

GLORIES OF THE MOST HIGH

THE MAIDENS OF DESTINY



EXALTED
SECOND EDITION
THE MAIDENS OF DESTINY

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THE MAIDENS OF DESTINY





PERSONAGE AND PANOPLY

A mystery even unto the makers of the universe, the Maidens were a known quantity before Creation existed. Because of this, it has been said that the Maidens are without origin. This is not entirely true. The Maidens *are* the handiwork of the Primordials, but they are omnitemporal, created in a future the Primordials could not foresee and a past they do not remember.

Long before Creation existed, Primordials were the sole things of substance and definition within the meaninglessness of the Wyld. As the Primordials began to encounter one another in the depths of the Wyld, their close proximity created a confluence of factual existence and the earliest tenets of natural law. It was through this reality-shaping interface that concepts like time, space, matter and gravity appeared, carried on the backs of five tiny sisters calling themselves the Fates.

Although the Fates came about as a result of immaculate superinduction, it was plain to the Primordials that the sisters were not a cosmic accident but the evidence of intelligent design they had yet to undertake. Most of the Primordials were merely amused by the appearance of the Fates, but otherwise ignored them as they continued with their plans for eternity. Some Primordials, however, were filled with dread at what the sisters portended, finding their sudden appearance ominous, and the Dragon's Shadow—who would become the Ebon Dragon—hated them because their very emergence shattered his designs on the architecture of fate.

Regardless of their dubious source, by the time of the building of Creation, the Primordials had fully incorporated the Fates into their plans for its construction. When Luna split day into night, she created a backdrop through which the Fates could approach Creation and called out to them, awakening them from their slumber. At that very instant,



the omnitemporal sisters merged at a single point in time and reached the fullness of their evolution, shedding their cryptic identity as the Fates to become the Maidens.

At this point, the Primordials believed their work to be complete. They saw the Maidens as the product of their genius, designed solely to service the Loom of Fate. But the Maidens had other ideas, for the Maidens had known the Primordials in the time before Creation and despised them for their shortsightedness. Looking back/forward across the ages, the then-Fates encountered Luna and the Unconquered Sun, and seeing their dreams and tragedies, fell in love with them from afar.

The Maidens set out on the perilous journey through time to meet Luna on Creation's first night, knowing they would be bound to act (mostly) impartially for the benefit of Creation but believing they could steer the course of events in their favor anyway. In the other Incarna, they saw kindred spirits in an otherwise lonely existence comprised of dismal titans and insane unshaped. They also saw in them the potential to be rid of their noxious makers.

They could not, however, be certain of the outcome. Where the Unconquered Sun was concerned, oracular vision had a way of becoming distorted as time spun itself in an orbit around his crushing gravity. More importantly, the Maidens did not foresee the Exalted, who formed an existential hole in their vision. Most alarmingly, they failed to foresee their own enslavement to the Games of Divinity, proving that not even they could account for everything that would happen. Even so, they risked everything to stand beside the Unconquered Sun in his revolution, and when the Exalted brought an end to the Primordials, the Maidens saw the last obstacle to their absolute control over Creation's destiny removed.

Five millennia have passed since then, and unlike any other era in their existence, those 5,000 years have had a significant effect on the Maidens. For most of their existence, the Maidens were withdrawn, dispassionate, robotic, inhuman; a cold and decisive collective moved only by necessity. But the Exalted, and the Sidereal Exalted in particular, have had an amazing effect on them. By observing

and interacting with their Sidereals and the other Incarnae, the Maidens have begun to take on human traits, feelings and motives. They have even gone against their own natures to break the laws of destiny in order to follow their hearts—hearts being something they very much didn't have previously.

TWINKLE, TWINKLE... NEVER MIND.

When the Maidens officially came into being, they represented the fullness of Primordial vision for Creation. No longer were they a culmination of unrealized miracles being beamed to the Primordials across time, but five full-fledged Celestial Incarnae bearing the hallmark of Primordial design. Yet none could say who engineered them! Some looked to Autochthon in suspicion that they were his, but while Autochthon agreed that he could have been their designer, he could not confirm it. Others thought Oramus might have had a hand in it, but he was unable to answer, for the Maidens were a known thing and thus beyond his sight. The Dragon's Shadow rankled at the sight of them, while secretly suspicious that they might have been his own masterworks gone awry and moving the course of things independent of his control. As for the Maidens themselves, when questioned on their parentage, they always fielded the query to Jupiter, and Jupiter wasn't telling.

THE FIVE MAIDENS

The Maidens of Destiny are often thought of and spoken of as a unit. This is a convenient practice. Together, they govern a common dominion, in the form of destiny; together, they endowed a singular variety of Exalted, in the form of the Sidereals. But the Maidens are not one, and to think such is to oversimplify. While they share a collective existence, each Maiden retains an individual identity, to form five distinct faces of an indivisible whole.



MERCURY

Rooted in the future and always moving forward, even through time, Mercury is also the Maiden who is least attached to the Games of Divinity. Although she is still stricken by a crippling addiction, Mercury is able to distance herself from the Games because she plans most of her moves far in advance and spends even less time taking her turns than the Unconquered Sun does.

When playing the Games of Divinity, Mercury is given to wearing saffron-colored robes tied with deeper saffron sashes and ribbons. Her garments are generously cut, but never to such an extent as to invite scandal. In fact, of all the Maidens, Mercury seems to take the least interest in her appearance. Nevertheless, although her robes are smudged with dust from hard travel, her bare shoulders and the swell of her bosom carrying the faintest tinge of perspiration, Mercury effortlessly commands the gallery with her every smile, anecdote and tale from the road.

Mercury appears as an athletic young woman with hair the color of spun straw, which she always makes some perfunctory attempt at dressing, usually pulling it into a tail or pinning it up. She has been famously known to carry with her a ladder of infinite extension, which she can throw into a gap to form a bridge or from the ground to a ledge to form a stair. Her preferred method of climbing this ladder is to hike up her skirts with both hands and run up it in defiance of the laws of gravity. Needless to say, the sight of the Maiden of Journeys using her ladder can be quite disconcerting. She has even been said to use it to leave Creation, using it to climb straight up into the stars or to board the passing moon.

VENUS

Arguably the most well known and personable of her sisters, the Maiden of Serenity is a legend in her own time, beloved and hallowed by her divine contemporaries as much as her countless worshippers. Composed of a peace that surpasses understanding with a gravity of magnetic calm so intense it pulls one in and invites drowning, Venus is said to be the most fascinating, intensely beautiful being in all existence, but such words fall short of her truth.

Yet she is not an utterly pacific being. Her gusts of laughter can be raucous, her alleluias can set fire to the coldest hearts, and her passions can burn brighter than the stars. Hers is the peace after the rage of the storm. She is the release of tension, the end of frustration, she who conspires toward the bliss of all things. Venus is the maker and breaker of hearts, she who gives love and takes it away. When her serenity is broken, her defense of love is so fierce that it has, at one point, even given the Unconquered Sun pause.

Venus appears as a woman at the height of nubility, clad in cerulean gowns that mold to her every perfect curve, swoop and line. Her hair, equally blue, cascades down her body, to blend with her gowns in a rise-and-fall onrush of blue on blue that simulates the crushing hypnotism of the Elemental Pole of Water. Her natural scent is a perfume that is both aphrodisiac and hallucinogenic, and she is given to interact with those illusions that spring up in the minds of those intoxicated by her presence. Fantasies involving her sisters are among her most common offerings.

Venus is commonly attended by a number of floating, shifting azure wisps, like both ribbons and prayer strips. When she shirks her garments to wander in the nude, these bands follow her, conveniently providing the barest modicum of decency. On the occasions she's been observed to do battle, she uses these ribbons as weapons.

MARS

It has been said that the Maiden of Battles is the most terrifying of the Maidens—ruthlessly pragmatic, quick to take offense and caring little for those mortals questionably blessed by her presence. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is because the Maiden of Battles cares so much for the lives she is affecting that she is so terse. Any business not having to do with battles, contests or war distracts her from her careful planning and causes her savage irritation. In truth, the destinies she weaves depict the death of millions, and the gravity of this burden is not lost on her. Only Jupiter knows that Mars holds the lives of soldiers sacred and honors in her heart those fighters she commends to the tender mercies of Saturn.



Mars favors several guises, each of them corresponding to an archetypal role she assumes. In all of them, she is a red-headed woman with blood-stained hands. Her most common role is that of the general, in which she wears lacquered red armor, carries a dire lance and has a number of head-dresses set with wigs of human hair spun from soldiers since time immemorial. She has been known to appear as a judge in scarlet robes with an iron mask to preside over honor duels, Gateway matches and other crucial contests. She also commonly appears as a sifu in a scarlet qipao, her hair worn in an extravagantly long braid and laced through with quipu, each knot binding some of her knowledge so that she does not inadvertently kill her pupils. In these forms of authority, Mars is at her most alien and frightening, but how could she not be? Hers is a cold, alien wisdom, and in these roles she must pass her knowledge down to lesser vessels who are not gifted with her understanding of *samsara*.

It is in her fourth guise that Mars is at her most human (and subsequently, the guise in which Mars is least likely to be seen). It is that of the soldier, in which she wears perfunctory armor and carries a slashing sword and round shield. As a soldier, Mars is not assuming a role of authority, but rather epitomizing the Thousand Correct Actions. In this form, Mars is a comrade-in-arms, seeking to understand and reproduce the fraternity or sorority that soldiers feel when they are made kindred in battle against a common enemy.

JUPITER

Apocryphal legend has it that alone among the Maidens, Jupiter once had no dominion, but simply existed as the caretaker of her sisters. One day she happened upon a terrible Primordial behemoth in the frigid lands near the Elemental Pole of Air, set to guard all the secrets in Creation. She posited to the beast that she knew a secret it did not. Scoffing, the beast answered her with a challenge, proclaiming that its mastery of all things





hidden was perfect and complete. She asked it what the nature of her divine domain might be. The beast opened its maw, and no answer came forth. Flustered, it retreated to its cave, and began to rummage through all the secrets in Creation and beyond, discarding them over its shoulder as it went. Jupiter calmly stood outside the cave, picking up each secret as it was cast out into the snow. Finally, when the cave was empty, the beast slumped back outside to admit defeat—but the Maiden was no longer there.

When asked about the veracity of this tale, Jupiter simply smiles, as is her way.

Jupiter is the oldest of the Maidens, and her looks reflect that, if only slightly. Seemingly on the cusp of middle age, Jupiter radiates maturity, experience and mystique. Her all-knowing air and her distracted demeanor work together to arouse a subtle provocation in the hearts (and bodies) of those who see her. Having no end of suitors, the Maiden of Secrets is the eternal focus of intrigue and obsession throughout Yu-Shan. Yet none can allege to have claimed her hand, for Jupiter knows how much value there is in withholding herself as an unattainable secret.

Jupiter wears multi-layered robes of white, emerald and jade, through which unknown things slither and leap just beneath the surface. Affixed to her skirts are hundreds of keys that seal away some of the world's greatest secrets, even from her mind, so that she cannot be forced to reveal them. Her hair (also green) is typically adorned with dozens of tiny bells. These she once used to call the other Maidens, when they were still children. Now that they are grown, the bells serve another purpose, announcing the approach of her sisters. When Mercury approaches, the bells of Jupiter either jingle like sleigh-bells or ring like the bells of naval ships and dinghies. When Venus is close, they have the peal of wedding bells, and when Mars is imminent they ring with the sound of hammer on anvil. When Saturn draws nigh, the bells of Jupiter toll like somber iron funerary bells, striking terror into those to whom Jupiter is paying a visit.

SATURN

Seated close at hand to the Unconquered Sun or lingering in the shadow of Luna, Saturn hopes to be overshadowed by the majesty of her peers. In a painting, she hopes to be the object to which the eye is least drawn. In a fete, she moves through the room like living smoke, stealing breath and cutting off thoughts mid-sentence, unforgettable in an instant and forgotten in the next. The Maiden of Endings' self-imposed obfuscation is a necessary one, for the distraction of her presence makes life difficult to live. And so she rides the arm of the Unconquered Sun and follows after Luna, holding the train of her garments and making her sign against that which the Argent Madonna must hunt.

When playing the Games of Divinity, Saturn appears to be a strikingly beautiful young woman with white hair, wearing a violet gown with a split that bares her leg and a pair of shears affixed to her thigh by a garter. At the table, she composes herself with a silent, knowing wisdom that is somewhere between mirth and hauteur, and very rarely does she appeal to or even deign to notice the gallery. Instead, her eyes constantly shift from player to player. It has been said that Saturn is almost as taciturn as Jupiter, but that is a fallacy because Saturn's actions and words are remembered only by those remarkable enough to contain a strong sense of the Maiden from moment to moment. Even then, a strong memory of Saturn is a stuttered one, consisting of broken images of movement and stillness and blurs of sound that sometimes contain audible words.

THE MAIDENS' STELLAR FREIGHT

While the Maidens each have their own wondrous treasures, it is perhaps more telling of their influence over Creation to examine the various wonders Exalted artificers have created while claiming divine inspiration from one or another of the sisters.

KITE OF MERCURY (ARTIFACT • •)

This deceptively powerful artifact resembles a Dynast's summer kite at a glance. Closer inspection reveals its lightweight, razor-edged starmetal frame and steelsilk covering, often dyed with murals



KITE OF MERCURY

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Attune	Tags
4	+2	+4L	2	30	Dex ••	5	—

depicting some famous historical journey. Mercury's kites may be wielded as weapons in battle, darting out on the end of their unbreakable tether to slash at a wielder's enemies or ridden to glide great distances (tripling the distance of an attuned user's jumps). A character riding a kite of Mercury never takes damage from a fall, no matter how far she drops.

HEAVENLY ECSTASY AIDES (ARTIFACT •)

"Heavenly ecstasy aide" is a broad catchall name used in the Realm for any artifact with no useful purpose outside the bedroom. This category of artifacts encompasses a broad variety of alchemical body oils, "clothing" that reveals and hides flesh in patterns geomantically calculated to increase sex appeal and erotic toys incorporating the magical materials into their construction, including such marvels of artifice as quaking white jade beads and green jade phalli which provide physical feedback when attuned. These devices serve to demonstrate the inventiveness of the gods and Exalted in pursuing greater heights of physical indulgence. Heavenly ecstasy aides are illegal to own or create in the Realm, ostensibly on the grounds of being a gross waste of valuable jade and alchemical reagents. In practice, most Dragon-Blooded households own at least one or two such items, and House Cynis is infamous for its stockpiles. Such collections are politely ignored until the Empress's magistrates need a convenient pretense to shake a household down in a particularly humiliating fashion.

BANNER OF THE CONQUEROR (ARTIFACT • • •)

The Realm and Lookshy covet these prized relics of the First Age, which take the form of a signal flag, its silk a flat crimson by default. When attuned for 10 motes, the flag instead displays the house mon, personal insignia or iconic anima of its wielder, as desired. Swung in battle, the flag's edge cleaves foes in twain (treat as a grimcleaver). If carried by the leader of a complementary unit in mass combat, the

unit enjoys perfect morale. With a successful prayer to Mars, a mortal may carry and wield a banner of the conqueror as though it were attuned at no cost. The Maiden of Battles pays the cost of the attunement herself. This secret is carefully guarded by the Great Houses and the Lookshy Gentes alike.

REVELATION BLINDFOLD (ARTIFACT • •)

This wonder takes the form of a green silk blindfold, woven around a secret known to only one living being and passed on by a dying breath. To properly prepare a revelation blindfold, this breath must be caught between the lips of the one dying and the ear of the listener. The difficulty of such a feat is the primary reason for the rarity of these artifacts.

Revelation blindfolds cost five motes to attune, and must be worn constantly for any benefit to be granted. For the first (11 - Essence) days after donning the artifact, the wearer suffers all normal penalties for blindness and no benefits. At the end of this period, she aligns with the deeper secrets the world around her is trying to impart. Her blindness penalty disappears, and she constantly benefits from an effect identical to All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight. She may also reflexively use the spirit Charm Measure the Wind as an innate power at no cost on any individual who speaks to her. Another full adjustment period is required if the blindfold is removed for any reason.

RINGS OF SATURN (ARTIFACT • • • •)

These dread artifacts, of which only three copies are said to have ever been created, take the form of delicate starmetal loops worn around the knuckles. They show hypnotic striations in their surfaces from the methods used to forge them, and are ice cold to the touch. A punch enhanced with Saturn's rings uses the normal traits for such an attack, save that it ignores Hardness, inflicts piercing damage and drains one point of Willpower from any target with an Essence rating lower than the wielder. Against

mortals or targets with a permanent Essence rating five or more dots lower than that of the wielder, a successful hit causes instant death as a Shaping effect. Rings of Saturn cost six motes to attune.



THE MAIDENS OF DESTINY

Five goddesses weave the destiny of the universe. Autochthon once remarked in faint awe to a Sidereal that he wished he had made them, and no other titan takes credit for doing so. The Ebon Dragon considers the goddesses a blight upon his invention of fate, meddling pests who keep time from assuming the shape he would impose upon it. He suspects another Primordial forged them in secret just to spite him, since that is what he would have done. The most likely explanation is that existence itself brought them into being to keep watch over it, but the likeliest explanations seldom apply to fate's keepers.

There could have been other Maidens long ago. There could be Maidens yet unborn. In one legend, the unknown Maiden of Wisdom stood in the path of the Three Spheres Cataclysm and doused its fires with her Essence, shattering herself forward and backward in time to spare some part of Creation. According to other stories, the Maidens mourn sisters fallen and entombed in the Orrery of Arainthu, adding the mystery of their Chosen to the speculation why Sidereals number only 100 to the 300 of the other Celestial Exalted. As in so much else, the Maidens are more enigma than answer, pledged to guard the future against the present and never forget the lessons of the past. The strangeness of the Sidereal Exalted pales before the strangeness of their patrons, but in each day that dawns anew, the victory of the Maidens stands over chaos and entropy and the unknown threats they alone witness.

Motivation: Mercury: "Make sure all things go where they should." Venus: "Make sure all things come together as they should." Mars: "Make sure all things come into conflict as they should." Jupiter: "Ensure the preservation of all knowledge for the time it must be known." Saturn: "Make sure all things end as they should." The Intimacies of the Maidens are strange and rarely appear to make sense to other beings when the goddesses deign to share them. Yet, the five share the following common attachments: the Tapestry (Awe), the future (Hope), the present (Delight), the past





(Satisfaction), Oblivion (Horror), Other Maidens (Camaraderie), the Fivescore Fellowship (Exasperated Affection), Autochthon (Wary Gratitude), Gaia (Respect), the Yozi (Sorrow), Luna and the Unconquered Sun (Uneasy Friendship) and pattern spiders (Pride).

Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 15, Stamina 10, Charisma 5, Manipulation 15, Appearance 10, Perception 20, Intelligence 15, Wits 15

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

Abilities: *All Maidens:* Athletics 10, Awareness 10 (Noticing What Is Actively Hidden +3), Craft (Fate) 10 (In Accordance With Motivation +3), Dodge 10, Integrity 10 (Ignoring Questions +3), Lore 10 (Shinmaic Theory +3), Occult 10 (*Samsara* +3), Presence 10 (Confusing Explanations +3), Resistance 10, Survival 10; *Mercury:* Ride 10, Sail 10, Thrown 10; *Venus:* Linguistics 10 (Native: Old Realm, Flametongue, Forest-tongue, Guild Cant, High Holy Speech, High Realm, Low Realm, Riverspeak, Rocktongue, Seatongue, Skytongue), Performance 10, Socialize 10; *Mars:* Archery 10, Melee 10, War 10; *Jupiter:* Investigation 10, Larceny 10, Stealth 10; *Saturn:* Bureaucracy 10, Martial Arts 10, Medicine 10; The Maidens can boost their Ability ratings with Fateful Puissance Integration (see below).

Backgrounds: As Incarnae, the Maidens have virtually limitless access to requisition the resources of Yu-Shan and Creation, giving them ratings of 5 or even N/A in any pertinent Background. Of particular note, they have Cult N/A restoring eight motes of Essence and one mote of Willpower per hour from the prayers devoted to them and the cosmic vastness of their dominions.

Sorcery: The Maidens are naturally initiated into the Emerald and Sapphire Circle through their numinous power, giving themselves spells as needed with the Charm Library of Inner Truth (see p. 14).

Charms: As Essence 10 deities, the Maidens have All-Encompassing versions of virtually every divine Charm not unique to singular beings, subject to the limitations of each Maiden's purview. They have no Excellencies or other Ability-enhancing Charms beyond those unique to their panoplies. They also

cannot use any of their Charms to directly contest their knowledge of *samsara*, so they cannot use a defensive Charm to stop an attack they know must happen or attack someone with lethal force who has a role yet to play in the saga of existence. The Maidens are versed in every conceivable Blessing and Curse and may issue permanent versions of either as many times per year as desired, spending 30 motes in lieu of permanent Willpower to do so. Notable capabilities include 10 purchases each of Essence Plethora, Reserve of Will and Ox-Body Technique and a Materialize cost of 100 motes. Their Hurry Home teleports them from anywhere governed by fate to anywhere governed by fate and may be used reflexively as a form of perfect dodge against any undesired effect rather than requiring a simple action when teleporting to the Loom of Fate, even against undodgeable effects. The Maidens have an unusual relationship with the martial arts (see Many-Flowering Lotus on p. 14).

Auspicious Panoply of Destiny: These Charms belong to the Maidens alone. No one else can learn them. To the degree it matters, they have a minimum Essence of 10. Except as noted, each Maiden has all of these Charms, though each uses them differently.

Samsara's Inviolable and Subtle Hand: The Maidens' Charms are virtually undetectable unless the keepers of fate wish otherwise, even to Essence-based perception. If a Charm contests this subtlety, the Maidens apply a flat 20 successes in the roll-off to hide their work. The Maidens also treat all mental influence that would make them betray their Motivation as an unacceptable order and cannot knowingly act against their Motivation of their own free will. This defense also applies retroactively to instantly shatter any ongoing externally imposed mental influence in the moment it comes into conflict with their Motivation. Finally, the Maidens can reflexively commit 10 motes to make themselves immune to all Poison and Sickness effects, all negative effects from hazardous environments and all hostile Shaping effects. Doing so also purges their bodies of all such deleterious effects already in their system.

Righteous Answer of Catechism: This Charm is similar to the Unconquered Sun's Charm of the

CHARM CONCEPT: SAMSARA



The Maidens see a fate beyond fate, the ebb and flow of the shinmaic substrata defining existence. Termed *samsara*, this pattern is arbitrary but never random, sublime in its beauty and horror. The design has neither guiding intelligence nor coherent moral imperative behind it, but it empowers the Maidens with knowledge that enslaves their actions. What they see in it, they cannot help but act to bring about. If destiny and fate are the grand architecture that the Maidens and their servants construct, *samsara* is the ultimate blueprint which defines the “as things should” in each Maiden’s Motivation. It is also more, because *samsara* can predict events not normally subject to divination, such as the actions of beings outside fate and events the Maidens cannot influence. In this, it is a numinous mystery that contains an infinitude of otherwise inaccessible truths.

Not all things are contained in *samsara*. Some events happen that the Maidens do not foresee. In part, this is a limitation of each Maiden’s purview. Mars no more knows where things must go than Mercury discerns future conflicts. The highest levels of the Perfected Lotus and the divinatory Charms of the Sidereal Exalted see even less, touching and manipulating the pattern without truly perceiving it. Jupiter theorizes that the sleeping Yozi Sacheverell truly sees the shape of things to come, and so lies trapped in hopeless inaction by the futility of predestination, but *samsara* itself is silent on the matter. Ultimately, the Storyteller chooses whether a given event is even eligible for divination in *samsara* and needs not apply any measure of consistency beyond whether it serves his story to have the Maidens aware of and working toward a particular outcome. For example, if a future plot in the series involves the death of the Unconquered Sun, that event could be excluded from *samsara* to catch even Saturn by surprise. If she knows, however, then she becomes part of the conspiracy.

Obviously, *samsara* cannot directly account for the actions of protagonists whom the Storyteller does not control. While Storytellers can work around this limitation by modifying the script, such as killing the Most High tomorrow if the heroes save him today, doing so would directly attack the core principle of Exalted that protagonists always matter. Unless the Storyteller has established great trust with the players such that they can be sure a scripted event will give them more options to matter than it takes away, taking this approach will most likely bring the game to a screeching halt. A more elegant solution is to keep the Maidens’ knowledge of *samsara* largely invisible to the players, allowing the goddesses to anticipate how the story actually plays out rather than tying them to a specific vision. Where it appears at all, *samsara* best serves stories as the inscrutable rationale for the Maidens’ actions, no more intrusive than the weird agendas of other mighty spirits.

same name (Glories of the Most High: The Unconquered Sun, p. 9), but prayers to the Maidens do not create a conduit for their ranged attacks. Also, it is not their usual practice to send messages to their Chosen at the moment of Exaltation. When a Sidereal prays to his patron Maiden and asks for enlightenment that is congruent with her vision of *samsara*, she may pay (30m, 1wp) to gift him with any Sidereal Charm, a dot of an astrological College

or a dot of Essence as a Training effect, bypassing age limits on the last. She cannot do so if he is already in experience debt. *Samsara* wisely does not permit this gift except in dire circumstances, especially with regard to the Maiden’s rarely used power to scribe a new Sidereal Charm into the firmament. Using this Charm, all five Maidens can ritually unlock Sidereal access to astrological Charms, after which responses to enlightenment prayers can bestow them as well.



The rite by which they sealed these techniques at the end of the Primordial War is not repeatable without catastrophic and irreversible damage to the Loom of Fate.

Strands Within Strands: By reflexively paying one mote, a Maiden can intuit the answer to any one question *samsara* permits her to know. This answer must help her uphold her Motivation, but the Charm is not otherwise limited in the information it can impart. “What do I most need to understand right now?” is a valid question.

Ordained Saga Triumph: Whenever a Maiden succeeds on an action in which she performed a stunt and that stunt resonated with her Motivation, she doubles any motes or Willpower she chooses to recover as a reward. She may immediately pay any Willpower points received this way to reflexively regenerate two levels of bashing damage or one level of lethal damage. She may extend this same benefit whenever she witnesses a successful stunt that resonates with her own Motivation performed by another character by reflexively paying three motes, broadening the options for rewards the character who performed the stunt may receive. Maidens automatically know when a witnessed action is eligible for this blessing. Unlike other beings, the Maidens cannot perform stunts to enhance actions or other rolls that have no possibility for failure. Thus, they cannot stunt in conjunction with using *Cosmological Constant* or when declaring success (or an opposing action’s failure) with *As Fate Decrees*.

Fateful Puissance Integration: The Maidens can consult the infinite wisdom of *samsara*, reflexively committing one mote per dot to temporarily raise any Ability up to a maximum rating of 20 as a Shaping effect. Abilities with trait prerequisites (such as Craft [Magitech]) require these prerequisites to be met as normal. Temporary dots last as long as the commitment sustaining them and are considered part of the Maiden’s natural rating during that time. Conferring Linguistics grants whatever languages the Maidens wish to incorporate at the time they give themselves those dots. The Maidens can also bless anyone inside fate they can perceive, committing Essence as usual for the Charm to provide temporary Ability dots up to the usual maximum for the target.

Cosmological Constant: This Charm is similar to the Conviction power of the Unconquered Sun’s Charm *Perfection Beyond Imagining (Glories of the Most High: The Unconquered Sun, p. 11)*, but permanently ensures success on all actions that support the Maiden’s Motivation and applies only a flat 20 successes to roll-offs against effects that contest this supremacy. Join Battle, Join War and Join Debate actions are always considered to support a Maiden’s Motivation. This Charm also enhances Virtue rolls supporting the Maiden’s Motivation. (For example, Mars is dauntless in necessary strife; the love of Venus is all-encompassing for those she would unite.) Using this Charm, the Maidens can successfully accomplish all Craft (Fate) actions necessary to maintain the entire Tapestry, but doing so requires the undivided attention of all five goddesses in one place within fate.

As Fate Decrees: Whenever the Maidens witness or engage in an event that requires a dice roll, they may reflexively pay one mote to reset the target number of that roll to anything from 4-9 as a Shaping effect. This Charm may be activated in any attack step in which a roll occurs to affect that roll. By also paying one Willpower, the Maidens can impose automatic failure or automatic success on all dice in lieu of an actual roll. An automatic result is not eligible for reroll. Automatic failure makes sure that no modifier or effect can cause the roll to generate more than 0 successes, and may similarly reduce a static value (such as a DV) to 0 for one event in which it is applied. Automatic success can double a static value for one instance of use. Rolls for other Essence 10 beings and all beings outside fate may not be adjusted by this Charm, nor can the rolls of those whose traits are protected from Shaping attacks. Roll-offs for Charm conflicts are also ineligible for modification.

Infinite Realignment of Destiny: The Maidens can mark anyone they can perceive within a mile using this instant Simple Charm, paying (10m, 1wp) that is not committed despite the ongoing effect. This is an unblockable and undodgeable attack. The target must be inside fate and not immune to Shaping-based trait alteration. If successful, the Maiden chooses a narrow subset of her own Motivation (“Fight De-





mons!” for Mars, by way of example) and selects a target number ranging from 4-9. Whenever the target takes a rolled action using any Attribute or Ability that directly supports the selected Motivation, the target number of that action adjusts as directed. If the target is invalid at that point, the destiny falls off. Otherwise, fates imposed by this Charm last until Calibration. No being can have more than one instance of this Charm applied to it. Trying to add another makes the old one fall off. In its secondary use, Infinite Realignment of Destiny can target non-Primordial beings outside fate, tangling their Essence in destiny’s weave so they become part of fate until Calibration.

Whispers of What Must Be: The Maidens can pay (5m, 1wp) as a simple (Speed 3, -0 DV) action to speak a social attack to one target they can perceive. This can be done in personal combat time as well as social combat, and no one other than the target hears the suggestion. This unnatural influence is both an Illusion and Compulsion effect, implanting a suggestion to take one action that directly supports

the Maiden’s Motivation. Resisting this suggestion must be done at the time of implantation and costs a number of Willpower points equal to (11 - target’s Essence; maximum 5). Otherwise, whenever any combination of designated trigger events occurs, the target must take whatever single action the Maidens commanded and believes it to be his own volition. He may, alternatively, be commanded to stop or avoid a particular course of action when triggered, in which case he may not repeat that action for the rest of the scene. The target need not be aware of the trigger events, as long as they are known to *samsara*. Each Maiden can implant only one suggestion per target. Trying to apply another removes the first. Otherwise, the suggestion waits indefinitely until triggered.

Like Spiders Alert: The Maidens cannot ever be surprised by any danger, and attacks against them are never unexpected; *samsara* can override this protection to conceal a threat. They also recognize whether anything is part of fate or outside it upon perceiving it. This Charm also allows the Maidens





to reflexively spend (15m, 1wp) to restart any given scene by having witnessed the “rewound” events as a vision in *samsara* that can offer insight when they “actually” play out the scene. A given scene can only be restarted once per Maiden and cannot be rewind if any being outside fate acted to disrupt the vision. In light of this power, the Storyteller should take note of the static traits and variable traits (like mote pools) for all participant characters at the beginning of every scene in which the Maidens take part. Finally, each Maiden can reflexively shift her senses to any location inside fate as though she were at that location, but her shifted perceptions fail to notice anything outside fate.

Arsenal of Fate: By reflexively paying motes equal to the rating of a starmetal artifact weapon, a Maiden can visibly weave strands of luminous fate into that item as a Shaping effect. Repeated use and separate commitment can create any number of weapons. The conjured artifact appears in the grasp of any being the Maidens can perceive and wish to gift (including themselves) and is considered attuned by all wielders as long as committed Essence continues to sustain its existence. In addition to basic starmetal magical material bonuses, weapons created with this Charm bring any being they strike into fate for the rest of the scene. Arsenal of Fate cannot create anything more complex or powerful than a grand daiklave, but it can form a weapon in time to make an armed parry against an attack.

Many-Flowering Lotus: By reflexively committing one mote per Charm, the Maidens can draw enlightenment from *samsara* to temporarily endow themselves with Martial Arts Charms from any style. They must give themselves all required trait minimums and Charm prerequisites to advance through a style, and they do not gain sutra benefits for Sidereal Styles since they do not truly internalize the teachings. They may, however, use these Charms as divine Charms for the purposes of not needing Combos. Mastery conferred by Many-Flowering Lotus fades upon releasing the motes sustaining it. The Maidens are incapable of learning Martial Arts Charms in any permanent fashion. Like the Primordials, they belong to other principles.

Library of Inner Truth: By reflexively committing one mote, the Maidens consult the wisdom of *samsara* to temporarily teach themselves a single Emerald or Sapphire Circle spell. They may also learn and cast Abjuration of the Maidens, Adamant Circle Banishment, Adamant Countermagic and Winds of Confusion (see *The Books of Sorcery*, Vol. II—*The White Treatise*) despite lacking Adamant initiation. (Replace the usual display of the last with the appropriate chromatic hue as they unleash the mind-shattering mysteries of *samsara*.) Alternatively, they can bestow a spell on anyone inside fate they are touching who knows the appropriate initiation Charms. Knowledge of a conferred spell lasts as long as the commitment sustaining it. Repeated use of this Charm can endow beneficiaries with vast sorcerous knowledge. The Maidens can, but do not bother to, learn sorcery in a permanent fashion. They have more important matters to which to tend.

Resplendencies Beyond College: The Maidens can appear as any thing or type of being that is or ever has been part of fate, cloaking all information about them at all to fit the disguise, including magical information such as Essence and destiny. Taking a form does not modify a Maiden’s traits unless she chooses to apply less than her full power to a task. Piercing this perfect disguise is impossible by mundane means. Charms that would reveal the Maiden’s true self face a flat 20-success barrier in the roll-off. One extremely important limitation of this Charm is that it cannot be used to copy specific entities. The Maidens can take any part they devise in the service of *samsara*, but they may not steal a role that has already been cast in the grand play of events. Pretending to be nothing is a valid use for this Charm, in which case the Maiden goes undetected to all perception for as long as she maintains this disguise. The attacks of an undetectable Maiden are automatically unexpected unless the target uses a Charm or stunt to augment his defense. An undetectable Maiden is likewise a valid target only for stunt or Charm-enhanced attacks and imposes a -5 external penalty to these. Beings outside fate automatically recognize that the Maiden is not what she appears, but they still perceive the Charm’s disguise. This recognition is

enough to void the stealth benefits of seeming to be nothing.

Starfall Path Unveiling (Mercury): Whenever Mercury uses *Hurry Home*, she may spend any number of Willpower points. Doing so allows her to teleport any number of individuals inside fate whom she can perceive, with a Magnitude no greater than the number of Willpower points spent. This Magnitude can encompass any number of scattered individuals and complementary units. Teleporting individuals thus is a Shaping attack. Unlike a mere Banish Charm, Mercury can send individuals to immediately dangerous destinations and can send each transported individual to a separate designated location within fate, if so desired. This Charm ignores and shatters any spells warding against teleportation of lesser power than Adamant or Void Circle as a specialized form of countermagic. Beings transported by the Charm flash away and arrive in beams of yellow light resembling a shower of shooting stars.


Ever-Loving Connivance (Venus): Whenever Venus hits a target with a physical or social attack, she may instill a positive Intimacy in him toward anything she desires as an unnatural Emotion effect. Blue starlight flickers in the target's eyes as the Intimacy takes hold. If the attack hits multiple beings, each Intimacy may be determined separately. Resisting the creation of this Intimacy costs five Willpower, in addition to any Willpower paid to resist the usual effects of a successful social attack enhanced by this Charm. The order in which resistance costs must be paid in the case of stacked influence is up to Venus. She can deliberately choose an Intimacy that directly opposes the target's Motivation to force Willpower drain.

Blessed Legion's Bloody Halo (Mars): By paying (15m, 1wp), Mars can reflexively infuse with her Essence a complementary unit of Magnitude 3+ that she can perceive. For as long as she maintains this commitment, glittering red stardust surrounds and blows in nebulous whorls behind the cadenced tread of the perfected army. This aura adds +10 to the unit's Close Combat, Ranged Attack, Close Combat Damage, Ranged Attack Damage, Drill, Might, Armor and Morale. Mars can use separate

activations to enchant multiple units with this Charm. The blessing lasts as long as the unit remains in formation together or until withdrawn by terminating the Charm.

Prying Veil of Discretion (Jupiter): Jupiter keeps her own counsel. She treats all mental influence that would make her believe anything untrue or divulge information to others as unacceptable orders and contests all Charms that would reveal information about her or her actions (such as whether she is telling the truth) with a flat 20 successes in the roll-off. Green light glitters in her eyes whenever this Charm blocks an effect and she is aware of the attempted intrusion as though it were Obvious to her senses. She can always choose to comply, but she can't be made to do so. The Maiden of Secrets can extend this same protection to all beings inside fate within a 10-mile radius by reflexively committing 15 motes. For a second 15-mote reflexive cost, the shield hardens to block all unnatural mental influence regardless of its intent, stopping attempts at control as readily as mental prying. As a result, it costs 30 motes total to shield an area with the greater defense. Extant unnatural influence temporarily abates in the presence of a greater shield, but returns when the protected character moves out of range or Jupiter withdraws her protection. What the Maiden of Secrets hides from others is an open book to her. Jupiter can glean all secrets of any mind currently protected by this Charm in *samsara* through use of *Strands Within Strands* (p. 12).

Final Cessation's Edge (Saturn): Whenever Saturn hits a target with a physical attack, she may replace the normal effects of the hit with a Shaping effect that offers several options. If she is feeling merciful, she may induce dreamless unconscious that lasts up to one week, during which nothing can wake the target. If she is less merciful, the target instantly dies in whatever manner Saturn decides, up to total disintegration of physical form into a burst of violet stardust. Such death is not a physical transformation, as the dispersion of Essence occurs to the victim's corpse following imposition of death. Beings slain this way pass on to Lethe if able or their Essence disperses back into the natural flow of



Creation, though beings such as Deathlords and many Primordial behemoths regenerate as normal from this demise. Inanimate objects are simply destroyed outright. If Saturn uses this Charm to affect a unit she hits, she knocks every member unconscious or slays them as desired. Only individuals shielded from the Shaping remain, though the Storyteller should permit any special character with such a defense to have activated it as they watched her obliterating her way through the ranks. This Charm can also enhance a social attack calling for an end to discussion on any designated matter. Targets of the attack must pay five Willpower or the unnatural Compulsion effect forces them to halt discussion on that topic or any closely related topic (as adjudicated by the Storyteller) and not resume such conversation for one day. A final power of this Charm is similar to Titan-Unleashing Clarion (Glories of the Most High: The Unconquered Sun, p. 12), but Saturn can summon only Yozi *jouten*.

Join Battle: 25 (always wins via Cosmological Constant, above)

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 10B, Parry DV 9, Rate 3, Tags N

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 13B, Parry DV 7, Rate 2, Tags N

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 15, Damage 10B, Parry DV —, Rate 1, Tags C,N,P

Soak: 5L/10B

Health Levels: -0/-1x16/-2x16/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 18 **Willpower:** 10 (20 points)

Essence: 10 **Essence Pool:** 250

Other Notes: Should another character somehow inherit the destiny and panoply of a Maiden following her unimaginable demise, use the same rules as for the Unconquered Sun (Glories of the Most High: The Unconquered Sun, p. 14). Unlike the Unconquered Sun, the Maidens are not particularly suited to directly scaling up or down their power. Given their utter dependence on and obedience to the whims of *samsara*, however, a strict and cruel future severely limits their capability to act just as a loose and flexible vision empowers them. More than any other beings in the Exalted setting, the

Maidens depend upon plot for power, and plot does not always go in their favor.

ENTOURAGE

The Maidens of Destiny comprise the best-known sisterhood in Creation. Although they work closely with the many Sidereals and gods under their command, the Maidens' truest confidants and companions are each other. Their sorority is an unbreakable bond and the subject of much legend.

To understand the Maidens, one must see them as a unit. Any single act that greatly affects the course of destiny will eventually pass through the domain of each of the five sisters. In the event of a great war, for example, while it might be Mars who assigns nations into alliances against one another and signs off on which battles will be won and which will be lost, and who will be the ultimate victor, she does not work alone. If an entire line of kings will be obliterated at the war's climax, Saturn is there. If cities are sacked into rubble and entire histories are lost, if brother turns upon brother in the final hectic moments of a siege, and if a bodyguard is paid to betray his general at the start of a skirmish, Jupiter sees and hears all. And what are wars if not epic struggles to move supplies, troops, and massive amounts of money and information across long distances? Mercury knows. When a war finally does come to an end, Venus must preside over the peace that comes in the wake of pandemonium, which she does with relish.

The five are not bound to act in concert, however, and sometimes one Maiden will act singly on behalf of the whole, creating a conflict in the sisterhood-collective. For example, Venus has repeatedly proposed a marriage of the Maidens to the Unconquered Sun. On every occasion, the Unconquered Sun has accepted her proposal only for Saturn to break off the engagement before the wedding. These sorts of disagreements are not an anomaly or malfunction in the Maidens' design, but rather just another expression of their upholding the laws of fate. When it seems Mercury might finally best the Unconquered Sun in a footrace, Saturn trips her without fail and without explanation. Jupiter

knows it is because Saturn would loathe seeing any of her sisters best Ignis Divine where she has, at so many Carnivals of Meeting, failed, while the Loom of Fate itself insists that the Unconquered Sun cannot be defeated.

Aside from one another, the only true peers of the Maidens are their fellow Incarnae. Although it would better serve the cause of destiny if the Maidens did not care about Luna or the Unconquered Sun, they find that, against their better judgment, they cannot help but regard the sun and moon as their peers, allies, friends and sometimes more. Saturn struggles against these bonds of affection most of all, for she knows that they, like all things, must end in time. Jupiter is aware of the unwanted feelings afflicting the Maiden of Endings but is kind enough not to speak of them.

Extensive information on the Maidens' divine subordinates may be found in *The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. III—Yu-Shan* and *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals*. Not all of the sisters' servants are as well known as the heads

of the five divisions of the Bureau of Destiny. One of the most numerous and least-seen is detailed here.

AURICHIM AND ARGENTIM

Even at the apex of the First Age, the upper boundaries of Creation remained sparsely explored and imperfectly understood by Exalted astronomers. Although the Incarnae had given their Chosen rulership over Creation, the mightiest gods remained possessive of their dominion over the vast, distant reaches of the sky, and left the aurichim and argentim in place as guardians of the starry vault.

The aurichim acted as the roving eyes of the Unconquered Sun during the Time of Glory, serving to warn the Most High of incursions against the boundaries of Creation. Ignis Divine invariably noticed such threats before his faithful servants brought their warning, but he thanked them regardless. Luna, more easily distracted, sent her argentim to track the movements of Creation's enemies within its borders, that she might hunt them at her leisure.

In the wake of the Primordial War, the Incarnae ordered their servants to continue patrolling and



safeguarding the wide empty spaces of the celestial void, and they continue in that task to this day. The aurichim speak to the Unconquered Sun less and less over time, though few have dared to suggest that he has forgotten about them. They are zealous beings by nature, and even the most lax and dispirited among them have dared little more than to occasionally make the long descent down to Creation's cloud layer, to briefly take their leisure among the cloud people.

The argentim are another matter. They no longer serve Luna, having been wagered and lost in a bet against the Maidens during a Carnival of Meeting in the early First Age. Rather than scouting out Creation's enemies, they have been reassigned as guardians of the constellations. (The Maidens specifically expressed a desire not to see a certain lamentable incident involving the Mask repeated elsewhere.) They also guard the secret anomalies of the darkest reaches of the starry void, of which they are forbidden to speak.

Aurichim and argentim are solitary beings, spending most of their time patrolling the vastness of the celestial realm far above Creation. They inspect the ceiling of the world to make sure it is in good repair, sweep for intruders, gossip about the movement of the heavenly bodies and lament the departure of the Unconquered Sun to Yu-Shan. Occasionally, they do battle with bizarre wonders or horrors pulled into Creation in the wake of the moon's nightly return from the eastern Wyld. Few have ever visited Yu-Shan or seen one of the Exalted, and most are intensely curious about these storied beings, whom they are intended to bar from disrupting the cycles of the heavens. Argentim often land on the passing surface of the moon and attempt to entice truculee to share news or gossip from Creation's surface, which they then carry back to their brethren and the aurichim. Truculee invent at least as much news as they report, so the guardians of the celestial void are perpetually ill informed about matters on Creation's surface.

Aurichim appear as tall men and women with bronzed skin and armor, 10 feet in height on average, with blank golden masks for faces and expressive eyes. They fly about on wings made of geometric

patterns forged from pure sunlight. Argentim are similar, but silver to the gold of the aurichim, and their wings, formed of bent moonbeams, now gather steady coatings of shimmering stardust from their dalliances with the constellations.

Sanctum: The aurichim make their homes in a series of recessed apartments cut directly into the ceiling of the heavenly vault, though they are rarely in residence. The current sanctum of all argentim is a spatial anomaly in the darkness between the Rising Smoke and the Sorcerer, a void within the void, which they fear to enter and of which the few among their number who have entered will not speak.

Motivation: Safeguard the celestial void against intruders.

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 8, Stamina 8; Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4; Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

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

Abilities: Archery 4 (Bow of Light +1), Athletics 3 (Flight +3), Awareness 5 (Distant Things +3), Dodge 3, Integrity 5, Lore 2 (Celestial Void +2), Melee 5 (Spear of Light +1), Occult 2 (Secrets of the Stars +1), Performance 2, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Survival 1 (Celestial Void +3), War 2

Backgrounds: Backing (Incarnae) 2

Charms:

Amethyst Awareness

Bane Weapon—Attacks against unauthorized intruders inflict aggravated damage.

Banish—The powerful Charm used by celestial guardians deposits unwanted intruders on the face of Creation, far below.

Divine Prerogative—Guardianship of the celestial void.

Essence Bite—Functions only during the day for aurichim, and only at night for argentim.

Essence Plethora

Hurry Home—Returns the spirit to its sanctum.

Intrusion-Sensing Method—The argentim use this Charm to detect tampering with any of the constellations.

Landscape Hide—Aurichim sometimes take their rest within a passing comet when they need to get from place to place.

Landscape Travel—Celestial guardians fly through the starry vault at twice normal movement speed.

Materialize—Costs 55 motes

Measure the Wind—The celestial guardians evaluate intruders for proper authorization from the Incarnae.

Ox-Body Technique (x2)

Principle of Motion—Aurichim and argentim usually keep seven actions banked.

Sheathing the Material Form

Touch of Eternity—Allows recipients to respire the thin, cold air of the celestial void without difficulty (-4 internal penalty to all actions otherwise).

Touch of Grace—Used to perform light maintenance on the roof of Creation.

Second (Ability) Excellency—Archery, Integrity, Melee

Third (Ability) Excellency—Athletics, Awareness, War

Infinite (Ability) Mastery—Archery

Join Battle: 8

Attacks:

Spear of Light: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 16L, Parry DV 8, Rate 2

Bow of Light: Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 13L, Rate 2, Range 350

Soak: 14L/17B (Celestial armor, 10L/9B;

Hardness 8L/8B)

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

Dodge DV: 8 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 4 **Essence Pool:** 85

OBSERVANCES

The average mortal in Creation understands that the Maidens are responsible for fate and destiny, but grasps little of the significance of this fact save for the great power of the five sisters. Misconceptions range from the notion that the Maidens are impartial caretakers of a preordained global destiny, to the laughable idea that they manually control the actions of each and every mortal in Creation. Regardless, they are well-known beings, and their influence over the various cultures of Creation is vast.

Mercury is widely considered to be a patron of merchants and sailors, and she receives more prayer

from the Guild than perhaps any other source in Creation, including Varangia. Rare indeed is the merchant caravan or wagon that does not have her symbol carved somewhere on it. But she is not merely the mistress of merchants. Couriers' bags are traditionally painted a bright yellow in recognition of Mercury, and the lemon-yellow jackets worn by riders for the Imperial Post are a clear nod to the Maiden's power. Generally, any individual who is traveling, or who is moving goods, services, ideas or culture from one place to another is likely to attempt to invoke Mercury's blessing over his venture.

The symbolism of Venus can be found marking the most sacred and profane aspects of Creation. On the lighter side, cerulean is the almost-universal color of weddings in Creation, and it is traditional in some regions for a newly married couple to spend its first night sleeping (assuming any sleeping is done) on blue sheets. Blue ribbons hanging from a house's eaves symbolize the recent birth of a couple's first child in much of the Threshold. The wide-brimmed hats worn during mid-day rests throughout the hottest parts of the South are decorated with blue bands.

Blue is also the color of brothels and the primary hue in the attire of more expensive harlots. Most houses of ill repute that can afford to advertise discreetly do so by hanging out a blue paper lantern, and the pleasure barges of House Cynis often fly blue sails (when they care to be identified as such).

Mars often sees her symbol painted on the shields of soldiers marching to war. But that same mark is also often painted or cast into anvils in ironworks throughout the Threshold where Fair Folk incursions are a problem. Even the aniconic Realm's foundries maintain the practice of painting their doors and roofs red. Furthermore, there is a significant trend in Dragon-Blooded depictive art featuring the Maiden of Battles to show her wearing hairstyles popularized by the Scarlet Empress. The Empress has never been known to publicly condemn this practice.

Jupiter is widely worshiped by scavenger lords who entreat her to give up a portion of her secrets. She is a popular figure in Threshold artwork, and a statue of her, blindfolded and contemplating a closed book, may even be found in the entry hall of the Heptagram.



Libraries are often decorated in shades of dark green intended to mollify the Maiden of Secrets and prevent her from growing wroth at the idea of so much information being offered so freely.

More unexpectedly, she is also widely worshiped by pirates. The Lintha in particular make lavish yearly sacrifices while asking that she keep the secret routes through the sargasso sea around Bluehaven from falling into the hands of their enemies. Lesser freebooters also attempt to propitiate her in the hopes that their buried loot and hidden ports will not be uncovered.

Saturn is invoked in funeral rites throughout Creation. She is also called upon at graduation ceremonies, rites of transition into adulthood and often by sailors about to depart to sea. Soldiers in the West worship her more commonly than they do Mars, for Siakal urges them to cast enemies into the hungry sea, and so naval battle is associated with death more often than conquest. The most expensive physicians often incorporate lavish sacrifices to Saturn into their consultation fees, attempting to bribe

her simultaneously to stay her touch from the lives of their patients while ending their afflictions.

Most gods and Sidereals, better informed than Creation's average mortal, believe that the multitudes of prayers directed to the Maidens are cast forth in absolute and utter futility. The pattern spiders are keyed to respond to only a very few authorized prayers and do not alter their weaving of destiny otherwise. As these prayers are known only to authorized members of the Bureau of Destiny, then, every mortal who begs Saturn to stay her hand or entreats Venus to smile upon him wastes his breath.

Such is the belief of the well-informed denizens of Heaven. They might be surprised to learn the truth. Ten thousand prayers may be cast to the ears of the Maidens without stirring them from their course, and then ten thousand times that number again. But every now and then, for reasons none other than the Maidens themselves could explain, a prayer will catch the attention of one of the sisters. When this happens, the Maiden in question almost invariably descends to Creation to investigate in

person, and just as invariably does so in an unassuming disguise. Mercury prefers to wear the guise of a wandering mendicant, dock worker, refugee or retired merchant. Venus often plays the role of the minor noble, runaway slave, disgraced monk or harlot. Mars prefers to investigate matters of Creation in the form of a mercenary, blacksmith, proreus or hunter. Jupiter walks among mortals assuming the role of a librarian, cutpurse, Gateway champion or a mourner at the funeral of an accomplished scavenger lord. Saturn is stirred to make the fewest visits to Creation, and generally does so as a vartabed, orphaned child, world-weary gambler or black crow.

GIFTS TO THE CHOSEN

Alone among the Incarnae, the Maidens handcrafted the Charms of their Exalted and affixed them to the stars of the 25 constellations. They have only rarely added to this gleaming roll of aptitudes, the last instance being in the earliest days of the First Age. They have never been known to remove a Charm from the reach of their Chosen. In all likelihood, it is not within their power to do so.

But neither is it within the power of the Viziers to craft new Sidereal Charms for themselves. As a result, their self-improvement has focused on the development of a wide array of esoteric martial arts styles which, at the end of the Second Age of Man, leave them the undisputed masters of such secret techniques.

CRANE STYLE

Developed by Sidereal Exalted during the Primordial War as a means of teaching newly Exalted Celestials the ways of martial arts without risk of deadly training accidents, Crane Style emphasizes defensive maneuvers, restraint and empathy for opponents. The style does not permit armor, but considers hook swords and war fans (as well as the magical versions thereof) as unarmed attacks for the purposes of its Charms. Most commonly, these weapons are wielded paired, as a one-winged crane is considered highly inauspicious. In the Second Age, the main practitioners of this Celestial martial art are Gold Faction Sidereals who run the train-

ing camps of the Cult of the Illuminated, applying the style's techniques to their original purpose as they prepare Solar Exalted to face the enemies of Creation.

FLUTTERING CRY OF WARNING

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The clumsy hunter might strike from ambush, but the crane is not fooled. This Charm may be activated in response to any unexpected physical attack targeting the martial artist or anyone within (Martial Arts x 10) yards of her. Yet, the target of the unexpected attack must not have made any physical attack previously in the scene (counterattacks are permitted). If the target is valid, the attack loses the unexpected quality and its target may defend against it normally.

EMPOWERING JUSTICE REDIRECTION

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Until next attack

Prerequisite Charms: Fluttering Cry of Warning

Crane stylists do not initiate hostilities—they finish them. This Charm may be activated in response to any physical attack targeting the martial artist and notes the attacker and the number of successes rolled for the attack prior to applying the martial artist's defenses. Whenever the martial artist next makes an unarmed attack or counterattack roll against the noted attacker, her roll adds a number of extra successes equal to those noted. An attack enhanced with these successes inflicts its usual type of damage, but the actual levels applied to an enemy in Step Ten convert into bashing damage that cannot spill over past Incapacitated to impose lethal wounds. If an enhanced attack inflicts any levels of damage, the opponent is automatically knocked prone by the force of the blow. Reactivation of Empowering Justice Redirection resets the noted aggressor and number of successes, replacing any prior activation.

SIDEREALS, REVISITED

For convenient reference, corrections and updates to several existing Sidereal Charms are compiled here. All Charms are from *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals*.

Fateful (Ability) Excellency (p. 127) has the Combo-OK keyword.

Dreaming the Wild Lands (p. 136) has the Shaping keyword.

Implicit Construction Methodology (p. 143) may be applied to only a single roll per project.

Duck Fate (p. 143) may be employed to avoid any harmful effect (including all undesired physical, social, mental and spiritual influence), regardless of applicability or the scope of the attack, as long as the Sidereal's player succeeds on the Charm's activation roll. It fails only against Limit Break and Pattern Bite. Duck Fate's fallible activation roll is considered a unique Flaw of Invulnerability.

Serenity in Blood (p. 155) applies its listed Willpower cost only the first time it is invoked during the character's action.

Of Horrors Best Unknown (p. 168) has the Shaping keyword. To clarify, it brings creatures outside fate inside fate for a year and a day, while its target-number-modifying curse lasts for only the first scene in which the net's criteria are met.

Soft Presence Practice (p. 170) has a duration of one scene and is a simple Charm.

Supernal Awareness (p. 174) has a duration of one scene.

(Virtue) Essence Replenishment (p.178) no longer provides motes for channeling a Virtue once that Virtue has been channeled a number of times in a day equal to its rating.

Blade of the Battle Maiden (p. 182) may apply its purchased dice to attacks *or* Parry DV, as decided at the time of activation—not both at once.

Unless otherwise specified, Sidereal Charms that leverage mental influence cost one Willpower to resist. The following Charms require two Willpower to resist:

Adopting the Untamed Face (p. 136), Favorable Inflection Procedure (p. 145), Life Without Compunction (p. 149), You and Yours Stance (p. 150), Force Decision (p. 156).

The following Charms require three Willpower to resist:

Becoming the Wilderness (p. 136), Sky Spirit Demand (p. 137), Song of Spirit Persuasion (p. 148), Avoiding the Truth Technique (p. 163), Masque of the Uncanny (p. 165), Icy Hand (p. 176), Underling Invisibility Practice (p. 176), Unwavering Well-Being Meditation (p. 178).

The following Charms require five Willpower to resist:

Neighborhood Relocation Scheme (p.144), Abandoned Words Curse (p. 145), Ice and Fire Binding (p. 148), Shun the Smiling Lady (p. 149), Spirit-Binding Battle Pattern (p. 161), Of Secrets Yet Untold (p. 167), Ceasing to Exist Approach (p. 172).

Spirits may not resist Terminal Sanction's (p. 176) Servitude effect.

CRANE FORM

Cost: 6m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Empowering Justice
Redirection

The crane is not a violent animal, it is an elegant one. While this Charm is active, the martial artist ignores the off-hand penalty for actions while wielding paired form weapons. If wearing clothing with long, flowing sleeves, she adds one to her Parry DV (and her clothing will never be torn or stained by using it to parry attacks), and her barehanded

attacks gain the R tag. She automatically succeeds on all Athletics checks to retain her balance and exerts no effective weight on any solid object, allowing her to balance on a pine tree's needles or run across a spider web as readily as firm ground. The Charm doubles the dice bonus (but not actual level) of all stunts made to enhance unarmed Martial Arts actions and allows such stunts to recover a Compassion channel in place of other awards if the action succeeds. Finally, all damage inflicted by the martial artist's unarmed attacks is limited to bashing injury as per the effects of Empowering Justice Redirection.

HUMBLING ENLIGHTENMENT COMMENTARY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Crane Form

The grace of the crane inspires those who bear witness to it. A martial artist who knows this Charm may enhance her unarmed Martial Arts attacks and parries with the same descriptions as a social attack, provided that her spoken words analyze her opponent's fighting techniques and offers helpful advice to improve them. Thus, comments by players speaking in character provide a one-die stunt, et cetera. Social and conventional physical criteria do not stack as such, though a combination of visual and literal poetry may certainly net a higher stunt award at Storyteller discretion.

As a secondary benefit, if the martial artist takes a dramatic action lasting one minute in which she spars with a single individual, both combatants treat that minute as a day of training time for the purposes of purchasing dots of Martial Arts, Martial Arts specialties or Martial Arts Charms. This acceleration is not a Training effect and does not allow purchase of traits the combatant's player lacks the banked experience points to afford.

KINDLY SIFU'S QUILL

Cost: —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Humbling Enlightenment Commentary

Gentle masters write their lessons in bruises, not cuts. While a character with this Charm has Crane Form active, he does not need to spend a Willpower point to channel Compassion to enhance an unarmed Martial Arts attack or parry. Moreover, whenever he does channel Compassion this way to improve an attack, he also adds the dice bonus from the channel to the attack's raw damage and he may choose to arrange inflicted bruises as calligraphy upon the victim's skin when inflicting any levels of damage.

CROSSED WINGS DENIAL

Cost: (0+)m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crane Form

What monster kills so beautiful a bird? This Charm may be activated in response to any physical attack of which the martial artist is aware, allowing her to make a perfect unarmed parry even against unblockable attacks. Doing so costs a number of motes equal to the number of times she has activated Crossed Wings Denial previously in the scene. Use of this Charm prevents the martial artist from making any physical attacks on her next action as a special flaw of invulnerability. Counterattacks are not similarly prohibited.

FEATHER-STIRRED ARROW DEFLECTION

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;



Type: Reflexive (Step 9)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crossed Wings Denial

With a mighty beat of its wings, the crane shames feathers bound to shafts. They understand the lessons that their archers do not. This Charm is an unarmed (Dexterity + Martial Arts) counterattack that may be activated in response to any ranged attack with a solid projectile. The projectile may strike the martial artist or not depending on her defenses, but regardless, the counterattack hurls the projectile at an armed character no farther away



than the distance between the original attacker and the martial artist. The target of this counterattack need not be the attacker who prompted it. If the counterattack hits, it inflicts no damage, but the opponent is automatically disarmed and the weapon flies five yards away in a direction of the martial artist's choice.

BEAK SPEARS FROG

Cost: 4m, 1wp; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack

Duration: One Scene

Prerequisite Charms: Crane Form

It is the nature of a crane to grab a frog that passes beneath its beak. It is the nature of Crane Style to strike those who strike first. A martial artist using this Charm cannot make physical attacks against other animate beings, but this prohibition does not extend to counterattacks. While Beak Spears Frog is active, however, the character may respond to any physical attack against him in Step Nine with a single unarmed counterattack, provided he can reach the attacker to do so. Counterattacks made this way suffer an internal penalty equal to the multiple action penalty of the attacks to which they respond, but are otherwise made at the character's full dice pool.

WINGS SPREAD TO SKY

Cost: 6m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Beak Spears Frog

Majestic and beautiful is the soaring crane. In activating this Charm, the character extends his arms to either side, hands pointed down, and glides up to (Martial Arts x 5) yards in any direction. If this path terminates in midair, he remains suspended in defiance of gravity for the duration of the Charm with enough mobility to dodge without actually moving from his location. He cannot reactivate Wings Spread to Sky until his DV refreshes. The Charm may be used to abort a fall safely or rise higher from the apogee of a jump. If used to pull away in response to an attack, the attack resolves

normally before the martial artist moves. Defensive gliding can interrupt a flurry if the martial artist moves out of the attacker's reach, ensuring that successive attacks automatically miss.

When Wings Spread to Sky ends, the character glides another (Martial Arts x 5) yards or less in any direction before gravity resumes its hold upon him. This can allow him to land safely from a great height or deposit him on a safer perch. Termination of the Charm can also close the distance to an opponent to deliver an unarmed attack or counterattack (effectively extending the reach of the attack). Closing to strike this way doubles extra successes for the purposes of calculating the attack's raw damage, but only the first attack in a flurry enjoys this bonus.

WISDOM OF THE CELESTIAL CRANE

Cost: —; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Holy

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Kindly Sifu's Quill, Feather-Stirred Arrow Deflection, Wings Spread to Sky

The crane is a sacred animal. How much more so are the masters who understand its ways? Upon learning this Charm, the martial artist converts all Combos solely containing Crane Style Charms into the experience points needed to acquire them. Combos containing Charms outside the style remain. Through the Wisdom of the Celestial Crane, the character can activate any Combo solely containing Crane Style Charms as though she knew that Combo and she considers Crane Form Combo-OK for this purpose. She does not need to spend Willpower to activate a Combo intuited through this Charm. Finally, if she is using Crane Form, whenever an unarmed attack she makes inflicts any levels of damage to a creature of darkness, that being also loses a Willpower point. Victims who lose their last Willpower point this way instantly form an Intimacy of love for Creation.

CRYSTAL CHAMELEON STYLE

This ancient Celestial martial art dates back to the Primordial War, when it was innovated and used by the Chosen of Mercury to help deliver vital mes-

sages despite overwhelming Primordial opposition. Demons and Lintha alike were left blinking and confused as practitioners quickly blurred through their blockades, leaving only footprints and corpses to mark their passing.

It is still strongly favored today for its mixture of surprise and speed. Those who have fought a Blinding Prism (as practitioners of this style are known) rarely know precisely what hit them, and that suits the needs of the Viziers of the Second Age perfectly. Unbeknownst to its Sidereal inventors, the style is also widely popular in Autochthonia.

Weapons and Armor: Crystal Chameleon style treats attacks made with the spear, rope dart, weighted rope and their artifact equivalents as unarmed for the purpose of its Charms. It is incompatible with armor.

Complementary Abilities: To properly execute the lightning-fast movements and sudden ambushes

of the style, practitioners must have at least three dots spread between Stealth and Athletics.

JUST ANOTHER BRANCH DECEIT

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-basic

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Radiating Essence through his chakras in a precisely controlled array, the character breaks light around himself, creating intermittent highlights of illumination and shadow throughout the area which help draw attention away from himself. This Charm may supplement an attempt to reestablish surprise (see *Exalted*, p. 156) during combat, adding three automatic successes to the attempt. If the character enjoys more than 50% hard cover due to the environment at the time of activation, the Charm provides four automatic successes instead.



The martial artist must still have the opportunity to attempt to reestablish surprise in the first place.

This Charm is known in Autochthonia as One Wire Among Many.

LIGHT-TREADING TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m, 1wp; Mins: Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Extending her anima in an ablative envelope around her, the martial artist eases her passage through the world. She adds her Martial Arts rating in yards to her Move and Dash actions, and raises her Dodge DV by one against ranged attacks.

FLASHING PASSAGE

Cost: 2m, 1wp; Mins: Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Just Another Branch Deceit, Light-Treading Technique

Collapsing her Essence into pure forward momentum, the martial artist briefly blurs and disappears from sight. This Charm supplements a Dash action, which may not be part of a flurry. The total distance the character travels is quadrupled after all other modifiers, and she cannot be seen or targeted while moving. This Charm's stealth element explicitly fails without provoking a roll-off against effects that would allow others to notice an otherwise perfectly invisible character.

CRYSTAL CHAMELEON FORM

Cost: 6m; Mins: Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Flashing Passage

The martial artist strikes her anima banner, fracturing it into a shifting prism. It becomes impossible to precisely fix her location, imposing a -2 external penalty on all attacks directed at the character. She is always considered to meet the requirements to attempt to reestablish surprise during combat while this Charm is active.

FLASHING LEAVES EVASION

Cost: 6m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crystal Chameleon Form

Putting on a sudden burst of speed, the martial artist melts into a blur as an attack closes in on her, briefly disappearing and reappearing to evade the blow. This Charm sets an incoming attack's successes to 0 in Step Three after all other modifiers. This does mean that rerolls (which occur in Step Four) may allow an attack to bypass this form of defense. This weakness is considered to be a special flaw of invulnerability. Flashing Leaves Evasion does not function against attacks that are undodgeable or unexpected.

This Charm is known in Autochthonia as Shadow Among Shadows.

SHATTERED CRYSTAL REBUKE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive (Step 9)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flashing Leaves Evasion

Subjected to attack, the crystal shatters, wounding its attacker rather than defending itself. This Charm may be invoked in response to an attack, whether it strikes the martial artist or not. The character vanishes in a blur of speed, reappearing behind his attacker. This movement allows for a reflexive attempt to re-establish surprise. This action does not impede resolution of the original attack in any way, and is considered to be a form of counterattack. If the martial artist is the target of a flurry, she may invoke this Charm in response to only the final attack in that flurry.

RAZOR-EDGED PRISM ASSAULT

Cost: 7m, 1wp; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

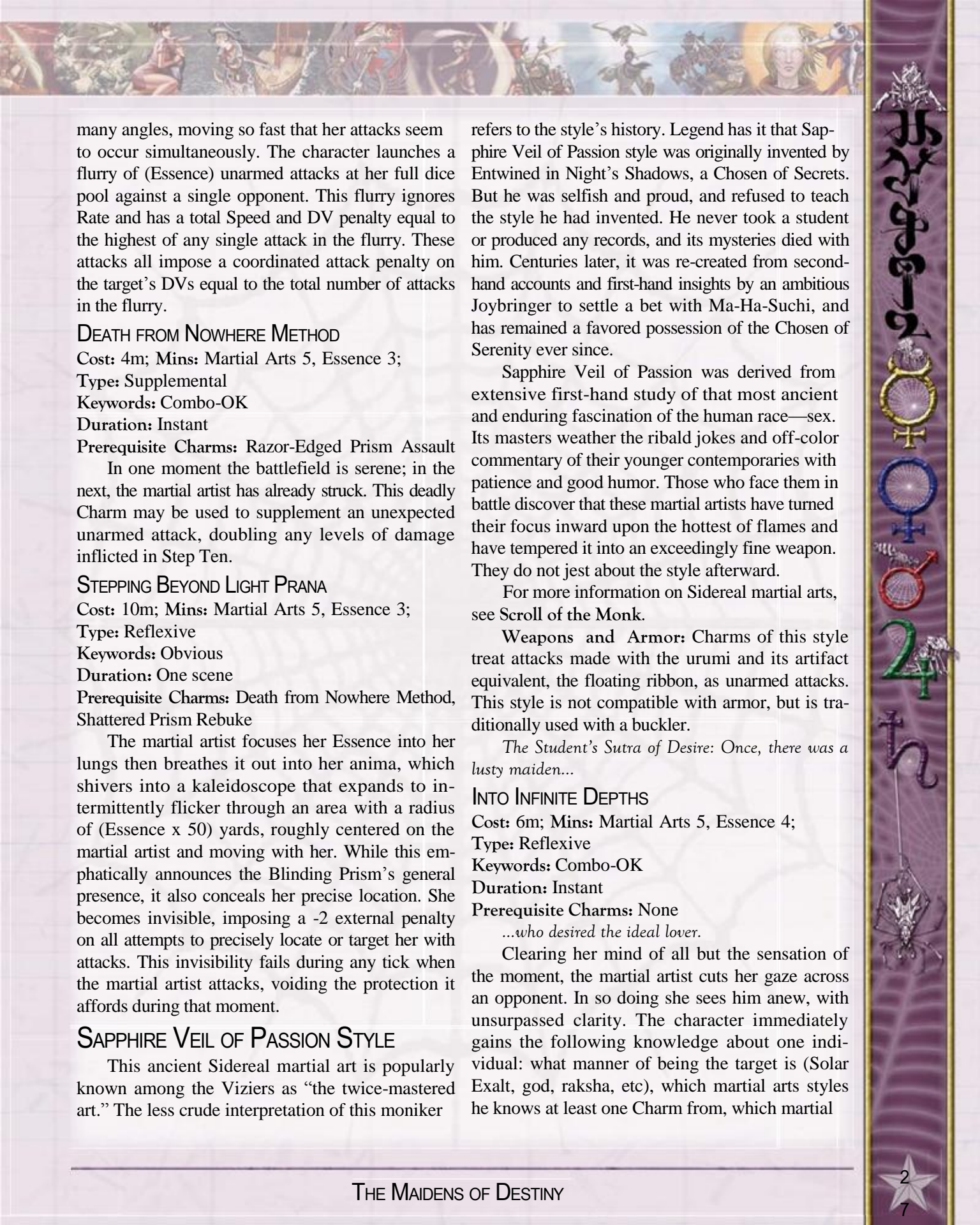
Type: Extra Action

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crystal Chameleon Form

Accelerating into a flickering blur of unleashed violence, the Blinding Prism strikes a foe from



many angles, moving so fast that her attacks seem to occur simultaneously. The character launches a flurry of (Essence) unarmed attacks at her full dice pool against a single opponent. This flurry ignores Rate and has a total Speed and DV penalty equal to the highest of any single attack in the flurry. These attacks all impose a coordinated attack penalty on the target's DVs equal to the total number of attacks in the flurry.

DEATH FROM NOWHERE METHOD

Cost: 4m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Razor-Edged Prism Assault

In one moment the battlefield is serene; in the next, the martial artist has already struck. This deadly Charm may be used to supplement an unexpected unarmed attack, doubling any levels of damage inflicted in Step Ten.

STEPPING BEYOND LIGHT PRANA

Cost: 10m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Death from Nowhere Method, Shattered Prism Rebuke

The martial artist focuses her Essence into her lungs then breathes it out into her anima, which shivers into a kaleidoscope that expands to intermittently flicker through an area with a radius of (Essence x 50) yards, roughly centered on the martial artist and moving with her. While this emphatically announces the Blinding Prism's general presence, it also conceals her precise location. She becomes invisible, imposing a -2 external penalty on all attempts to precisely locate or target her with attacks. This invisibility fails during any tick when the martial artist attacks, voiding the protection it affords during that moment.

SAPPHIRE VEIL OF PASSION STYLE

This ancient Sidereal martial art is popularly known among the Viziers as "the twice-mastered art." The less crude interpretation of this moniker

refers to the style's history. Legend has it that Sapphire Veil of Passion style was originally invented by Entwined in Night's Shadows, a Chosen of Secrets. But he was selfish and proud, and refused to teach the style he had invented. He never took a student or produced any records, and its mysteries died with him. Centuries later, it was re-created from second-hand accounts and first-hand insights by an ambitious Joybringer to settle a bet with Ma-Ha-Suchi, and has remained a favored possession of the Chosen of Serenity ever since.

Sapphire Veil of Passion was derived from extensive first-hand study of that most ancient and enduring fascination of the human race—sex. Its masters weather the ribald jokes and off-color commentary of their younger contemporaries with patience and good humor. Those who face them in battle discover that these martial artists have turned their focus inward upon the hottest of flames and have tempered it into an exceedingly fine weapon. They do not jest about the style afterward.

For more information on Sidereal martial arts, see *Scroll of the Monk*.

Weapons and Armor: Charms of this style treat attacks made with the urumi and its artifact equivalent, the floating ribbon, as unarmed attacks. This style is not compatible with armor, but is traditionally used with a buckler.

The Student's Sutra of Desire: Once, there was a lusty maiden...

INTO INFINITE DEPTHS

Cost: 6m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

...who desired the ideal lover.

Clearing her mind of all but the sensation of the moment, the martial artist cuts her gaze across an opponent. In so doing she sees him anew, with unsurpassed clarity. The character immediately gains the following knowledge about one individual: what manner of being the target is (Solar Exalt, god, raksha, etc), which martial arts styles he knows at least one Charm from, which martial

THE FLOATING RIBBON (ARTIFACT • •)

The urumi is a rare martial arts weapon—a sword with an extremely long, flexible blade, wielded like a hybrid of sword and whip. Its artifact equivalent, known as the floating ribbon, possesses a nine foot long, silk-thin blade of alloyed magical material attached to a carefully weighted handle. The blade has a heavier tip, allowing it to be deftly wielded to make sudden stabbing attacks, or to guide the path of the blade. The wielder may also reflexively pay one mote to extend the length of the blade out to a distance of 10 yards for a single attack. The urumi's weapon traits are repeated here, for convenience. More information on the spring-sword may be found on page 156 of *Scroll of the Monk*.

URUMI

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Mins	Cost	Tags
5	+1	+3L	-2	2	Dex ••, Mrt ••••	••	—

FLOATING RIBBON

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Mins	Attune	Tags
5	+3	+5L	+0	2	Dex ••, Mrt ••••	5	R

arts styles he knows up to the Form-type Charm, which martial arts styles he has mastered, whether he has any Intimacies toward the martial artist, and the nature of those Intimacies, if they exist.

For the rest of the scene, the martial artist gains a +2 bonus to her DVs and MDVs against any opponent she has evaluated in this manner. Into Infinite Depths may be activated as an innate power, which does not count as a Charm activation if Sapphire Veil of Passion Form is active.

ETERNAL INFATUATION DANCE

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack, Obvious

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

She flirted her way across Creation,

Taking attention to imply invitation, the character is able to quickly close with those who draw her notice. This Charm may be activated in response to any social or physical attack. The martial artist vanishes in a swirl of collapsing sapphire ribbons, appearing one yard away from her attacker. In the case of long-range social attacks (such as those delivered through sorcery), the Charm's maximum allowable range

of movement is (Essence x 20) miles. This action incidentally acts as a perfect dodge upon activation against physical ranged attacks of which the martial artist is aware, assuming the attack can be dodged. Subsequent ranged attacks during the remainder of the Charm's duration must be defended against normally.

As long as the martial artist does not voluntarily move away from the individual whom she activated Eternal Infatuation Dance to approach, she may stay within one yard of him at all times, regardless of his movement rate or any exotic movement abilities employed.

The initial movement granted by this Charm is considered a counterattack. This Charm may not be invoked more than once per action.

YELLOW DRAGON FLIGHT

Cost: 13m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

courting handsome boys

Wild ribbons of yellow and scarlet power blaze around the character's attacking limb. Channeling her understanding of the male principle of Essence,

the martial artist enchants an unarmed attack with aggressive, penetrating power. The attack is considered unblockable, ignores soak derived from armor, and in addition to inflicting standard damage, ignites a number of the target's motes equal to the martial artist's (Essence x 2). These motes are not only lost, but also immediately applied as raw lethal damage which ignores armor, but is soaked separately from the original attack. If the target lacks sufficient Essence, or lacks Essence at all, this aspect of the attack is wasted.

BLACK DRAGON COILS

Cost: 5m, 3wp; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Yellow Dragon Flight

and smiling girls.

Stepping back from determined opposition, the martial artist swirls with onyx ribbons. Channeling her understanding of the female principle of Essence, she enhances an unarmed parry against any attack she can perceive, even unblockable attacks, rendering the defense it provides perfect. Additionally, the martial artist regains one channel of any Virtue of her choice for every five motes or fraction thereof the opponent spent on the blocked attack. For example, if an opponent spends one to five motes, the martial artist regains one channel. If an opponent spends six to 10 motes, the martial artist regains two channels (one for the first set of five motes, and another for the remainder in the second set of five motes).

DISSOLUTION OF VALUE

Cost: 15m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Eternal Infatuation Dance, Into Infinite Depths

She attended great debauches, but quantity did not satisfy.

Rooting herself in the midst of her opponents, the martial artist's anima erupts into a series of spiraling ribbons that brush aside the attacks of her foes. While this Charm persists, no penalties of any kind may reduce her DVs. (As always,



inapplicability is not a penalty.) Characters attacking her from behind in a press also do not gain a free unexpected attack. Dissolution of Value automatically ends if the martial artist moves more than one yard from the point where she activated this Charm.

SATISFYING IDLE FANTASY

Cost: 10m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Emotion

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Dissolution of Value

Finally, she met a mirror. Realizing she had learned nothing,

Wrapping herself in self-indulgent dreams of her own triumph, the martial artist denies opponents the ability to hold themselves superior to her. No penalties may apply to her dice pools when she attacks any character she has evaluated with Into Infinite Depths during the course of the scene, save for multiple action penalties. Additionally, when any of her attacks inflict damage, the target must pay one Willpower or accept an Intimacy toward the Sidereal. (This Intimacy represents lust if appropriate to the character's gender preferences, uneasy fascination otherwise.)

SAPPHIRE VEIL OF PASSION FORM

Cost: 13m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Crippling, Form-type, Emotion, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Black Dragon Coils, Satisfying Idle Fantasy, One complete Celestial martial art
the maiden was satisfied.

The martial artist executes a languid kata, hesitates a moment, and then erupts into a shuddering battle pattern. Her anima unfolds into a towering, shifting array of cerulean and sapphire ribbons, which twine about her body even as they strain for the sky. She levitates a finger's length above the ground as she moves, incidentally gaining perfect balance and the ability to move safely over hazardous terrain. Players of all characters who possess any sort of Intimacy toward her, positive or negative, must fail a Compassion roll

or pay one Willpower per attack made against her. If she manages to strike any character who possesses no Essence or Willpower (non-Essence users are not evaluated for current Essence, only Willpower) with an unarmed attack, that character is immediately rendered unconscious for (attacker's Martial Arts) hours as a Crippling effect. Finally, she gains five motes whenever her DV refreshes.

SOMEONE ELSE'S CONSEQUENCE

Cost: 15m; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Reflexive (Step 10)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Shaping

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Sapphire Veil of Passion Form

The Elder Sutra of Desire: One morning, the maiden awoke...

Advanced students of the Sapphire Veil of Passion are among Creation's more careless fighters (and lovers), unconcerned with the consequences of their actions. This Charm may be activated when the martial artist successfully strikes an opponent with an unarmed attack, levying one of the following effects:

- The martial artist immediately terminates the effects of all unnatural mental influence from which she suffers, transferring them to her target, who must then deal with them as he is best able.
- The martial artist immediately terminates the effects of all Poison and Sickness effects from which she suffers, transferring them to her target.

SILKEN ROPE TRICK

Cost: 15m, 1wp; Mins: Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Emotion, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Sapphire Veil of Passion Form

...to find herself wearing a leash and collar.

Moving through a swift kata, the martial artist weaves sapphire threads out of her own Essence, which quickly knot around her. She is unable to take Dash or Jump actions while this Charm is in effect. More beneficially, she adds her Martial Arts

rating in successes to all rolls to establish or control a grapple. Any character who enters a grapple with her (even one who initiated the grapple by attacking the martial artist) automatically gains an Intimacy of lust toward her, regardless of standard sexual preferences. This unnatural Emotion effect costs three Willpower to resist, or two if the character is not of the sex to which the target is normally attracted. Finally, all rolls by opponents to establish control of a grapple suffer an external penalty equal to the martial artist's Appearance if her last action was to hold an opponent.

JOY IN OWNERSHIP

Cost: 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;
Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion, Servitude, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Silken Rope Trick, Someone Else's Consequence

She could not recall when or where she had acquired such fetters.

The martial artist gently touches a target she has rendered unconscious during the scene, manipulating the flow of his Essence through the chakra points known as the gates of desire. Upon awakening, the target gains a second Motivation to "Love and obey (the martial artist)." Her memories are also altered so that she believes the martial artist is an old friend or lover (whichever is appropriate to her normal sexual preferences). Memories that might contradict this belief are suppressed.

Resisting this unnatural mental influence requires that the target spend three Willpower within the space of a scene, over a number of scenes equal to (10 - target's Essence). While Joy in Ownership remains in effect, the target is metaphysically considered to be the martial artist's property.

SAPPHIRE BINDING PATTERN

Cost: 16m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;
Type: Reflexive (Step 10)

Keywords: Combo-basic, Obvious, Shaping, Stackable

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Joy in Ownership

She set about to follow the leash,

This Charm may be invoked to enhance a hold during a grapple. Spinning ribbons of sapphire Essence around her target, the martial artist impedes her Essence flows for the rest of the scene. One of the following effects is applied:

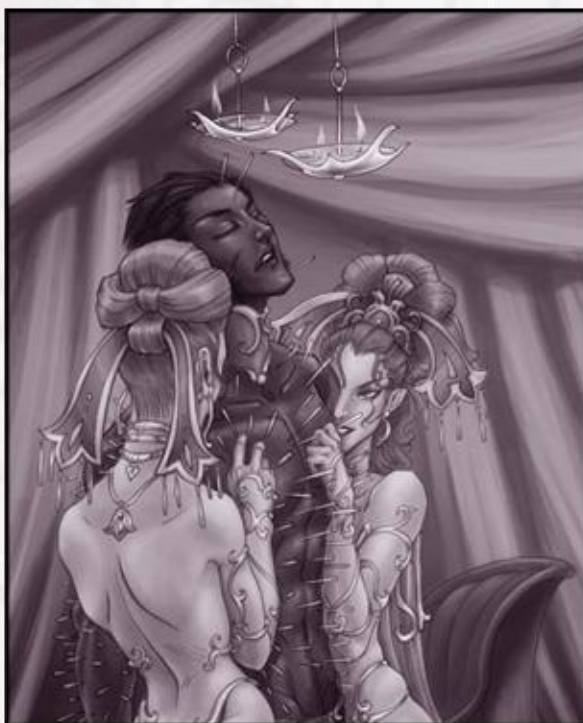
- All of the target's actions are reduced to 0 dice if not supplemented by a Charm or stunt.
- A mote surcharge equal to half the martial artist's Appearance is added to all of the target's Charms. This effect may be applied only to targets of lower Essence.
- The target's Dexterity is considered to be 0 for the purpose of calculating Move and Dash actions, and his Strength to be 0 for the purpose of calculating Jump actions.

These effects last until the end of the scene, and this Charm may be re-applied to the same target over the course of repeated hold actions in order to inflict additional effects.

MEMORIES OF INTIMACY

Cost: 15m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;
Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious



Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Joy in Ownership

pursuing it past a line of all her former lovers,

Try as they might, the martial artist's former conquests cannot shake that status. This Charm supplements an unarmed attack, rendering it unblockable and undodgeable if any of the following criteria apply to the target:

- The martial artist has defeated the target in combat at some point in the past (defined as having rendered the target unconscious, or the target having voluntarily admitted defeat or surrendered to the martial artist on the field of battle, even if only in a sparring match).

- The target carries an Intimacy of any sort for the martial artist.

- The martial artist owns the target.

- The target suffers from any Crippling effect inflicted by the martial artist.

If two or more of these criteria apply to the target, the attack is also considered unexpected.

THOUSAND DESIRE RIBBONS

Cost: — (+10m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Memories of Intimacy, Sapphire Binding Pattern

and found that it resided in her hand.

Coming to understand the pinnacle of desire, the martial artist steeps himself in the inconsequential motives that shift the world. This Charm allows the martial artist to pay a (+10m, 1wp) surcharge when activating Sapphire Veil of Passion Form, upgrading it with the following capabilities:

- The martial artist gains the ability to solidify and control the sapphire ribbons of her anima, treating them as starmetal floating ribbons. Each time her DV refreshes, she gains a pool (equal to half her Essence) of reflexive martial arts attacks with these ribbons, which she may unleash at any time using her full dice pool. This pool refreshes along with her DV, and may not exceed (Essence/2) actions.

- The range on all urumi or floating ribbons the martial artist employs extends to (Essence x 10) yards. No motes need be paid for this benefit.

- Any character wounded by an urumi or floating ribbon wielded by the martial artist feels the pain transformed and transported into a kind of transcendent ecstasy. The distraction from this overwhelming sensation changes all wound penalties from internal to external until the end of the scene, as a Crippling effect.

SECRETS OF THE MAIDENS

The function of the Loom of Fate was largely automated in the wake of the Primordial War, by request of the Maidens. But the Primordial Autochthon was not the only one who instituted changes to the engine that drives Creation. Recognizing that the Yozis were sealed away and the might of the Solars would be sufficient to safeguard Creation, the Maidens repurposed their Chosen as custodians of a temperamental cosmos, no longer needing them to serve their previous role as weapons of unlimited warfare. As a result, the greatest potentialities lurking in the Loom of Fate were sealed by the Maidens themselves, rendering the most dangerous and instability-provoking astrology used during the Primordial War inert. Rumor and speculation have swirled around these "lost arts" ever since.

Two elements of the rumors are true, at least: The lost arts did indeed possess power beyond that of standard Sidereal astrology... and they were very, very dangerous. Now, as the Time of Tumult rumbles on and Creation tilts toward the turning of the Age, it is possible that the safety locks on the Loom will be disengaged, either by the inscrutable hand of the Maidens... or the desperate actions of rogue Viziers.

GREATER ARTS OF ASTROLOGY

If and when the seals on the Loom are broken, the Greater Signs of the Maidens are upgraded so that their cost in permanent Essence and Willpower naturally replenishes at a rate of one dot per month, but add five automatic points of Paradox to their invocation cost.

More importantly, the astrological Charms of the Primordial War become available once again.

The “#p” in the cost of astrological Charms are the number of Paradox points accrued on invocation, as the Pattern Spiders are forced to deal with the terrible causality errors provoked by the magic. *Astrological Charms do not require committed Essence for effects with a Duration longer than Instant.* They do count as Charm activations, but may never be placed in a Combo. They all have the Shaping and Fate keywords. They have no prerequisite Charms.

Each use of an astrological Charm globally imposes a cumulative -1 external penalty on *all* Craft (Fate) rolls by *all* characters in existence for one week after invocation. Without *truly excellent* justification, any unauthorized use of astrological Charms would constitute an offense of Severity 8 depending on the circumstances. Astrological Charms cannot be used by creatures of darkness.

Finally, the experience costs of certain Charms changes for Sidereals: Auspicious and Favored Sidereal Charms cost nine experience points, or 11 experience points otherwise, while Celestial and Terrestrial Martial Arts Charms cost only eight experience points, or 10 experience points if Martial Arts is not Auspicious or Favored. Astrological Charms cost eight experience points for the Colleges corresponding to a Sidereal’s Caste, and 10 experience points otherwise. The cost of Sidereal Martial Arts Charms does not change. Viziers are immediately reimbursed the experience point difference for already-purchased Charms, the better to quickly learn new astrological Charms. Sidereals *may* develop new Charms for the Greater Arts, once these Charms are unlocked.

SATISFACTION IN EMPTINESS

Cost: 5m, 4p; Mins: The Gull 4, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Fate, Shaping

Duration: One month

The impermanence of the world wears down the spirits of those sworn to preserve it. Only in letting go do they find peace. While in effect, this

Charm renders the Sidereal immune to all Emotion effects that seek to produce any feeling other than simple happiness or joy-in-living. The Vizier may waive the Charm’s Paradox cost and extend its Duration to one season if he voluntarily abandons an artifact that he owns at the time of activation. He must leave it behind in some place where it cannot be easily retrieved (abandoning a daiklave in a crowded market swarming with thieves, for example, or casting it into the ocean), and instantly loses all mystical rights of ownership. Intentionally coming into possession of the item again in the future provokes immediate Pattern Bite.

INEVITABILITY WITHOUT FINESSE

Cost: 7m, 1p; Mins: The Mast 3, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Fate, Shaping

Duration: Instant

Grasping the skein of fate in his fist, the Sidereal forges an unalterable path between his killing intent and the heart of an opponent. The Vizier makes an attack at his full dice pool with the offensive Ability of his choice. This attack is unblockable, undodgeable, and strikes with a threshold of at least 0 successes for the purpose of calculating raw damage, even if it should have otherwise missed. No attack may strike the Sidereal until his next action.

WITHOUT TEMPTATION

Cost: 12m, 2p; Mins: The Messenger 3, Essence 5;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Fate, Shaping, Touch

Duration: One year

With a firm touch, the Sidereal coats his own destiny or that of a target in an ablative sheath of Essence, preserving it against efforts to pervert the natural hierarchy of master and servant established by She Who Lives in Her Name and perpetuated by Heaven.

Upon invoking this Charm, the Sidereal names a master-and-servant relationship between two individuals. The target of the Charm must be the servant in the proposed relationship; the master needs not be present, and no preexisting relationship of any sort between the two is necessary. For the

duration of the Charm, the target treats all mental influence that would cause him to betray his new “master” as an unacceptable order. He may, of his own will, still act against his “master’s” interests.

COERCION BY ANY MEANS

Cost: 5m, 1p; **Mins:** The Lovers 2, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Fate, Shaping

Duration: One scene

Passing a hand across his eyes, the Sidereal is no longer fooled by society’s subtle distinctions in the application of uneven force—they are all the same to him. For the rest of the scene, when the Exalt is in control of a grapple, he may opt to inflict standard Emotion, Illusion or Compulsion attacks rather than crushing to inflict damage. These attacks are natural mental influence costing one Willpower to resist, but they bypass MDV and are considered automatically successful. Bound by the Sidereal’s superior strength, the target finds herself powerless to reject his words.

SINGULAR PLUMAGE RIOT

Cost: 2m per Magnitude, 1wp, 5p;

Mins: The Peacock 4, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Compulsion, Fate, Shaping

Duration: Varies

Violently wrenching destiny into a tangle around himself, the Vizier draws in those who share some commonality with him and forges them into a weapon. The character names one trait about himself, with roughly the same level of specificity as an Ability specialty (Storyteller’s discretion—appropriate examples include “blue eyes,” “red hair,” “born in Chiaroscuro” or “wearing a turban”). He then spends two motes per dot of desired Magnitude, up to a maximum Magnitude equal to his Essence. All extras who meet this criteria and who do not consider the Vizier an enemy immediately approach the character and, over the course of a minimum of five long ticks, form into an unordered complimentary social or military unit which the Sidereal leads. If there is an insufficient number of valid extras in the immediate vicinity, the nearest valid extras drop what they are doing and trek to the location where

the Charm was invoked, even if doing so requires long and dangerous travel. This is an unnatural Compulsion effect, which cannot be resisted. Once formed, the unit persists for one scene, at which point it dissolves.

REMEMBERING THE BEST TIMES

Cost: 13m, 3p; **Mins:** The Pillar 3, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Fate, Shaping

Duration: Until Calibration

Those who regard the Vizier well find that he is never far from their hearts, like it or not. All characters who hold a positive Intimacy toward the Sidereal at the time of this Charm’s invocation find that for its duration, that Intimacy cannot be permanently removed. If lost or altered, the Intimacy reasserts itself an hour after the next sunset. This Charm cannot be invoked during Calibration.

ANGRY MAIDEN MANTLE

Cost: 3m, 0p; **Mins:** The Gauntlet 2, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Compulsion, Fate, Shaping

Duration: One day

Shaping her Essence profile into a rough likeness of her patron Maiden, the Sidereal gains great power over her ostensible inferiors. She may spend one Willpower to command gods with a permanent Essence rating lower than her own, as though she were their direct divine superior (see *Exalted*, p. 295). This also causes her to accumulate one point of Paradox per command, and would constitute at least a Severity 4 offense if used to order a god to perform some illegal or inappropriate action.

UNDERSTANDING ECSTATIC WAYS

Cost: 11m, 3p; **Mins:** The Shield 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Emotion, Fate, Shaping

Duration: One day

The Vizier wraps himself in the destiny of the exotic outsider. For the next day, it is impossible for any violent action he undertakes to give offense, either to his victim or to witnesses. He may assault the Tri-Khan of Chiaroscuro, pick fights with random merchants or even murder a village head-



man's wife in broad daylight. No one will become upset or angry with him, understanding that these are simply the Sidereal's strange foreign ways. This Charm does not protect the Vizier from the legal repercussions of his actions, should someone feel obligated to arrest him out of duty. Understanding Ecstatic Ways constitutes an unnatural Emotion effect costing three Willpower to resist.

MAIDEN AND GAMBLER STANCE

Cost: 7m, 5p; Mins: The Spear 4, Essence 5;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Fate, Shaping

Duration: One scene

A good soldier and a good Sidereal both understand that their own actions are only the smallest of the many forces that guide the course of their destiny. Trusting to fate and his own legend, the Sidereal snarls the thread of his own destiny around himself, then waits to see if it will form a shield or a noose. Upon invoking this Charm, the Sidereal

picks out an opponent. The players of the Vizier and his selected opponent make contested Essence rolls. If the Sidereal's player wins or draws, the Vizier automatically dodges all attacks his selected opponent makes against him for the rest of the scene, even unexpected or undodgeable ones. If the opponent wins, all of the Vizier's instant-duration Charms have their cost raised by three motes for the rest of the scene.

OLDEST SECRET REVEALED

Cost: 6m, 1p; Mins: The Guardians 3, Essence 4;


Type: Simple

Keywords: Fate, Shaping

Duration: One month

All secrets are identical from the perspective of one who does not know them. If wisdom is a better thing than ignorance, then all knowledge should be indivisible as well. Exploiting this unique insight, the Sidereal cross-strings the threads of his destiny, multiplying his competence. For the





duration of this Charm, the character's First, Second, Third and Fateful (Ability) Excellencies may be applied to any Ability residing under the auspices of the same Maiden. For example, a Sidereal could use his First Presence Excellency to enhance a Melee roll, because both Presence and Melee are Abilities under the auspices of Mars. He could not, however, use his First Presence Excellency to enhance a Martial Arts roll, as that Ability is governed by Saturn.

BENDING THE MIRROR

Cost: 14m, 4p; **Mins:** The Key 4, Essence 4;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fate, Shaping
Duration: One day

The Sidereal inverts his own destiny at the point where his soul and his Exaltation are joined. For the duration of this Charm, the Vizier gains perfect recall of one of his Exaltation's previous incarnations. To invoke this Charm, the character must know the name of the previous life he is attempting to assume. He does not gain access to additional Ability dots or other traits—merely the opportunity to retrieve lost wisdom. While under the effects of this Charm, the Vizier cannot remember his own identity or Motivation, though his Intimacies and personality remain unchanged. When the Charm ends, the character immediately forgets everything he learned from his former incarnation. Writing down important revelations before the Charm's duration elapses is strongly suggested.

WELL-SCHOOLED PEDANT DEFENSE

Cost: 9m, 1p; **Mins:** The Treasure Trove 3, Essence 4;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fate, Shaping, Social
Duration: One day

Wise stewards of an ungrateful cosmos have no need to trouble themselves with the interjections of the ignorant and unlettered. While this Charm is in effect, the Sidereal is immune to natural mental influence from any character whose Lore or Intelligence is lower than her own. She also reduces the cost to resist unnatural mental influ-

ence from such sources by one Willpower point (to a minimum of zero).

DEAD MAN'S STAND

Cost: 2m, 1p; **Mins:** The Corpse 3, Essence 4;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Fate, Shaping
Duration: One scene

Mastery of destiny cannot avert death, but it can at least ensure a dignified passing. While this Charm is in effect, the Sidereal does not lose consciousness if his Incapacitated health level fills with bashing or lethal damage, nor does lethal damage proceed into his Dying health levels. Instead, once his Incapacitated health level has filled with lethal damage, subsequent damage converts existing lethal damage to aggravated. If the Sidereal's Incapacitated health level fills with aggravated damage, he is mortally wounded and begins dying as normal. If slain, this Charm ensures that the Vizier's corpse remains relatively intact and dignified enough to allow for an open-casket funeral.

AN END TO DARKNESS

Cost: 30m, 2wp, 9p; **Mins:** The Crow 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Obvious, Fate, Shaping, Touch
Duration: One week

Laying a hand upon a consenting demon, the Sidereal transforms that spirit into a god. The demon is immediately removed from its governing Yozi's soul hierarchy as though slain with Ghost-Eating Technique, and no longer retains any metaphysical link to the titan of which it was once a part. Although subjected to many alterations, including shifts in personality, Charms, and other traits (all at the Storyteller's discretion, as the Sidereal has no say in these changes), the new god retains its previous Essence rating and memories, and often many traces of its former nature. The more powerful a demon is, the less it is likely to be changed by transformation into a god.

Demons of the Second Circle or higher must be made subject to fate before this Charm will function on them.

CROSSING PLUTONIAN SHORES

Cost: 20m, 4p; Mins: The Haywain 2, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Fate, Shaping

Duration: Indefinite

The Sidereal solemnly makes the Lesser Sign of the Maiden of Ashes. She becomes a creature of death and respire Essence accordingly. This Charm remains in effect until the character is next touched by the light of the sun.

FATED WEAPONS

These rare weapons may be legally created only after a direct petition to the Maidens themselves, for they require removing a living strand of destiny from the Loom of Fate to be forged into the artifact. Fated weapons use the same traits as a normal starmetal weapon artifact of the desired type, such as a daiklave or grand grimcleaver, with *one* of the following modifications as an additional benefit:

- If the weapon inflicts damage on a creature outside fate, that being is brought into fate for the rest of the scene. All attack rolls made with the fated weapon against a being it has brought into fate are made at a default target number 6 while the target remains so.

- Attack rolls made with the fated weapon against creatures outside fate have a default target number 6.

- Attack rolls made with the fated weapon against a specific category of creatures outside fate (valid categories include beings of the Wyld, the Underworld, Malfeas or Autochthonia) are made at a default target number 5.

The Artifact rating of a fated weapon is its normal rating plus two dots.

SACRED RITES

The Maidens, collectively, are more strongly associated with thaumaturgy than perhaps any other gods in the Celestial Bureaucracy are. The entire Art of Astrology is considered their property. But in addition to allowing mortals to sometimes glimpse the destinies planned for them in the stars, each of the Maidens has contributed a few sacred rituals to Creation to assist the universe in its necessary progression—or at least, this is what they say. The Maidens are occasionally known to claim destiny's mandate to mask their own desires.

THE ART OF THE DEAD

Proper Funerary Practices (1, Manipulation, 3, three hours): Various societies throughout Creation have dozens of variations of this rite. Most Western isles attempt this ritual, though many lack a sufficiently knowledgeable priest. Even the Realm habitually works a variant on these thaumaturgic funeral practices into the last rites given to its Exalted dead. The funerists of Sijan know virtually all recorded versions of the funerary rites of Saturn, and are willing to perform them for an appropriate fee. Properly performed, this ritual encourages the spirit of one who has died in the last three days to peacefully pass on into the next life. While it regrettably has no influence over the individual's po soul, the rite does carry considerable weight with the hun of the newly dead. If the target of the ritual passes on into the Underworld as a ghost, he is immediately subjected to a powerful unnatural Compulsion to pass on immediately into Lethe. Resisting costs three Willpower.

THE ART OF GEOMANCY

Tripping the Steel (0, Wits, 2, five minutes): Used throughout the Threshold and occasionally, illegally, within the Realm, this ancient ritual sanctifies duels in the eyes of the Maiden of Battles. The two participants state terms and delineate the field of battle according to the ancient forms. (The precise protocols differ; there are many small regional variants on this rite.) If successful, the Essence of the battlefield



itself holds the duel that follows sacrosanct. Any individual who breaks its terms or interferes in its outcome finds that the next time he enters battle, any 10s rolled count as only one success. (For non-heroic characters, when they are next in battle, a failed roll will become a botch instead.)

THE ART OF HUSBANDRY

First Greeting (1, Perception, 1, five minutes): This simple ritual is practiced in countless Thresh-old communities to name newborns. It must be performed within one day of an infant's birth. Beseeching the Maidens for their wisdom, the thaumaturge intently examines a newborn child, attempting to discern the name that would most fit the plans destiny has laid out for it. While it is debatable whether Heaven cares what any individual mortal is called, success on the ritual's activation roll grants the practitioner a flash of insight and a name. If that name is granted to the infant, the child enjoys a +1 bonus on all Resistance rolls for its first year of life.

Harmonious Union (0, Charisma, 1, one hour): Small variants of this marriage rite are used throughout Creation. A successfully performed ceremony not only makes a union between two beings (regardless of their sex) legally valid in the eyes of Heaven, it also increases the likelihood that the first child conceived by the couple (assuming they are a man and a woman) is free of defect or disease. It also grants a bonus die on all Temperance rolls by the couple to avoid any temptations that might endanger their union throughout its first year.

Sundered Union (0, Charisma, 1, five minutes): While Venus holds the various marriage and partnership rites of Creation to be sacred to herself, Saturn claims dominion over the small, cold legalisms that end such unions. In its various cultural iterations, this rite is short and curt. Properly performed, it legally dissolves any existing romantic union between the subjects of the ritual in the eyes of Heaven, as long as the individual in the partnership with the highest Essence score consents. (There exists a standing exception from First Age law which has never been stricken from

the rolls of Heaven. No divorce or annulment involving a Solar Exalt and a non-Solar entity is legal or valid unless the Solar in question consents, regardless of respective Essence ratings.) The two newly divorced individuals suffer a -1 external penalty to all Compassion rolls with regard to one another for the next year.

THE ART OF WARDING AND EXORCISM

Scarlet Passage Idol (2, Intelligence, 3, six hours): It is a sad truth of the Second Age that even the wealthy and the mighty must contend somehow with the dangers of the Great Western Ocean. The Dragon-Blooded cannot adorn their ships with red-haired mastheads, for to do so would be to admit the power of the Storm Mothers and would violate the Immaculate Philosophy. Instead, through a painstaking ritual, thaumaturges prepare small feminine wooden idols for their clients, hair

stained with rare red dyes and body stained yellow to acknowledge the power of Mercury. Secreted away somewhere within a ship, the idol negates the power of Storm Mothers the same way a red-haired female masthead would. An idol retains its power for one season, at which point it must be repainted and re-enchanted.

Things Best Lost (2, Intelligence, 2, thirty minutes): This ritual helps the thaumaturge hide some object small enough to be lifted with one hand. It requires that she smear the object with a mixture of dust and the sap of certain trees that grow only in the Western Bordermarches before concealing it. Performed successfully, the rite consigns the object into the care of the Maiden of Secrets, imposing a -2 external penalty on all rolls to uncover the object's hiding place for one week per threshold success.

