. They also attack anything that goes against their beliefs, including Solars.

In combat, the walkers of the midnight sun wield any weaponry that can be held by a being of human size, even those fit only for Exalts (although the walkers cannot attune to the Five Magical Materials).

## LESSER PLASMICS

**Crystal Mouse:** Crystal mice are common on the Isle of Stygia, in areas rich in gem or crystal deposits. Intense blue-colored eyes contrast with the mice's pale crystal bodies. Whenever they can, crystal mice steal minor crystal shards and gems to keep in their nests as objects of beauty. While they have no appreciation for beauty as those with a soul, they feel a certain camaraderie with the

Plasmic	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will	Health Levels	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/ Soak	Abilities
Alaun	2/5/2	6	-0x3/-1x2/ -2/1	Slashing Sword: 11/10/4L, Warhammer: 5/10/6L	7/1L/2B	Awareness 3, Craft (Masonry) 2, Dodge 2, Melee 4, Presence 1
Cobbler	2/2/2	4	-0x2/-2x3/ -4x2/1	Nail Punch: 2/6/7L	4/1L/2B	Awareness 1, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Presence 1
Crystal Mouse	1/3/1	1	-0/-2/1	Bite: 6/3/1L	6/0L/1B	Awareness 2, Dodge 3, Survival 3
Malfic Stalker	4/4/5	2	-1x6/-2x2/ -4/1	Claws: 7/8/9L	8/2L/5B	Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Presence 4 (Intimidation +1)
Portee Dog	7/3/5	3	-0/-1x2/ -2x2/-4/1	Bite: 6/5/7L	4/2L/5B	Athletics 1, Awareness 1, Brawl 2, Dodge 1, Presence 2 (Intimidation +1), Survival 3
Rock Bird	4/2/5	2	-0x3/-1x2/ -4/1	Bite: 5/4/4L, Talon: 5/4/4L	6/3L/6B	Athletics 2 (Flight +2), Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Survival 2
Seabull	5/2/5	2	-0/-1x5/ -2x3/1	Gore: 5/7/8L	5/2L/5B	Athletics 3 (Swim +1), Brawl 4, Dodge 3
Thorn Hawk	2/4/1	1	-0/-1/-2/1	Talon: 7/6/2L	7/0L/1B	Athletics 1 (Flight 1), Brawl 2, Dodge 3
Walker of the Midnight Sun	3/4/4	8	-0/-1x2/ -2x2/-4/1	Punch: 7/6/3L (or by weapon type)	6/2L/4B	Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Melee 2, Presence 2 (Intimidation +2)

\* Further information exists in the creature's write-up.  
All creatures have Intelligence •, Perception •• and Wits •••, unless the description says otherwise.

inanimate objects. Sometimes, the mice secretly travel from one place to another by hiding in travelers' baggage or in caravans.

**Seabull:** These violent creatures roam the waters west of the Isle of Stygia. They appear to be bulls covered in rotten skin and maggots. However, the creatures lack the legs that their land-based relative possesses. Instead, they have six tentacles that they use to swim. Due to the tentacles' weakness, it is impossible for the seabulls to use them in combat, leaving them to rely on their sharp horns and powerful bites instead.

**Thorn Hawk:** These creatures emerged from the Labyrinth centuries ago and have now settled in the Stygian forests. Although they possess the form of hawks, these creatures do little hunting except to relieve tension. Their bodies are covered in short and rotten feathers, while their wings lost any cover to their bones long ago. A thorn hawk's entire body is covered in thorns that constantly torment it and keeps it eternally enraged. As a result, thorn hawks never remain still in one place when guarding an area, but often circle the entire domain in hope of finding prey on which to vent their frustration.

## LABYRINTHINE PLASMICS

The natural habitat of the following plasmics is the Labyrinth.

### CONTAGION PARASITE

When the Deathlords unleashed the Contagion upon the Creation, their sorcery was so powerful that a byproduct carrying minor traces of the plague awakened as a creature. Contagion parasites appear only as a dark-green layer of silk that grows inside the colder domains of the Labyrinth.

These plasmics wait for individual ghosts who died from the Contagion in order to join with them to spread the chaos the Deathlords want. Once a Contagion ghost enters the Labyrinthine area where a parasite grows, it drags the victim to the ground (using the clinch rules from *Exalted*, pp. 239-240), after which it begins to enter the body through its skin and orifices. If it is successful in its endeavor, the ghost perishes and reforms as Contagion creature (the exact name depends on what type of individual the parasite took over). Although most infected ghosts have the ability to leave the Labyrinth, the majority of them remain inside the dark tunnels out of familiarity.

The parasites continuously feed on their hosts Essence. Though they strongly prefer victims of the Great Contagion, they will attach themselves to other beings if they are hungry. This is a gamble for a Contagion parasite, as if the target is not slain by its Essence drain, the parasite will attempt to join with him, fail and die.

If the parasite manages to clinch its victim, it may make an additional attack (using the regular combat procedures, although the victim loses four dice from his

dodge pool) the same turn without suffering penalties. The second attack is to see if the creature manages to break the skin or otherwise enter the ghost's body (which it does if it inflicts at least one health level of damage). It may make a single attempt to enter the victim each subsequent turn. Once inside the victim, the player of the Contagion ghost or animal makes a Willpower roll, difficulty 2, during each turn that the parasite clinches him or it. If the roll fails, the ghost or animal forced to acquiesce to the parasite's presence. If it succeeds, the target may continue to attack the parasite but will take the same amount of damage it inflicts on the plasmic. Once the Willpower roll is failed, it takes a successful Intelligence + Medicine roll, difficulty 5, to successfully cure the host, and the character will attempt to evade or avoid treatment.

Contagion parasites drain 4 motes each day without having to make a dice roll. These motes can easily be recovered if the victim carries a Hearthstone or spends time in a Manse, but targets of the creature can never regain Essence from respiration or health levels from Slumber due to the wracking pain they experience. Over the course of (the target's Essence + 28) days, the victim becomes a Contagion creature if it has not perished from Essence drain by then.

### FERRYMAN

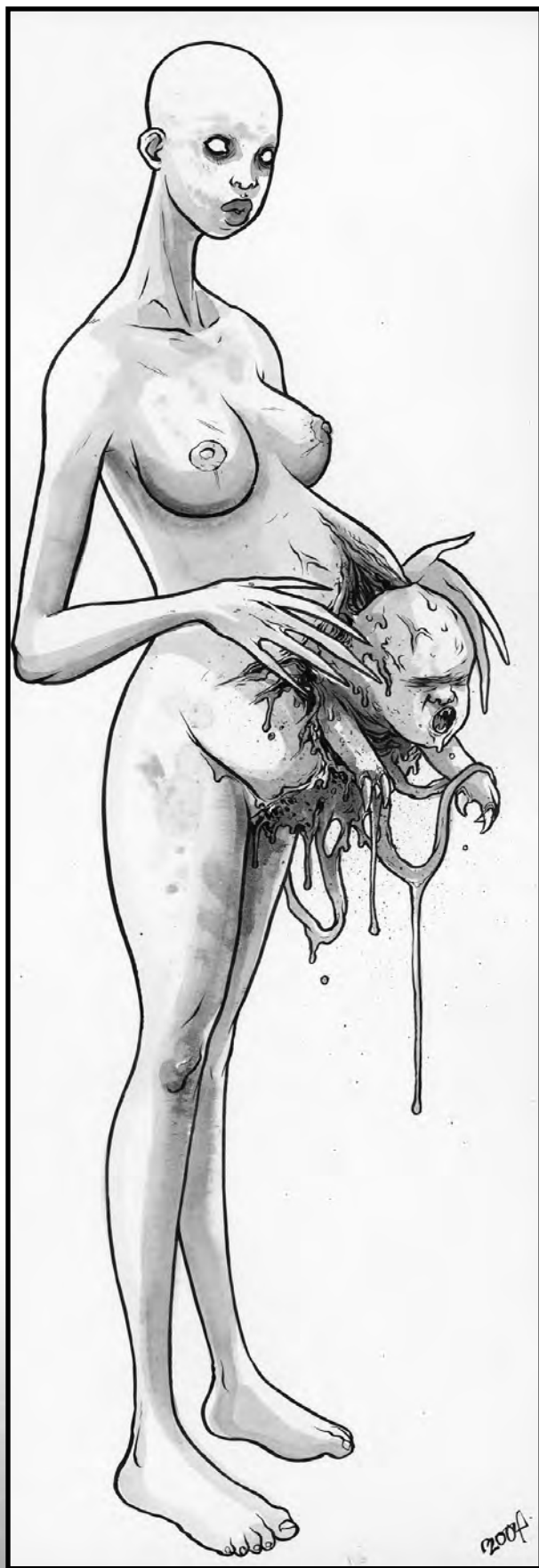
The ferrymen are guardians of the Labyrinth. They traffic the waters that exists in numerous places inside the tunnels and ensure that none pass beyond their assigned areas. They have no discernable appearance except for their hooded black robes and the shadowy clawlike hands that steers their barges' oars. Although numerous legends about horrifying practices of slaying ghosts and stealing their memories surround them, the ferrymen seem to exist to protect the Labyrinth from powerful enemies, even the Deathlords themselves.

Should a ferryman be attacked, it can manifest a weapon, most commonly a scythe, in the same way that Abyssals can summon their weaponry from Elsewhere (this is a reflexive action). This power was granted to the ferrymen at their creation by ancient creatures close to the Void itself.

In combat, a ferryman wields its scythe with supernatural speed and skill; moving too quickly to be caught by the eye without the use of Charms, Arcanoi or spells that enhance perception. Everyone who is unable to follow the ferryman's movements suffers a two-die penalty when attempting to parry the scythe.

Storytellers should note that ferrymen have Essence 3 (and that this value is not included in any of their scores) and may spend 10 motes to change the damage they inflict from lethal to aggravated. Their Essence pool is 30 when combat begins. If a ferryman succeeds in slaying another being with its scythe, the weapon absorbs any motes that





the opponent had left and transfers them to the ferryman, regardless of whether or not this increases its temporary Essence beyond 30. Extra Essence is discharged at the end of the scene.

### KRAKEN

None except the most ancient of ghosts retain any knowledge of what the Kraken really looked like, and even their memories have faded into a mixture of truth and fiction. That is how long it has been since a ship survived an attack by this beast. What is common to all stories is that the Kraken possesses hundreds of tentacles that it uses in combat and that, at the center of the beast, although always under the surface, there is a menacing looking eye constantly watching and gazing into one's soul.

### OBSIDIAN OWL

During the height of the bloody Dragon-Blooded uprising, the Twilight Caste sorcerer Huan-Li fled to the Underworld with his most prized possessions — the obsidian owls. The owls' purpose was to track and weaken enemies before Huan-Li made his mighty presence known, but the creatures failed, and a small band of Terrestrials managed to track him down and destroy him at the cost of their lives. During the extremely violent combat, which lasted for over a day, most of the owls were destroyed, leaving only about a dozen left in the Solar's hidden necropolis.

When spectres took control of the small necropolis about a century ago, they brought the owls into the Labyrinth where Oblivion tainted their pure form and gave them a darkish and broken appearance. Today, the obsidian owls protect the spectres domain with an unrelenting fury and occasionally even attack their masters by mistake.

### STILLBORN

Although the stillborn are not the most horrifying thing one may see in the Labyrinth, they are visually one of the most disturbing plasmics. Indeed, they look like pregnant women with their bellies torn open and their fetuses moving their heads around inside, staring at anyone who crosses their path.

Out to a radius of four yards, a stillborn's presence invokes a sense of fear and illness in all whose players fail a Valor roll, where the difficulty is equal to the Compassion rating of the character. The stillborn's other attack stems from the fetus, as its gaze drains victims of their will. Instead of dodging this attack, players of its victims must roll Willpower + Essence for their characters to resist the creature's horrifying gaze. The difficulty of this roll is 3, and should it fail, the fetus' victims reduce their permanent Willpower by one dot. Exalted and other supernatural beings regain their lost Willpower at the rate of one dot per month.

When engaging in physical attacks, the stillborn are extremely talented users of the martial arts and inflict lethal damage with both hands and feet. During combat, once per turn, the fetus can extend from a stillborn's body and inflict aggravated damage on an opponent by opening a maw that is so tiny it is only visible due to the glimmering of the sharp set of teeth within. The fetus drain and bite are additional attacks that the stillborn may perform for free, and it imposes no dice-pool penalties on martial-art attacks.

When the fetus extends from the body, it's connected to the stillborn through a rotten umbilical cord. Should this be severed (any successful attack aimed at it that does damage will sever the cord, but it must be taken on the initiative tick when the fetus is extended), the shock the stillborn experiences paralyzes it for three turns. Naturally, all the powers that the fetus made use of are forever lost to the stillborn in question.

### VENGEFUL EXILE

Vengeful exiles are ghosts that have lost the capacity to feel and think for themselves. The exiles roam the Labyrinth in search of both the living and the dead to slay, and they are especially hostile to Exalts. Vengeful exiles have a humanoid appearance — in fact, the very same they had when they were normal ghosts. However, their bodies radiate the chilling cold of Oblivion, and none can behold them without knowing they are servants of the Final End. Their aura affects animals in the same way as Dawn Caste animas affect mortal opponents.

Whenever one of the vengeful exiles comes within five yards of an Exalt (with the exception of Sidereals and Infernals), its hatred reaches out as an animated anima and attacks the higher soul of the being. Unless the victim's player succeeds on a Temperance roll, the Exalt's temper flares, causing the hero to go berserk for a number of turns equal to the number of successes the vengeful exile received on the attack roll. The Exalt's player must make a successful Willpower roll, or his character attacks the nearest enemy without reserving any actions for defense. The player of a character outside of combat who is affected must fail a Valor roll for his character not to take violent offense at the tiniest slight while under the exile's effect.

A Temperance roll must be made every turn a character is within five yards of a vengeful exile. If an Exalt manages to withstand the creature's power, each success on the roll adds one Limit or Resonance or other appropriate negative Trait. Ghosts must also try to avoid bursting into a fit of rage when they are in close proximity of the creature, but they also suffer lethal damage at the same time. Whenever a ghost's player fails her Temperance roll, the ghost must also soak 3L damage as if she was struck with a weapon (i.e., armor soak applies).

### LESSER PLASMICS

**Borer:** Borers are large molelike creatures with six spade-shaped claws on each arm. They move inside the dry areas of the Labyrinth and are often food to spectres and other plasmics. Although borers may appear harmless, they have an extremely aggressive nature, and their claws inflict aggravated damage.

**Cerement:** Cerements are creatures that consist only of muscles and dried veins inside a translucent cover. Cerements drain memories from their victims, eventually leaving confused individuals to roam the Labyrinth. These memories can never be regained and should be considered sacrificed to Oblivion. In order to drain a year's worth of memories from a victim, a cerement must succeed with a clinch attack during three consecutive turns. It is only possible to protect oneself from their memory absorption by one's player succeeding on a Conviction roll, difficulty 3, on the fourth turn of the drain. The draining effects do not change the character's Traits. Characters lose one year's worth of memories on the fourth turn and on each subsequent turn the clinch is maintained.

**Whisperer:** Regardless of the location inside the Labyrinth, there are whisperers. Some are the remains of nephwracks that have become incorporated into the walls of the Underworld. Others are sessile creatures that imitate the insane blandishments of the nephwracks as a form of hunting lure. Both types appear as translucent masks that are stuck to the wall, ground or ceiling of Labyrinth tunnels. Whisperers emit constant Essence vibrations — perceived as a dim whispering — that confuse those who travel inside the Labyrinth. After rolling a whisperer's attack, count the successes, and have the Labyrinth guide roll Temperance, difficulty 2. Should the roll fail, deduct as many dice from the next navigation roll as the whisperer had successes on its attack.

### WINTER'S DAY

Long has it been since the Mask of Winters first conceived his plans of conquest, the Green Lady's words forever echoing in his mind. With the aid of his mighty fortress, Juggernaut, the Deathlord conquered Thorns and established a vast, controlled shadowland in the Threshold. Yet, that was the mere beginning of his grand scheme.

Ever since the night he erected his stronghold on the back of the corpse of the creature, the Mask of Winters knew that a day would come when the maggots feeding on the dead behemoth would emerge as powerful monsters that could turn the tide of his plans, for better or worse depending on who gained control over them. He used his sorcery to bind the maggots into his service while his ghosts possessed them to provide defense to the fortress. No matter what happened, the Mask of Winters would





Plasmic	Physical Att. Str/Dex/Sta	Will	Health Levels	Attack Spd/Acc/Dmg	Dodge/ Soak	Abilities
Borer	4/2/4	5	-0x3/-2x2/I	Claw: 5/6/4A	2/2L/4B	Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 4
Cerement	5/2/4	3	-0x2, -2x2/I	Embrace: 5/4/5L	4/2L/4B	Brawl 2, Dodge 2, Stealth 2
Contagion Parasite Ferryman	5/5/2 4/6/8	6 9	-0x7/I -0x4/-1x3/ -2x2/-4/I	Engulf: 8/10/clinch Scythe: 9/10/6L	5/1L/2B 10/4L/8B	Brawl 5 Awareness 5, Dodge 4, Melee 4, Presence 3 (Intimidation +2), Survival 5 (Labyrinth +2)
Kraken	10/4/10	10	-0x18/ -1x8/-2x5/I	Crush: 7/9/10L	9/5L/10B	Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Presence 5 (Intimidation +3), Survival 5
Obsidian Owl	2/3/2	2	-0/-1/I	Talon: 5/5/2A	6/1L/2B	Athletics 3 (Flight +2), Brawl 2, Dodge 3
Stillborn	3/4/5	5	-0x3/ -1x5/-2x4/I	Fetus Bite: 7/4/2A, Kick: 4/8/5L, Punch: 7/9/3L	9/12L/16B (special soak)	Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Martial Arts 5
Vengeful Exile	2/3/2	2	-0/-1/-4/I	Anima Assault: 6/3/special*	5/1L/2B	Awareness 2, Dodge 2
Whisperer	0/0/3	3	-0x2/I	Whispers: 3/4/special*	0/1L/3B	Archery 4

\* Further information exists in the creature's write-up.

All creatures have Intelligence •, Perception •• and Wits •••, unless the description says otherwise.

exert control over the monsters, and they'd serve him in his conquest of both Creation and the Underworld.

That was his vision, his dream. The time for action is now!

## JUGGERNAUT REBORN

In this scenario, the Mask of Winters is caught by surprise when his ghost servants are thrown out of the maggots bodies and the behemoth corpse crumbles to dust and rotten flesh in front of his very eyes. All attempts at hindering this process, even through magic, are futile, and when the dust settles, all that remains are the maggots, crawling across the landscape.

During the days that follow, the maggots are drawn to the remains of the corpse and devour the last of their former host. The Mask of Winters is enraged, as he can no longer exert control over any of the maggots. When nothing remains of the behemoth, the maggots frenzy and begin to battle and devour each other. Watching his visions crumble to dust before him, the Mask of Winters orders the surviving nemissaries to engage one of the maggots while he binds them inside. Against all

## WHAT MIGHT BE

**Exalted** has always presented events that Storytellers could easily work into their own series if they desired to do so. The emergence of the Mask of Winter's maggots doesn't differ from this. While one of the following four scenarios may eventually be canon for the **Exalted** line, each Storyteller running a game with this event should choose one version that fits the vision of your game or perhaps even create your own solution.

Needless to say, the plasmic, or plasmics, born of the maggots are extremely powerful in each of the presented scenarios — if you just want them to be wiggly extras with 6L bites, then that's about the end of the matter. This section assumes the result one gets when using monsters that feed upon the remains of a dead beast that posed a threat even to the gods and Solar Exalted of yore is something with which one can drive a story or a series.

odds, this attempt is successful, but even the possessed maggot cannot withstand the hunger and consumes the rest of his brethren.

When all seem to be at an end, the remaining maggot stops, begins to shake and, finally, explodes as a newborn plasmic behemoth emerges under the Deathlord's control.

## JUGGERNAUT OF THE SECOND AGE

**Description:** Juggernaut is a 500-yard-long, 100-yard-wide, lizardlike dragon, with no legs, but thousands of claws, mouths and ebony wings covering its entire body. Next to each mouth is a pitch-black crystal with a core shining in swirling dark-red colors. Each crystal is an eye, and they allow the behemoth to react to anything that visibly approaches it.

Juggernaut hungers for more power, and while the Mask of Winters subdues it, it sets out to destroy and devour anyone with an Essence rating of 4 or more. Years spent feeding on the corpse of its predecessor, fueled by sorcery, have left the new Juggernaut addicted to Essence. Without it, it fears it will surely perish again.

**Attributes:** Strength 25, Dexterity 20, Stamina 45, Charisma 5, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1, Perception 10, Intelligence 1, Wits 13

**Virtues:** Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other rolls.

**Abilities:** Athletics 5 (Flight +3), Awareness 5, Brawl 5 (Bite +3), Dodge 5 (Ranged Weapons +3), Endurance 5 (Stamina +1), Presence 5 (Intimidation +3), Resistance 5 (Sorcery +3)

**Base Initiative:** 33

**Attack:**

Bite: Speed 33 Accuracy 28 Damage 25L Defense 25

Claw: Speed 33 Accuracy 25 Damage 16A Defense 28

**Dodge Pool:** 25 (28 against ranged weapons)

**Soak:** 23L/45B

**Willpower:** 10      **Health Levels:** -0x10/-1x10/-2x5/-4x3/Incap

**Essence:** 7      **Essence Pool:** 150 (Starting Essence Pool: 50)

**Other Notes:** Stealth and Linguistics roll automatically fail for Juggernaut due its size and lack of intelligence. By spending 20 motes and spinning in the air, Juggernaut can create a tornado that lasts for a day. All ranged attacks, unless empowered to hit the target via Charms or sorcery, automatically fail. Also, everywhere Juggernaut passes, the environment is ripped apart, leaving a trail of destruction behind it.

## WAR OF THE DEATHLORDS

War finally breaks out between the Deathlords when the First and Forsaken Lion engages the Mask of Winters to break his hold over Creation. The Mask of Winters responds by amplifying the amount of Essence he infuses

into the maggots in order to hasten their hatching time. When they eventually hatch, everything goes wrong, and the Mask of Winters loses control over them. The children of Juggernaut have truly changed into plasmics.

With the plasmics rampaging through the Underworld and the war between the Deathlords escalating, the denizens of the Labyrinth take the opportunity to act and begin to meddle in the war. The Underworld is drawing closer to an end, and Oblivion threatens to expand and consume the realm of the dead, all because of the Mask of Winters' failed plan.

## HATCHLING

**Description:** Hatchlings appear as large flying maggots with obsidian wings, dragonlike faces and scorpionlike tails. They engage everything they see moving and will stop at nothing to destroy their targets.

Due to their rapid speed, the hatchlings can cover hundreds of miles each day, something that leaves a clearly visible trail in both Creation and the Underworld. If one of the plasmics is slain, another hatchling can consume the remains by spitting decaying venom on the carcass and devouring the slimy residue. Two days after such an event, the devourer gives birth to a new hatchling.

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 15, Charisma 3, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 5

**Virtues:** Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other rolls.

**Abilities:** Archery 3, Athletics 4 (Flight +2), Awareness 5, Brawl 5 (Bite +3), Dodge 5 (Ranged Weapons +1), Endurance 3, Presence 5 (Intimidation +3), Resistance 4

**Base Initiative:** 10

**Attack:**

Bite: Speed 10 Accuracy 13 Damage 10L Defense 13

Venom Spit: Speed 12 Accuracy 8 Damage 5A (Rate 2, Range 25)

**Dodge Pool:** 10 (11 against ranged weapons) **Soak:** 7L/15B

**Willpower:** 6      **Health Levels:** -0x5/-1x5/-2x 3/-4/Incap

**Essence:** 2      **Essence Pool:** 25

**Other Notes:** None

## USURPERS BEWARE

When Juggernaut suddenly stops moving, the Mask of Winters enters the corpse only to find that the larvae have shed their maggoty aspect and assumed an earthworm-like shape suited to subterranean travel. He is able to exert control over the creatures and sends the burrowers as a crawling carpet beneath the seafloor toward the Blessed Isle, ostensibly to extract revenge on the Solars who slew Juggernaut in the First Age. Upon emerging on the Blessed Isle, however, they find only Dragon-Blooded, who immediately



strike back against the plasmics and also send a fleet of ships against Thorns to deal with the Deathlord once and for all.

## BURROWER

**Description:** Burrowers appear as seven-yard-long worms, with sharp, bent blades covering their bodies. When digging through rock and earth, the maggots spin, allowing the blades to do the work for them, while everything edible living underground is immediately devoured by them.

Upon emerging from the ground, the maggots extend wings from their bellies and turn on their backs while soaring through the sky, eventually entering combat while assuming the same spin as when digging. When doing this, they become a swirl of deadly blades, waiting to cut something into a thousand pieces.

**Attributes:** Strength 15, Dexterity 9, Stamina 15, Charisma 3, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1, Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 5

**Virtues:** Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other rolls.

**Abilities:** Athletics 4 (Flight +2), Awareness 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Presence 4 (Intimidation +3)

**Base Initiative:** 14

### Attack:

Blade Spin: Speed 14 Accuracy 15 Damage 15A  
Defense 15

**Dodge Pool:** 14      **Soak:** 7L/15B

**Willpower:** 8      **Health Levels:** -0x10/-1x5/-2x3/-4/  
Incap

**Essence:** 4      **Essence Pool:** 50

**Other Notes:** The burrowers use Athletics (Flight) for their attacks.

## WINTERS' SOLDIERS

Juggernaut's maggots reduces their activities inside the corpse, feeding less and moving less than before, despite being possessed. One by one, the maggots enter a deep slumber, and the Deathlord loses all contact with his possessors.

Within a month from this event, the maggots each enter a cocoon, which they remain in for yet another month. During this time, the Mask of Winters does his best to cover this up and find out exactly what's going on. When he finally gets his answers, Winters is thrilled, for not only are his connections reestablished, but he has also gained new soldiers with which to wage war.

## WINTER MIMIC

**Description:** Upon emerging from their cocoons, the maggots were bipedal creatures, with bodies covered in what seem to be purple drapes, and faces in the shape of the mask their Deathlord master wears. Upon further investigation, the Mask of Winters discovered that their drapes were the remains of the maggots' husks, which they allowed to grow into their new form.

Beneath the drapes, each has the legs of an extremely well-built human male made out of a crystallike material. The mimics' six arms are translucent, allowing onlookers to see their purple blood flowing through their green veins. Yet, the mimics have no hands, but each arm ends in a claw of pure Underworld Essence, and their touch were not only cold, but also frightening to the Mask of Winters' victims. Their torsos appear to be made out of ebony strengthened stone, shining with gray and white highlights.

Although they're plasmics, winter mimics are able to learn new skills so long as the exercising of them is practical. Many have learned to ride horses in order to quickly transport themselves from one place to another, while others have studied the martial arts.

An interesting aspect, probably caused by the Mask of Winters' Essence infusion from time to time, is that the mimics can wield the simpler Abyssal Charms. However, they seem to be born with the Charms they are capable of using and lack the ability to learn new ones.

All of this, however, comes at a high price. Not only does the Mask of Winters need to continue giving them motes from himself, but in order to keep them at full capacity, they need to feed on hundreds of Essence-rich sacrifices each week. If a single mimic fails to devour at least seven individuals, it loses two dice on all rolls each day (this penalty is cumulative) until it has fed again for seven consecutive days.

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 30, Charisma 2, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

**Virtues:** Not applicable. Never fails Valor rolls, never succeeds at any other rolls.

**Abilities:** Brawl 2, Dodge 4 (Melee Weapons +3), Endurance 2, (Martial Arts 4,) Investigation 3, Presence 5 (Intimidation +3), (Ride 2,) Stealth 3

**Base Initiative:** 10

### Attack:

Claw: Speed 14 Accuracy 9 Damage 8L Defense 9

**Dodge Pool:** 9 (12 against melee weapons)      **Soak:** 15L/  
30B

**Willpower:** 8      **Health Levels:** -0x15/-2x3/-4/  
**Essence:** 3      **Essence Pool:** 40

**Other Notes:** Storytellers must do two things upon choosing which type of mimic characters should encounter. First of all, choose between Martial Arts or Ride. Those with Martial Arts knowledge are fierce combatants, but they can only move across the landscape in walking speed. Those who Ride are not as good in combat, but travel very quickly. Second, Storytellers must pick three Abyssal Charms related to the Abilities that the mimics have. These Charms may not have a higher Essence prerequisite than 2 and may not improve health levels or allow quicker transport. The Charms may only be selected from those available in **Exalted: The Abyssals**.

## EXALTED POWER COMBAT STATISTICS

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate
EAST					
Chameleon Monkey Claw	7	6	2L	6	4
Fork Spider Bite	3	4	3L	4	2
Lethe Serpent Bite	6	6	2L	3	2
Pulse Blossom Droplets	5	8	2L	4	1
River Quadruped Tentacles	9	6	3B	4	3
Scavenger Bite	6	9	3L	4	2
Swamp Golem Punch	7	5	5Bp	4	3
SOUTH					
Ashen Nomad Punch	5	5	2B	5	5
Black Garda Fiery Crash	18	11	16L+	0	1
Bone-Road Walker Bite	4	3	1L + poison*	2	2
Bone-Road Walker Butt	5	2	4B	2	4
Firedust Phantom Blast	20	N/A	20L	N/A	1
Firefly Fiery Touch	8	6	2L	3	1
Lesser Rock Dragon Bite	6	7	15L	4	2
Lesser Rock Dragon Claw	9	9	10L	9	3
Lesser Rock Dragon Lava	4	7	30L	0	1
Razorwing Wing Slash	12	6	3L	2	1
Scorpion Wasp Sting	3	5	1A	2	1
WEST					
Algal Dragon Bite	12	8	8L	8	2
Clam Turtle Bite	4	3	2L + special*	3	1
Ebon Whale Bite	9	9	15L	9	2
Ebon Whale Fluke Slap	9	9	20L	6	1
Eoi Claw	4	4	2L	4	3
Essence Maelstrom Bolt	12	10	Special*	0	2
Uldra Bite	8	7	5L	4	2
Saltwalker Bite	6	6	1L	6	3
Shore Eel Shock	8	10	1A	6	3
NORTH					
Cannibalized Bite	9	8	8L	5	1
Cannibalized Claw	11	9	6L	7	3
Cannibalized Ice Sword	12	13	12L	10	3
Feral Bite	6	7	12L	7	3
Shadow Bear Bite	5	6	7L	4	2
Shadow Bear Claw	5	6	7L	6	2
Shatter Bite	6	6	3L + poison*	6	2
Shatter Spit	12	5	Special*	0	1
Wind Howler Scream	13	9	10Bp+	0	1
Yeti-Spawn Bite	7	6	6L	6	2
Yeti-Spawn Claw	9	8	7L	6	3
Ygdra Clinch	6	8	10B	8	1



## EXALTED POWER COMBAT STATISTICS CONTINUED

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate
STYGIA					
Alaun Slashing Sword	14	10	6L	9	2
Alaun Warhammer	12	10	10Bp	10	2
Cobbler Nail Punch	5	5	7L	6	4
Crystal Mouse Bite	6	3	1L	1	1
Malfic Stalker Claw	7	9	9L	7	3
Portee Dog Bite	6	5	7L	3	3
Rock Bird Bite	3	5	4L	1	1
Rock Bird Talon	6	4	2L	2	2
Seabull Gore	6	7	8Lp	5	1
Thorn Hawk Talon	7	6	2L	6	1
Walker of the Midnight Sun Punch	7	7	3L	8	5
LABYRINTH					
Borer Claw	5	6	4A	4	2
Cerement Embrace	6	4	5L	2	3
Contagion Parasite Engulf	8	10	Clinch	6	1
Ferryman Scythe Slash	18	13	8L	14	3
Kraken Crush	7	9	10L	7	8
Obsidian Owl Talon	6	5	2A	5	2
Stillborn Fetus Bite	7	8	2A	6	1
Stillborn Kick	7	10	5L	6	2
Stillborn Punch	7	8	3L	8	5
Vengeful Exile Anima Assault	6	3	Special*	N/A	1
JUGGERNAUT'S OFFSPRING					
Burrower Blade Spin	14	16	18A	16	1
Hatchling Bite	10	13	10L	10	3
Juggernaut Bite	33	28	25L	25	2
Juggernaut Claw	33	25	16A	28	3
Winter Mimic Claw	12	9	8L	9	5

# BOOK OF BONE AND Ebony™



## The Black Power of Necromancy

Though only the Solar Exalted can wield the mighty power of Solar Circle Sorcery, they are not alone in wielding vast magic. The Deathlords and their Abyssal slaves can focus the vast power of the Malfeans into the black miracles of necromancy, evil magic equal to the mightiest sorcery of the Exalted.

## The Sorcery of the Dead, Power of the Underworld

The **Book of Bone and Ebony** details the black art of necromancy and many other important facets of the Underworld. From the secrets of Stygia to the construction of necromantic war machines and new ghostly Arcanoi and Underworld creatures, **The Book of Bone and Ebony** contains all the information necessary to unlock the powers of the Underworld for any game involving Abyssals or the heroic dead.



ISBN 1-58846-680-9 WW8806 US \$24.99



9 781588 466808



5 2 4 9 9



WHITE WOLF  
GAME STUDIO



www.white-wolf.com