

3rd Edition
Don & Ackels

NARRATOR'S GUIDE



I M M O R T A L
I N V I S I B L E W A R





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3rd Edition NARRATOR'S GUIDE

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FORWARD

“Into the Future”

An excerpt from a presentation by Professor Cynthia Marday to the Paragon Council on May 5th 2005. (The professor — formerly with Duke University — is a parabiologist specializing in himsati physiology):

“... simply put my esteemed guests, the Myelin Project is not a viable way of protecting you from your susceptibility to various toxins. Please allow me to explain...

The myelin sheath is an electrically insulated white membrane covering the nerves in living beings. The most common form is the “white matter” that covers the nerves of the brain, conducting impulses between it and other parts of the body. As immortals you do not possess this sheath due to the interaction of the shards within you, and the changes they have wrought to your physiology. While this lack provides a number of benefits not found in mortal humans, it does come with a price.

The symbiotic shard within you — the vox — has no need for the myelin sheath; in fact the sheath would inhibit its ability to reroute impulses through your central nervous system. It is the vox’s ability to do this that allows you to alter your forms at such high speed without fear of pain. If not for your vox’s ability to function this way, your metamorphosis into himsati would bring excruciating agony.

This rerouting also allows you to

function far better than a normal human under duress or great injury. Finally, it is partly responsible for your ability to strengthen your physiology well beyond human standards in endurance, agility, mental processing capacity and more.

The shard generates a substance that creates its own sheath; however, this acts as a neurodegenerative disease, causing the demyelization of the original sheath. This new sheath unfortunately attracts certain substances such as poison. However, research performed by a number of Magdalen scholars suggests that the vox as a symbiotic entity purposefully causes this in order to gain a degree of control over your species. Among evidence gathered to support this claim is the fact that the toxin susceptibility apparently does not exist among the drove Progeny.

Other side effects include increased duration of effects from various drugs — such as alcohol — should they be able to overcome the natural resistance of the immortal’s body. Additionally, the increased mental capacity leads to a state of ‘babbling’ between the left and right hemispheres of the brain: a primary symptom of heightened levels of the affliction known as Fugue.”

ONWARD & UPWARD

The Narrator’s Guide provides you with the information necessary to take your game well past the basics presented in the Player’s Guide. We’ll clarify a



number of topics only briefly mentioned before and provide new rules and information to help you immerse your players deeper into the world of Immortal. Before you get started, a few things to assist you in your reading...

The First Rule

This book is a set of guidelines; as the Narrator you decide how to use the information presented in this book. The first rule is entertainment: making the game fun and enjoyable for your players and yourself — make it fit your group’s “style” of play. So while these are the official expanded “rules”, view them as guidelines. If you don’t want to deal with the mechanics of explosions or falling that’s okay; just make sure the players know what you are and aren’t using. Surprising your players with unexpected rule changes dampens the fun for everyone.

Almost Everyone?

Speaking of everyone, there are lots of times that you may wonder, when the book says that members of a group all do something or believe in something, does that really mean every last one of them? In short, if the word “all” or “every” is specifically used then that means the exceptions are extremely few. Otherwise, when no clarifying word is used, assume it holds true for the vast majority, with a few exceptions here and there. If words like “most” or “the majority” are used, that indicates roughly three quarters of a group. “Some” or “significant number” means about a quarter or so on average.

Excerpts

This book is more about running the

game than being a player in it. Most of the information isn’t presented from an “in-character” point of view, as it was in the early chapters of the Player’s Guide. However, you’ll find some small excerpts from various immortal tomes, conversations and speeches, to give you an idea of how members of the himsati race (at least within the tribes) view a particular subject. Treat these as the generally accepted world view of a topic unless otherwise noted.

You’ll also find that much of the information is presented from a sort of “pseudo-science” perspective. This is to assist you in being able to perceive the game from multiple angles, and provide a diverse and satisfying experience for your players and yourself.

And while on the topic of excerpts, to answer two questions from the Player’s Guide...

The “writer” of the first four chapters of the Player’s Guide was one of the Reborn — Ingénue as they were called then — from the early 1990’s. He found and mentored a group of Reborn that recently awoke within the last few years. He wrote the book as a means to give them guidance, for they had to leave him before their training was complete. His actual identity and those of his students remain unknown.

Arturo — known to most as “Lorekeeper” — lives outside of Prague in the Czech Republic. He claims no allegiance to any tribe and appears to understand a great deal of history about the Twelve Tribes and their ancestry. He gained the nickname Lorekeeper



from the Paragon Council. He is never seen outside of his gargoyle-like form; there are rumors he may not be an immortal, but a creature of another sort from somewhere out among the far-flung Dominions.

Famous Immortals

The books purposely avoid tagging too many specific mythological, historical and fictional characters as being members of certain tribes — or even members of the himsati race. This lets you decide based on the dictates of your story. There are also — at times — multiple Immortals roaming the universe with the same mythological name and heritage (as explained later in this book). So which tribes some potentially famous immortals belong to is left mostly up to you to decide as the Narrator.

When Are We?

The Narrator's Guide sets the year in the game-world to be one year behind time outside the game. This allows you to work real-world events into the game, should you desire. Of course, you will still need to factor in the differences between real life and the game-world — such as the slightly more advanced and wide-spread levels of technology that exist in the game-world.

Who are you?

“You” in the Player's Guide meant players; “you” in this book means narrators. The male pronoun — he, his, him, etc. — is used for most examples in the book. Unless a statement specifically indicates a male or female, assume the example means “he or she”, “him or her”, etc. The use of the male pronoun is for illustrative purposes only and not meant to indicate a preference for one gender or the other. And a final note: “Immortal” with a capital “I” refers to the game Immortal: Invisible War, while “immortal(s)” or “himsati race” refer to immortal characters and narrator-characters in the game universe.

So with that all said, time to get to it. Read on and enjoy!

Rick Don
Designer—3rd Edition





CHAPTER 1

THE LIFE IMMORTAL

In this chapter we go back over basic topics from the Player's Guide such as shards, Fugue, lethe, avatars, himsati and toxins, but from a Narrator's point of view. Appendix B contains major or lengthy rules additions, enhancements and/or replacements. So let's look a little deeper into these, and give you more insight.

SHARDS AND VOXES

Everything starts with the shards: the shattered remains of an entity that immortal legend tells them is older than time itself.

Shard Network

Immortals treat shards as objects of power and trophies from fallen enemies consigned to the Blue Air. But the shards are actually a crystalline form of life sharing a relationship with a living host. They are symbiotes — though immortals tend to regard them as parasites when discussed that way.

Shards share a metaphysical bond with one another, reaching across the vast gulf of space and even dimensional barriers. They possess a rudimentary communication network operating on an instinctual level. Anything affecting the shards in large numbers or with significant strength, affects all shards. When humanity wiped away the slave forms of the immortals they first encountered, the effect was transmitted to all shards. Thus all current immortals and even those created in the future, gain

Excerpt of a response to a mortal follower, by Remiel of the Eremites...

... to ask one of our kind to define what the Eidolon are, is impossible. For example, if you were to somehow go back in time to the Age of Myth; ask a mortal who and what Zeus is. Surely his best answer would be that he is a god, a being of divine spirit that no mortal human can begin to fathom. Remember, today's mythology is yesterday's theology, its religion.

I doubt any of the himsati race can truly tell you what the Sanguinary, Rukshasa, Sharakai and Leviathan actually were. Those of us not in lethe during the final years prior to the Great Betrayal easily recall the insidious, seductive whisper of the Sanguinary in the back of our minds, calling to us from the Hush-Hush. The members of Sharakai's Tribe will tell you the feeling of inner spiritual strength they receive from their god's blessings; a few among the Hemari will enlighten you to the splendor of Rukshasa's milk; and perhaps the great living thing the Protean use to sail the undersea of Ys, is truly the body of a fallen elder god called Leviathan.

The Eidolon are the gods of our mythology. But whereas we left you at the end of the Age of Myth so many eons ago, their leaving was more recent. So to us, they are also still part of our theology as well.



a human guise. The communication network of the shards makes Atrana Cant actually work as a language among members of the himsati race. These and more, are instinctual abilities the shards grant their hosts.

The Vox

Upon bonding with a host the shard morphs into something akin to a human vocal chord, with miniscule strands that reach up into the organic mind. The strands of a vox are invisible to all but the most advanced technology, generally not available except at the level of top-secret installations and the like. Once a shard bonds to a host it is called a vox. Now shaped as such, it becomes trapped in this form permanently — even if removed from the host.

The vox plays a major role in a character's existence. Originally programmed to receive information and record experiences, then return to the Sanguinary's core essence and reassemble, they are no longer able to fulfill that mission. The spirit of the Sanguinary is gone, but their communication network is still active. Like a computer program continuing to dutifully run, they continue collecting and assimilating information and experiences of any and all kinds.

To continue this task they require a living organism to serve as the host and energy source: the character. In addition, the host's unique perspective allows the same kind of experience to be recorded in multiple ways. The vox and its communication network is only "interested" in what is logical and efficient for it, not for the host. What

"waste" it has developed in how it functions, is the result of millions of years of Abzulim experimentation followed by massive encounters with human faith. Characters cannot bend a vox to their will and make it record differently, splinter differently or enter lethe differently. There are only three known entities able to do anything to a vox: Abzulim, Bright Bloods with godlike levels of faith, and the Sunedrion. Even a nuclear explosion leaves a vox unharmed and unchanged.

Your Brain on Shards

Being the primary mind of the immortal; the vox handles most biological and supernatural functions, but the immortal still retains his organic mind. Even plant and elemental himsati develop an organic mind as part of their transformation into a member of the himsati race. The vox stores far more information than the organic mind; it allows one to remember details, sensations and facts completely lost to a normal mortal.

This does not make characters omniscient, able read minds, or gain eidetic memory as they grow more powerful. Since the vox retains so much more information, there is now that much more to sift through. As the character's perception increases, he takes in more and more details of his experiences to be stored within the vox. Recalling memories stored in the vox, but lost to the organic mind, requires the vox and organic mind to come into synch. Then the character begins sifting through the vox's vast storehouse of information — including the occasional detour into the memories of his avatars



also stored on the vox. Finally there is the character's Fugue to factor in, a topic we'll discuss shortly.

These all serve to keep the mental faculties of an immortal in check and balance with the rest of his physiology. Whether a purposeful plan of the sentient shards or by accident, it creates limitations on just how godlike the immortal's mind can become. Boons such as eidetic memory, iron willpower, and others are *not* automatically granted at higher WIL and PER attribute values.

Sorting Lifetimes

The vox stores everything the immortal experiences in the form of microscopic fissures along its surface. When an immortal discovers memories from one of his avatars a fissure is created, linking the immortal's present memories with those of the avatar. The telepathic disease known as the Lash occurs when an abundance of these occur, cross-linking so many memories that the immortal can no longer distinguish between what was and what is. He slowly slips into complete madness, a chaotic melding of his present and past personas.

Shards Small and Large

The largest single shard known to exist is at the core of Haley's Comet. In immortal history the crystalline entity known as Sanguinary crashed into Earth 65 million years ago and shattered. Several of the larger pieces reached escape velocity and were flung out into space. There they gathered detritus from the cosmos and became mistaken for comets; it's possible that most, if not all, major comets have shards at their core.

Extremely large shards seem to resist bonding with a host, even retaining some higher level of sentience — such as the Blue Emerald of New Atlantis.

On the opposite end, there appears to be no limit to how small a shard can be, though shards less than one micron in width and length are not classically considered shards — the landscape of Sheol is made of shard-dust. In this day and age there are no tales of shards smaller than a large gemstone creating new members of the himsati race. Otherwise there would be significantly more insect himsati in the world.

Shards are rarely found on Earth today, they would be ranked among the top twenty rarest gemstones. Most shards are found in other realms near Earth or in nearby Dominion worlds. Of course, there is always Sheol, where a character can go digging through the crystalline sands in a lengthy search for a shard. Meanwhile he'll be facing hordes of drovelings, catching the unwanted attention of the Shadowen, and sidestepping the occasional Zuzog root that attempts to impale him.

An interesting feature of a shard is that regardless of the size, it becomes the size of a human vocal chord when transforming into a vox. It is believed the same mechanism allowing changes in size for an immortal's himsati, is at work in changing the size and mass of the shard.

Fugue

The presence of the vox enhances communication between the left and right hemispheres of the brain, in order



to allow the organic mind to act as an intermediary between the vox and the host body. The speed at which the rational and creative halves communicate is much faster than the organic mind is designed to handle. Bits and pieces of mental “debris” are left floating in the subconscious as a result. Younger immortals refer to this subconscious rambling using the slang term “babblers”; its proper term is Fugue: the bits and pieces of thoughts forgotten by the immortal in order to cope with his existence.

Though initially undetectable, as the immortal’s existence unfolds around him this residue of thought begins to grow. Eventually it becomes audible in the quiet solitude of deep rest, later in idle moments of thought. Finally it overtakes the character’s waking rational thoughts. Like the whisperings of ghosts that only he can hear, the Fugue begins to haunt nearly every waking moment.

An increase in Fugue is triggered during any event that challenges the immortal’s sense of identity, or place in his world. As mentioned in the Player’s Guide on

page 12, there are those that choose to keep only themselves as the most important thing in their lives — those with the Hermit, Survivor and Bully predilections often fall into this category. These characters don’t form attachments to others, so the loss of those attachments doesn’t rate high for triggering Fugue. But they eventually get left behind by the world, locking themselves away in mantles or other hidden places; dealing with the world itself becomes a Fugue trigger showing how alone they truly are.

On the opposite side are those who tie themselves to everything around them. Many more triggers abound for them, but they have support groups to rely on to help them through those times. Which

way is better, is a balance in the middle the best? Perhaps, perhaps not. It is a question that members of the himsati race struggle with. Either way, all immortals eventually succumb to Fugue.

Ennui

Ennui calms an immortal’s Fugue and reduces, for a time, the babblers he hears. The stronger the fugue rating, the longer





an immortal must remain in Ennui to relieve himself of the cacophony within. If the immortal is roused from Ennui too early he loses the benefit and must start over. Some immortals voluntarily place themselves in this torpid state in order to find relief from the inner voices.

During Ennui, the immortal's heartbeat and breathing slow to an imperceptible rate; he appears dead to normal means of detection. He is still awake, and depending on how strong his Fugue is, can perceive the world around him to some extent. The deeper the Fugue, the less he perceives and the harder it is to rouse him. This is dangerous as an immortal in deep Ennui is helpless to stop anything done to him.

If a character is roused from Ennui before he naturally emerges, he is not forced to enter Ennui again. However, the character will now be forced to deal with the effects until he enters Ennui again. Characters can willingly choose to enter Ennui, it is an instinctual ability and requires no roll. However, the character cannot preprogram himself to "wake up" at a specific time; self-induced Ennui lasts up to twice as long as forced Ennui (at your discretion as Narrator).

New rules for Fugue and Ennui appear in Appendix B.

LETHE AND CONSEQUENCES

The bonded shard makes the genetic structure of the immortal malleable, thus he can shapeshift. This also grants another ability of the himsati race: lethe.

Lethe

Lethe is the vox's first defense against the physical destruction of its host. If unable to enter lethe (because the body is too badly damaged to reform) the vox leaves the body behind and teleports the character's spirit to his ark — assuming it has enough energy and is within reach. If neither option is viable the vox will be left behind as the spirit enters the Blue Air and becomes a gossamer.

Entering lethe reduces the fugue rating back to 1, removes the effects of poison, and normally restores anything lost over the years (such as a limb); this is done by creating an entirely new persona for the immortal. Not only can a character be forced into lethe by their vox, they can willingly enter through a short meditate ritual. An immortal enters lethe willingly for one of two reasons: the weight of Fugue and the ages is driving him to the brink of madness, desperation or loneliness; or he feels his body is no longer able to properly sustain him in a manner he can cope with.

Vox Triggered Lethe

If a character takes enough damage to become incapacitated and then continues to take damage afterwards, the vox will attempt to force the character into lethe if possible. The process takes a few scant seconds (about one combat round), during which the vox gathers all the energy of the character's living auras (except enough to maintain a physical presence and glimmer of spirit) and releases them, using the sudden release of energy to "teleport" the character a short distance from where he has fallen.



Excerpt from the Osiri “Tome of Life” — The Invention of Lethe...

In those first centuries of freedom after the Shouting War, the finest things in life created a vulnerability among the himsati race. We dined on adventures and experiences until our own discernment was overwhelmed. Having experienced too much, we began to loathe even our own unfettered existence; the ages sapped our will to continue on.

As a misguided humanity sought to destroy the very beings they once worshipped, many of us allowed ourselves to be consigned to the Blue Air; others simply entombed themselves in their own minds, lost to Ennui. We Osiri — then called the Banjax — saw and understood this spiritual extinction. Being survivors, we devoted our energy to finding a way to halt the withering of eternal souls. At length we discovered a way to mimic the miracle by which the vox escapes living death: Lethe. Now we can willingly drown out the eons of time, our mighty powers and form; then partake in the limited — yet fulfilling — outlook of a human mind.

The vox connects to the Ley Membrane to accomplish this “teleport”; attempts to block access to the Ley Membrane though serenades and other Mystech means have failed to stop the lethe process however. Physically removing the vox from the auras (ripping it out of the body before it can “teleport”) will stop lethe from occurring. Another popular method is to “behead” an immortal, thus disconnecting the vox from the remainder of the body (it will

stay with the head) and leaving it without enough raw energy for a physical presence to enter lethe with.

Self-Imposed

Using a meditative ritual easily learned from another immortal, a character can willingly enter lethe. The ritual begins in the same manner as self-induced Ennui and takes a few extra minutes. Why would an immortal willingly enter lethe, knowing that his current self will be submerged beneath an entirely new person? The answers are many, but the most common are fear and survival.

Immortals cannot die, but they can only stand to taste the same flavors, feel the same sensations, and experience the same emotions for so long. As Fugue builds up, it makes the situation that much more unbearable. The cacophony of thoughts regarding lost loved ones or realizing how long it has been since they’ve been able to experience something truly new — that first kiss or the first time tasting their favorite food for example — begin to weigh heavily on the immortal’s mind. Eventually Fugue is too strong to stay out of Ennui for long, it becomes increasingly difficult to stay sane long enough to enter lethe. The immortal suddenly finds hundreds or thousands of years slipping by while he “sleeps” in the waking death of Ennui. He can no longer connect with or do anything as the sensations of a continually changing world keep pushing him back into the comfort of Ennui. It is truly maddening.

Another fear is the Blue Air. During a major battle — or while in Ennui — there is a chance his spirit can be



severed from his physical form, sending him into the beautiful but empty Blue Air. Lethe is a way to avoid spending a possibly eternity lost in the empty spiritual gulf.

Self-imposed lethe is not a crime, but its benefits and “costs” are disputed among the himsati race.

Rebirth

Once the “teleport” is complete, the immortal appears in a secluded area (usually within a few dozen miles of where he entered lethe); his body will appear in a protoplasmic state, looking like a reddish-gray puddle of ooze. Over the course of days or weeks — depending on the mortal population around — a new body is formed. During this time, the body looks rather gray, small and malformed — little gray men indeed.

Immortal history reads that after the destruction of its body, the Sanguinary’s spirit melded into the telepathic grid that humanity once possessed, which is now called the Morpheum. The shards still connect to the Morpheum — scholars see this as part of how their communication network is formed. Through the Morpheum, the vox reaches out to various living beings, using their subconscious knowledge to reconstruct a new body. Constructing the body of a child takes many days, to recreate a full-grown adult takes weeks.

This new body will best suit the subconscious needs of the surrounding area, including cultural and ethnic attributes. Some time later a lost baby is found in the woods or beside a stream,

or perhaps an amnesiac young child looking like he comes from a neighboring territory. In ancient times an immortal would provide his Quiet Culture with a talisman, guiding them to him upon entering lethe. The young immortal was protected and nurtured towards becoming his old self by his new “parents” from the Quiet Culture.

Often times if there is a missing or long lost mortal from the area — that the shard network can verify is dead — the new persona will be constructed to match expectations of that mortal’s return. Any oddities or deformities of the copied mortal carry over to the new persona; fortunately most minor ones (like allergies or being nearsighted) fade once the new persona begins to emerge from lethe, but not always. Chapter four has banes available if the character wishes his now-immortal persona to still suffer from various maladies he had during his time as a mortal.

Fades

Today, lethe has resulted in a human society with scattered immortals living in it; oblivious to their true origins, enemies and friends they have temporarily left behind. The mental and physical effects of lethe break down gradually, taking many years before the mortal identity gives way to the full realization of what the immortal truly is. This intellectual state is often somewhat alien to the burgeoning immortal, as it incorporates memories and desires from prior personas: his avatars. Assuming some form of traumatic or mythical event doesn’t forcibly skip the first phase of emergence, the immortal begins to experience fades, generally following



three phases.

Déjà Vu — In the first phase the immortal (still believing himself to be wholly mortal) begins to have strong feelings of repeated events or of being at certain places before. This initiates a pattern-association that eventually leads to lethe “fades”, a form of memory flashback to the most recent avatar. The feeling of déjà vu eventually seems constant, even waking up the immortal at night, as it is experienced intently in dreams. At this point the immortal experiences inexplicable irritation with his normal routine, finding mundane activities shallow or unappealing. Many quit their jobs for no reason and enter states of depression that accompany the first fades.

Flashbacks — As the sense of repetition climaxes, the immortal (still believing himself to be mortal) begins to hallucinate. He sees his face transform into those of others as he stares into the mirror, he hears sounds that have no source and experiences dizziness. He suffers from fits of narcolepsy; what actually occurs is the recall of extremely vivid memories, triggered by similar experiences in the present. These first true fades — flashbacks — are brief, jumbled, and occur without warning. A few immortals become stuck at this phase as avatars unsuccessfully attempt to manifest; they are diagnosed by the mortal medical community as having multiple personality disorder. Some find themselves locked up in mental institutions for years before they are able to cope with their awakening from lethe. Many just go mad, left there until stumbled across by someone from the

tribes, Progeny or a mortal government agency.

Floodgates Open — The fades become more frequent and vivid. He may remember glory days while marching with the Legions of Rome, watching Pompeii being devoured by volcanic ash, recalling ritual burials of mummies in ancient Egypt or hearing a barrage of tank fire from Rommel’s Nazi army. The fades also now consist of more than mere sight and sound. They take on all the realism of the moment they reflect. Arrows sting when they strike flesh, and rain that fell a thousand years ago chills the skin. These psychosomatic experiences carry over when the character comes out of the fade; he may actually feel wet and chilled after remembering a night in the rain.

It doesn’t take long for the unwitting immortal’s sense of self to become lost in a chaotic soup of visions. The realization that he shares his world with much older creatures becomes paramount. His life falls into shambles as he discovers powers that he never dreamed of wielding. He becomes stronger and begins to perceive intense beauty in what previously seemed mundane and uninspired.

Fades continue on for decades as the immortal connects with his ancient past and various avatars that share his vox. Over time various facets of his prior personas imprint themselves on the current one, as the immortal finally comes into his own. Eventually lethe subsides and true fades happen infrequently. Finally they are almost nonexistent as the immortal travels the



path of Fugue and Ennui, dreaming of his own long history. He becomes lost in the thoughts he already possesses, unable to bear any more thoughts of an ancient past that he has given up over and over. It is a vicious cycle that only Transcendence appears able to stop.

Self-Induced Fades

Characters are able to induce fades on their own (it is merely a heightened state of remembrance after all); there are no mechanics involved (unless they are trying to connect to the memories of specific avatar). It is up to you to decide how successful they are. The current situation, any in-game props the character may have to assist, and his current mindset, all play a part in whether the fade is successful. This also comes together to determine how long it lasts and how vulnerable the character is during the fade. Characters cannot self-induce fades related to unknown avatars; they must have experienced one uncontrolled fade relating to the avatar prior to self-inducing for it.

Enhanced rules for fades appear in Appendix B.



Avatars

Immortals, through their fades, eventually discover the liability that haunts all who bury their memories in the comforts of lethe: the presence of a multitude of distinct individuals existing just below his own conscious mind. One avatar is created for each time the immortal enters lethe. Each is a template of a lifetime of experience and personality formed between one instance



of lethe and the next.

The vox stores the entire matrix of the former persona within. Every skill, memory, nature, ability, even the predilection at the time he entered lethe, is stored. Immortals often find themselves becoming similar to their most recent avatar as they emerge from lethe and time passes. After all, the fades allow one to experience and inherit skills, memories, gifts, curses, friends, enemies and other pieces of the former life. In ancient times, many immortals “grew up” to be nearly identical to their most recent avatar, taking the same name. In recent times, as immortals taste a myriad of cultures and upbringings, this does not happen nearly as often.

With distinct personalities, knowledge and abilities based on their own era and culture, avatars are a group of strangers forced to share accommodations in a single being. They may become what they are through the process of lethe, but many regret it and wish to again become cardinal — the ruling persona of the body — even at the expense of the existing cardinal: the player character.

Avatars have hidden pasts and motivations; many have curses, enemies and allies the new immortal inherits. Some were famous figures in human history or heroes in mythologies spanning the planet. Others were guilty of wickedly ingenious crimes or brought new forms of reason to human society. A scattered few — antediluvian creatures incapable of dealing with the modern world — are best left untouched and asleep. Whoever they were, they

now slumber beneath the mind of the new immortal — until something causes them to awaken.

How many avatars can a character have? There is no right or wrong answer; what matters is how many avatars a character connects to through his fades. Avatars only manifest once connected to via a fade. A character can have dozens of avatars, but most likely he will only have fades concerning a handful of the more recent ones; only a few of those will ever manifest.

The First Manifestations

All avatars are in a state of spiritual suspended animation when the immortal begins to emerge from lethe. Stronger fades trigger when the current situation is extremely similar to an event one of the character's avatars took part in. The majority of fades in the early years of emergence are tied to the most recent avatar. During these it is possible to spark the avatar's matrix, causing it to awaken. Most often this first encounter takes place within the immortal's mind and there is no actual manifestation. Sometimes an avatar will manifest during the very first fade concerning it; especially if the fade is highly immersive.

For the avatar, this first manifestation is disorienting. The last thing he probably remembers is the final moments prior to entering lethe; those who fell in battle, and their vox forced them into lethe, will not even realize what has happened at first. This causes interesting twists in the story, especially if the avatar was of an extremely different cultural, ethnic ... or gender background.



During the first manifestation the character's body remains unchanged (only a few hints of the avatar's features peek through in the eyes and hair for example) and the avatar won't have access to his full range of attributes and abilities, yet. This first manifestation lasts for an hour or so at most, until the shock of awakening in a new world and different body overtake the avatar; he must return to his deep slumber within his matrix.

Rising Avatars

In the early phases of an avatar's manifestation the character only hears it in his mind; for many avatars this is the extent of how far they wish to go. The strange world they see through the eyes of the character takes time to get used to. Often an awakened avatar gladly sits back and dispenses advice, ridicule, heartfelt stories and more as he watches the young immortal "learn the ropes".

Some avatars feel the need to exert at least minor control if possible; perhaps speaking through the character's own mouth, or gaining control of a limb. At this point the true struggle begins if the avatar wishes to completely force the new immortal's persona to submerge, while the avatar emerges to become the dominant persona — the cardinal — for a time. Should the avatar succeed in gaining control, the new immortal now becomes trapped in the back of his own mind, witnessing through his own eyes the actions of his avatar. If an avatar takes strong enough control, the new immortal is forced to temporarily slumber within his own matrix on the vox until the avatar tires and relinquishes control. If an avatar does

simply go to sleep for whatever reason, when the body awakens the normal character will be the one to wake up, not the avatar.

Avatars can also awaken during periods of extreme exhaustion or stress, and on rare occasions due to entering Ennui or other more unusual circumstances at your discretion. It is possible to purposely rouse an avatar; a mere act of concentration on the immortal's part. This doesn't mean it will respond, or react kindly to the sudden "request" to wake up and "speak" with the immortal. Once roused, the avatar is free to stay in the background of the immortal's mind or attempt to exert control over the body as normal.

It is also possible for more than one avatar to awaken; in such cases only one can attempt reach any levels of control. Avatars battling to see who gets a chance to exert control is handled entirely by you as the Narrator and left to your discretion on how you wish to resolve such conflicts. It is very rare that multiple avatars are able to rouse; characters should receive bonuses when attempting to quiet or control multiple rising avatars.

An immortal can benefit from alliances with his avatars, especially powerful ones. Many avatars are wiser, more experienced, and have a great deal of serenades, skills and knowledge of use to the new immortal. In times of crisis, an avatar with superior fighting skills could emerge — taking control of the body while the new immortal submerges — and battle for the life of the shared body. Avatars can also be of "casual"



assistance from time to time, giving advice or a helping hand when situations become desperate.

An alliance of this nature is usually reached at the price of willingly letting the avatar emerge. This reduces the threat of one becoming angry or vengeful, taking control and wreaking havoc while the new immortal is powerless to stop it. A new immortal can learn what he was once like and how he existed in the past, by forming at least tenuous relationships with his known avatars. And of course in many cases, since the new immortal generally inherits at least some unfinished business from his avatar, being informed ahead of time is always helpful.

Full rules for rising avatars appear in Appendix B.

The Splintering

On rare occasion, an avatar is discovered to be an immortal of great importance to the tribes. Using the ritual of the Splintering, an avatar can be effectively removed from the vox and given a new body. Performing the splintering uses the same mechanics rules and requirements as those for increasing attributes beyond a 6 (page 222 of the Player's Guide), but there are two additional requirements: one is a vox other than the character's own — not a shard but an already formed vox; the second is a group of immortals who understand the ritual and can perform it — the character cannot do this on his own. It requires immortals of great skill and power to perform the ritual.

The ritual captures the avatar's spiritual

essence and tricks the character's vox into "believing" the body is being destroyed. The vox teleports itself and the character's spirit into the nearby ark, creating a new body. The captured essence of the avatar is placed, along with the new vox, into the remaining auras of the character's old body. This mixture is then sent into the ark after the first vox. When the ark breaks, two individuals appear.

The character's old body has been reformed into that of the avatar and the avatar's spirit now residing within, having both the new vox and new avatars to contend with. The new body has the same number of attribute points as the character, but rearranged to better match the avatar before it entered lethe. Otherwise the avatar has access to the full power of all his skills, himsati form, natures, serenades, boons, and banes — save any mystical boons or banes the character inherited from the him — those now stay with the character.

The character appears as well, having a new body crafted from the auras stored in the ark (but he does not receive the attribute increase), and retains his original vox; however, the matrix for the avatar has been fused as the vox removes the redundant copy from existence. The character can never again have any fades related to that avatar, nor spend EP or MP on gaining anything further from that avatar, it is no longer there. Other avatars are unaffected.

Those who performed the ritual bring the avatar to the tribe descended from the Pride (as the tribes were known before the Great Betrayal) the avatar



belonged to when it entered lethe. If the character is considered by his tribe to be of sufficient ability and of the same tribe as the avatar, the avatar will be placed under the character's tutelage to learn about the modern world and see if he can find his way. Otherwise, the avatar is given over to a mentor from his new tribe until he is ready to officially rejoin with his former brethren and take his place among his peers. Each tribe has their own rules on dealing with splintered avatars.

Characters cannot splinter themselves off onto another vox, nor can an avatar splinter a character off onto another vox; shards cannot be used for the splintering, it must be an actual vox. The ritual requires the participation of multiple immortals to be successful. The character doesn't do anything during the

splintering ritual; once it starts his senses are completely cut off and he is effectively placed into a deep sleep; he'll remember nothing of the ritual.

I'm Whose Avatar?!

When a character's body is destroyed, his spirit enters the Blue Air. Should he return and reconstruct a new body using a different vox, he gains all new avatars. Even if he is an experienced immortal,, the character will experience some lethe fades. For a young immortal barely out of lethe, it is like starting to come out of lethe all over again.

If another immortal winds up with the character's original vox, a copy of the character becomes an avatar to that immortal. If for whatever reason the copy is ever splintered off, there are now potentially two "copies" of the same





character running around. This is the only known way the vox network tolerates such copies. It is even possible the immortal the characters meet today is not actually the original — or re-emerged from lethe — but he is a copy of an immortal that spilled into the Blue Air long ago and has never returned.

Confusing? Imagine being the splintered avatar — or the character — who comes face to face with ... himself. It is very rare that something like this happens; perhaps to a handful of immortals over the eons. Most legends and tales told of an immortal in multiple locations and cultures is due to lethe or from traveling and spending decades of time in differing areas. Over generations the stories fused together and they all eventually just seemed to have happened around the same time.

Reborn Mortal Avatars?

Whatever happened to the thousands of immortals, the best and brightest of the himsati race, during the Fire of London in 1666 A.D. remains unclear. Even the avatars of the reborn — those who were there that night — do not seem to remember what actually happened. Regardless, for over 300 years the Reborn lived and died as humans, being reborn in a manner most regard as being similar to the Bright Bloods.

This has left the Reborn with hundreds of years of prior mortal memories; they occasionally have lethe fades of them. However, no mortal avatars exist within the vox; their voxes don't even have any recordings of these mortal lifetimes. The memories seem to be contained wholly within the spirit of the Reborn.

Excerpt from secondary interrogation of Lady Camille, by Seana of the Shadowen (then known as Pride Nimrod) dated January 12th, 1991...

They are truly Reborn! Ingénue is a disgusting term you use to hide the truth of what they are. We've been over this before, we both know thousands of our best and brightest weren't consigned to the Blue Air in 1666 while London burned to the ground. They went into Lethe, but it was more than that.

You've heard the same theories I have, maybe the Primals, maybe the Transcendents, even one of the Trine. Maybe it was just something gone awry; but regardless, they lost their voxes to who knows where. They became truly mortal, their spirit being reborn a normal human infant, growing old, dying and being reborn again.

They experienced what we dare not, they dreamed, they saw the machinations of our enemy, stared it in the face and laughed for not being recognized by it! And I can't tell you why, but they are coming back, now, today. Wherever those voxes were stored, they are returning to their rightful owners and they are all going to remember. No one will control them, no one will manipulate them, they'll either save us or destroy us all!

Somebody out there knows the truth of why, I doubt even these "Reborn" know it ... yet. But they will find out and that's when the suffering of our wicked souls will truly begin...



HIMSATI AND HUMAN

Immortals change back and forth between their two forms at will. On the one side you have their original bestial form known as the himsati. This should not be confused with the term himsati race, which is the collective term for all immortals. On the other side you have the human form, sometimes referred to as the terrene form. Himsati is both singular and plural, depending on the context the word is used in.

Just as mortals don't notice the supernatural battle taking place in the alley — or their minds subconsciously tell them it is a bunch of street punks dressed for an early Halloween — the same goes for any himsati that doesn't "fit". A wolf in the middle of the city will be perceived as a large dog, but a crow himsati will go almost anywhere and be treated just like any normal crow. This ability does not protect the immortal during direct interactions with humans, especially those of faith and belief who can warp the immortal's himsati form based on the interaction that occurs. See Chapter 4 for more information on these temporary curses.

An immortal in his himsati form is quite different than his mortal counterpart. A wolf himsati is more powerful than an

actual mortal lupine. Natures let the immortal run faster, jump higher and bite harder than his mortal counterparts. While humans cannot tell an immortal in himsati form apart from his mortal counterparts, mortal animals can.

Just as the human race is made up of diverse cultures and ethnicities, the himsati race is made up of diverse species of creatures. The vast majority of himsati species are based upon naturally occurring animals, while a small but significant percentage have qualities of elementals and plants.

The Animal Himsati

Mammals account for most animal himsati. The next largest groupings — not necessarily in order — are birds, amphibians and reptiles. After that you have insects, fish and related marine life. Immortals coming out of lethe often find that their mortal counterparts can match them — even exceed them — in some areas. A cheetah himsati fresh from lethe will find his mortal counterpart is far faster; but as he grows in power he will outrun it not just by a few paces, but by miles.

Evolution

Just as the vox changes and updates the immortal's human guise each time he

Excerpt from Discourse Centuria AD 1900

As spoken by Ammut the Devourer, then Paragon of the Terat ...

“Humanity: The quality of being humane; benevolence, kindness, mercy. Do I hear laughter in the gallery? Do you not agree with the human's definition of himself? No? Then how about this one: Bestial: Having the qualities of or behaving in the manner of a brute; savage. Subhuman in intelligence. Does this describe us? If you ask me, the irony here lies in the contrast between the arrogance of man, that he should pen himself so noble, and the wisdom of the beast, who sees no use for the pen at all.”



enters lethe, it does the same for his himsati form. For this reason you won't readily find woolly mammoth or saber tooth cat himsati about. For those few who work towards making their himsati more like an ancestral form, the path is difficult and few succeed.

Mythic Animal Himsati

Aside from those gifted by their tribe with a particular nature that may be odd for their species, there are even fewer who purposely attempt to create a unique form. A handful reach a form and power great enough to be recorded in the annals of human myth. Some, such as Hydra and Manticore, have even been copied by other immortals through the ages. A mythic himsati is very hard to do since it takes natures from different animal species and combines them together in unique and interesting ways.

Handling characters attempting to create hybrid himsati can be difficult; there are no natures for having the multiple heads of a hydra. It is going to be up to your imagination to determine which natures a character should use; for example, Enhanced Limbs might be used for those multiple heads (up to two heads per purchase of the nature).

Dinosaurs

Nope. There are no immortals with dinosaur himsati. That would be the Abzulim, more commonly known as Dragons in human myth. The closest to a classic dragon or dinosaur an immortal will get is a komodo dragon with a Size (Growth) nature, or being a member of the Tribe of Sharakai. If an immortal actually did have that kind of himsati, every tribe and drove on Earth would

NEW MECHANIC —

De-Evolution & Mythic Natures

Any nature purchased, that makes the himsati look more like an ancient form, costs 10 points for the nature/level — even if normally common for the species. Any nature altered for the same purpose requires the character to pay an additional 5 points to change the nature. If it has levels the character obtained previously, they must each have the 5 points paid before the change is complete. This ensures the player is serious about the change, and reflects how few ancient himsati forms roam the modern world. Examples of this would include an elephant changing Armor to look like a woolly mammoth hide, or a frog purchasing Poison to resemble a poisonous ancestor.

Any nature purchased or changed to create a hybrid or mythical creature (examples: griffon, pegasus, etc.) follow the same rules as above for taking on a more ancient form. Natures granted by joining a tribe are simply granted by that tribe; there is no cost even if it creates a hybrid or mythic form.

fall upon him at first sight in an attempt to rip him to shreds and get his vox.

Mortal Animal Natures

Mortal animals have natures, but they are static and grow little as the animal reaches its adult stages. For those natures that come in levels, most animals never have more than 3 in any given nature. Some natures are held by no animal; Beauty and Terrible Countenance do not exist for mortal animals. They simply rely on their natural presence and mankind's innate



fear or attraction to them. In chapter 7 we'll talk a bit more about creating mundane animals for your games.

Newborns

Stick a shard or already formed vox into a pile of mud, a bonfire, or a patch of grass and nothing is going to happen. Only in extremely rare and bizarre circumstances does a new elemental or plant immortal come into existence. Most newborns come into existence today as a result of a purposeful union directed by another being. In ancient days the Earth's flow of life was so strong almost anything could spontaneously bond with a shard through a wound. But in the modern age newborns rarely come about by accident.

Complex rituals are enacted to help ensure the animal not only survives the process, but doesn't turn into some wild insane half-immortal creature. The Progeny have a particular fondness for creating predators in this manner, forcing the bonding of the shard and host to go awry in some way. But assuming



nothing goes wrong and the animal survives, it is suddenly changed into a human form, and given human level intelligence, cultural and language knowledge — with absolutely no idea where all those new abilities came from. Most newborns have a tendency to panic, lashing out at anyone that comes near it or running for dear life. The process just isn't pleasant.

A newborn has to stop its instinctual



need to be an animal all the time, as it accidentally shapeshifts at random moments — either partially or fully — and hungers to thrive on instinct over intellect. They are a very real danger and constant threat until they can come to terms with their new existence. They are kept under constant supervision by any tribe that finds them, at least for the first year or two. Otherwise a newborn is similar to an immortal awakening from lethe and is created using the same build points as a starting character — though bonus points tend to be invested almost exclusively in natures.

Human Himsati

Humans don't survive the experience of bonding with a shard, their connection to the One Soul is too strong. The Progeny have rituals they can perform to darken a mortal's soul enough to hopefully survive the process, but it leads to a

creature more insane and deadly than a newborn bonding gone awry. Less than a handful of humans have survived the process and are the darkest Progeny one can encounter — even the droves have found themselves unable to control or manipulate these maleficent, corrupted souls.

Characters may have ancient human himsati such as Cro Magnon, or some other non-human primate form (ape, monkey, etc.), but not a modern human as their himsati form. If a player wants a character that can focus on remaining human with the benefit of his himsati natures, he may wish to look into the Eremite Tribe; the same goes for those who wish to play “angels” in the popular sense as the Eremites — and to a lesser degree the Morrigan — are largely responsible for the myths and legends surrounding those beings.

An interview with Makeda of the Anopheles, during the signing of the Strategem Pact in the first Atlantis, circa 6500 B.C. ...

“Anath was so inspiring until his downfall. Did you know when we found him well over 500,000 years ago he had evolved far from his primitive ‘caveman’ state? What would you think if I told you that he already looked a lot like a modern mortal of today?”

Of course, we could never have predicted that allowing him to breed with Rukshasa would produce over 100 children a day, and that those children would all become immortal, forming the Eremites and Magdalen. The Eremites... they worship Anath still, even after it was clearly shown that those exceptionally few humans who survive becoming immortal all become corrupted. Anath's corruption at the hands of the Rime during the Shouting War proved that; he was the pinnacle of human immortality if you ask the Eremites, and a fool if you ask the Magdalen.

If you had an avatar that allowed you a glimpse of 65,000 years ago in Sheol, when Anath and Namergon fought, you'd be driven blind by the pure spectacle of it all. It's a shame they destroyed one another. But he did prophesize his destruction, and he did tell the Eremites to look for him in the Crucible later. The question is, was he referring to the Wellspring of Talos or the One Soul?”



The Elemental Himsati

The pure elemental himsati were created in ancient times when Earth's life force was strong enough to mingle with the elements freely. Since then, new elemental himsati are mixed, having a base form of an animal with elemental natures added. For example, a stone tiger is a tiger whose Armor nature manifests as stone; he might also take the nature of Stillness as well.

If a character starts as a mixed elemental-animal himsati using the Mixed Himsati boon, natures from both the animal and elemental species count as common. Otherwise, animal himsati attempting to add elemental natures pay the extra cost for them being uncommon for their species. Even if a nature that is normally common to their species is

purchased, but manifests in an elemental form, it is still considered uncommon. Shades for a mixed elemental are based on their animal form. There are no mixed elemental-plant himsati, only elemental-animal.

Pure Elemental Himsati Form

Pure elemental himsati are amorphous in appearance, as described on page 127 of the Player's Guide. Their shape remains humanoid as they first begin to change, but quickly alters into something like nothing ever before witnessed by human eyes.

Shadow Himsati

The rarest of the elementals — shadow himsati — are similar to air himsati: they are mixed shadow and animal, using the same rules. Unfortunately they





are treated with a great deal of mistrust among the tribes. The Shadowen — estranged from the tribes and sometimes viewed as an enemy — have multiple himsati of solid shadow. Commanding them with leashes of spiritual silver, they can unleash these shadow himsati from their human guise at will. The Phoenix and Shadowen have a long and tragic history and are mortal enemies in this day and age. An interesting side-note: The ruling elders of the Circle of Nimrod among the Phoenix Tribe apparently have dual-himsati: one of fire and one of shadow.

Primals

Primals are not immortals with elemental himsati. They are incredibly powerful spirit beings that manifest using the elemental forces of the Maelstrom. They should not be confused with elemental himsati. In the last few decades there have been reports that Primals have appeared in forms other than the classic earth, air, fire and water. These sightings take place when a Primal is actually spotted within the bounds of a modern town or city, a rare thing indeed. Bodies shaped from a number of conceivable materials such as steel girders, neon tubing and even glass have been reported in these rare sightings. A Primal so far from Atlantis or the Valley of Gynnah is a sure sign that an assailant against the Sunedrion is about to meet his demise.

The Plant Himsati

Nearly all plant himsati were created circa 200,000 BC during an event known as the Second Bloom. The Blooms are said to have soothed the Primals bent on destroying all the servants of the

defeated Abzulim — which meant all members of the himsati race. Over the eons, as these immortals have entered lethe and adapted themselves to the types of plants present in the modern world, but always appear as an exotic, more lush version. The Second Bloom is also responsible for creating another race, the Milesian line of Bright Blood humans.

Amaranth

Members of the Tuatha, the Amaranth are said to have been created in the First Bloom and have ties to the Sunedrion themselves. They maintain their own special mantle known as Talitha in the South Pacific. The Amaranth always appear extremely exotic, maintaining aspects of plants species that have been extinct for millions of years.

The Bizarre Himsati

Are there himsati made of plastic, soda and other exotic substances? No. Immortals cannot be created from synthetic materials. The same goes for pure minerals or elements from the periodic table; you won't see himsati made of pure gold, copper, liquid mercury or hydrogen. You may see (especially among the Peri) bits of those mingled in with their normal earthen forms. And finally, microscopic himsati are myth and rumor, as stated on page 128 of the Player's Guide.

Toxic Himsati

In a world full of pollution and man-made substances, the Progeny — in their experiments — have been able to create various himsati considered toxic by normal immortal standards. The poison natures of these creatures are twice as



**Excerpt from “Horrors of the Lash”,
written 2003 AD, author unknown...**

The Shonelkidar are the only himsati species on record to come from the microscopic world of bacterium and viruses. As research suggests, they were actually immortal-like predators created by the Abzulim and unleashed during the Shouting War. By infecting immortals and literally “eating” new carvings into their voxes, the Shonelkidar were able to crosslink an immortal with each of his avatars, creating a madness from which there seemed to be no escape.

Approximately 15 years ago, the group claiming the name of Shonelkidar appeared, offering a cure for the Lash. It is believed they ‘infected’ the immortal in an effort to recapture their own wayward brethren — then cleaned the avatars off the vox — leaving only the imprint of the current immortal. They vanished after the Great Betrayal.

strong as that perceived in any normal himsati, giving off effects of toxic chemicals and sometimes radiation. The physical bodies of such aberrations eventually self-destruct, thrusting a powerful and malevolent spirit into the Blue Air.

Chimera

Chimera are the offspring of a Madonna and another immortal. A Madonna is capable of bearing children seeded with a bit of his or her own shard. The Chimera grows as a shapeshifting being, able to taken on the himsati form of either parent. When the Chimera reaches maturity he stops aging and

gains the ability to sing serenades; he can also now take on a form combining that of his parents’. Chimera have a propensity to take himsati form as often as possible, easily giving in to their more savage and bestial urges.

Chimera are not trusted and many are killed on sight. However, Tribe Terat honors them, rescues and assists them in becoming functional adult immortals. Adult chimera can hide their true nature from others, appearing to be mythic himsati to forms of detection; only if someone physically sees them in the two separate forms of the parents can the difference be told. Ammut, the former Paragon of the tribe, was a Chimera himself. The Terat have had such long association with Chimera and forming mythical himsati that nearly all natures in existence are tied to the tribe’s very makeup. They have become part of their mystical traits; most natures in the game are listed as common for the Terat.

The Garm, a sect among the Eremite Tribe, are all Chimera with a special gift of faith, allowing them to control their savage natures. They are unable to take on the himsati form of their father, who is reputed to be Longinus, the Peri spear that pierced the side of Christ. Their himsati forms instead appear as a simple mix of lupine/canine and earth elemental. Their mother — the Madonna who gave birth to the entire litter during World War II — has remained in seclusion, her identity unknown but to a handful of Eremite elders.

In game terms, a Chimera counts natures from either parent’s species as common,



they are born as a mythic himsati. They have two different himsati forms and can mix and match them when desired. It is strongly recommended against allowing players to have Chimera as characters.

Doppelgangers

A doppelganger is the product of two Madonna, and carries the entire genetic code of the himsati species. They are almost as rare as an immortal with a modern human himsati; only a handful probably exist. Able to shapeshift into any form they desire, they also preserve any gift they gain, even tribal and calling, even through lethe and joining other tribes or callings. They make the ultimate espionage agents, when they are sane enough to deal with.

Doppelgangers have fits of instability. Unable to maintain a single form, their mindset completely changes from one form to the next. They are feared within the tribes for whenever the Progeny find one, they expend vast resources to keep the creature sane long enough to mimic an existing immortal the Progeny have captured. They send it into the midst of a tribe to create all sorts of havoc. Players cannot be doppelgangers; they are incredibly unbalanced.

The Human Guise

In the days of the Abzulim empire, immortals had slave-forms they shapeshifted into. Slave forms were designed for the immortals to perform various tasks for their Abzulim masters. The Abzulim made the genetic structure of their slaves malleable, an effect that rippled out across all shards in existence.

Near 300,000 BC, early humanity

destroyed the Red Shard: a gigantic shard housing the spirit of the Sanguinary. The spirit fled into the telepathic network shared by early Homo Sapiens and the Morpheum was born. This caused a brief surge in the latent telepathic abilities of humanity; causing their faith to reach out to those immortals they interacted with and reshaping their slave forms into human ones. The effect was so powerful it rippled outwards to all shards in existence.

When an immortal begins emerging from lethe, he is used to his human form only; thus beginning characters start the game with only a few natures. But even as immortals' himsati grow in power, most feel just as comfortable — if not more so — in their human guise.

Sensing Immortals

When in human guise, a mortal cannot distinguish an average immortal from any other human he meets. Of course, various curses, serenades and other effects in play may give more than a clue that this odd individual is something more than a normal human. Immortals cannot automatically sense or detect another immortal when they see one — except on contact. If two immortals come within aura contact they know they have encountered another member of the himsati race. The contact of auras does not have to be direct skin to skin contact; simply brushing close enough for clothing to touch is enough. For this reason many immortals avoid shaking hands or getting too close to another person they meet. Immortals were largely responsible for many greeting customs developed over time



that keep individuals from making physical contact. Immortals in full himsati, while perceiving the Blue Air, will see another immortal's himsati feature overlaying the vague outline of his human form. And of course various serenades and gifts can reveal someone as an immortal.

Eye of the Tiger

If an immortal spends a great deal of time in himsati; aspects of his himsati blend into his terrene guise. If he spends the majority of his days over the course of a year or more in himsati, his eyes will be the first to blend his himsati into his terrene form, after that his skin tones and hair will begin to alter. For those spending nearly 24 hours a day in himsati, their few changes into terrene will leave their facial features, body posture, movement, fingers and toes reflecting a bit of their himsati. It will be just enough that other mortals will notice how odd or "animal-like" the person looks ("eyes like a rat, smiles like a snarling wolf, etc.). If the character starts spending more time in his human form, the changes will slowly recede.

New and enhanced rules for himsati appear in Appendix B.

Shades and Companions

Mortal animals react to immortals like they do any other normal creatures. They treat him like any other human while in his human guise; in himsati he's treated as whatever species he represents — they will react rather oddly to elemental and plant himsati though, since their senses are telling them they are dealing with walking and talking rocks, fire, plants, etc.

NEW MECHANICS —

Shade Damage

Tainted characters take additional damage when attacked by their shades. During step 4 of physical conflict, after END and appropriate armor are subtracted from the damage points, add half the character's own taint. Then the player marks off appropriate health boxes. Even if END and armor reduce the damage to zero, add half the taint.

Plant Himsati

Plant himsati attacked by objects made of mostly plant material counts as shade damage (for example, a wooden sword with a plastic handle deals shade damage). Even a paper cut can be a terrible ordeal for a heavily tainted plant himsati. The panacea does not heal this damage even from a non-living source.

Elemental Himsati

Elementals also add half their taint to the damage from any attack from a form of their shade; this is also added (after defenses are applied) to any non-damaging effect (such as a serenade using a form of their shade). Additionally, they take a -2 pain penalty when simply in contact with pure forms of their shade, while tainted:

Fire: Salt or fresh water; bottled/filtered water will not do it.

Water: Earth, not concrete or steel or other processed earthen substances.

Earth: Air in the form of wind or breeze under open sky.

Air: Fire, even if the himsati is intangible at the time.

Shadow: Natural sunlight, even if reflected from a mirror.

Again, the panacea doesn't heal this damage even from a non-living source.



Shades, however, sense the immortal is one of them and yet not. If the character is not tainted, his shades are well disposed towards him and will take him in as one of their own; they may even allow him to establish a temporary dominance over the pack, herd or territory. There are no hard and fast rules on this, it depends on the type of shades the character is dealing with; a roving pack of stray dogs will react differently than a pride of lions.

Once the immortal becomes tainted, things change. If the character's taint is lower than all his other attributes, his shades will simply avoid him, try to scare him off if he comes too near, etc. Other types of animals will still react normally. If his taint becomes equal or higher than even one of his attributes, his shades will frenzy and attack him on sight, even other animals will now avoid him, try to scare him off, etc.

Companions

There are no game mechanics to a shade becoming an immortal's companion. A relationship of trust develops between the immortal and one of his shades. He might spend a few hours a week during the year ensuring the shade can defend its own territory and care of its family; or he might spend a solid month in the wilderness assisting the shade each day; maybe he just saves the creature's life.

Once you feel that a bond has developed between the character and the shade, it is simply there. The shade is now mystically bound to the character; it can sense when the character needs it or when the character is in danger — so long as they are both in the same region

(and therefore the same realm) at the time. The character has no special senses concerning the shade; he'll have to use Mystech or serenades to accomplish that. However, a companion is now attuned to the character, and it can be used against him by those that realize such.

If the character becomes tainted, but the taint is lower than all his other attributes, the companion will still treat him as a friend. If it becomes equal or higher than even one of his attributes, the shade will avoid him, scare him off, etc. If the taint grows higher than the character's highest attribute, the bond is broken and the companion will react like any other shade; it will not bond with the immortal ever again.

Bête Noire

The "blackies" are animals that have become tainted themselves. Occasionally they come to serve as companions to Progeny who willingly allow themselves to remain tainted. A Bête Noire is capable of stealing immaculum from other living creatures, consuming it to feed their taint and empowering them to do additional damage, move faster, sense better, etc..

TOXINS

Toxins fall under four categories: natural venoms, drugs, poisons and radiation. The natural healing factor of an immortal (the panacea) does not work in healing damage from toxins.

Venoms

Natural substances produced by living creatures to inhibit or neutralize prey;



they can be highly debilitating, but usually not deadly to a normal adult mortal. Bee stings, mild snake venom, spider neurotoxin, and bacterial infections are examples.

Drugs

Processed substances designed to affect the mind or body in a way other than damaging it, both pharmaceutical and recreational, fall into this category. Continuous consumption tends to make the drug more potent until it is strong enough to become an actual poison.

Poisons

Any processed/refined substance designed to cause injury, illness or death. This includes substances that do the same when used improperly (such as ingesting household cleaning chemicals). This also includes pesticides, herbicides (like Agent Orange), carbon monoxide and most pollutants.

Radiation

This directly damages the malleable genetic structure of an immortal, potentially crippling him for millennia. It is one of the deadliest “poisons” known and therefore has its own category.

Complete rules for toxins appear in Appendix B.





CHAPTER 2

SIGHTSEEING GUIDE

Earth is the last bastion of the tribes; the rest of the worlds and dimensions that occupy the universe — collectively called the “Dominions” — are extremely dangerous for them to traverse. Even the act of traveling to such places has become difficult and fraught with peril. But the Earth and its nearby realms — called the “Habitat” by older immortals — are rather interesting places to visit.

In this chapter we take a second glance at the various realms and dimensions of the Immortal universe. Appendix C contains major or lengthy rules additions, enhancements and/or replacements related to this chapter.

MODERN WORLD

The Earth in Immortal Invisible War is very similar to the Earth in the real world. While you might think the difference in technology makes a big difference, the in-game technology already exists in the real world. The real difference is that in Immortal this technology is already available and widely distributed to consumers.

Within the real world today many cities are already working on providing free wireless internet access to their citizens; the concept of net kiosks are being implemented in locales now. Driver’s licenses and identification cards in many countries already have a magnetic strip on them or use a scannable barcode. DVD’s are now double-sided and store several gigabytes of information.

Computers are moving to quad-processors and affordable terabyte storage is a reality. So in the world of immortal, the things we present aren’t at all far fetched.

The Haves And Have-Nots

The price tag for this new technology is not very steep, but it is still not available for everyone. Those who can be considered in the upper end of “middle class” in most cultures can afford things like Eyz Units and high-power computers using the new Telepath Chip. These items have quickly infiltrated the world of business, forcing manufacturers of both operating systems and other software to keep up. The hybrid car is even reaching a point as an economical and affordable family car. Most fuel stations around the world carry alternative fuel sources for these vehicles; H2 (hydrogen-based) and E85 (ethanol-based) are the two most popular.

The Big Change

So what radical departures from the real world has Immortal taken? The only big change from the real world is that there is no such place as Mexico City; it never existed. If you look at a map of Mexico, the area is open land. The capital of Mexico is Puebla, sometimes referred to as Mexico City. There is a road called Calz Ignacio Zaragoza that winds its way — right past where the Distrito Federal and the Ciudad de Mexico would be sitting in the real world — between Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl and



Naucalpan De Juarez. In between these two towns sits fertile open land.

Simply put, in the world of Immortal there never was a Mexico City in that place. However, there is evidence that a civilization may have once existed there; in 1790 an ancient Aztec calendar stone (weighing nearly 24 tons) was unearthed in the area. Tribal Law vs. Dragon's Rule (our 3rd core book about the tribes and droves) will provide more information about why there is no Mexico City in the world of Immortal Invisible War.

The Great Betrayal

The series of events that comprised the Great Betrayal had incredible, yet subtle, impact on the modern world of humanity. Yet few immortals understand what really happened. Scholars among the tribes spent a great deal of time piecing together the flow of major events and have what they feel best represents what happened during this short, violent and fast-paced period.

It began with the theft of the Femme Darkle in the year 1990; an artifact made from the head of the ancient Abzulim King, Samiel. The artifact was kept in the Temple of Sheol — now under the control of the Shadowen — guarded by Keepers from all the Prides (predecessors of the tribes). Its theft was prophesized to bring about the Rapture, the final battle of the himsati race. It is now believed that Semiramis, queen of the Shadowen, engineered the theft herself. While she now possesses it, she has yet to wield its power against the tribes.

Shortly after the theft, the first group of Reborn appeared. Being so soon after the theft, conspiracy theories flew through the ranks of the jaded Prides. Up until the Exodus of 1666 when the Reborn vanished, an immortal returning from lethe was viewed as a happy occasion; a former brother or sister returning to the fold with new experiences to bring his Pride.

The Reborn were different due to whatever force placed them into the special form of lethe they endured for hundreds of years. The experience fundamentally changed them; some believe an outside force did this to prepare them for the Great Betrayal. It did not prepare them for the reactions of other immortals though. They were met with distrust and paranoia by those who felt these Reborn could not be controlled like others emerging from lethe. Some sought these Reborn as pawns while others treated them as wolves in sheep's clothing.

In 1997, a small group of immortals known as the Solas vanished. They stumbled upon drove plans to attack the very mantles of Sanctuary; for their discovery they became the first attacked. A few escaped the attack on their mantle and the warning they sent was intercepted by the followers of Sharakai. Within a year, Sharakai's followers purposely opened themselves up to attack in order to fake their own defeat and disappear. The next to fall were the Morrigan as their primary mantle was attacked.

The droves successfully regrew the dread Zuzog — anti Sunedrion trees —



using them to bridge the gap between Sheol and Sanctuary. The roots and branches of these twisted and mighty trees of darkness tore holes in the barriers protecting the mantles, and the droves poured in. Many mantles were completely shredded, their makers and immortal denizens lost into the black void beyond the mantle barriers.



Many have questioned how the defenses of these places were so weak, how could the droves breach the mantles without some warning? It came down to the Anopheles, the former sisters of Tribe Hemari. With the Femme Darkle free of its own containment, the dark whispering voice of the Sanguinary and echoes of the long-dead Samiel haunted the Anopheles until they returned to their dark ways. The Anopheles turned traitor, using their positions as lovers and consorts to many immortal leaders to ensure successful attack by the droves.

As chaos ensued, the droves — suddenly far better organized than the scattering Prides — rained defeat after defeat upon them. Eventually, the Transcendents stepped forward, assisting our greatest warriors in reclaiming the former Morrigan stronghold of Valhalla. With further assistance the scattered Prides formed the Courts, based on their primal connections to reality, battle tactics from their revolt against the Abzulim and

their roles in human faith during the Age of Myth. Using these new tactics — plus information from the Tribe of Sharakai (the first to use the term “tribe”) that was gathered in secret after they were thought destroyed — the Courts slowly beat back the droves. In early 2003, the ruined mantle city of Nivalea became the final battleground of the Great Betrayal, where the voice of the Sanguinary was heard no more.

What did humanity perceive through all this? The events of the world as they have happened in real life these past several years have also happened in the world of Immortal. A rise in terrorism, natural disasters, culture barriers and technological advances; all came about in part due to the Great Betrayal. The Prides were so busy fighting their great battles that humanity was free of their influence. The droves gained a foothold over humanity’s path during those few years. Oddly, it brought great advances for a humanity, constantly held back by



the anachronistic Prides. But the Great Betrayal sowed fear and distrust among humanity. The great work some Prides accomplished in bringing humanity closer to a more mythical viewpoint was all but destroyed.

Though the tabloids gained more amazing stories to tell, humanity blundered through the Great Betrayal oblivious to it. The great battles took place outside the perception of human eyes. Great efforts were made to undo the damage to the psyches of the few humans who did witness such battles. But even after being “convinced” that their perceptions had fooled them, they now carry in their minds and spirits the subconscious knowledge that the world is different. The veil has begun to lift from mortal eyes. If the tribes cannot assist humanity to be ready for the truth, who knows what will happen...

The Dominions

The Dominions comprise the many worlds and dimensions away from Earth. Traveling to the Dominions is not easy; the vacuum of space makes it difficult to reach other planets. The nearby ones are now inhospitable wastelands; even an immortal will have difficulty surviving without being thrust into the Blue Air as the ravages of these worlds destroy his physical being. Other worlds, separated by the infinite gulf of the Blue Air are just

as difficult to reach, let alone survive on. It is an unfortunate consequence of the Shouting War, but most of the Dominions within feasible reach of Earth were savaged by that ancient conflict.

Our Solar System

Though a vox will continue to work in a vacuum, the rigors of outer space are more than an immortal’s physical form can bear. None of the nearby planets — those that make up our solar system — are capable of supporting normal life, they are mostly dead worlds without enough life force to sustain anything. If an immortal goes to one of the other planets in our solar system he needs to travel by conventional human means or via lighter ship (which is considerably faster). Once there, things like breathing tend to be problematic. It’s





embarrassing for a character to be rescued because his body ceased to function from a simple lack of oxygen; or worse yet, for him to remain trapped until his body desiccates enough for his spirit to release to the Blue Air or his vox attempts to reach his ark — because there is no nearby place to go to using Lethe on a dead world.

What about other worlds light-years away from our own? They're out there and a few support life: ancient strongholds of groups of immortals from the Age of Myth. There are most likely small tribes of humans eking out a bare existence in these places, or other creatures yet to be rediscovered. Whether those creatures resemble the humans and creatures of earth still or have evolved along different lines remains to be seen.

Other Realms

Most of the habitable Dominions exist as their own pocket dimensions, accessible only through the Blue Air. A few still connect to the energy conduits known as the Nadir. Either way, some form of lighter is required to travel to these worlds. Out among these dimensions lie ancient Abzulim fortress worlds such as the original Tarterus and Babel. Their locations remain lost but for the knowledge of a few avatars hidden somewhere among the voxes of modern immortals. Entire worlds and realms await discovery, each with their own flora and fauna.

The only problem is time: the Abzulim ruled for millions of years, easily spending thousands of years traveling from their holdings in one dimensional

Excerpt from “In the Shadows of War”, as written by Hippolyta prior to the Great Betrayal...

“Ares truly enjoyed finding yet another new realm full of unknown threats to test his mettle against. In the time that I served him, prior to my time now with Semiramis, we traveled to places that the rest of our race will most likely never see.

Interpretations of ancient writings lead you to believe that there were only two worlds in the cosmos: the Habitat and the Dominions. Those writings claim the destruction of the malice shard broke the Dominions up into smaller worlds, scattering them into their own dimensions; that humanity's faith caused the sun to stop revolving around the Habitat and made it vice versa. Not so. Our former Abzulim masters traveled the breadth and depth of the universe long before the Malice Shard was shattered only 400,000 or so years ago. Our ancestors were simply too scared to rise out of their own ignorance and see the truth of the universe around them.

Today, we consider nearby realms tied to Earth as part of the “Habitat” and all other worlds and dimensions (including the other planets in our own solar system) as part of the “Dominions”. Both are simply outdated terms no longer functional to properly describe the wonder of what is out there.”

realm or planet to another. Members of the himsati race have a hard time maintaining their sanity for such a trip; such was easier before the advent of



humanity. In the modern world so much happens in such a short span of time, that even to many immortals such lengthy trips are looked at with trepidation. There are an infinite number of worlds and dimensions immortals will likely never see.

Another problem is life force: the One Soul metaphysically coexists with Earth. Places farther away (metaphysically speaking) do not bathe in the life force as strongly. Humans barely survive so far away from the One Soul, making it harder for immortals to eke out a bearable existence. This problem was one of the primary reasons the Shouting War even happened.

The Sconces

The mystery of the Sconces comes up during many discussions concerning the Dominions. There are a dozen or so of these monolithic towers by most accounts, scattered throughout the known Dominions. Impenetrable by any known means, they may antedate even the Abzulim. The Anopheles — who have good claim to know the truth considering their servitude to the Abzulim — repeatedly claimed such prior to their defection from the tribes. They emphatically maintained the Abzulim were unable to enter these strange edifices. The Magdalen disagreed and concluded the Sconces were built by the Abzulim and sealed up as grand treasure vaults. They accused the Anopheles of hiding the truth and of knowing how to enter the Sconces; but even now the Sconces remain untouched and the debate continues. More information will be found in Tribal Law versus Dragon's Rule.

The Labyrinth

A great seed-like object that once housed the Wellspring of Talos — the first Crucible — the Labyrinth is now a dark maze sitting at the metaphysical center of the universe. Like a dead husk, it is infected with all manner of dark creatures. The last known expedition to this place was made by the Phoenix to rescue many of their brothers imprisoned there by the Shadowen thousands of years ago. Stories abound of great brackish colored orbs holding creatures older than the Abzulim in stasis, awaiting someone ignorant enough to release them. Even the droves do not consider trying to find the way there.

There are tales of the lost lighter known as the Spirestrike, and that it may hold clues to the path taken by Samiel millions of years ago. The Spirestrike was his personal flagship during the height of his reign over the Abzulim empire. The ship passed through the hands of the Terat in their ancestral past and several groups of Solitaires before going missing just prior to the Great Betrayal.

THE HABITAT

Besides the Earth there are other nearby realms the himsati race can reach, many without the aid of a lighter, serenade or other form of alternative travel. It is simply a matter of knowing where to go in order to gain entry.

Ley Membrane

The Ley Membrane (simply called the Ley by most immortals) is the remainder of a network of energy lines once connecting all living worlds and realms



An Excerpt from Merlin's Cautionary Tale...

The Morrigan, Protean and Tuatha came upon Sheol after the fall of Abzulim Empire. There they came under the influence of the Rime, an immortal creature carrying a portion of the Sanguinary's true essence within her. She sent the three young groups of immortals across the universe, having them slay all before them; bringing back the bodies of these creatures along with various shards and voxes. All this was grafted to the largest shard to ever exist, the Malice Shard — the still beating "heart" of the Sanguinary. Not far away from this grotesque creation of mixed flesh and shard lay the Red Shard, housing the Sanguinary's spirit.

Unknown to us, the Abzulim returned and connected the Malice Shard to the Nadir. 400,000 years ago Sharakai led the Anopheles and their primitive human servants on a chase into Sheol, where the Anopheles used the Femme Darkle to destroy the Malice Shard. This tangled the Nadir and prevented our kind from following the Abzulim into the deep Dominions. Years later humanity's faith would grant them the ability to destroy the Red Shard, leaving the Sanguinary no escape except into nascent humanity's telepathic network: the Morpheum.

And for those that did not heed Loki's warning, he turned to the Rime and created our worst enemies, the first droves: Fenris, Hela and Jormungard. A plague that has turned many of our own brethren against us over the many long eons.

in the cosmos: the Nadir. A few immortals learn serenades letting them command the power of the Ley Membrane, but most simply find a nearby line and step upon it. Some humans of faith are sensitive to the Ley Membrane and can perceive and walk its more powerful lines as well.

Tens of thousands of these lines crisscross Earth, but most aren't strong enough for someone to travel upon them without a serenade. There are some very strong lines literally wrapping around the planet. At the few points where more than two of these lines cross are Na Gates: entry points into what is left of the Nadir itself.

The Nadir

The Nadir was the primary method used by the One Soul to distribute life force throughout the universe. It still connects most realms in the universe, coating each world in a Ley Membrane. The Nadir is hopelessly tangled after the shockwaves from the Malice Shard's destruction 400,000 years ago. The Nadir's warps and twists worsen the further away from the Habitat one goes; portions are shredded and even completely disconnected from some worlds and realms. Those worlds have suffered greatly and are dead worlds, much like the nearby planets in our solar system. Only truly skilled lighter crews dare travel too far beyond the Habitat; otherwise they become hopelessly lost in the further reaches of the universe.

Occasionally a stray line of the Nadir flares, becoming visible in physical space. Mortal science has given a term



NEW MECHANICS —

Ley Travel

There are three methods to travel the Ley: By serenade (Chapter 5), by boon (Chapter 3), and as described below:

Immortals — and mortals with Religarum — with a 5 or higher PER can perceive and step onto ley lines. Mortals believe themselves to be doing something other than “walking” the Ley. Other beings with at least a PER of 6 can also perceive and step on ley lines. Once stepped on, the character moves at his running speed multiplied by his SPT attribute value. Strong lines add one to SPT, only for the purposes of determining speed. Weak lines subtract one; extremely weak lines require a serenade or boon to be at all useful for travel.

While traveling, the character perceives himself moving through buildings, trees — even warded structures — as if they were mostly transparent and ethereal, he cannot interact with them. “Stepping off” the line immediately moves him off to the nearest point under open sky; ley lines will not deposit someone inside a structure, liquid or solid object. Likewise, they cannot be stepped on while inside a structure, liquid or solid object.

Changing Direction

Characters can reverse direction on an existing line at any time. To go in other directions requires jumping to another line that intersects the current one. If the line is stronger than the current one no roll is needed. If the line is the same strength or weaker, an uncontested WIL roll is made against a target number of 6 to jump over to a same strength line, 7 to jump over to a weaker strength one.

to this phenomena based on their limited understanding and not knowing what the Nadir truly is: wormholes. Other than these flares, it’s nearly impossible to tell a gateway from one world to another simply by looking at it. Gateways to other realms are most often found by accident, and rarely through skill. Often gateways and Nadir lines simply empty out into the Blue Air, leaving those not protected by a living lighter to be slowly torn apart.

Maelstrom

Like other realms of the Habitat, the elemental plane of the Maelstrom coexists alongside Earth. A swirling chaotic world composed of the four classic elements of earth, air, fire and water, it is surely the father of all pure elementals, just as the life force of Earth is their mother. In older times the barrier between Earth and the Maelstrom was weaker, and the energies of the elemental world often broke through. When such energies came in contact with shards and high concentrations of life force, a new immortal was born: an elemental.

Existence in the maelstrom is nearly impossible for normal immortals. Only a pure elemental in full himsati can survive the rigors of the maelstrom. Chunks of living earth hurtle through pockets of air, fire buffets water; there is no place of stability. Even for a pure elemental the entrance can just as easily disappear within seconds, leaving him stranded for years until another opening appears. All the while he’ll feel himself mingling with — or being buffeted by — the power of various elemental forces. Others find their physical forms



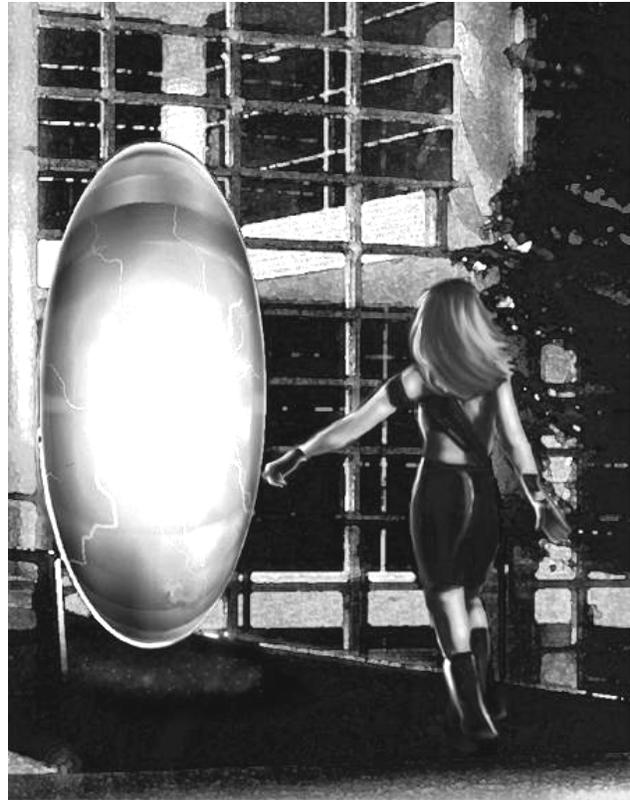
immediately torn apart by the raging elements, their spirits quickly thrust into the Blue Air.

The Primals

This place is home to the Primals, dancing upon its energies and wrapping their spiritual forms in cloaks of elemental power. When leaving the maelstrom, Primals take part of those energies with them, manifesting on Earth as elementals of godlike power.

There are no game mechanics for Primals, they are easily a match for any Paragon of the tribes. One might wonder — if not for their single-minded dedication to the nurturing and protection of the Sunedrion — what might they do if they ever again turned their fury against the himsati race? A small army of powerful immortals might be able to hold off a single Primal, but in any numbers all one can do is hope to survive the fury they unleash. It took the intervention of the Trine, millions of years ago, to keep the Primals from consigning nearly every member of the himsati race to the Blue Air or worse.

The Primals are only seen outside the Maelstrom in two places: The Valley of Gynnah and New Atlantis. The presence of a Primal anywhere else indicates it is tracking down something that directly threatened a Sunedrion. Any other place on Earth where a Sunedrion may grow, one or more Primals are there tending to it and hiding its presence from the rest of the world. Only the pure members of the Tuatha are able to come near a lone Sunedrion without igniting the wrath of its Primal caretakers.



The exact number of Primals in existence is unknown; but tales of the war between the Primals and Abzulim indicate several hundred existed during that time. Only a few Primals are known by any actual names, mostly the Ishim and the Kai Ra.

The Valley Of Gynnah

Deep in the deserts of North Africa there is an oasis. It mysteriously moves from day to day, never staying in one spot. The hot sands give way to a small pool of perfectly crystal clear water and a small but thick stand of trees and bushes that cannot be seen through. Pushing through this small stand, one finds himself in a great desert valley, the Valley of Gynnah. The oasis serves as the only permanent entrance to the Maelstrom, and Gynnah the only stable point in it. The valley was home to the



first Sunedrion and was the place of both the First and Second Blooms —the Blooms cleansed the Primals of shards forced upon them by the Abzulim during their war millions of years ago; the Blooms placated the Primals and kept them from destroying the himsati race after the war was over.

The Valley is also the birthplace of the Primal beings known as the Ishim. Possibly born of the One Soul during the First and Second Blooms, the way the Primals were born of the Wellspring of Talos. The Ishim consist of Nimrod the Horned Lord, Styx the Immortal Celebrant, Namergon the Lightning Man, and Sphinx the Earth Watcher: four special Primals not bound to the duty of serving the Sunedrion.

The Horned Lord was destroyed by the former Morrigan Loki, but then resurrected during the Second Bloom; he now serves as the Phoenix Paragon. Sphinx was wounded in battle with the ancestors of the Osiri and sits in an Ennui-like state to this day. Many believe its spirit long fled the physical body, but its pure power has caused the body to remain. Styx continues to wind its way through the Underworld. Namergon was itself destroyed, as it destroyed the corrupted immortal human Anath, tens of thousands of years ago in Sheol.

Immortal scholars believe these four have an older “brother” — an entity the Osiri refer to as Death — an observer and attendant of the One Soul. The Osiri assist and serve this being in return for secret knowledge. The most potent secret being their tribal gift.

The Kai Ra

The Deepwalker Unamal created the Kai Ra during the Abzulim war with the Primals. Bonding them to voxes and forging them into weapons, he robbed them of their eternal connection to the Sunedrion. When the war ended, the Kai Ra were spared, as the Primals still sensed a glimmer of what these weapons once were. The Kai Ra chose to enter their own form of Ennui, save one. Solitaire sought another way, assisting the Terat to claw their way from darkness and building a haven for the himsati race: the first Atlantis.

When Atlantis was destroyed, Solitaire is thought to have been destroyed or spread her essence among her followers similar to Sharakai. Of the other Kai Ra, most sleep in a place known as the Foundry, deep within the realms of the Underworld. Caliburn serves as the Paragon of Peri Tribe; within the tribe, Mimir watches over the Gargouille — whom he rescued from the Azhoth long ago. The Kai Ra still carry their voxes.

Gremlin Grid

Originally discovered by a group of immortals with electrical himsati — the Solas — the Grid is a true cyberspace, a matrix, virtual reality and digital world; but its landscapes, structures, flora, fauna and avatar-like denizens are made of real “electronic” flesh and blood. When it was first discovered decades ago, it was a dark realm some compared to Sheol. A barren, dark green landscape with black volcanic-like monoliths rose into an equally dark sky. Only flashes of amber-colored ball lightning illuminated the strange “data forests” that corresponded to huge



SYSTEM NOTE —

Characters' Looks in the Grid

When entering the Grid, a character's appearance is slightly altered to match the node he enters. As he leaves the node, changes wash away; entering another node will cause him to blend with that node's aesthetic qualities. Colors of clothing, skin, fur, scales, hair and eyes will match the colors and look of the denizens in the node; features may become distorted, angular, mottled or extremely vivid. It's all just aesthetics and has no bearing on the character's normal abilities.

For example, if the character enters a node corresponding to the headquarters of a large MMOG, his look will change to match the colors and style of characters found in the MMOG. As he leaves he'll change back to normal until he reaches another node. Small nodes make no changes to the character's look, like those for a small business complex or a lone video game arcade.

The character's own innate and supernatural abilities will react accordingly to the physics as the node presents them. If the denizens can all jump ten times their height, so can the character. If he has the leap ability it is increased ten-fold as well. Serenades react normally, depending on the physics of the node; denizens may have electric souls, but they have the same attributes as any other mortal being. A word of caution though, if a denizen looks like he has the power to shoot fireballs every time he throws a punch ... he probably can. You can use any nature or serenade as appropriate to simulate any abilities needed in this digital world.

mainframe computing complexes on an Earth still experiencing the "Cold War" of the 1960's. Raindrops like sparkling colors fell from the sky, fizzling as they splashed to the ground. A few bits of dry green and amber foliage, sometimes pure white, skittered across the landscape like tumbleweeds.

Topography

As Earth progressed into the 21st century, the Grid's topography changed with it. Home computers and small home console game systems helped usher in the first changes. Digital media, DVD's, second generation consoles and the boom of the Internet completely transformed the landscape of the Gremlin Grid. Today, with the advent of next generation gaming consoles, MMOGs (massive multiplayer online games), and the Telepath Chip, true life exists in the Grid. The Grid's reality is not virtual, it is most definitely real, but it is an electronic life — the soul of the machine — that lives and breathes here. Once thought of as an electronic Sheol; now it is seen more as an electronic Morpheum ... the dreams of the machines.

Everything in the Grid mimics the technology, and in some places the topography, of the place on Earth it corresponds to. The Grid is constructed of "nodes" corresponding to places of high technology. Major cities, industrial parks, hi-tech manufacturing plants (ex: Silicon Valley or Haiden Science Park), and multimedia entertainment areas (ex: Las Vegas, Disney World or Europa Park) have corresponding nodes that can as large as a city. From there the nodes generally get smaller. Small to moderate



size nodes represent small business parks, hi-tech malls, or technology “superstores”. Smaller mini-nodes appear here and there, representing collections of net kiosks, internet cafes and the like across small towns. They resemble “tourist traps” along the expressway or the “one-horse electronic town” off the highway.

The actual makeup of what one sees as he approaches a node often defies mortal imagination. Imagine every operating system, graphics program, video game, and virtual reality simulation; nodes are made from elements of all these, both those that closely mimic the reality of Earth and even surreal environments and mixes in-between. The Las Vegas node is a hyper-computerized version of the Las Vegas strip, where computerized video game icons play alongside virtual reality “avatars”. Silicon Valley’s node is gleaming glass and steel surrounded by gold-plated trees and electric veins lighting neon pathways along bubbling data “fountains” and “streams”. Some nodes — especially the larger ones — look very much like the reality of Earth, having buildings, streets and denizens that resemble humans. Most nodes, however, look nothing like normal Earth reality, instead looking like various versions of cyberspace as presented in movies, literature and other media.

Connecting these nodes are “circuits”; pathways of energy that act using the same game mechanics as ley lines. The landscape around circuits gets simpler as you travel farther away from the larger nodes: punch card hills rise up from dark green landscapes and leftover creatures from mini-monster game

crazes battle for the respect of “trainers” and “masters” they never had. Grid areas corresponding to technology-bare areas on Earth don’t have nodes and only weak circuits to travel on. While the view is nothing to write home about, the occasional “black ice” virus stalks these lonely roads, and they are very real and dangerous.

Traveling back and forth between Earth and the Grid is normally accomplished via serenade and an internet kiosk, and only works where a node is present. Only a few learn the ways of attuning themselves to the very energies of the Grid, transporting themselves to its landscape from nearly anywhere. There are a few places — hidden in plain sight





— where one can step right into the Grid. Those who know of them guard that knowledge with jealous fervor.

Denizens

There is some debate over how “real” the creatures and people of the Grid are. They are very much like the denizens of a mantle; once outside of the Grid they “de-rez” and cease to exist. Their supporters are quick to point out that a mortal human tossed out of Earth’s realm into a place like the Maelstrom or Blue Air will also cease to exist. There is no reason that denizens of the Grid should not be thought of as real beings.

Except in the larger nodes, denizens of the grid are restricted to simpler forms of electronic life. Still, if you cut them they bleed ... maybe neon red or radioactive green, but they bleed. Yellow balls with hungry gaping mouths, diamond-shaped floating creatures that continually collapse in on themselves, and small plumbers with colorations straight from a comic book, all exist. In larger nodes, you will find characters from complex video games, instant message avatars and so much more. The problem most immortals have is understanding them; just as all immortals speak Atrana Cant, all denizens of the Grid speak binary. More complex denizens, especially those that appear human, can also speak a human language fortunately.

The Arachne are regarded as the masters of this electronic realm; they took the haven once occupied by the Solas and moved it to correspond with Mount Girnar in India. No node should exist there, but they maintain its presence

there as their chief stronghold. Deep within the caves of Girnar are direct access points to the Gremlin Grid, kept open by the Arachne. Other tribes (and droves) have their own “grid surfers”, but the Arachne devote a great deal of resources to the Grid and information on Earth that can be gleaned through it. Data stored on Earth in large enough quantities does have an approximation in the Grid. The trick is decoding what amounts to an encryption algorithm on the data; the data does not appear the same as it would on Earth.

The undisputed lords of the grid surfers are affectionately known as the Net Spiders. This small clique among the Arachne Tribe is known for its unconventional attitudes in comparison to a “normal” Arachne. They are younger immortals, very showy and full of emotion. The Swarm has declared them “off limits”; they receive no punishment for their consistent, rather un-Arachne-like behavior.

Underworld

Underneath the civilizations sitting atop the earth’s crust, there lie entrances to a labyrinth of dimensions consisting of gigantic caverns, winding passages, gaping chasms and bottomless crevasses. These lands of darkness are home to a host of mortal and immortal beings. Here, in the nooks and crannies beneath the mortal world, the forces of darkness fester while the forces of light search them out.

Most entrances to the Underworld system of realms lie in deep cave complexes such as the Odyssey Cave in Australia, the Schwersystem in Austria,



the Jean-Bernard Cave in the Alps, the Sistema Purificacion in Mexico, Optimistrcheskaya in Russia and the Black Hills of the United States. Hundreds of other openings exist, but are not as well known as they are hidden from mortal detection. But an immortal with a keen eye will notice them should he happen upon them.

Though the Underworld is actually a collection of dimensions that have permanent gateways between them, they are often viewed as regions. There are six main groupings of dimensions that form these regions; each region with most of its Earth-bound entrances located around certain areas of the planet. In addition, there are seven layers or “tiers” that each of the regions seem to follow, giving some similar features to all regions at a certain

“depth”. The concept of the tiers is used mainly to simply denote how far one has “descended” through a region, though one or two have been named due to their particular historical significance to the himsati race. The uppermost tiers allow each region direct access to various areas of Earth, and following along a particular tier within a region will lead you to other regions it passes through.

Several features define and represent the Underworld, stretching through multiple regions and/or tiers. Central to these is the Walk, a continuous pathway crisscrossing the whole of the Underworld and connecting all of the regions together as a coherent whole. Created by the Peri Tribe millennia ago, it has fallen into disrepair and is coveted by all as the fastest means of traversing the vastness of the Underworld’s



dimensions. Similarly, the river Styx winds its way through the regions, passing through undiscovered caves and engulfing all those that touch its waters.

The Seven Tiers

The first “tier” of the Underworld is considered part of Earth’s crust by most immortals: part of the mortal world. The caves and caverns in this tier have been largely explored by humanity. The second tier has only been reached by humans within the last two hundred years; it is also generally abandoned by the himsati race to the mortal world. This is as far as any normal mortal has dared tread or hoped to survive. It is a region of perpetual darkness, whose pathways down to the lower tiers were hidden from mortal eyes long ago.

Deep beneath the earth’s crust, the third tier marks the first real Underworld passages where inhuman activity is found. Luminous lichen illuminates corridors and cavern walls; it is well-traveled and lacks the unspoiled beauty of the second tier. The River Styx runs strong through this level, providing transport through the six regions for those wishing to avoid the dangers of the Walk, for a price.

The fourth tier — nicknamed the War Burrows by many — is home to the Walk. The tier is long mined out by drove and tribe alike, the most precious sites ravaged long ago by constant warring between light and dark forces. It is a hot and dank level, without charm, and home to the remnants of ancient battlegrounds and ruined prehistoric strongholds. Yet it remains a busy region since the Walk traverses the six

regions along this tier.

The fifth tier remains the principal territory of the Peri Tribe, keeping their primary strongholds here. Great stone forests and carved out caverns stretch for miles. Overall, this tier is also hot and dark, full of winding passages and dead ends. It has the fewest connections to other tiers and is the easiest to defend. The Peri have held it so long that arches and grand statues can be found in the oddest of places; often monuments to tribal achievements and caverns that various members admired and wished to artistically develop.

The sixth tier is known as the “Deep Strata”, closely resembling many mortal depictions of “hell”. Here mapping to the topography of Earth is pointless, one can enter the sixth tier from a region under Eastern Europe, go just a little ways, and come back up into a region under South America. The sixth tier is full of lands of great mineral diversity and magnificence, it is afflicted by scorching heat and frequent earthquakes. Traversing the regions via this tier is done by the most brave ... or most desperate. For those that brave the heat and dangers there are rewards: the jewel-filled wastelands of Avernus, the ore filled veins of the hilly caverns of Dis, and the steam trenches of Stygia. Here live the Azazel, a small drove of little reddish creatures that know the tier like no other; slipping into the murky blackness in the blink of an eye. These ex-members of the Terat leap out from dark holes and strike with obsidian spears. This is about as deep as most areas of the various regions go.



The seventh tier was once home to the Blue Emerald of New Atlantis. Those crossing the sixth tier find themselves in a kind of paradise, though without the Emerald's presence this paradise slowly fades. There are few entrances and even fewer exits. There is little to see as most of the caverns are immense but barren. Only Undersky holds any real interest for travelers; a mostly abandoned place in the largest of the caverns, inhabited by lone immortals wishing to stay removed from both the mortal and immortal worlds. Only the Deep Strata keeps the tribes and droves from coming in numbers to establish claims to this once shining natural metropolis. The seventh tier consists mainly of the city of Undersky and surrounding massive caverns, it is in a sense its own region. But the only means to get to it is through the sixth tier, so it is treated as a seventh tier, lying at the bottom of all the six main regions.

The Six Regions

The six regions are Arcadia, Acheron, the Barrens, Gehenna, Inferno and Tarterus.

Arcadia

Located underneath the area of Europe and the Middle East, it shares a "strip" of territory with Gehenna to its south — where the Middle East and Africa meet. It was the first region the Peri explored and settled in their early years and is rife with ruins and battlegrounds. Unfortunately it is of great interest to the mortal world, and many mortal explorations come close to piercing the third tier in this area. This has caused rekindled interest by the Peri in the once abandoned region.

Thousands of caves honeycomb the higher tiers of this region, largely composed of limestone with a fair mix of chalk, conglomerate, sandstone, granite and lava rock. The climate is temperate, but an atmosphere of ruin and death hangs in the air. Collapsed tunnels and gaping holes in the floor reveal the decay overcoming the upper tiers here. Most of the rich mineral deposits are long mined, leaving vast caverns of rubble. Here are wonders such as the Medusa Plains, filled with statues carved by unknown Peri millennia ago; the statues are said — by some — to move from time to time. The ruins of the great Citadel fortress remain and a small number of minor Peri fortresses. Even the stronghold of the Wormine Druids, built in 1021 A.D. remains; though reduced to rubble, the entrance stands holding the last words of its dark defenders: "In Mortality We Exalt". Even droves shudder as they pass the former dark mortal stronghold. Only Bête Noire of ancient times call this place home; it ranks as one of the more desolate regions.

Acheron

Lying under the New World of the Americas and stretching from the Arctic Circle to Antarctic Circle, it is isolated by its position between the Barrens and Inferno. The tribes didn't discover this region until after the fall of the first Atlantis; droves and followers of the Blue Emerald had already entrenched themselves into the tiers of this region. But the Peri fought long and hard, and were able to construct the Hearth under the Mammoth Caves in Kentucky. It serves as their primary fortress even today.



Acheron is the center of most activity in the Underworld now and is currently the most coveted region. The Walk in the fourth tier of this area remains a major battlefield. Like Arcadia, it has a diverse geography and mineral make-up, but on a much larger scale. Monstrous caverns act as mini-worlds unto themselves, with occasional crevasses reaching from higher tiers straight down to lower ones. Yet many areas remain largely unexplored with entire networks of caves yet to be discovered. This allows droves to hide in the darkness, and bitter lone immortals with murderous intent to scurry through unknown side passages.

Within Acheron lies the Gauntlet, a series of traps and ambushes protecting the Hearth. There are many Peri outposts and a few Terat ones as well; rumors abound of long abandoned Solitaire cities though none have been discovered. All species and races of underground denizen have found their way into Acheron; some find it quite easy to prey upon solitary travelers.

Barrens

Under the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean, the Barrens lie mostly devoid of sentient life and are largely flooded. The Barrens effectively lie underneath the oceanic realm of Ys. A handful of explorations to this region — prior to the discovery of Arcadia — discovered a thoroughly desolate region too vast to cross; it was decided nothing else lay on the other end of it. No major battles appear to have been fought there, nor any outposts erected.

But in truth, there lies a great civilization

at the heart of the Barrens, merging with the ocean and the realm of Ys. While only traces of Ys remain in the Barrens, there were once great battles fought in this sub oceanic region. But as Ys is a world unto itself, most immortals are unaware of this. Recently the Walk has been restored through the Barrens, allowing travel without having to navigate the flooded labyrinth. Still, investigation beyond the Walk is rare; so many other things of importance occupy the tribes in this era.

The Barrens have very few passages existing within the lowest of the tiers; the limestone and granite caves among the various tiers are freezing, cramped and mostly flooded. Dry sections are usually filled with ice, stretching only a few miles before filling with freezing water again. Travel through the Barrens — away from the Walk — results in exposure damage even for immortals. Aside from a few mutated Bête Noire looking for a meal, there is little life in the Barrens. Only the Drove Roane dwell in these areas, with a few brave members of Tribe Protean hunting after their former brethren.

Gehenna

Situated underneath the continent of Africa, it once stretched from pole to pole; but the arrival of Arcadia into the mix of the dimensions of the Underworld untold eons ago, compacted this region into a smoldering concoction of its former self. The Terat claim a great deal of this area for themselves as most of the passageways to other regions were destroyed by the arrival of Arcadia, and only a few were recently restored.



The Peri tend to leave this region to the Terat, believing it a cursed place for any misfortune enough to travel through it. Drove in this area wage a great deal of guerilla fighting against the Terat. The Walk is mostly intact and passable here, but travel remains difficult. Drove Azhoth armies scour the Walk looking for battle.

A hot region overall, Gehenna has many lava caves, fissures spewing forth hot gases, and caverns full of noxious vapors. A sulfuric stench fills most of the caverns, especially in the lower tiers. The network of passageways defy mapping, reflecting the mystical cataclysm that tore it apart and then crushed it into a region half its original “size”.

Inferno

Under the Pacific Ocean, stretching under Oceana and Eastern Asia, including Japan. Where the Barrens present a frigid barrier, the Inferno in some places can manifest heat able to melt the strongest of metals. Until the discovery of Acheron, exploration of this realm was minimal at best. The Phoenix actually hold some domain here, struggling against the fiery Salamanders.

The region is made of mostly lava caves, hot springs and steaming fissures like Gehenna, but with numerous violent earthquakes; much of this region sits within the Deep Strata tier. Traveling through Inferno results in exposure damage from the intense scorching heat. Only a small area known as the Devil’s Catacombs — which vent cool air — are safe from the heat and exposure.

There may be less life in the lower levels of Inferno than even the Barrens, but it is a magnificent cathedral of flowing magma and showering fountains of fire. Here the Phoenix and those like them move as clouds of fire — the only ones with any real interest in claiming the region.

Tarterus

Covering most of Asia down to the Indian Sea, it has the fewest connections to the upper tiers and the mortal world save for perhaps the Barrens. Tarterus is feasibly reached only through the Walk.

One of the oldest known regions, entire small communities of immortals and their followers — with their own distinct cultures and traditions — live and thrive in this region, regularly dealing with the tribes on a commercial basis. While there is little to trade in modern times, token amounts of trading is kept up to maintain the peace with these disparate communities that still cling to traditions most immortals have abandoned. At times these communities will fall under the sway of a drove, forcing the tribes to fight them.

The Peri and Terat strongly contest for dominance of this region. Though open warfare does not occur, those that have lived in this realm for the long eons still have issues with one another. It is similar to a long standing feud like that between the mortal Hatfields and McCoys. A region consisting more of vast caverns than winding passages, it is a place of great riches in the deeper tiers, with simple travel only complicated by the few earthquakes that close and open up the few passages. The greatest threat



to both Peri and Terat in this region is Drove Gaki, which gives the two tribes continuous reason to put aside their differences in the face of a common foe.

This region should not be confused with the ancient stronghold of the same name. That fortress was flung far into the Dominions by the Eremites preceding the Shouting War.

Other Features and Places

There are a few special places worth mentioning that stand out on their own.

Alavastis

The dark city of the Azhoth is a bottomless pit, a web of horrific technological edifices made of dark bone-like material and hardened green resin. Spanned by bridges, buttresses, cables and huge machines of unknown

purpose, it is a place of fear, pain and despair. It serves as a game preserve where captured mortals are brought to serve and provide food and entertainment to the dark immortals residing there.

Once destroyed by the Kai Ra known as Mimir, it was rebuilt by the last of the Azhoth and remains concealed in the third tier of the Underworld. It is guarded by a corrupted Peri known as Phra Saeng Khan Chai Si (the Sword of Victory), who has claimed many Peri souls. Alavastis has the reputation of being a breeding ground for especially horrific newborns — used as shock troops by their Azhoth masters. The city glimmers seductively like the emerald-lined throat of some huge gothic beast, ready to swallow the soul of those who enter.





The Furnace

A place all to itself, laying deep under the seventh tier, the Furnace has only been seen by a small number of immortals, almost all of whom are Peri. Even the Terat who have long traversed the Underworld, only know of this region bordering Earth's magma core through story and tale. Only a few passages and caverns, whose heat was muted by the powerful Kai Ra millennia ago, are bearable to traverse.

Within the heart of Furnace lies the ancient Abzulim fortress known as the Foundry. Enchanted Abzulim locks keep the Peri from exploring more than a few areas. It is unknown what other creatures or objects the Abzulim created might be contained within this treasure-trove. The Kai Ra were created in the fires of this place by the terrible Deepwalker Unamal, and it is said Solitaire herself gave birth to the very first Peri here. The Kai Ra do not acknowledge any requests by the Peri for information about the Foundry. Within an accessible area of the Foundry is the Vault, where the majority of the sleeping Kai Ra stay.

Hidden deep within the Foundry is Scramasax, the corrupted Kai Ra. This dagger is best known for delivering the fatal wound that slew a magically protected Julius Caesar; ending a short-lived Eremite rule over the Stratagem pact during that time. Scramasax appears to be the only being knowledgeable about how to enter the inner areas of the Foundry, thus providing it with safe haven.

The Walk

Composed of two hollow "rings", each one encircling the Earth; the first ring runs around the North and South Poles, the second bisects the first ring, running along the equator. It appears as a huge, enclosed ornate bridge of gothic/high-tech architecture with buttresses, battlements, spires, stained glass windows, emplacements for exotic ranged weapons, fluttering pennants and small bridges all connecting these and other features. The walk is not truly a set of perfect rings as they pass through various regions of the Underworld.

Being an enormous hollow ring it extends from horizon to horizon when looking from the inside. It is so large that one can see small lakes and parks inside through the windows. Small bat-like lighters hang dormant underneath it at various Tribal outposts. Aside from various outposts, it is filled with old abandoned galleries, halls, quarters, kitchens, theaters, arenas, aqueducts, cathedrals, parade grounds, airlocks, laboratories, factories, temples, parks, coliseums, zoos, palaces and a host of other features; it could literally house millions of people with ease.

A central corridor leads through it, with smaller "travel tubes" winding around the exterior; but the tubes are silent, so the Walk must be traversed manually. Many sections have fallen to ruin and parts of it are submerged underwater. The physical makeup of the Walk depends on the region it is passing through (mostly limestone, with granite in Europe, dolomite in North America, etc.).



Unfortunately the Walk is mostly dark, as its primary power source was the fabled Blue Emerald; nothing has ever been found to match it. A few claim to have witnessed the caretakers of the Blue Emerald, the Cerulean Order, traverse the Walk with ease as its once dormant features — sliding doors, lights and other mechanical features — sprang back to life while in their presence.

River Styx

Originally thought to be a great river running through the Underworld, the Styx is in reality an immense Primal being: one of the Ishim. It is not a mappable entity, changing course without warning, vanishing in one area while appearing anew in another. The only constant seems to be that it remains primarily in the third tier. Bathing in the water of the river renders one temporarily invulnerable to weapons not enchanted with life force, but there always seems to be some kind of karmic price to pay. To most it is dangerous; touching its water only brings misfortune. Safe passage along the River is contracted with Chaeron, an immortal of unknown lineage who alone may travel the Styx with impunity. Chaeron charges a hefty price — not always monetary — for his services. But it is the fastest and safest way to traverse from one region to the next. Only his lighter is capable of successfully navigating the waters; sometimes the river drops hundreds of feet and has rapids that would crush a normal lighter or boat attempting to sail them.

Moor Lock

Home to mortals and immortals alike —

most of whom are Peri — Moor Lock sits in caverns deep beneath the city of New York in the United States. Originally setup over a hundred years ago as a place for younger Peri to learn and train, it now serves as a haven for many mortal followers of the Peri in that area of North America. Dozens of passages lead to cave entrances on the surface and to cracks in the walls of the subway system. Various other similar entrances exist in other major cities in the Northeastern United States and Southeastern Canada, but only a handful in any given city.

Undersky

The former domain of the Blue Emerald of New Atlantis, it is a great cavern complex deep beneath Arcadia with four major “cities” radiating out from the central city known as Tizacia (lit. “the place of singing crystals”). Ralderoth, Thortis, Balphor and Dalchist are carved into enormous stalagmites rising from the cavern floor. The exteriors are carved and imbedded with windows and balconies. Surrounding the base of these is an immense shallow lake; bridges connect the stalagmites to each other and to the central pillar that is Tizacia.

The domed ceiling of the central cavern housing the stalagmite cities is studded with fine jewels, each containing a bright fiery light — their reflections glitter upon the surface of the lake like stars, giving Undersky its name. Unfortunately most are gone or burned out without the Blue Emerald’s presence. The society of Undersky in its time was quiet, reflective and somewhat monastic; now the cities lay abandoned in near darkness. Most of the paths to



the great cavern crumbled and fell in on themselves. Only refugees from the Great Betrayal wishing to be left alone live here; even avoiding each other as they slowly fade into an eternal Ennui.

Ys

An aquatic realm of sub oceanic tunnels, Ys is to the Earth's oceans what the Underworld is to its crust. A watery extra-dimensional maze, it has strange pockets of air and land, forming islands not found on any map. Entering Ys requires traveling into the deepest reaches of Earth's oceans, places

modern mortal craft can't go.

Entry to the Realm

Whirlpool vortices coalesce, providing entry into the realm. They are hard to find, appearing and collapsing seemingly at random. There are a few stable entry points, having stayed in place long enough to cause the ocean floor beneath them to fall to great depths: Challenger Deep in the Marianas Trench of the Pacific, Puerto Rico Trench in the Atlantic, Eurasia Basin in the Arctic, Java Trench in the Indian, and the South Sandwich Trench in the Southern Ocean.

There are also a few somewhat stable "land-locked" entry points such as the bottom of Lake Assal in Djibouti Africa, and the Bentley Subglacial Trench deep under the ice of Antarctica.

Connections even exist sparsely in the Underworld. This is how most non-water dwelling immortals make their way into Ys, thus avoiding the deep sea pressure that would crush them long before reaching any of the vortex entries. Nearly all these entries are found in the Barrens region.

What is it like?

Once inside, the pressure of most tunnels eases up to the same as the surface of the oceans.





The tunnels appear to be made of pure water, with nothing beyond them but a swirling blue-gray colored mist. Attempting to pierce one side of a tunnel brings one back in from the other side. The tunnels do run in currents in particular directions, and the speed of the current seems tied to the shifting tides of the oceans “above”. Where various tunnels meet they form large expanses similar to underwater caverns. Occasionally the waters of Ys will meet with the realm of the Underworld in the Barrens to form vast water-filled caverns or caverns that continually spill waterfall torrents from vortexes at the cavern walls, with small islands sitting at the center of them.

There are a few mantles whose only exterior entrance is from Ys. These generally appear as islands similar to those in the area of Micronesia or New Zealand. Vortexes drop waterfalls into the ocean around the island and whirlpools around the island pull the water back into Ys. Old tales tell the story of Gradlon, the Bright Blood king who fell in love with the Tuatha Malgven. A protean named Morvac, a fantastic sea horse, was their constant ally. Lost somewhere among Ys is the lost mantle of Gradlon, created by Dahud, the maker-daughter of the mortal king and his Tuatha love.

Ys is primarily the domain of the water-dwelling Protean, in their continuing battles against their own former tribemates: Drove Roane. The Protean pilot a massive lighter known as Leviathan. It appears to have once been a gigantic creature — the size of a city — capable of traversing Ys with ease.

Most likely it is the physical remains of the true Eidolon Leviathan, having been poisoned and destroyed by his sister, the Sanguinary, eons ago.

SHEOL

A terrible place of darkness, where the himsati race languished for thousands of years, it is the closest to “hell” the himsati race can imagine. It is not considered part of the Habitat.

Topography

A vast wasteland covered in a fine deep purple crystalline “sand”, it is filled with rolling dunes and sparse forests of twisted Zuzog trees. A few drove forces make their homes in small encampments and “towns” setup near access points to Earth. The land stretches for untold miles until it reaches the “shore”. Here the land stops and gives way to inky blackness as far as one can see forward, up or down. Those who stare too long at it say it laps at the crystal sand like waves; currents of dark “air” can be felt coming from somewhere beyond Sheol’s shores.

Accessing Sheol is difficult, there are only a few places allowing one direct entry from Earth; most of these seem to be impact craters from the K-T boundary event of 65 million years ago — The Shiva crater under the Indian Ocean, the Silverpit in the United Kingdom and the Boltysh in the Ukraine. Only a handful of entry points from nearby realms of the Habitat appear to exist as well.

The only visible light comes from the sand itself, lending an eerie purplish-red hue to the landscape. The sky above is



the same as that beyond the shores: inky blackness. Navigating Sheol is frustrating since it is all just one wasteland of glowing sand and sparse trees. There are almost no landmarks and nothing in the sky to navigate by. Flight is limited to within a hundred or so feet up as the blackness begins to envelope the traveler, cutting them off from seeing the ground below (even a proper sense of up and down becomes lost as one ascends into the inky blackness). The Phoenix seem capable of easily navigating this place, due to their ancient history with it and with the current, most powerful denizens within: the Shadowen.

**SETTING NOTE —
Sheol and Sanctuary**

Sheol rests in the same dimensional realm as the mantles of Sanctuary, the two separated by an inky black gulf known as the Oblivion Void. The roots of Zuzog trees burst outwards from the shoreline of Sheol, arcing across the void where they come to grip on the outer barriers of mantles comprising the outermost layer of Sanctuary. Though Sanctuary has become much stronger again since the formation of the tribes, occasionally a root will pierce into the reality of a mantle, causing all manner of havoc and chaos. If the rift is large enough, the contents of the mantle are sucked out into the void, lost in the blackness; until the maker can repair the rift or is sucked out himself. Doves who still battle the Shadowen within Sheol have ways of claiming some of those lost in the black, and slowly poison them into becoming Progeny, or just leave them eternally adrift in the Oblivion Void.

The Shadowen Citadel

Even in Sheol the doves are not completely in control. There is a place within this vast wasteland that even they are wary of nearing: the fortress of the Shadowen. The fortress was originally a great temple to house the darkest artifact in the himsati race's history: the Femme Darkle. It was used by the Shadowen to temporarily imprison the ancestors of the tribes for 3,000 years, ending the Shouting War.

Semiramis, the Shadowen Queen, sits upon a throne of bone and muscle from an ancient creature her followers claim is the remains of an Abzulim. From here she wields the Femme Darkle, commanding her forces against dove and tribe alike. The citadel coincides with the rough center of the Chicxulub Crater in the Yucatan Peninsula and is the same place the Rime attempted to build the Malice Shard millions of years ago. Access to Sheol through this point means entering past the master gates that once kept almost the entire himsati race imprisoned. Shadowen guardians — with shadow-animal packs they harvest from the shadows of other creatures and give dark life — prowl the area around the citadel and its entrance.

THE MORPHEUM

Residing within the Blue Air is a grid-like energy force: the remnants of humanity's telepathic link it used to communicate with long ago — before the Magdalen invention of the spoken and written word. Now the Morpheum represents the total subconscious of the human race; a place of dreams where more sublime aspects of the Invisible



War are waged between the tribes and droves. It is well-protected, immune to the meddling of most immortals save those who have devoted their very long lives to plumbing its mysteries.

The Morpheum is not a physical place or realm. It is more a conjoined state of mind, shared among all humanity; their minds instantly and automatically contribute to it, even during something as simple as a common “daydream”. Immortals must consciously link to the Morpheum or they sleep within their own minds, viewing images of their own pasts. This is one reason immortals are often anachronistic and susceptible to Fugue: they miss a large portion of the creativity and mental renewal that comes with true dreaming.

In recent times, more tribe members have taken to chancing an occasional drift into the Morpheum. But droves still prowl the realm, as do other things. Many immortals — lacking the experience and knowledge of how to successfully navigate and manipulate the energies of the Morpheum — find themselves helpless victims of the enemy. Most of the tribes’ members do not chance true dreaming; only the Terat and those Mystics who wield the Incubus Boon are able to navigate the Morpheum with any real chance of success and safety.

Mortal Dreaming

As mortals fall into slumber they link to the Morpheum. Their subconscious minds activate and a dreamspace spins up around their mental signature in the form of a web-like cocoon. These cocoons are hung from webbing strands

slicing through the Morpheum. The lightly wriggling cocoon “appears” to be of a finite size from the outside, based on the strength of the dreamer’s spirit and how deeply he is sleeping. But “inside” it can be any size necessary to contain the environment of the mortal’s dream: grandma’s house complete with all the smells of baking, a twisted dark forest, or a beach under a warm tropical sun. All of these are merely subjective realities contained inside the cocoon of a dreamer for as long as he sleeps.

Within the dreamspace, time and space are fluid. The reality of the dream is so all encompassing that dreamers do not even realize it has boundaries. When a mortal awakens, his conscious brain functions override his subconscious link to the Morpheum and he stops dreaming. The cocoon stops moving and hangs like an empty sack on the winds of the Blue Air. Over time, the cocoon is sheared by these winds and drifts off in pieces to become parts of “anchors” or other web strands.

Dreamspace cocoons usually remain far apart from one another. But on rare occasion one can break free from its hang-point and drift through the web to come rest in another spot, or stick to another dream — thus causing the mortal phenomenon of shared dreams. Aside from events within the shared dreamspaces, mortals take no damage from cocoons breaking free and drifting.

A significant amount of mortal creativity and inspiration begins in the Morpheum. Every experience and memory experienced inside a cocoon creates a “dew-like” particle that rolls like



SETTING NOTES —

Hush-Hush

Somewhere among the telepathic layers of the Morpheum is the center of this web: the Hush-Hush. It was once a roiling sea of captured souls, constantly feeding the dark spirit of the Sanguinary, her spirit's lair if you will. The presence of the Sanguinary's spirit within the Morpheum gave the droves unprecedented access to the telepathic web, making it a truly dangerous place for immortals to tread.

Now the Hush-Hush is just that, a quiet hardened mass of extinguished souls, no longer writhing in the center of the great web. No one is able to penetrate its exterior to determine the final fate of the once frightful god that spawned the himsati race.

Dreaming In Other Realms

The Morpheum is resident throughout all the Blue Air, reaching to dreaming mortals and immortals in mantles, other realms of the Habitat and out into the furthest reaches of the Dominions. Even in other realms there is a Morpheum that can be connected to by mortal and immortal alike. For game purposes, any given realm (a mantle, Arcadia in the Underworld, the Gremlin Grid) is treated as having its own Morpheum. The strands connecting these disparate dimensions and worlds are so fine that even the most powerful immortal would be hard-pressed to detect them. Plus it is too taxing — even with a serenade — for an immortal with the needed skills to send his mind reaching so far away from where he connected to the Morpheum. Only a few true masters of the Morpheum might accomplish such a feat, and their minds will most likely never return to their cocoons.

glowing perspiration down the outside, dripping and collecting on the filaments of the web. Sometimes, “traffic” on the strands, will cause the particles to mingle together until their weight causes them to fall like a drop of rain. If the drop strikes another cocoon hard enough, bits of the tangled thoughts and memory enter the new dreamspace, giving rise to more ideas by the mortals experiencing them.

Anchors

Created from the collective will of human faithful, these permanent structures form part of the Morpheum's exoskeleton. To step on one is to tread upon a greater dream; like a telepathic stronghold, the occasional Bright Blood or immortal can find safe haven in these shared dreamspaces. Instead of appearing as conjoined cocoons, they appear as thick web cables or giant bright masses (like a “nest”) based on the spiritual strength of the group sustaining them. Anchors appear at large intersections of many strands.

Anchors are virtually indestructible, forged by the minds of the most powerful mortal spirits on Earth. The only way to destroy one is to search out the dreamers connected to it and kill them; even in their waking hours their faith sustains these powerful strands.

Immortal Dreaming

An immortal's natural instinct is to rest within memories of his past and not truly dream. If he chooses to dream, he forms a cocoon and dreamspace like any mortal. These cocoons are easily spotted among the mortal ones, the exterior sheath glistens with power — more so if



the immortal carries immaculum while he dreams. Immortals cannot free their minds from their own dream cocoons, but circumstances and various powers can. Immortals with the Incubus Boon can simply choose to appear on the strands and not even form a cocoon. It must be remembered that it is a telepathic representation of the immortal's mind that sits within the cocoon or wanders the web, the immortal's physical body is still somewhere in physical space.

For those who do find themselves outside their cocoons, "walking" along the strands "shakes" them — though anchors do not move under the weight of all but the most powerful creatures. These tremors draw unwanted attention to the traveler as droves and other creatures roaming the web are highly sensitive to the heavy footsteps of other supernatural beings treading upon the strands. Anchors are relatively safe to travel, though chance encounters can still occur. The safest havens are "inside" the anchors or dreams

suspended there. A few potent Bright Bloods are also able to leave their cocoons, but face the same trials and dangers as their immortal counterparts.

Faith

Droves are not the only foes faced while walking the strands and anchors. The endless breeze of human emotion emanates out of dreams. The winds of faith projected by the irrational impulses and terrors of human dreams confuses members of the himsati race, warping





their instincts. The winds buffet an immortal, causing him to lose his way on the web and influence his thoughts. Sometimes this breeze becomes a storm, sweeping hapless travelers far away from their dream-space. They become trapped in the Morpheum until they can reach their own dreamspace again, a doorway to the waking world. Like lightning, human fear and superstition occasionally strike a character, transforming him into a reflection of those fears, a monster.

When winds generated by multiple mortals in a similar physical region come together — such as during a region-wide panic — they form a Tempest. These faith storms eventually spiral out into the Blue Air, occasionally flaring into other realms; usually through shallows, but any portal or gateway between realms can be temporarily broken through. The power of a tempest is so strong that personalities, beliefs and even physical forms can be changed. Immortals can only find safety within the dreamspace of an anchor, little can stop such a powerful force. Sometimes a mind can be “swept” off the strands and lost in the Blue Air for days until it drifts back to a point on the strands where the mind can begin to find its way back to the cocoon. Individuals lost this way are often mistakenly thought to be in comas.

Such changes should be used as a plot device; drastic changes should be made with caution and only to advance the story. Tempests are rare since it requires a large number of mortals to all share the same superstition or fear at great strength and at the same time.

From a conversation with ‘Epiphany’...

“I remember my encounter with a Tempest: October 29th, 1929. I had just returned from Sanctuary back into New York City and set straight to the Morpheum; I had no idea what happened that day. The breeze of human emotion was a bit stronger, but I was sure I could handle it. As more panicked people connected to the web of slumber, I felt the change in the winds, biting, stinging and grabbing at me. Small webs of confusion clung to me, misdirecting me, stopping me from reaching the safety of my own cocoon.

I had almost forgotten the feeling of fear in my long existence, until I saw the raging storm rise up over the strands, helpless as it carried me off into the Blue Air. I felt my body back in the corporeal world twist and warp, my mind afire with fear and loss from all those who suffered at the hands of Black Tuesday. Surely my mind was about to be torn apart, and too late I realized the Tempest had somehow pulled my physical body into the Blue Air to join the destruction of my mind.

I only remember waking up half a continent away, my clothes tattered, my hair a different color, and my outlook on my life completely changed. All I know is that somehow I was spared, and most likely I’ll never know why.”

Entering a Dreamspace

Sleepers are those immortals capable of willingly walking the strands of the Morpheum, complete with all their supernatural abilities — they possess the



Incubus Boon. Other immortals are incapable of leaving their cocoons without the aid of serenades or Mystech.

Once out on the web, it is difficult to find a specific mortal cocoon — even droves have difficulty. Cocoons look practically identical to one another on the outside. Characters need a mental link of some kind with the dreamer they are searching for. If the character goes to sleep while in the physical presence of the target dreamer this is not a problem, their cocoon will be within visual distance when the character appears on the strands. Otherwise, the character must “physically” travel the Morpheum; its dimensions do not exactly fit the geography of the waking world, adding to the dangers of doing so.

Once found, the immortal merely presses himself against the mortal’s cocoon, injecting his presence into the dream; he becomes wrapped up along with the dreamer. Once inside, the immortal is forced into the role of one of the “characters” of the dream, if one is available. If there isn’t one available he merely gains a third-person point of view of the current dream. The dream-character does not necessarily have to be human (or “alive” for that matter, depending on the what the dream is about). The immortal can force himself into another “role” if he wishes. The physical appearance and abilities of the immortal are now those of the dream-character: if the dream-character can fly, so can the immortal; if the dream-character is incapable of speech the immortal is now mute. The immortal possesses no other skills or knowledge save those he came into the dream with.

At this point it is up to the immortal to play along with the dream or use the dream-character he inhabits to try and modify the dream. Attempting to grant the dream-character abilities it doesn’t possess (those the immortal possesses in the waking world) forces a contest between the immortal and the dreamer (see Appendix C). Failure causes the winds of faith to affect the immortal, depending on how drastic a change the immortal attempted to create.

Character Abilities

What a character can do while in the Morpheum depends on how he connected to it:

Normal Dreaming

An Immortal dreaming in the Morpheum is just that: dreaming. He resides within his own cocoon and is unable to leave it save for waking himself up. Immortals in their own cocoon are fully cognizant of the fact they are dreaming unless misled by a serenade or other force. Within their cocoon they have the full range of their normal abilities.

Should the character somehow be transported, or gain entry, into another’s cocoon, he only has the physical abilities and appearance granted by the dreamer. He retains his own knowledge and personality, though he may be influenced by any dreamers possessing faith. A character cannot “use” his Natures while in the dream, though he may accidentally activate them in the waking world while attempting such in the dream. A few creatures are able to “break” these rules on appearance, abilities and natures when in another’s dream.



Serenade & Mystech

Those using serenades (such as Somnus) or some other form of mystical power do not link to the Morpheum, but instead link directly to a specific mind's subconscious. Consult the Influence chart to determine how much they can affect a particular dream. At truly high levels, they are able to mentally damage others in the dream, such as the dreamer and other entities connected to the cocoon.

“Sleepers”

Those possessing the Incubus Boon have the full range of their powers, natures, skills, etc., even while morphed into another appearance within someone's dreamscape. It is possible to mimic the Incubus Boon via serenade, but it does not grant quite the same level of ability. Many Progeny and even some mortal thralls and drove predators carry the boon from the time they spent tied to the will of the Sanguinary.

Conflict in the Morpheum

The Morpheum is fraught with peril. Physical conflict in the Morpheum is a metaphor for conflicts of the mind. No matter how many blows are struck — and with what apparent force — a character remains physically unharmed wherever his body sleeps. If a character is “destroyed” in the Morpheum, he slips into a comatose state until his mind can recover from the disruption caused. It is in this state that many mortals are found in the waking world by the droves and slain or captured. There are a few ways to cause true harm to others in Morpheum however. Those with the Incubus Boon are able to do such, as well as those who find various ways via

SYSTEM NOTES —

Terat Dreamscape Gift

This creates a pseudo-anchor, pulling others into the Terat's dreamscape, and granting him full control over the environment, dream-characters and props. Terat often interact with others via the use of a dream-character — created from his imagination — invested with any ability he has knowledge of. He may appear as himself, but only has his own skills, natures, serenades, etc. ; or he can manifest as a disembodied or telepathic voice, controlling the surrounding environment. Others pulled into the dream follow the normal rules as if dreaming in another's cocoon, but are forced to appear as themselves and cannot jump or alter their roles.

Dreamtime Mantle

The Dreamtime is treated as an anchor in regards to bonuses and penalties. Any immortal connecting to the Morpheum from inside the mantle gains a +1 to all rolls made in the Morpheum. Terat tribal members also gain a +1 to all appropriate defenses (armor, MIND, etc.). A non-Terat being allowed to enter the Morpheum through the Dreamtime is highly honored indeed.

Mystech or other means to focus damage through the mental web.

Other Denizens and Travelers

The Dreamless

There are a number of effects sleep deprivation has on the human mind; judgment is impaired, mental processing of stimuli is both distorted and slowed, and hallucinations are experienced. Most mortal scientists agree that sleep deprivation is dangerous to a person's



well-being.

For some humans sleep deprivation causes them to see the world of the himsati race, making the mind more alert to their presence while at the same time breaking down mental defenses. Most mortals eventually collapse from exhaustion and a few become mentally unstable or simply die. But a rare few are fundamentally changed by the long-term effects and become the Dreamless.

A rare and mysterious breed of human, their link to the Morpheum severs and they dream the same way that immortals do, within their own minds. Never truly sleeping, they see the world without its illusions; they can see immortals for what they are, the borders of mantles, ley lines, and the quicksilver coils that tether other humans to the Morpheum. Some can even pierce the veil into the Blue Air and rumors persist that a few can see the thoughts of other humans flying out of their minds. Their perception increases to supernatural levels.

The naked glare of the truths normally hidden from humanity causes great despair in the Dreamless. But with it comes great wisdom as they see all that the immortals see; with the mind, soul and sensibilities of a human being. Like jewels among humanity, a few of the himsati race treat the Dreamless as mentors for a time; hoping to receive help along the elusive path to transcendence. Many Solitaires covet the Dreamless and watch over those they find to ensure their safety.

Alas, some Dreamless come to hate the

world for all its sharp edges and work towards the destruction of that which the tribes hold dear. These are prime recruits for mortal agencies such as the Apocrypha and also the occasional drove.

The Fringe

The Fringe is a group of immortal Mystics exploring the outer limits of consciousness and sanity. They spend most of their time in the Morpheum studying the dreams of insane and drug-addled mortals, with the intent of milking their dreams of volatile elixirs that they hope to use as weapons against the forces of darkness. These are the strangest, most alien of the Mystic Calling, tinged with the surreal human madness they constantly immerse themselves in.

Members of the Fringe come from tribes, Solitaires, even an occasional convert from the droves. Though they never officially abandon their original group, there is no expectation that they'll ever return to work with their original brethren. Their minds become rather chaotic and beyond influence. But there is the sporadic moment when a kernel of wisdom springs forth from their group, offering a small but potent weapon against the forces of darkness.

Succubi

Human dreamers killed while they sleep; for unknown reasons their mind and spirit disconnect from the body at the moment of death and survive in the Morpheum. Initially they wander the strands and sustain themselves on the dream perspiration of various cocoons. Once matured they enter a chrysalis



stage, emerging with ethereal wings and a voracious appetite for life force. They seek and enter the dreamspaces of mortals, seducing them and draining their life force. They return dream after dream until the mortal has nothing left to give, becoming comatose and most likely dying.

Often they find a dreamspace to use as safe haven rather than draining the mortal's life force. The Succubus takes on the form of dead relatives, fantasy lovers or anything else the dreamer will protect. This symbiotic relationship ends when the succubus, ravenous with hunger from failed hunts, turns on its benefactor. Some gain enough power to manifest physically in the waking world for brief periods.

Sandmen

The Sandmen are part of Drove Nightmare; a constant thorn in the side of the Terat, waging war with them over the fate of Bright Blood telepaths. The Sandmen themselves are not immortals,

but a group of human thralls mutated eons ago by the Terat during their time as a drove. Looking vaguely like large misshapen humanoids with avian-like beaks, they maintain a corrupted anchor hidden not far from the dead Hush-Hush. The Sandmen physically live in the Morpheum, their bodies capable of surviving while inside their dark anchor; they come out into the waking world only as needed.

Using telepaths as the Terat do, they are projected into a mortal's dream and step out into his physical presence. They wake him up, throw their special sand into his eyes, and leap back into the mortal's dream — without forcing the mortal back to sleep — the mortal is now in a constant state of light daydream. The sandmen can not only see through his eyes, but affect his thoughts and actions as well. Eventually the mortal goes both blind and insane as repeated interference in his mind by the sandman cause the equivalent of human "babbling" to develop.





SYSTEM NOTES —

Succubi

After emerging from the chrysalis state, the succubus enters dreamspaces at will; via a contested roll of PRS vs. the mortal's WIL one point of BODY is drained per encounter. In the waking world the mortal takes a -1 penalty for each missing BODY (it heals as if it were marked off health boxes). If the succubus ever fails, it cannot drain that mortal ever again. Succubi possess the equivalent of the Incubus Boon and the Harlequin's Mask gift (no immaculum required to use). Any damage dealt by a succubus in the Morpheum is real damage and must heal normally.

Once the succubus drains enough BODY to equal three times the sum of its other four attributes (it only has PER, PRS, WIL and SPT — from when it was alive and whole), it is able to form a

temporary physical body in the waking world, restoring its lost physical attributes. It must continue to drain at last one BODY per day or it will fall asleep and dissipate after a number of days equal to its SPT. It must start the process of gaining enough BODY all over again.

Sandmen

A sandman can see through an affected mortal's eyes at will, and via a contested WIL roll, inhabit their body. Once inside they can influence the mortal's thoughts and actions by comparing the sandman's WIL to the mortal's PRS and checking the influence chart. Sandmen can maintain a number of vessels equal to half their SPT. Sandmen have a 4 - 6 WIL, but weak physical attributes (1 - 2 each for STR, END, AGL). PER and PRS range from 3 - 5.

Full Rules

For the full rules and expanded mechanics of interaction in the Morpheum, see Appendix C.

THE BLUE AIR

A spiritual ocean directed by the tides of emotion, thought and energy, it is the home of the Morpheum, filled with the energy fueling the patterns of reality immortals call the Aria. The Nadir winds through it, it is home to a multitude of spirits and the mythical Crucible, or One Soul, and apparently connects to all of existence.

The Blue Air is a place that immortals cannot enter unaided. It is similar to the Maelstrom, whose physical properties tear apart unprotected immortals on

many more levels. It is a place that physical matter is not meant to exist in any form the himsati race understands. Corporeal beings entering the Blue Air do not return from it — at least not whole and/or in any form resembling that in which they entered.

Being an endless, ever-changing ocean of energy makes it impossible to set up any kind of static navigation or routes through the Blue Air. The only seemingly static routes are those found by following the Nadir. A few mythical Abzulim lighters can directly navigate the Blue Air in the same way the Saturna of the Osiri do, but none of the tribes have been able to decipher how these fantastic super-lighters are capable of such a feat.



Tempests rip through the Blue Air, both those born of the Morpheum and those born of the clashes of energy, thought and emotion. Tempests born purely in the Blue Air do not enter the Morpheum, nor do they normally pass through the Ley energies that surround most worlds. For the few that do, nothing is safe from their reality altering effects, not even the very environment. Such a tempest is even rarer than those created in the Morpheum and Narrators should use such an incident carefully in their stories.

Gossamers

Normally, when an immortal's physical form is destroyed, his vox uses the releasing energies from the spill to "teleport" itself and his spirit in a fashion similar to lethe. The destination is the character's ark, where the character will reform. If for any reason the vox is unable to complete the process, the character's spirit spills into the Blue Air and becomes known as a gossamer.

There are four main reasons why the vox may not complete such a process.

1. The ark doesn't have enough energy to reconstitute the immortal.
2. The vox is removed from the body just prior to the "teleport"
3. The character is "too far" away — dimensionally speaking — from his ark. This is at your discretion as Narrator, and normally only happens when the ark is in the realms of the Habitat but the character is far out in the Dominions.
4. If a vox is unable to enter lethe — for a character that does not have an ark — because there is no location

SETTING NOTE —

The Saturna

Roughly a century ago, the Eidolon Rukshasa gave a small group of Anopheles (before that group's fall to darkness) the ability to safely traverse and navigate the Blue Air in a physical form. The Saturna are now members of the Osiri. Saturna merely will themselves into the Blue Air and unerringly navigate it, resting on the strange chunks of physical matter that appear from time to time. They not only seem to understand how the chunks are formed, but predict when and where they appear, using them as landmarks. The Saturna are only able to safely navigate the Blue Air that corresponds to the Habitat and not beyond.

nearby to serve as a point of relative safety for the reforming character (ex: character is trapped at the bottom of the ocean).

The gossamer only has a SPT attribute, as he floats through the realm of thought, energy and emotion. However, he retains his full personality, knowledge and intelligence, unlike most mortal ghosts. Able to see the flow of emotions resident in the Blue Air, a gossamer can sense when he is near a shallows and cross over into it. Unfortunately, most gossamers float far away from any inhabited realm (Earth or otherwise), and lose any chance of finding a shallows for eons ... if ever.

Should the gossamer cross over into a shallows, he is not restricted to its boundaries and may leave the shallows to travel the physical realm he finds himself in. But he is still intangible and unseen; only those using serenades,



Mystech or perceiving the Blue Air while in full himself can see him. He only sees other spirits (both mortal and immortal), immaculum, taint and the living SPT attribute of other beings. By “manifesting” attributes he then perceives and interacts with the physical world.

In order to regain a permanent physical body, he must find a mortal Believer to bond with, and use this new “master” to gain needed life force and deposit it into his ark. Bonding with a mortal Believer in this state requires no rolls, it is a simple act of will and desire, and is initiated simply by coming in spiritual contact with the mortal. But the mortal can sense this desire to bond, and can reject it. So the mortal must be willing; this typically requires the gossamer to gain the mortal’s trust. Typically this requires manifesting and getting the

mortal to believe that the gossamer is not only more than a normal creature or ghost, but that it can also be trusted (regardless of whether or not that is in fact true).

The loss of the vox disrupts the gossamer’s various attunements to objects and places. However, by substituting the faith of the master for his vox, the gossamer restores the attunement to his ark and any sanctuaries he has. Even without a master, any sanctuaries tied to Believers still keep their attunement with him (see Chapter 5 for the normal rules concerning sanctuaries and arks). Unfortunately any talismans or other items are permanently lost unless the gossamer is able to reconstitute with his original vox.

Gossamer and master now share a



telepathic bond whenever they are in close proximity to one another. The bond allows the master to build an ark — if the gossamer doesn't have one— and talismans that attune to the gossamer. If the gossamer can easily reach his own ark, the need for talismans is effectively negated. The bond severs if the master is harmed by the gossamer; the definition of "harmed" is up to the beliefs and self-worth of the master. For some it is just a simple insult, for others it is directly attempted life-threatening injuries. The bond is also severed if the gossamer returns to the Blue Air for any reason or if the gossamer attempts the sinning of life force from the master

There are two ways the gossamer gains life force to store in a talisman or ark.

- Lullaby or sin committed against a mortal allows the gossamer to take in one attribute point. This point must then be deposited into a talisman or directly into the gossamer's ark.
- Believers (including the master) can use the tithing skill (see Chapter 5) to contribute life force directly to a talisman or the ark.

If the gossamer commits lullaby upon the master directly, the life force doesn't go directly into a talisman or the ark. Instead it is used to create permanent physical manifestations for the gossamer; these are always of the gossamer's *himsati* form and always rather small (regardless of the gossamer's normal size when in *himsati*). The gossamer now has limited human speech capabilities and can fully interact with the surrounding environment at all times.

The other important element to creating a new physical body is a *vox*. If the gossamer doesn't have his original *vox*, he must track down another (typically with help from his master). Gossamers have no special means to sense or find their original *vox* unless they come within close proximity to it. Often it is not possible to find the original, so the gossamer accepts whatever *vox* can be found, stolen, or otherwise obtained; this means completely new avatars to learn about, and the loss of all his old ones. Reconstituting using a previously unbonded shard requires a tremendous amount of energy in the ark, and often results in a rather unpredictable new physical form.

Once sufficient energy is stored within the ark, as soon as the gossamer next makes contact with a *vox* — that is not currently in the throat of another immortal, used in a piece of *Mystech*, etc. — it immediately whisks him into the ark and he is reconstituted. His most recent avatar is now the *vox*'s prior host, which might just be a copy of some other gossamer or recently reconstituted immortal elsewhere.

Mortal Spirits

When mortals die, their physical and mental auras dissipate, leaving the spirit free to leave the corporeal remains and travel to the One Soul. From within this vast pool of soul energy, new souls are created as old ones mingle together. When a mortal dies with unresolved issues or has a traumatic death, its mental and physical attributes do not completely dissipate and these fragments cling to the spirit. Until the spirit finds some kind of inner peace and can shed



them, it wanders the Blue Air — a ghost. Each ghost is different; no one can say how long it will take, or what inner torment the spirit feels during the long and lonely time it spends struggling with a life ended in turmoil.

Worse yet is when a mortal of faith dies in such a manner; the power of his faith creates a shallows. Called a “haunting” in immortal slang, the barrier between the Blue Air and the physical location of the mortal’s death becomes thinned. Eventually the ghost is pulled from the Blue Air back to the shallows it created. This may take weeks or years before the ghost makes its first crossing from the Blue Air into the shallows. There it remains tethered until it can resolve whatever caused it to create the shallows in the first place. Going beyond the shallows thrusts the ghost back into the

Blue Air only to eventually reappear at the shallows a short time later. Other ghosts from the Blue Air may cross over into the physical world if they stumble across the shallows. But if they leave the area, they too are thrust back into the Blue Air, but are now again lost in the sea of thought and energy.

The personalities and memories of ghosts are just fragments of their former selves. The only pieces remaining whole relate to whatever incident caused them to create the shallows (unrequited love, traumatic or violent death, curse, etc.). Ghosts partake in activities closely related to what is holding them back from the One Soul. While most ghosts are barely able to manifest, a few strong ones cause quite a bit of havoc in the area encompassed by their shallows.

Excerpt from a discussion with Aecus, Osiri Scourge...

“...indeed, all mortal spirits — ghosts if you prefer — have a driving need to resolve those issues left when they died. For those that died a traumatic or violent death, that need is often revenge, satisfaction that the guilty party is brought to some form of justice, or that those they left behind will be okay. All too often they cannot accomplish such resolutions on their own. We often assist in such resolution, then allow one of our members who has remained in gossamer form — or for those most important a member of the Saturna — to escort these spirits to the One Soul, protecting them from the more malevolent spirits that sometimes roam the Blue Air near shallows.”

Bright Blooded Ghosts

By their very nature, Bright Bloods travel to the One Soul, but their spirits do not merge with the vast pool of soul energy. Depending on which scholar’s theories one likes best, they either orbit it for a time, or plunge in but come back out exactly the same. Either way, the spirit returns to the physical world to be born again; it is rare that a Bright Blood returns as a ghost. On the rare occasion a Bright Blood creates a shallows, it has a surreal, obviously otherworldly quality to it. Any being that wielded Religarum and returns as a ghost, becomes a powerful spirit that makes immortals think twice before entering its shallows.

Soul Reapers

If a mortal has taint in his aura and dies with unresolved issues, in a traumatic or violent way, he becomes a Soul Reaper.



The taint consumes the fragments of the physical and mental auras, and clings to the spirit as it traverses into the Blue Air. This creates a “dark” shallows drawing in free taint and creating a cursed place. The unresolved issues — as well as how the mortal died — play a heavy role in the development of the curse, but it can be created from any number of sources: prominent features, history, or beliefs of the locals concerning the location. The curse affects those who come in contact with it in traumatic ways; over time it can actually twist and change as the dark shallows becomes stronger. See Chapter 4 for information on curses.

Eventually the taint consumes the spirit, turning it into an unloving, malevolent entity — a Soul Reaper — returning to the shallows it created. In appearance they look and act like shadow elementals with appropriate natures. Soul Reapers rip away the spirit of mortals they come in contact with, targeting Believers most often, in attempts to create new shallows with no ghost (since the Soul Reaper effectively consumed the ghost in the process). The new shallows is then swallowed up by the dark shallows, expanding it even further. Soul Reapers can also attack other spirits in this way, but it brings them less nourishment than attacking a still living being.

Soul Reapers have the same driving goals as normal spirits to come to terms with their unresolved issues, but there is no spirit to actually be freed. They twist and pervert anything that might bring such resolution, their hunger for mortal souls never satisfied.

SETTING NOTE —

Soul Reapers

A Soul Reaper’s taint motes become its effective SPT. They may leave their dark shallows for a number of days equal to their taint motes, after which they are pulled back to the shallows (not into the Blue Air). By making a contested SPT roll against a mortal, they can rip away a point of the mortal’s SPT. Mortals reduced to 0 SPT die (and create a shallows if the mortal had faith). If the new shallows touches the dark shallows, the dark shallows overtakes it and expands equal to half the size and strength of shallows it overtook.

Full Rules

For the full rules and expanded mechanics for gossamers and other spirits, see Appendix C

MANTLES

Across from Sheol in the inky black Oblivion Void lies Sanctuary. A fantastical place made of a collection of clinging pocket dimensions known as mantles. At the heart of Sanctuary lies the mythical realm of Ife, the first mantle. Here the fabled Ark of Conundrum gives the maker of this mantle a strange eternal life. There are rumors and speculation that a small group of immortals went inside within this last century, but other than those rumors no one even bothers to lay claim that they’ve been within the boundaries of this place of power. All mantles effectively cling to Ife and/or to one another in the Oblivion Void. Think of Sanctuary as a giant egg-sac or cluster. Ife seems to provide the power for the other makers to generate their mantles.



Makers

Makers begin their life as a tryst: the rare result of a purposeful union between a mortal human of the Milesian bloodline (a Bright Blood) and an immortal or maker. The chance of producing a child through such a union is very low and only possible if the union is entered into with a strong desire to bear one. Trysts are always single births, going through normal human gestation. Left alone and not bonded to a shard, the tryst grows up a normal long-lived human with no access to the Religarum granted by his Milesian heritage. Only through bonding with a clean unbonded shard does a tryst finally become a maker.

One of the parents must be a Bright Blooded human (not a maker) and the other must be an immortal or maker. The child's father gives up a full point of SPT during the union regardless of whether a child is conceived or not; it takes approximately one year to heal back that point. The mother, if immortal, finds it increasingly difficult to shapeshift as the pregnancy comes to term.

The very best means for gaining a viable maker is for the tryst to be born of a consenting, loving union. Such a child, guided to his or her duties from birth, can form stable, brilliant realities once bonded with a shard. Trysts

born from traumatic, violent or “convenience” unions are burdened with psychological disorders affecting their created realities. For this reason many among the tribes believe only those with intimate connections to — or effectively worshipping — an immortal should become parents to these special children. The claim is often challenged by those claiming fanatical followers and devotees have preconceived ideas that limit the creative vision of their children. The matter leads to occasional conflicts: a hold-over from before the Great Betrayal when cohabitation with humans was prohibited by the former Tribe Shadowen.

Becoming a Maker

Simply binding a shard to a tryst is not what turns him into a maker; in fact, taking an untrained tryst and bonding him to a shard has disastrous results. Without training and conditioning the tryst is overwhelmed by the bonding process and begins creating skewed realities. He merely morphs his

i m m e d i a t e surroundings and doesn't create a proper mantle. Beings caught in such a maelstrom of confused reality have their minds and bodies torn asunder. It makes stepping into the Maelstrom or Blue Air seem merciful when described by those who witness such an event.





The process of becoming a maker starts shortly after the child's birth. Most trysts are placed in the mantle they will eventually take over the maintenance and care of. They spend their early life being taught about the world they now live in, conditioned through training, instruction, and enforcement of a complete and utter focus on every facet of that world. Mystical means are employed at times, but constant experience of the mantle itself — and keeping away outside distractions — is the surest method of training.

When the time finally comes, the tryst is given a clean unbonded shard, a vox will not work. It may have come from the last maker upon its death (the shard remains clean even after bonding) or be a shard from another source. The tryst merely places the shard to his forehead

where it grafts to the body, forming an unseen "third eye". The tryst's Religarum is activated and he falls into a partial state of constant daydream when awake. The new maker's thoughts race out, invariably making subtle changes to the mantle; if the training went well these will be negligible to its residents. From this point forward the new maker controls the mantle.

Recruitment

Makers can be "liberated" from another mantle, either currently occupied or long forgotten by its owner in a previous incarnation. Badly treated makers are easier to enlist and smart immortals know to continue treating them well. Over the eons, immortals too far removed from the mortal experience imprisoned and forcibly bred new generations of trysts, bonding them with





shards against their will. But once the new makers realized they had absolute control over the reality of the mantle, revolutions of the enslaved were woefully common. The largest known revolution was that of the first Atlantis, provoked by agents of the Apocrypha after infiltrating its mortal population.

Escape into the real world usually proves too much for the maker. Unable to adapt to an inflexible reality, they find themselves returning to a lonely existence within the mantle or die from being unable to handle the “real” world. Some makers sire children of their own with a human Bright Blood, carrying on the tradition of maintaining the family’s ancestral world. Some mantles are maintained by a single family of trysts and makers, a long and proud lineage. Immortals walk these mantles with no small amount of trepidation; such a long line can produce a tyrant maker far worse than any drove. After all he is the creator and absolute controller of the reality the immortal walks in. For this reason many trysts are never allowed to learn the true extent of their power and relationship to the mantle they maintain.

Maintenance

Mantles require the constant presence of the maker in order to remain stable. If the mantle is left without a maker — usually because of his death — the reality of the mantle destabilizes. The length of time before the mantle begins to shrink depends upon the strength of the maker’s spirit. All living things not created in the mantle are slowly thrust out into the real world; all other components and mantle-beings simply vanish as they cease to exist. The

presence of humans with faith has been known to stall a mantle’s disintegration, bolstering the stability past the maker’s demise. When multiple mantles connect, mantle-denizens have been known to escape into another nearby mantle. The maker there takes over their maintenance, possibly making a few minor changes to their being, allowing them to mesh with the new reality more comfortably.

If a maker dies or leaves, another maker can take his place. Those who take over require a thorough understanding of the mantle’s physical laws and aesthetics or they unwittingly change the mantle. This is why trysts are often raised in the mantle their entire life, or some makers have their own children take over from them.

The synergy of a mantle becomes an intelligent extension of the maker, he doesn’t need to concentrate to give it ongoing life and “personality”. Anything created by the maker acts accordingly based on its original concept. If the maker desires, he merely needs to concentrate and can change any component of the mantle. But as stated earlier many makers don’t realize the reality is of their own creation, so it’s done on a subconscious level only.

New Mantles

Witnessing the process of a brand new mantle being created is a rare and wondrous experience. As the tryst bonds with the shard, he literally vanishes from the physical world. He will spend the next several days or weeks (depending on his spiritual strength) creating the initial bubble of



reality around him; it will have little in the way of components. As it expands, receding away from the new maker, landscape, objects and beings begin to simply fade into existence already performing their normal routines.

The bubble exists within the Oblivion Void, nestled among the other mantles of Sanctuary. Like the dreamscapes of the Morpheum, the apparent interior dimensions of the mantle's reality are only bound by the strength of the maker. At the point in time when the mantle has finished growing to its initial "complete" size, a portal opens from the mantle back into the physical world. The opening appears near the place where the tryst bonded with the shard, and always hidden in some mystical way. With time and coaxing the parents — or current guardians — of the maker may persuade him to create additional openings. During the first year the mantle undergoes significant changes, especially if it is particularly large. After that, the daydream of the maker only receives minor changes unless interfered with by outside forces. Eventually the "boundary" of the mantle touches upon the boundaries of others; over time connections may be made between them as the makers sense each other and form instinctual bonds of trust (usually only if the two mantles share similar physical laws and aesthetics).

Contents

The contents of a mantle are up to the maker's daydream, within the limits of his SPT. It is up to him what things look like, from structures to flora, fauna and any intelligent beings present. The style of dress, the way they think, act and

speak — even the language spoken may be some strange dialect that only exists in the maker's head. Even the terrain and changing weather are all at his subconscious command. Most are dreamt up initially and just continue on, based on the maker's subconscious expectations.

Living things in the mantle are real so long as they remain within. Savage predators can hurt mortals and immortals brought into the mantle; mantle-folk live their lives, raise children, grow old and die. It's possible for someone from the outside world to raise a family with someone created within the mantle. However, nothing created within the mantle can leave it. Items brought out of the mantle simply vanish upon leaving as if they never existed. If someone attempts to force mantle-created beings out into the real world through one of the portals, they immediately reappear right back inside the mantle; they don't leave: they can't leave.

The physics and laws of reality are up to the maker. While most mantles reflect a bygone age of mankind where some immortal held great power, others are quite fantastical. There are mantles where the humans all appear as elves, or they all have wings and fly; ones where the fish breathe air, swim in the sky and are capable of speech; and places where gravity goes sideways or the sky is green and the trees are blue. Such mantles tend to be smaller than the true power of the maker's spirit would indicate, some of the power is sacrificed to turn back the Aria's attempts to "fix" the mantle to be more like the physical realm it connects to (the vast majority of the time



that realm is Earth).

Maker Conflict

Makers can work together, creating a single, more lavish mantle. They maintain a more unique reality with each maker “supervising” a large region for himself. Most immortals dissuade makers from joining their realms into a single mantle; they also don’t introduce additional makers into a single mantle — which has the same effect. If two makers come into conflict with one another, the mantle suffers. Problems arise if conflict or competition becomes too serious as divisions in the mantle’s reality occurs. The maker with the stronger spirit has the upper hand, but as more and more force is directed towards the conflict, his creations begin to suffer. Intelligent beings begin acting more like automatons, wildlife slowly dwindles away, flora stops thriving and wilts, buildings begin to inexplicably crumble and fall apart. Worse yet are the dividing lines where makers’ powers meet; rising cliffs suddenly drop off into pure sky with no ground in sight, boiling hot lava spews from volcanoes next to mighty glaciers. Granted these are quite extreme examples, but are possible with makers of very powerful spirit.

Outside Forces

Immortals often attempt to do miraculous and terrifying things within the boundaries of a mantle. Most makers are more than ingrained with the concept that members of the himsati race are beings capable of performing all sorts of magic regardless of the mantle’s rules. And it is only because of that ingrained belief — passed from generation to generation of makers —

that immortals and their ilk wield the power they do within Sanctuary. In the mantle, the maker’s belief is the Aria for all intent and purposes. Makers are subconsciously aware of all that transpires within a mantle they contribute to, and in effect have complete and total control over it. Fortunately most do not realize this fact and it stays on a subconscious level only. A maker swiftly reacts to anything that upsets the precious balance of his mantle, his subconscious (or consciously if he is aware of his true nature) correcting the problem quickly.

The tribes learned during the Great Betrayal that limits do exist to a maker’s near omnipotent power. Sheer numbers can overwhelm his ability to react and “fix things”. When the roots of the dark Zuzog trees broke through the metaphysical barriers of outlying mantles, the hordes of drovelings pouring in were too much for the makers to handle. It was left to the resident immortals to provide defense as the poor maker rushed from one fire to another in failed attempts to stop the wholesale slaughter and destruction. The chaos and confusion was so great that many makers simply lost control, finding themselves plucked from their own mantles as the barriers were shredded. Countless real-world beings were cast into the Oblivion Void, while the maker helplessly watched his creations shredded as he was carried away along a Zuzog root or himself lost into that same void.

Full Rules

For full rules and expanded mechanics on mantles, see Appendix C.





CHAPTER 3

DOWN TO BUSINESS

In this chapter we take a look into optional and advanced rules for use in the game including new character creation, combat, aftermath, environmental and athletic mechanics.

ADVANCED CREATION RULES

The Player's Guide is written with the Reborn meant to be the primary player characters, but not everyone wants to play a starting character. No doubt there are many exciting and diverse adventures to be had with characters of higher power levels. Alternatively, starting characters from the Player's Guide could be treated as normal immortals coming out of lethe. This is a great way to run a campaign set in another time period, though character progression is much slower than for Reborn characters (the amount of EP and MP gained should technically be much slower than it is for the Reborn).

Higher Level Startup

There are other classifications of immortal power in the game, the terms listed are only out-of-game terms used to describe them.

Ingénue

These immortals are coming out of lethe just like the Reborn, but instead of swiftly leaving lethe and returning to power within a decade, these immortals take roughly a century to do so. A terrific choice to play is the Ingénue who is nearing the end of his time in lethe,

already having joined with a tribe (often his former one) and having established himself for a decade or so within it. This allows experienced players to play a character at the same power level as a Reborn but have the equivalent of some experience with the himsati race and their immortal heritage. Until they have proved themselves within their respective calling, Ingénue are often referred to as Rooks in terms of their place in tribal society.

Competent

A Reborn who awoke in the early 1990's that is now fully recovered from lethe and has a few years of experience (10 - 20 years since awakening from lethe). These immortals lived through the Great Betrayal and were tested by its fires. Alternatively these can be non-Reborn who have recently shaken off the last of normal lethe (a 100-year process) within the last decade. These are fully recovered immortals with enough experience to take on all the basic responsibilities of their tribe and have earned all its basic privileges. Such immortals may very well belong to a particular faction within their tribe (See forthcoming Tribal Law vs. Dragon's Rule book).

Powerful

Hundreds of years old — a few into the thousands — most were actually unprepared for the Great Betrayal. Many still hold ages-old grudges and prejudices from their time before becoming the tribes. Immortals at this



level spend their time in mantles and nearby Dominions, fighting their own vices and archaic natures as much as they do the enemy. But some are able to maintain enough human perspective to freely walk among the world of mankind, going back and forth between it and other realms. They know many serenades, quite a bit of secret knowledge all their own, and some even wield fabulous pieces of Mystech. Such immortals serve important roles; the most powerful of these serve as Regents and Retainers.

Godlike

These immortals represent the Tribal Paragons and their councils, the Paradigms of the callings and other immortals on the final path to Transcendence. These immortals are too far along to mask their immense power, and cannot even begin to set foot on Earth for more than brief periods without interacting with humanity's faith and the Aria in a way that would cause ripples in the very fabric of Earth's reality. These immortals can easily be several thousand years old. Godlike immortals are not designed for use as player characters.

General Notes

Competent and Powerful starting characters may be wielding Mystech and have special skills and boons — right at the beginning of the game. Many will easily make use of the many optional rules and available changes presented in this book. Most starting characters from the Player's Guide will only learn one or two of things available here prior to reaching these new levels through EP and MP — or through the course of the

game as with boons and banes.

Starting as Ingénue

Build points and other features for starting as a Ingénue are as presented in the Player's Guide. If the characters are being designed to already have some experience as immortals — they have already progressed halfway or more through the century of coming out of lethe — increase the Bonus Points from 20 to 30.

Starting as Competent

Build points and other features for starting as a competent character are changed as follows:

Callings: Starting skill changes

Instead of picking two skills at 2 and one at 3, they now pick one skill at 2 and two at 3.

Natures: 8 starting

It is recommended the additional points first be used for the purchase of levels in natures that use them, rather than purchasing more natures.

Attributes: 24 points

This provides an average of four attributes at 4 and three at 5. No attribute can begin the game above 6.

Skills and Foci: 90 points

The near doubling of points takes into account advanced rules on foci and additional options for skills. No skills can start at rank 5, two skills maximum may start at rank 4.

Bonus Points: 30

Bonus points may be spent as per the Player's Guide (but players may now



buy foci for serenades), and may also be spent on boons if those rules will be used in the game (see Chapter 4 for the costs to purchase individual boons).

Starting as Powerful

Build points and other features for starting as a powerful character are changed as follows:

Callings: Starting skill changes

Instead of picking two skills at 2 and one at 3, they now pick one at 2, one at 3 and one at 4.

Natures: 10 starting

It is recommended the additional points first be used for the purchase of levels in natures that use them, rather than purchasing more natures.

Attributes: 28 points

This allows an average of 5 in all attributes. No attribute can begin the game above 7.

Skills and Foci: 100 points

The doubling of points takes into account advanced rules on foci and additional options for skills. One skill maximum can start at rank 5, two skills maximum may start at rank 4.

Bonus Points: 40

Bonus points may be spent as per the Player's Guide (but players may now buy foci for serenades), and may also be spent on boons if those rules will be used in the game (see Chapter 4 for the costs to purchase individual boons).

Not many additional build and bonus points are given in order to keep characters from being "boon-crazy". If

the characters want more boons, they should be taking banes to get those points. *No free lunch here either...*

These relatively small increases to the build points represent the decreasing speed older immortals learn at, as they resist the lure of becoming entrenched in their own past. At this stage they fight to push forward in skills, knowledge, ability and to just keep up with the times; otherwise they become anachronistic relics relying solely on mystical powers.

PREDILECTION RULES

For players, Predilections provide a way to quickly explain how their character will react in given situations. For you, a character's predilection provides clues to the kinds of stories and challenges a player will most likely enjoy when playing as that character. In addition, it serves as a gauge of how consistent the player is with the character's personality, convictions, attitude and more. As this is a role playing game, part of the reward for players should come when they consistently stay true to the persona they developed. As a Narrator, you should be making sure you create plots, situations and interesting characters tailored to allow each player a chance to role play their character's predilection. By providing the opportunities many times of the course of the stories you tell, your players will all have multiple chances to show off their many abilities and unique characteristics.



Bonuses

When a character comes into a situation and role plays through it — taking advantage of his predilection — at your discretion give a +1 bonus to any one roll where proper role play of the predilection adds to the story. This bonus does not have to be immediate, indeed sometimes proper playing of one's predilection means doing something or reacting in a way the player knows is not best for the character; the bonus can be saved until it is of more benefit for the character. Consistent role playing of the predilection over the course of an entire act or episode should provide the character one or two extra EP during the next award. Some players find it challenging to take on a predilection that, in real life, they have some difficulty acting out in character. But if the actions, words and deeds they relate stay within the predilection there is no reason they cannot receive these same bonuses and rewards.

Penalties

We highly recommend penalizing rolls, simply because someone appears to not be acting true to their predilection. Penalties of this nature only serve to dampen a player's enjoyment of the game. Instead, we recommend that during a break you quietly ask the player about the scene that played out. Often you will be surprised to learn of a motivation or justification you hadn't thought of; one that is completely in line with the character's predilection.

In general, you should wait for one or two game sessions before deciding to take action — we all have bad days — if

it appears the character is repeatedly ignoring his predilection and “stepping out of character”. Waiting too long though, might offend your other players as the one player keeps changing how his character acts in order to constantly gain advantages or avoid penalties. The first one or two times this happens, it is best to quietly withhold a point of EP from the experience point distribution at the end of the session (never withhold MP if honestly earned). See the rules on EP and MP for ways to do this without embarrassing or upsetting the player. If the behavior continues and the player does not come to you; it is best to go to the player — away from the rest of the group — and suggest the next Predilection rule...

Changing Predilections

Sometimes the way a character is played better matches a different predilection (based on how you run things and how you perceive the predilections). Just let them know that based on the way you are running the game, the predilection they are playing actually matches “x”; suggest they just change it on their character sheet. No harm, no foul, they just keep playing the way they are.

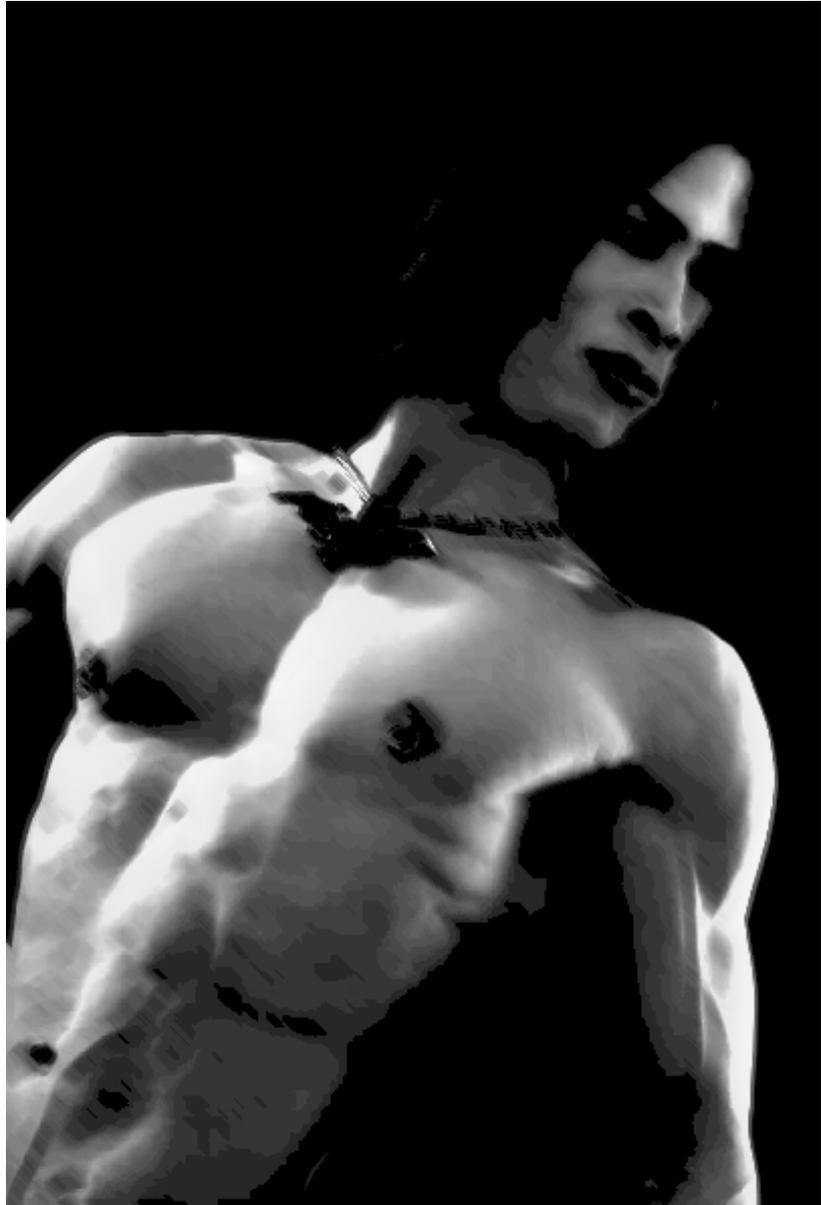
But sometimes the game goes on for a while and then you notice a change begin to happen. Perhaps the player just lost interest in playing that predilection and is looking for a change; maybe an incident his character was involved in has him thinking differently about things; perhaps someone just lost the knack they had for acting out or describing actions in a way that match that predilection; or even an incident in real life has just changed the way they



role play now. Regardless, you don't want to penalize the player for it. Now is the time to suggest role playing through a change in predilection.

Monster to Mr. Nice

We all remember stories where the monstrous henchman is convinced to join the forces of good, turning against his evil masters. Picture this brute meeting outsiders early on his path to becoming a force for good; the gaping maw attempts a sincere smile or a polite grin, but it only manages to scare away those around him. But in time he gains better control or his overall demeanor just changes somewhat. Eventually those around him come to see him in this new light and accept him as such. It took time and many tribulations, but he has changed his predilection and is now comfortable with it. The same can be seen when a knight first falls from grace, as others come up to him expecting the shining knight who will valiantly ride out in their defense. It is easy to see the inner struggle in his eyes as he attempts to make sense of the difference between his old urges as a knight and his new desire to just be left alone. But eventually he is the hermit and no one



expects him to be anything else.

To accomplish this in the game, the character is going to role play the new predilection, but your narrator characters continue to perceive the old one. Assign hidden penalties to social conflicts (and occasionally physical and supernatural ones where appropriate) that the player is unaware of. As time passes and the last vestiges of the old predilection



vanish, let the penalties dwindle to nothing. For someone purposely switching from one predilection to another by choice, let them make the change on their own, at least making sure they don't make it too quick for the needs and pacing of your story. For those who are just having issues playing the old one, let them play the new one fully and just handle the penalties in the background.

Once this mini-story arc is completed, the character should be awarded 2 - 3 EP; 3 - 4 EP if the player actually role played through all the way from one predilection to the other on his own.

Not Wrong, Just Different

The most important thing to remember is that no one is wrong in case of predilections. Most often the way you perceive and play a predilection is just different from the player. His method of play may advance the story in a direction you and the other players would not have taken; that doesn't make him wrong for it. Your goal is not to punish anyone — that merely creates a lack of enjoyment for everyone, including yourself. Instead, always work with your players to find ways that everyone can enjoy the game and still work within the framework you've created. Ultimately, that is what predilections are designed for.

CRITICAL FAILURES AND SUCCESSES

You've seen it before: a last minute save on the movie screen. You've read about it, counting the pages to the climactic end of the story and suddenly

there it is in the one paragraph you weren't quite expecting. Maybe the villain made a mistake, sheer luck said hello, or perhaps the hero just had that much grit and determination. Regardless, it is exciting when something suddenly goes so perfectly you can't help but cheer. These are what critical successes are all about.

On the other side of that coin we've all watched the hero make a fatal mistake, winced and thought "Ouch, that had to hurt a lot." We've read the story, dread creeping further into us with each sentence we perused. The heroine who everyone knows has the skill and pluck to succeed, until Murphy's Law catches up with her. Though unpleasant for the character, they lend an air of excitement all their own to the story; they are critical failures.

Critical Success

Critical successes occur when:

- The character is rolling two dice (using a focus in a skill or serenade)
- The character rolls the maximum amount on both dice.

It is completely up to you how the success plays out, based on the actual action the character was taking at the time. A quick and easy resolution is to multiply the die roll by 1.5 (like adding half the second die to the first die). Other incidental effects can be put into play to benefit the character: perhaps his opponent is knocked out cold in a single blow, perhaps he not only picks the lock but it "opens the door, that knocks over the chair, that falls into the puddle, knocking over the wire and setting off the electrical trap **before** you walk into



the room!”

The more powerful a character is, the less likely he is to roll a critical success. Powerful characters rarely need to roll, accomplishing most tasks without the need for a critical success. When such a character is forced into a situation where a critical success comes in handy, the forces opposing him are likely just as powerful, and since technically they should get critical successes too... In fact, in Chapter 7 we will discuss narrator characters. Only main antagonists and protagonists should receive critical successes (and failures). Otherwise, they are reserved for the players' characters. So more powerful characters get fewer, but they need fewer; and when they do happen they should be spectacular!

It also means weaker characters tend to critically succeed within their focus more often, though not as spectacularly as for a powerful character. But against the types of threats and tasks lower powered characters face, it has the same kind of spectacular feel to it — when you narrate it in a way that makes it feel spectacular. As they grow more powerful they rely on the critical successes less against those same early threats.

Critical Failure

Commonly referred to as “botching”, critical failures occur when:

- The character is not working in a focus, he is only rolling one die.
- The character rolls a 1 on the die
- The character fails the task by two or more points.

Characters working with their focus cannot critically fail, to help enforce the epic and larger than life nature of the game. It also stops people from botching on mundane tasks that only remove from the enjoyment of the game. Like a critical success, it is up to you to determine how the “botch” plays out. The most common form a critical failure is the exact opposite effect the character is trying to achieve.

Weaker characters with more human level skills and power easily critically fail. The fact is that weaker characters aren't much more than human in some aspects. Attempting to go out of their focus to do things puts them very much out of their element: a critical failure is far more likely. As they age and grow in power, their general understanding of their area of focus and also of related things gets better. Thus the chance of critically failing decreases.

On the same subject, when a character of great power critically fails, it should be made as spectacular as when he critically succeeds. They don't do it very often, but such a failure can often serve to advance the story in unique and interesting ways, changing everything for your players and providing new opportunities in the story.

OPTIONAL RULES FOR SKILLS

This area covers a host of new skills and options for skills. If you are looking for more information on serenades or Mystech, they each have their own chapter later in the book.



New Foci Rules

Competent and Powerful characters may have two additional foci per skill (rank plus two, instead of just equal to rank as per normal starting characters). In addition, once the average number of EP earned by any one individual character in your group has reached 200 EP, you may increase the limit for them as well, to reflect them nearing the level of a character built as Competent. We do not recommend allowing starting characters to take the additional foci except when using signature moves.

Signature Moves

Signature moves provide bonuses to attack, defense or maneuvers when using a specific combat skill. The character purchases a “style” focus for the skill and then is allotted “slots” that attach to the skill for building the signature moves with. They are often been popularized in modern videos games as “finishing” or “specialty” moves.

The Style Focus

The style focus is a normal focus within a skill and is purchased as such. It represents a fighting style, the classic example of a fighting style being a martial arts style: “Southern Praying Mantis”, “Jeet Kune Do”, “Eskrima”, “Fencing”, “Dirk Dance”, “Savate”, “Pankration”, “Lucha Libre” and “Shootfighting”. Even the “Himsati” focus counts as a style focus; any signature moves purchased would only work while in full himsati. Many existing foci from the Player’s Guide already count as a style focus, so the player doesn’t have to spend any additional points to make the existing focus into a style focus.



The same style focus can be purchased for multiple combat skills, allowing signature moves to be purchased within those skills as well. This lets your players create complex martial arts systems incorporating both unarmed and armed combat techniques.

Purchasing Signature Moves

Once a style focus is purchased, the character receives a number of slots equal to half the skill’s rank (round up). Increasing the rank of the skill later can increase the available number of slots. The cost for a signature move is the same as a normal focus for that skill, but does not count as a focus. Each move has a chosen primary bonus and has the appropriate notation of -a, -d or -m after it: attack (-a), defense (-d) or maneuver (-m).



Weapon-based combat skills represent a broad range of weapons; when signature moves are purchased for a style focus in a weapon skill, they only work with a related group. A signature move purchased to work with pistols for a “Pistol Kata” will not work with submachine guns or sniper rifles. Similarly a signature move purchased for a “Fencing” style focus under Blade Weapons is not going to be used with two-handed and other large swords.

Signature moves may not be purchased with Military Weapons.

Using Signature Moves

Moves can only be used when appropriate (taking into account current circumstances, surrounding environment, etc.) — a jumping spin kick is not usable while the character is lying down, he needs to get up first.

When an attack move is used, the character gains a +2 to his highest attack roll. When a defense move is used, the character gains a +2 to his defense roll, if there is no defense roll to be made, it is applied to the appropriate defensive target number, defense total, etc.. When a maneuver move is used, a +2 bonus is applied to the next action the character takes — so long as the action is consistent with the maneuver made. Alternatively, the bonus can be used to offset tactical and other appropriate penalties.

There are times when a signature move makes sense to provide a bonus to one of the other two categories, instead of the primary bonus. In this case it only grants a +1 to the attack, defense or

SYSTEM NOTE —

Signature Move Examples

Example 1: The character purchases Eight Extremes Chuan as a style focus for Unarmed Combat at Rank 3. He purchases “Spinning Heel Kick –a” and “Explosive Elbow Lunge –a” to fill the two slots. As long as he has room to perform the spinning heel kick, he rolls the two dice for the skill with the style focus, takes the higher of the two and adds 2 to the roll for the signature move.

Example 2: The character purchases two “Himsati” foci, one for Unarmed Combat (Rank 4) and one for Dodge (Rank 1). He purchases “Jawlock –m” and “Pounce –a” for the two slots in Unarmed Combat and “Leapback –d” for the one slot in Dodge. He uses leapback as he comes around a corner and thugs open fire on him. He later uses Jawlock to keep an opponent, the +2 is added to his next STR test to hold onto his opponent. If he used it to damage his opponent the bonus would have only been +1. He uses the Pounce move with his Leap nature to quickly take on an opponent from a short distance away.

Example 3: The character has a “Florentine” focus for both Blade and Parrying Weapons, to represent various maneuvers, attacks and defenses while fighting in that manner.. He increases his Blade Weapons from a Rank 2 to a Rank 3, thus providing an additional slot for a new signature move within the Blade Weapon’s Florentine style focus.

maneuver bonus. Attack signature moves are rarely useful for defense bonuses and vice versa. But substitutions between attack / defense



and maneuver bonuses happen often with creative players.

Dodge Skill

Dodge foci are normally purchased to dodge a specific type of attack. Style foci can be purchased for the dodge skill to allow for signature moves, but are only allowed for defense and maneuver bonuses only. The maneuver bonus may add to the next action's attack, but the dodge skill itself cannot directly be used to "attack" someone.

Other skills

Fighting styles and signature moves cannot be purchased for other types of skills without special permission. Two possible examples that you might allow are Animal Discipline (ex: fighting from horseback) and Gymnastics (ex: acrobatic maneuvers used along with a specific fighting style). If so, the primary bonus should always be maneuvering and cannot be used for attack or defense.

Expanding Athletic Tests

Most athletic tests involve running, climbing, jumping or swimming. Unless specified, characters do not need to achieve success levels, only beat the target number by at least 1. If a serenade, nature or other mystical power is used that conflicts with these rules, then these rules are ignored in favor of the supernatural power's effect.

Sports and Gymnastics Skills

They are the most common skills used for athletic tests, but you can allow other skills to substitute for certain athletic tests when appropriate. Most athletic tests are considered everyman skill rolls,

so the 4-point penalty for being unskilled doesn't apply when the character does not have sports or gymnastics.

Additional Foci for Gymnastics / Sports:
Buildering, Free Climbing, Free Running, Parkour, Street Stunts, Tricking, Yamakasi

Running and Sprinting

Running tests are rolled to avoid obstacles and navigate difficult terrain when moving faster than combat movement rates. Hopping a small hedge or quickly moving through a light group of pedestrians creates a target number of 6. The more difficult the obstacle or terrain, the higher the target number. Running up a slope greater than 45° is a target number of 12. Failures force the character to slow down to combat movement speed temporarily; critical failures result in the character falling or being completely halted. Trying to run up the side of a near-vertical wall moves into climbing.

If the character has a running-style sport as a focus, he adds his sports skill rank to the number of minutes he can stay at a full run, and to the number of rounds he can continue sprinting.

Climbing

Climbing tests are rolled when there are no easily accessible hand or footholds for upward movement. Climbing a tree with limited handholds and branches creates a target number of 6. Characters climb at a rate equal to their combat movement — in feet instead of yards. Failures force the character to stop — he must attempt to find another way up —



critical failures result in the character falling (see Falling under Environmental Rules).

If the character has a climbing-related sports or gymnastics focus, he adds the rank of the skill to his combat move for purposes of climbing speed.

Swimming

Swimming tests are rolled when the character is attempting to swim under duress situations such as turbulent water. Swimming along the surface of a small lake with a light “chop” would be a target number of 6. Characters swim at a rate equal to their combat move — in feet instead of yards. Failures force the character to stop and “dog paddle”; critical failures cause the character to begin floundering. Any further tests are made at a -2 penalty for each failed test until the character can again successfully begin swimming normal. If he cannot regain control he will begin to drown (see Drowning under Environmental Rules).

If the character has a swimming-related focus he may add its rank to his combat move for purposes of swimming speed.

Jumping

Jumping tests are rolled to clear great heights, jump long distances or clear large gaps or series of obstacles all at once. Jumping small objects and basic navigation of terrain are considered running tests. There are three types of jumping: High Jump, Broad Jump, and Long Jump.

High Jumping

Characters jump straight up — from a

standing position— 1/2 their STR in feet. An athletics roll is made to jump higher, with a target number of 6. Each point above six adds 1/2 foot to the jumped height. A character can lift his feet up to increase how far off the ground they are, but the head goes no higher than the value indicated by the die roll. In reality, high jumping rarely has a practical application except for leaping up to reach something just overhead. Obtaining great heights requires a serenade or the leap nature.

Broad Jumping

Characters jump forward — from a standing position — a number of feet equal to their height (round up). An athletics roll is made to jump further, with a target number of 6. Each point above six adds one additional foot to the distance jumped. If the character is attempting to broad jump a specified distance (over a large gap), the target number is equal to the number of feet jumped minus the character’s height (in feet, round up), minimum target number is 6. If the character beats the target number he makes the jump and lands on his feet.

Long Jumping

Characters jump forward — with a running start equal to twice their height — a number of feet equal to twice their height. An athletics roll is made to jump further, with a target number of 6. Each point above six adds two additional feet to the distance jumped. If the character is attempting to long jump a specified distance (over a large gap), the target number is equal to the half number of feet jumped minus twice the character’s height (in feet, round up), minimum



target number is 6. If the character beats the target number he makes the jump and lands on his feet.

Missing the mark

If a character does not jump far enough — in the case of jumping large gaps such as an alleyway — a second test is made against a target number of 6 plus the number of points still needed to make the original jump distance. If successful the character grabs a handhold or manages to keep from falling too far. If there is no way for the character to grab hold of something (too far away from any handholds, or simply no handholds available) the second roll does not take place.

Special Skills

Based on the information provided in this guide there may be a need for some characters to have other skills beyond those in the Player's Guide. Many of these skills (especially those involving tribal rituals) are very costly, time consuming to learn, and known to only a handful of immortals from any tribe. Any skill listed as a Tribal ritual requires multiple immortals to perform.

Avatar Handling (Base Cost = 4)

PER-based or PRS-based as appropriate
A skill in dealing with avatars that have emerged from within another immortal. Normally used with PER to gauge information about the emerging avatar and with PRS for interacting with the avatar. It is a "pop-psychology" skill combining academics and social; characters with this skill excel at quickly determining what era an avatar belongs to, which Tribal predecessor he may have been a member of, how much of a

threat he may pose to the current environment, etc. In addition, he can quickly emulate necessary mannerisms, allowing him to interact in a way that will help ease an avatar's frustrations or confusion. It is quite popular with Mentors, Tacticians and Keepers. It can also assist a character in dealing with his own avatars, though it is more difficult to analyze and interact using this skill with an avatar inside one's own mind.

Suggested Foci: Calming, Charm, Calling/Era/Predilection/Tribal Identification (pick one), Negotiation

Banishment (Base Cost = 6)

SPT-based

A tribal ritual. The process by which the mystical connection between an immortal and his tribe is severed. The character must have a skill equal to at least half the SPT of the immortal to participate in the ritual. Any changes made to an immortal's natures during his uplifting are reversed by this ritual, and the originally replaced nature comes back at its starting level (he also loses any points he would have put into the new nature). This also severs the link to the tribal gift, curse and other special tribal-linked abilities and powers.

Suggested Foci: The character must be taught the specifics of the tribe's ritual to purchase a focus in that tribe; tribes only teach the specifics to their own members. The character's initial focus will be in the tribe he learned the skill with while a member.

Birthing (Base Cost = 7)

WIL-based

A tribal ritual. The process by which a shard or vox is implanted into a creature not already immortal. This is rare as



there are few shards (or even voxes) that become available for such a purpose. A more perverse and twisted form exists that the droves use to create various monstrosities. This skill is automatically considered focused, there are no foci to purchase.

Lighter (Base Cost = 4)

Attribute-based as appropriate

This skill gives the character knowledge to work in most lighters, both organic and artificial.

Suggested Foci: Pilot (for smaller lighters), Helm (piloting for large ones), Navigation, System Ops, Engineering, Weapons

Mystech Skills

The Mystech skills of attunement, carnels, enchantment and sharding are covered in Chapter 5.

Peregrinate (Base Cost = 3)

WIL-based

Peregrination involves the successful journey and survival of off-Earth environments. Each item listed below is not a focus, but instead a separate skill with a base cost of 3 — any use of the skill is automatically considered focused. Normally these are used as knowledge skills, but you can allow them as active skills when appropriate (such as using Peregrinate Ley skill to gain bonus speed during Ley Line walking).

Suggested Peregrinate Skills:

Gremlin Grid, Ley, Mantles, Morpheum, Nadir (traveling various dominion worlds), Underworld, Ys

Splintering (Base Cost = 7)

PER-based

A tribal ritual. The process by which an avatar is removed from an immortal and given its own body using another vox. The character must have a skill equal to at least half the SPT of the reconstituted avatar to be pulled from the immortal. This skill is automatically considered focused, there are no foci to purchase.

Scion (Base Cost = 6)

PRS-based

The process by which an immortal sheds one of his curses into a child-like clone of himself. The skill is also used in controlling the clone during any wild outbursts it may have. The character can



only shed curses with a rank equal or less than his skill. More information on curses is in Chapter 4. This skill is automatically considered focused, there are no foci to purchase.

Tithing (Base Cost 3)

WIL-based

A skill used by an immortal to provide immaculum motes to talisman's belonging to other immortals. Immortals do not require this skill to give up attribute points or immaculum motes to any talisman or ark they are already attuned to. Neither can ever be given — even with the skill — to an ark not attuned to.

This skill is also taught to mortal Believers (by an immortal, a “magical” tome of knowledge, ancient scrolls of lore, through family tradition, etc.) so they can give attribute points motes directly to an ark or talisman. Points given in this way cannot come from WIL or SPT. The Believer makes a tithing roll against a target number equal to 6 plus half the attribute they are pulling from; success allows one point to be pulled and flow into the talisman or ark. Believers do not require attunement to an ark or talisman, just belief in what they are doing and that the object holds significance in their belief system.

The point must heal back — as if lost during a lullaby — prior to the Believer being able to tithe another point. Failure causes the point to become unusable by the Believer and it must go through the same healing time (as if it was lost) prior to the Believer being able to attempt to tithe again. The Believer never knows if he actually successfully gave the point

or if it was just “damaged”, it feels the same either way. Believers can also give immaculum with no roll required; one mote can be tithed per day at most.

Uplifting (Base Cost = 6)

SPT-based

A tribal ritual. The process by which an immortal is mystically bound to the tribe, includes changing various natures (such as providing flight for incoming Morrigan) and providing a link to the tribal gift, curse and any other tribal-linked special abilities and powers. To participate in the ritual, the character must have a skill equal to at least half the SPT of the immortal being uplifted.

Suggested Foci: The character must be taught the specifics of the tribe's ritual to purchase a focus in that tribe; tribes only teach the specifics to their own members. The character's initial focus will be in the tribe he learned the skill with while a member.

COMBAT OPTIONS

In this section we'll go over optional rules for more advanced play.

Stunning and Knockout

When a character is forced to mark off more than half his health boxes from a single source of damage (a single physical blow, the damage from a single serenade, etc.) he is considered stunned. If the source of damage is non-living, make this determination prior to the Panacea reducing the number of health boxes to be marked off. Stunned characters lose all remaining standard actions in the round and have an automatic initiative of 0 on the following round. Passive actions and defensive



rolls still occur but at a -2 penalty to all rolls. Optionally, characters can become stunned as a result of a critical success by their opponent. If a character is again stunned before the beginning of the following round, he is knocked unconscious, regardless of whether he is incapacitated or not.

It is also possible to purposely wear an opponent down, doing only “stun” type damage, in order to make them fall unconscious rather than do normal damage. All attacks made in order to do this must be announced prior to the attack roll and take a -2 penalty. Damage taken from such an attack is marked off on health boxes using an “s” in the box to differentiate it from standard damage. If the character becomes incapacitated with at least half the boxes “s” marked, the character falls unconscious (mortals are not in danger of dying). Immortals awaken a number of turns later, equal to the number of “s” boxes marked off, at that time all the health boxes are cleared; mortals take twenty times longer (ten minutes per each “s” box) to awaken.

Destructive serenades designed to do damage cannot do stun damage. A serenade would have to specifically be designed to do stun damage to do so. If that is the case, there is no 2-point penalty to the attack.

Mixed Damage

When damage is mixed (normal and “s” boxes both filled in for the character), any additional normal damage ignores the “s” boxes — as if they were not there. However, once the normal damage has been recorded, a single “s”

box is added to the end of all existing damage. In this way there will never be any “s” boxes sitting in between boxes marked off normally. For example, a character with nine health boxes has already marked off the first two boxes with normal damage (boxes 9 and 8). He then takes two boxes of stun damage (marks an “s” in boxes 7 and 6). He then takes three more boxes of normal damage; he marks overtop of 7 and 6 with normal damage and also marks normal damage in box 5. He then puts a single “s” in box 4. He then takes one more stun damage and marks an “s” in box 3. He then takes another single point of normal damage, marks it overtop of box 4, and then puts another “s” on box 2 (at the end of all existing damage).

Whenever a character awakens from mixed damage, all “s” boxes clear, but normal damage remains and heals as normal.

Going Defensive

A character can “go defensive” by sacrificing his remaining standard actions and defense rolls for the rest of the current round and make one roll with a bonus equal to the number of standard actions he has remaining. For the remainder of the round, that total is used as a defense against all physical attacks made against the character. In addition the bonus from his remaining standard actions is also added to his BODY and MIND for resisting any serenades directed at the character. A character must have at least 2 actions to go defensive as one standard action is used to make the defense roll.



In the following round, the character takes a 2-point penalty to his initiative roll, but the bonuses from the prior round carry over into this round until his first action.

Conditional Held Actions

When characters hold actions under the rules in the Player's Guide and decide to act on a later initiative count, they go last on that initiative count. If the character announces he is holding for a specific circumstance — holding until “something happens” is not specific — then he may not necessarily go last on the initiative count when he acts.

Hold to Block / Dodge

Characters already receive a defense roll for incoming physical attacks, via their combat skill or dodge skill. If a character declares he is holding to block or dodge a specific attack, he uses his standard action to dodge when the attack is made, and gains a bonus of +2 to the dodge or block roll. The character must be able to perceive the attack in order to get the bonus.

Parry with Riposte

A character can parry with a riposte — counterattack — if he has a saved action. Parry with Riposte is often done as part of a held action and uses the Parrying Weapons skill. On his action the character declares he is attempting to riposte the next incoming attack and holds. When the attack comes, the character uses up both his held action and any passive defense rolls for the initiative count. He makes a single parrying weapons roll with a 2-point bonus. If his total is higher than the attacker's, his defense roll now counts as

an attack — the original attacker's roll now counts as a defense roll — and damage is calculated against the original attacker. Parry with Riposte may only be used against unarmed or armed combatants, not against missile weapons or firearms — though interesting uses of carnals have caused a few bullets to ricochet into opponents (see Chapter 5).

Covered

A character can hold action while

NEW MECHANIC —

Range

Accuracy is reduced on ranged weapons when used at medium or long range; as an epic game there is no penalty for short range. The following are basic guidelines for ranges (shown in yards) for common classes of weapons. Older / lower quality versions will have lesser ranges and high-tech / better quality ones will have greater ranges. Going beyond long range provides a 6-point penalty — but many weapons simply cannot fire any further than their long range.

Weapon	Medium - 2	Long - 3
Thrown (dagger, bola sling, hand grenade)	10 - 20	20 - 30
Musket, Shotgun	10 - 40	40 - 80
Bow / Crossbow	40 - 100	100 - 300
Pistol, Light Rifle	50 - 100	100 - 200
Grenade Launcher	100 - 200	200 - 300
Heavy Rifle (with aiming sight or basic scope)	200 - 500	500 - 1500
Machine Gun	400 - 750	750 - 2000

keeping aim on a stationary target. If the target moves, the character gains a +3 to hit if he fires or strikes immediately. The target must have first become stationary long enough for the character to perform a covered held action first. The target must also be within point blank range (3 yards) to be covered. Some weapons — such as heavy weapons — are not designed to correctly work at such close range; disastrous results occur at your discretion if used this way.

Bracing and Aiming

A character can expend actions bracing against the recoil from fully automatic fire, and aiming to reduce range penalties. Each action spent bracing or aiming prior to firing a weapon (or throwing a weapon for aiming only) reduces the penalty by 1 point. Penalties cannot be reduced below -1 in this way. These rules only apply if recoil and range penalties are used in the game.

WEAPON RULES

New types of ammunition for firearms and military grade exploding devices and weapons are found here.

Armor Piercing (AP) Rounds

AP rounds are used in ammunition for firearms and anti-structural (anti-tank) weapons to reduce the effectiveness of armor and barriers. When AP rounds are used, the first 2 points of any armor is ignored. In exchange, AP rounds subtract one from damage before comparing to END and armor. If a weapon is using this kind of ammunition it should be noted by -AP after the weapon name to keep track of that fact.

NEW MECHANIC —

Reloading

Once a firearm has expended its current ammunition it must be reloaded, we provide a basic guide to the number of actions it takes to do so.

Firearm Type	# of Actions to Reload
Blackpowder, Launchers (mortar/rocket/grenade/etc.)	10
Revolver-Style Pistols and Single Shot Rifles	1 per bullet
Cartridge/Clip Style (includes ejecting used clip)	2

High Explosive (HE) Rounds

HE rounds are used in firearms to do additional damage to the target by using a small explosive charge that detonates when striking the target. Against a target with 3 or less points of armor the damage is increased by +2 prior to comparing to END and armor. Against a target with 4 or more points, the total damage is halved before comparing to END and armor (the rounds do not pierce hard/thicker armor well enough prior to detonating). If a weapon is using this kind of ammunition it should be noted by -HE after the weapon name to track that fact.

Explosive Devices

Most of the time, immortals deal with lightning bolts, swords and the occasional pistol or automatic rifle. But eventually, someone is going run afoul of a paramilitary force or an enterprising opponent will find himself the proverbial BFG (big flipping gun). Modern military hardware deals out devastating



damage even to a powerful immortal; immortals can lose limbs and be literally blown to bits!

While the power of a serenade may look like an explosion, it is mystical and keeps the same strength throughout its area of effect. Mundane explosions get weaker, the further you move away from “ground zero” — the origination of the explosion. Explosive devices are divided into two main categories, anti-personnel and anti-structural.

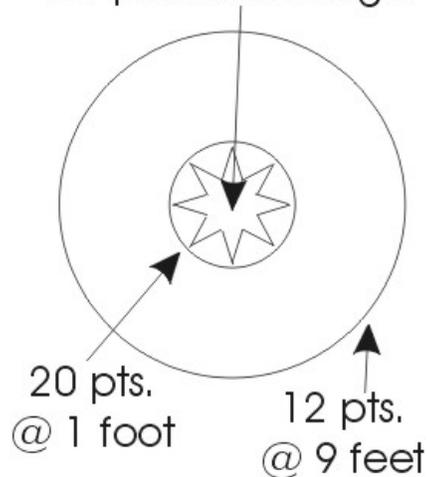
Anti-personnel

Grenades and other explosive devices fragment apart with concussive force, damaging everything in a nearby blast radius. The greatest damage happens at “ground zero” and quickly gets weaker as it radiates outward. Any armor points are doubled against anti-personnel explosives as long as they cover a significant portion of the target. These type of explosives are designed for “soft” targets such as people, pedestrian vehicles and even big game animals.

Anti-personnel explosives are identified as having 3 ratings X-Y-Z. X is for the damage at ground zero, Y is for the dissipation level, and Z is for the dissipation rate in feet. Standard anti-personnel explosives (grenades, small mines, etc.) use a rating of 21-1-1: they apply 21 points (x) of damage against END and armor at ground zero and then apply one less point (y) every one foot (z) (see diagram at top right of page)

Anytime a target of an anti-personnel device is missed, it might still explode close enough for the target to take damage. Anti-personnel explosives are

“21-1-1 Rated
Explosion”
Blast Origination
21 points damage



considered “indirect” hit weapons. Every point the target is missed by puts the origination of the explosion 2 feet away. Missing by 4 points means the device explodes 8 feet away from the target; if the rating were 21-1-1, the target would still be going up against 13 points of damage to compare to his END and armor.

Anti-structural

Anti-tank weapons use concussive blasts directed through the point of impact to punch through a barrier and heavily damage the “soft” targets on the other side of it. Armor is not doubled against these weapons, but if they miss the target it takes no damage as the blast will not be pointed at the target any longer. These are for use against armored vehicles, bunkers, planes, large boats, etc. Rocket launchers, small mortar launchers, large land mines are examples of such weapons; they use the same X-Y-Z rating, starting at 21-1-1

and going up from there as they enter full military grade (guided missiles for example).

Blasting Through Barriers

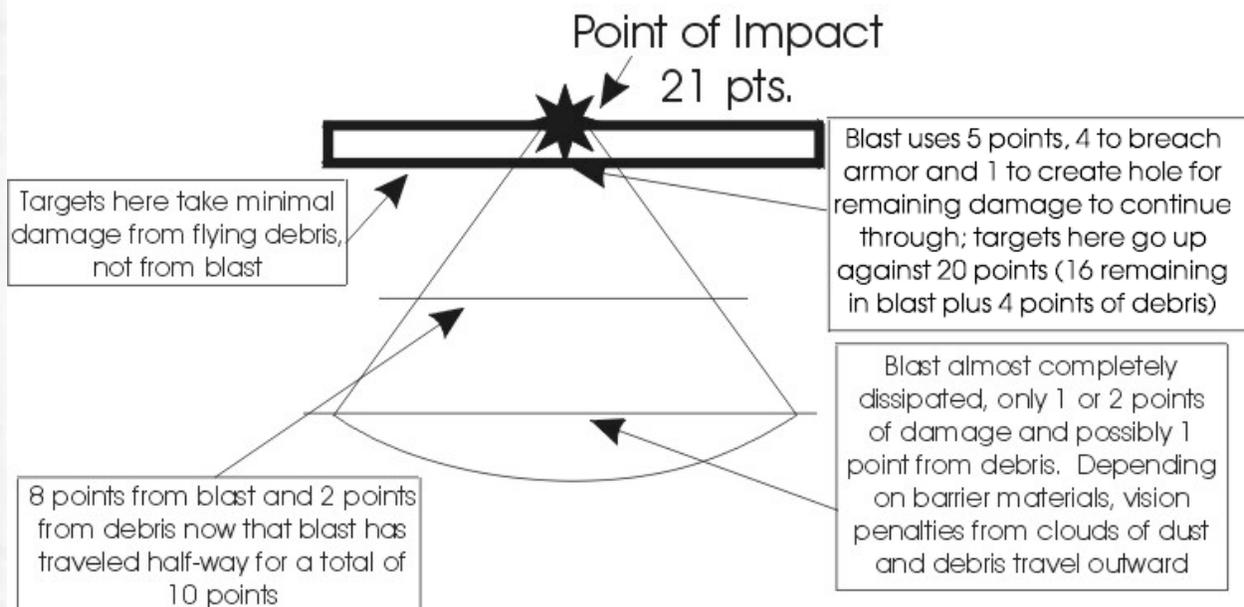
When anti-structural weapons hit barriers, they first attempt to break through the barrier using the breaking object rules from the Player's Guide — only a hole needs to be created. If successful, any remaining damage not negated by the barrier continues through. The remaining damage dissipates normally, in a cone-like shape. If the remaining damage is equal or greater than twice the armor rating of the barrier at the point it broke through, the armor rating is added to the remaining damage, but dissipates separately. This extra damage is the result of debris from the barrier, being carried by the blast.

Using the diagram below, the 21 points is reduced by 5 to get past the 4 armor

and create a 1-BODY sized hole. The remaining 16 points picks up 4 points of debris since 16 is easily more than twice the 4 armor of the barrier. Targets just inside the hole resist 20 damage points. At the halfway point (8 feet away from the hole), targets resist 8 points of remaining damage plus 2 remaining points of debris for 10 damage points. Once it reaches the full 16 feet the blast is negligible. However, the debris and dust can create additional penalties against vision or even tactical. Additionally flying debris could do damage to other parts of the area beyond the barrier, causing collapses and further damage, especially if inside of a room or other smaller structure.

If the explosion is unable to breach the barrier, half the remaining points blast back in a small half-sphere on the same side of the barrier as the impact. This will affect any targets very close to the

"21-1-1 Rated Anti-Structural against a 4 BODY, 4 Armor Wall"





point of impact. A similar effect occurs if the explosion breaches the first barrier, and a second barrier is within reach of the remaining damage and flying debris — but it cannot be penetrated. The second barrier will cause the damage to blast back as well at all sorts of odd angles at your discretion as Narrator.

Reinforced Armor Rules

Barriers, Vehicles and other items use the rules in the Player's Guide on pages 201 and 202 to determine BODY, Armor and Health boxes. If an item has been specially reinforced, modified or provided additional armor — for the purpose of resisting additional damage — have 2 additional points of Armor rating; this does not affect their BODY or number of Health Boxes.

Nuclear Weapons

... are basically feared by all but the most insane of the himsati race; droveling, Tribal and loner alike. Rather than even attempt to provide mechanics for something like this, let's look at the general effects in the various realms that



link to or correspond with the main blast areas:

Earth

You know what this looks like. No, you didn't go to your ark and reform, but there will be a vox left somewhere under the nuclear fallout. How long it remains irradiated, or the strange and deadly effects it generates, is anyone's guess.

Blue Air

All spirits are shredded that were in the area that corresponded to that spot on Earth. There are no shallows formed. As to your immortal spirit? Sorry, that didn't even make it out of your disintegrating body back on Earth. No way, bye-bye, game over. So yes, there is one sure-fire mundane way to utterly destroy an immortal.

Mantles

The maker goes partially insane when the blast rips through the portal that connected into the blast area, destroying anything within a few hundred yards of it; this includes frying a portion of the maker's mind. This assumes the maker is not in that blast, in which case the mantle begins destabilizing almost immediately. Time to get a new maker, because this one is not going to be right ever again.

Morpheus

The sudden snuffing out of all those souls causes a super-Tempest that destroys any anchors in the area, snaps lots of strands, and leaves a lot of survivors scarred for life when they try to dream in the shambles left behind. It'll take years to right itself. Yes, a tempest that destroys anchors, and then



spirals out into the Blue Air — what do you think shredded all those spirits?

Ley Membrane

Any Na-Gates connected to the Nadir from this location are gone. There are a few less ley lines, and the remaining ones are in new positions and have some odd twists in them... this is after things untangle in a year or so. Eventually it'll all straighten out, someday.

Underworld

Everywhere on the First Tier with connections to the blast area is irradiated and immortals cannot pass through it for at least a few years.

VEHICLE RULES

Driving a vehicle in duress situations — such as a car chase — is combat driving. Drivers make control rolls using the Ground Vehicle skill. It takes one standard action to make the control roll. The target number is vehicle speed divided by 10 (15 for kph), round down; minimum target number is 6. Hair-pin turns, rush-hour traffic, construction, or other abnormal conditions increase the target number by an additional one or two points as you deem fit. The driver needs to only beat the target number by one point. Additional points are used to offset penalties for other non-vehicle actions as explained later.

If the roll is successful, the character continues on at roughly the same speed, if he fails he rolls a second time at a 2-point penalty. This “last ditch” roll is to avoid crashing, flipping the vehicle, etc. If the second roll is successful, the driver is able to slow down enough to get control of the vehicle and maneuver

around the various traffic and/or other obstacles. The speed of the vehicle is reduced to whatever speed is normally used to navigate that area under non-duress situations. The user can increase speed again at any time.

When not in a duress situation — and staying within legal speed limits — passive actions are used to stay in the correct lane, watch speed, look out for traffic lights, construction, pedestrians, etc.; no control rolls are needed.

Non-Vehicle Actions

Performing physical non-vehicle actions, such as shooting from one vehicle at another, take a penalty equal to -2 plus any other penalties applied to the driver for those same hair-pin turns, construction, etc. However, for every two full points the driver beats his control roll by, the penalties is reduced by one point (to a minimum of a 1-point penalty).

Chases

Contested control rolls are made between the drivers. Each point of difference between the rolls provides the winner an effective 10 mph (15 kph) boost of speed for the round, for the purpose of closing or extending the gap between vehicles as appropriate. A 4-point difference counts as if the winner suddenly was able to muster a 3-second boost of an extra 40mph (60 kph) to either close the gap or move further away as appropriate.

Resolution

There are only a few ways that such chases tend to end. The escapee gets too far away and loses the pursuer in traffic



or off on side streets; the escapee pulls over or is forced to stop (maybe he gets out and runs, maybe not); or there is a fantastic crash. Once vehicles are within close enough distance the drivers and passengers can try anything they want to get the other vehicle to stop.

If one vehicle attempts to ram into the other, the aggressor counts his control roll as an attack roll; the target number is equal to the most recent control roll made by the defender. The aggressor can make multiple control rolls in the round (per the number of standard actions he has) for multiple attacks. The defender can do the same to attempt to increase the target number for the aggressor. If both are attempting to be the aggressor on the same initiative count, the higher roll simply beats the lower roll.

If the aggressor beats the defender, the difference is added to the target number for the defender's next control roll. This continues until someone gives up trying to drive the other off the road or someone crashes due to failing the control roll and the "last ditch" roll. Vehicles must remain within 10mph of one another to stay close enough to try to run each other off the road. If one slows down or speeds up the other must keep pace or they separate again.

Example:

A car and a truck are in chase. The car is going 100 mph and the truck 90 mph. The car attempts to force the truck off the road, there are no adverse conditions or traffic at the moment. The driver of the car rolls a 11 on his control roll against the target number of 10. The

truck's last control roll was 12. The car succeeds on his control roll but is unable to make contact with the truck. On the next roll he tries again and rolls a 14. The driver of the truck takes a 2-point penalty to his next control roll (going from 9 to 11 now); on his next roll he gets an 8 and fails. He now makes the "last ditch" roll but against a 13 now for the normal 2-point penalty. He rolls a 12 and fails. The truck crashes.

Vehicle Crashes

When a vehicle crashes, its final speed is equal to the speed during the last control roll, minus the total of the "last ditch" roll. Damage points applied against the vehicle and the occupant are determined using impact rules (see Damage and Healing Rules later in this chapter).

Example:

Picking up from the prior example, the truck was going 90 mph and the driver rolled a 12 on the "last ditch" roll; the final speed on impact is 78 mph and this is used with the impact rules to determine how much damage the truck and passenger take.

Vehicle Damage

A single box or two of damage breaks headlights, bangs up the body and paint job, etc. Filling in all the boxes completely totals the vehicle; if the battery is still working, the radio might come on if you can reach the on button through the rather twisted wreckage.

Occupant Damage

If protected by a safety and restraint system (seat belts, air bags, etc.), the damage points are reduced by 6 before applying them against the occupant.



Other Vehicle Control Rolls

Piloting air and water craft in duress situations force the pilot to make control rolls based on the same 10 mph (15 kph) system. Weather, sea and/or wind conditions take the place of road hazard penalties. Piloting such a craft unskilled is automatically considered a duress situation, requiring control rolls. Below we provide some basic average speed guides and rulings for these vehicles.

Watercraft

Watercraft normally use knots to determine their speed, one knot equals roughly 1.15 mph (1.85 kph).

- Boats utilizing a sail go upwards of 20 - 40 mph, depending on the size of the hull and sail.
- Simple engine-powered boats (ex: small fishing boat) go upwards of 30 mph.
- Large and racing boats (ex: PT Boat, aircraft carrier, cigarette boat) go upwards of 50 mph.
- Hovercraft and airboats go upwards of 60 mph regularly; airboats can easily go even faster, but any turbulence at these speeds is liable to cause immediate capsizing or flipping of the craft.

Aircraft

Modern engine and jet-based aircraft have special onboard instrumentation to assist the pilot; depending on how modern or complex, it increases the mph (kph) that the aircraft can go between increases to the target numbers:

- Simple and slow moving air vessels such as gliders, blimps and zeppelins make control rolls as normal.
- Standard helicopters and single-engine planes for private and

commercial go 20 mph between target number increases.

- Commercial jets and small private jets go 40 mph between target number increases.
- Hypersonic aircraft go 80 mph between target number increases.

Other Craft

Obviously there are other types of craft such as submarines, hot air balloons, bicycles, skateboards, skis and more, but using the above guidelines you should be able to come up with appropriate rulings as needed.

ENVIRONMENTAL RULES

Fire, lightning, drowning, falling... there are a host of mundane threats characters face just going about everyday routines.

Falling

Falling in the game is a simplified version of acceleration and terminal velocity as it occurs in the real world. Terminal velocity for normal humans with air resistance (outstretched limbs) is 120 mph. Reducing air resistance can produce a speed of nearly 200 mph; the fastest speed ever recorded is just over 300 mph. Damage is handled using impact damage rules (see Damage and Healing Rules later in this chapter) and is calculated based on the final speed at impact with the ground, structure or other hard surface or barrier (even impacting water once the character starts gaining speed is considered a hard surface). Impacting natural earth, a stand of trees or the surface of a natural body of water negates the Panacea.



Falling Chart		
Distance to impact	Speed at impact (metric speeds are rounded for ease of play)	Time to impact
10 feet	10mph (15kph)	< 1 second
20 feet	25mph (40 kph)	1 second
50 feet	35mph (55 kph)	Just under 2 seconds
100 feet	55mph (90 kph)	2.5 seconds
200 feet	85mph (135 kph)	3.5 seconds
500 feet	125mph (200 kph) — standard terminal velocity	Just over 5 seconds

The chart above provides a rough time to — and speed at — impact, based on how high the character was when he started falling. It is based on a human being in terms of size and mass in an uncontrolled fall. Larger and/or heavier things may fall a bit faster; while a piece of paper is certainly not going to achieve those speeds. Air resistance also affects speed.

Drowning

Unable to die via drowning, an immortal still feels its effects; it is possible for an immortal to find himself incapacitated at the bottom of a large body of water. Breath can be held for a time based on the character's END, after this he makes END rolls — the sports skill can be used with an endurance or swimming focus — against a target number of 6, plus 1 for each minute beyond the time allotted based on their END.

Characters attempting to hold their breath after failing a swimming roll —

now floundering under the water — take the same -2 penalty in addition to any other penalties.

Atmospheres

One atmosphere is 33 feet (5½ fathoms). Characters can safely swim at a depth — in atmospheres — equal to their END.

Each atmosphere past this point increases the target number for holding breath by 1. Characters with Aquatic receive no penalties until they pass their END x1000 fathoms (1 fathom = 6 ft.). Then the 1-point per atmosphere penalty begins.

Example:

A character with 4 END is 165 feet below the water's surface (5 atmospheres). After two minutes he rolls to hold his breath against a target number of 6 plus 1 for the additional atmosphere — total target number of 7. At three

minutes the target number goes up to 8, at four minutes to 9, and so on.

<u>Holding Breath</u>	
END	Time Held
1	1 round
2	1 turn
3	1 minute
4	2 minutes
5	4 minutes
6	8 minutes
7	16 minutes
8	32 minutes
9	64 minutes



Damage

If the character fails the roll to hold his breath he marks off one health box each round as water enters the lungs and asphyxiation starts. If the immortal is unable to regain control and reach the surface before becoming incapacitated he sinks to the bottom. At this point the vox shuts down his biological systems: taste and smell completely cease, and the other three senses dull as motor control over the body stops. This is considered living damage for healing purposes if done in a natural body of water (river, lake, ocean).

Decomposition

When humans drown, air in the body is expelled and they sink; days or weeks later bacteria decomposing the body produce gases, causing it to rise again. The vox stops decomposition and the immortal never floats back to the surface. Every few hours the vox forces an internal spasm within the body to check for breathable air entering the lungs; if successful it restarts bodily systems. If the body remains trapped in the liquid, after a number of days equal to the character's total health boxes, the vox will attempt to initiate lethe. If for any reason it cannot succeed (the distance to a safe point is too far away, say from the bottom of an ocean) the vox allows the body to decompose, eventually shunting the immortal's spirit into the Blue Air as a gossamer. The vox floats along the currents of the water to hopefully come in contact with a new host or unfortunately settle and sink into the earth at the bottom of the body of water.

Fire

Fire comes from a number of sources, flamethrowers, exploding barrels of fuel, and even bonfires. Fire-damage from explosive devices and chemical burns should be treated using the rules for explosives and toxins. Any other type of fire — or normal fire resulting from something like an explosion — should use these rules.

Fire damage is dependent on how hot it burns and how much of the character's body is likely to get burned. Fires have a heat value based on how hot they get. The heat value (HV) is based in part on the type of fire and/or fuel it is using. A die value represents the potential to burn something within the area of the fire. Next to the die value is a size calculation, using the heat value to get an approximate area of effect.

Damage is determined by rolling the die value for the size and multiplying the result by the HV, this is done once per round.

HV Example

- 1 Heat Exposure Only — no flames but high intensity heat in excess of 150°F.
- 2 Cigarettes, light bulbs, heat elements less than 1000°F.
- 3 Candles, matches, stove elements, halogen lights up to 2500°F.
- 4 Bunsen burners, blowtorches, wood/organic fueled, gas-based fires (butane, propane, methane) up to 4000°F.
- 5 Chemical, napalm, white phosphorous, Plasma torches (upwards of 5,000°F and higher).



- Die Size (Radius in yards)**
- D4 Negligible Size (only by purposeful or accidental touch)
 - D6 HV (heat value) x 2
 - D8 HV x HV
 - D10 HV x HV x HV
 - D12 HV x HV x HV x HV

Mundane worn armor only provides protection against D4 size fires, and only if it covers the area being burned. Intrinsic armor (magical, natural, serenade) provides normal damage reduction. Heat resistant material reduces the heat value of a fire — thus reducing the multiplier for damage each round — but often only provides protection for a limited time before the general heat works its way past the protection.

Dousing a Fire

Fires are easily doused by an application of an appropriate suppressant, large enough to extinguish the coverage area. The suppressant's roll lowers the total damage of the fire in the area it covers until it extinguishes the entire fire or runs out and the fire again begins to spread.

Suppressants use a die value of D4 to D12 and coverage area is based on delivery system (a fire extinguisher can put out most HV * 2 size fires, but a fire truck can cover a much larger fire). If the incorrect suppressant is used, it will do little or nothing to put out the fire.

Magical methods of putting out a fire use the total rolled on the actual die plus the HV value (not the damage total) as a target number. Each success level brings either the size or the HV down by one level depending on how the magical power manifests. It may still take multiple applications or time for a magical method to completely put out a fire.

Incendiary Liquids

Greek fire was a highly flammable liquid created in ancient times. Many consider its descendent to be napalm: a thick highly flammable liquid often used in warfare. Napalm is often mixed with gasoline to make a sticky incendiary gel. It is used in everything from specialized grenades, air-dropped bombs and flamethrowers. Most normal humans suffering a direct napalm attack die quickly from severe 3rd degree burns. Its use against civilian populations is banned by the United Nations.

To illustrate the danger: a napalm fire rolling maximum on a D12 die creates a 5⁴ yard radius (625 yards, just under a mile diameter) area, doing 60 points of damage in the first round. Against an unarmored human with a 3 END it causes 28 health boxes of damage!

White Phosphorus

While primarily used as a flare / smoke



producing agent, it is also used as an incendiary device. What makes it so dangerous is that it keeps burning until it has completely consumed itself or is completely deprived of oxygen, even continuing to burn while inside the body of a living being. Ingestion of as little as 15 milligrams usually results in death. White phosphorous rarely comes with a size value greater than D4, but is almost impossible to suppress.

Fire from Explosions

Various containers and objects can explode causing a burst of fire into an area. The initial blast is calculated two HV higher for the first round. On subsequent rounds when the die is rolled use the normal HV.

Electrical damage

Electrical damage is based on the amount of energy pumping into the target each second. Resistance or insulation (grounding) reduces damage; becoming highly conductive (such as standing in a puddle of water) removes defense.

Each round the target is in contact with the current, the damage die is rolled. The damage points rolled, divided by two, is the number of health boxes the target marks off. If the target is insulated, subtract its END from the damage points before calculating health boxes. If the target becomes highly conductive increase the die value by one level (at D12, roll it twice and add the two rolls together).

Intrinsic armor (mystic, serenade or natural) protects against electrical damage, mundane worn armor does not.

Die Example

D4	Battery Operated Device
D6	Light Socket
D8	Wall Outlet
D10	Small Generator
D12	Power line, Lightning Bolt

DC vs. AC Current Side Effects

AC (alternating current) and DC (direct current) work differently. A DC current also immobilizes the target, requiring a STR roll against the electrical damage's die roll to break free. An AC current adds up to 3 extra points of damage per round for any electrical devices the target is in contact with (ex: pacemaker, Eyz unit, etc.).

Lightning

Lightning is a single massive instantaneous shock. It travels over 100,000 mph and reaches temperatures over 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Its power is in the millions upon millions of watts. However, it passes through the body in less than a fraction of a second, so individuals actually survive most lightning strikes; only 30% of strikes are fatal. Of course this does not apply to mystical lightning.

D A M A G E A N D HEALING RULES

Characters take damage from a variety of sources, these are divided into two main categories: living and non-living. To mortals it makes little difference, but for the characters — who are immortal — it greatly affects game-play.

Living Damage

Any living being, energy force, object with a SPT attribute, object imbued with



immaculum, or object directly wielded by a living being, all count as living damage. A long spear's damage is living while in the hands of its wielder, once thrown it is no longer living damage. An enchanted dagger though, is living either way. And lightning, serenades, and plasma wells on far-off Dominion worlds? Living. Toxins are considered living damage only in terms of game mechanics due to the unique way they interact with the immortal physiology.

The elements get a little trickier. Getting hit by rocks or having a water tower fall on a character is not living damage. Drowning in a river, lake or ocean is, as is being buried in a mudslide and having it enter the character's lungs. If it traps him within the Earth's aura and enters his body as part of the damage, then it is living. If it is disconnected from Earth's aura (mankind's technological savvy stands in the way) then it is not living damage. So even drowning in the water tower is not living damage.

So what happens when the extremely strong character rips a telephone pole out of the ground and hits someone with it? If the object's length is less than the character's STR in yards, his aura is strong enough to encompass it. This means a human with a 3 STR wielding a seven or eight foot pole arm weapon does living damage. The telephone pole? That depends on just how high of a STR the character has and how long the telephone pole is...

Non-Living Damage

Everything else is non-living damage, even a normal dagger when thrown

(since it is no longer in contact with the living being who threw it) becomes non-living damage. Any projectile weapon, falls, vehicle crashes or other types of solid impact damage fall into this category. All forms of non-living damage are subject to the Panacea.

Remember, the basic function of the Panacea per the Player's Guide: *before health boxes are marked off on a character's sheet, half of those boxes are negated and the remaining boxes (round up) are then actually marked off.*

However, there is a limit; the Panacea cannot negate more than half (round up) of the total health boxes a character has from a single source of damage. This is not based on how many may already be marked off, just the total number of health boxes he has. So the Panacea of a character with 11 health boxes can only negate 6 health boxes from any one single source of damage.

Example:

The character with those 11 total health boxes is hit by a subway train for 14 boxes of damage. The Panacea only negates 6 boxes instead of 7; half of his 11 total health boxes (rounded up) equal 6. So 8 get through instead of 7.

Impact Damage

Impact damage is used for falling, vehicle crashes, or any time a being or large object traveling at a consistent rate of speed collides with another. These rules are not used when a character picks something up and throws it; that uses the standard rules from the Player's Guide of STR + accuracy + item damage value. The combination of STR and accuracy

account for the relative speed and precision when throwing an object. In the instances described here, an outside force is propelling the character or object at a continuing rate (such as a vehicle engine or gravity). The same method is used if a being or object collides with a stationary being or object, or if both are moving and collide with each other. The following steps are used to determine total damage:

Step 1 — Damage Potential

Every being and object has a damage potential equal to its STR. If it has no STR rating, use its BODY (i.e. cars, walls, boulders, net kiosks, wrecking balls, etc.). If the object is complex (has different areas with different BODY ratings), use the BODY rating of the area that is actually impacted (such as colliding with a building's large window instead of its concrete wall).

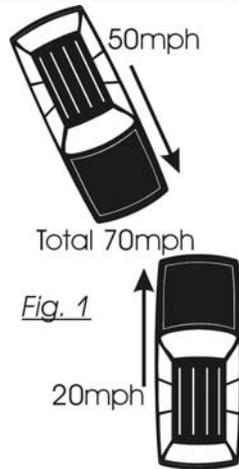
Step 2 — Total Speed

Total speed is determined in one of three ways:

Head-on/Near Head-on Collisions

See Fig. 1

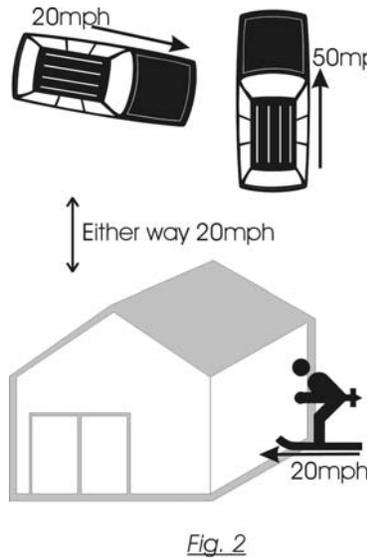
If both beings/objects are moving towards each other, add their speeds together.



Stationary/Side Impact Collisions

See Fig. 2

If one of the beings/objects is stationary, it has a speed of 0. Use the speed of the moving being/object only. If one collides into the "side" of the other, the impacted being/object has a speed of 0. Use the speed of the one that had the "forward" movement only.



Rear/Near Rear Collisions

See Fig. 3

If both beings/objects are moving in the same direction, and one catches up to the other, colliding into it, subtract the slower moving speed from the faster.

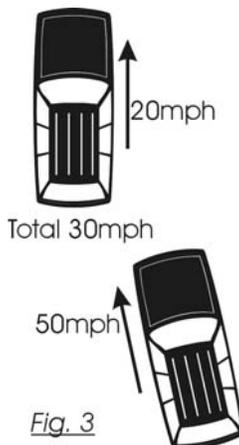
Step 3 — Speed Multiplier

If speed is calculated in mph, divide it by 4; if it is calculated in kph, divide it by 6. Round down the result.

Step 4 — Damage Points

Multiply the damage potential by the speed multiplier, this is applied against the other being/object as per normal rules for living beings and objects.

Anything residing within an object (for example someone is sitting inside of a vehicle) during a collision takes damage from the object as well. For





example, if a standard passenger car going 30 mph hits a barrier, the occupant must now resist damage equal to 28 points (30 mph divided by 4, rounded down to 7, then multiplied by the car's BODY of 4)

Step 5— Resist Damage

Living beings resist impact damage normally, per the rules on page 204: the defender subtracts his END plus appropriate armor from the points and marks off one health box for every two full remaining points.

Each object or being now resists a total number of damage points equal to the other object's BODY (or being's STR) multiplied by the speed factor. Only intrinsic or magical armor (natural, serenade, Mystech or by himsati nature) helps defend against impact damage. Mundane man-made armor (for example: Kevlar vest, flak jacket, riot gear, etc.), is not appropriate armor for resisting impact damage. Panacea rules apply, so long as the impact isn't with another living being or direct contact with a portion of Earth's living aura (such as colliding with the surface of a natural body of water, bare earth, or a cluster of trees).

Impact damage often results in the need for Massive Trauma (MT) Damage rules due to the high amount of damage taken in a single blow; more than merely stunning or knocking out a character.

Massive Trauma Damage

When an immortal character is forced to mark off more than 1.5x his health boxes from a single source of damage (a single physical blow, the damage from a single

serenade, etc.) he takes Massive Trauma Damage (MT Damage). If the source of damage is non-living, make this determination prior to the Panacea reducing the number of health boxes to be marked off. MT damage changes how the Panacea and incapacitation functions for character's that are immortal. Mortal characters are immediately dead unless you, as Narrator, have implemented special circumstances.

Example:

A character with 10 health boxes can sustain up to 15 health boxes of damage (10 x 1.5) in a single blow without suffering MT damage. If he receives 16 or more boxes of damage from a single source, that is beyond his 1.5x capacity; he now follows MT damage rules.

Once a character enters MT damage, the vox shuts down all of the biological systems of the body: the immortal is effectively dead for all intents and purposes. The Panacea works at a much slower rate during this time, attempting to repair the damage to avoid both the physical destruction of the character or forcing him into lethe. There are some circumstances where this is not possible and the vox allows the spirit to enter the Blue Air so it may await a new host organism instead: the character is literally cut in half for example.

When a character takes MT damage he fills in all remaining health boxes; the remainder is kept track of separately and is counted as "overflow" damage points. The Panacea does not negate any of this damage initially. Instead, every 10 minutes it removes one of the overflow



SYSTEM NOTE —

Example of MT Damage

Two characters, currently with no damage, fall several stories and must each resist 42 points of damage.

After subtracting his 5 END the first character (with 14 total health boxes) has 37 points remaining, which equals 18 health boxes to be marked off. He does not take MT damage: he would have to take 22 or more boxes for MT damage to occur. The Panacea negates 7 of the boxes and he marks 11 off on his character sheet. He is stunned however, if the stunning and knockout rules are in use.

After subtracting his 4 END the second character (with 9 total health boxes) has 38 points remaining, which equals 19 health boxes to be marked off. He takes MT damage: anything over 14 boxes causes MT damage to occur. The character fills in the 9 boxes and keeps track of the 10 points of overflow damage (note the Panacea didn't negate any of the 19 boxes).

Every ten minutes one of the overflow points is removed, it will take 100 minutes to remove all 10. Then the character remains in this death state for another 38 minutes (38 points of damage) At the end of the 38 minutes, the right-most health box (incapacitation-level box) is cleared and he wakes up. He will have been apparently dead for 138 minutes, over two hours.

points, even if the source of damage was living. If the character takes any more significant damage (3 or more boxes

worth) before the Panacea can finish removing all the overflow points, the vox will force the character into lethe if possible. If not, then the character will transport back to his ark for restoration of the body or spill into the Blue Air if that is not possible.

Once the last overflow point is removed, the character remains in the suspended “death” state for a number of minutes equal to the number of damage points he took (after END/Armor); that is the damage points after subtracting his resistance, not health boxes and/or overflow points. Once this time has passed, the incapacitation-level health box is cleared and the character wakes up.

Healing Aesthetics

As a symbiote, the vox's primary concern is the general protection of vital parts of the host organism. The internal structure and organs, torso and head are of paramount concern, all else is unnecessary. The vox is concerned with the gathering and dissemination of information to the shard network; any information is viable: the condition of the host organism is irrelevant so long as the vox is able to receive *some* kind of experiential input to process. Only when the vox is no longer able to receive that input will it then — of its own accord — attempt the process of lethe or allow the destruction of the host body (in order to reconstitute at an ark or be freed from the host organism to await a new one).

Voxes heal internal organ and structure damage at the same rate as minor external injuries, providing the immortal with two benefits. By the time minor



external injuries are healed, he is often fully healed. But he doesn't appear to be healing too fast in the eyes of mortals, allowing him to continue to act as if he has bruised ribs or other appropriate latent ailments from recent injuries. In short, he appears to heal very fast, but can hide a great deal of the supernatural quality with relative ease.

Whenever rapid healing takes place, damage is healed based on the form of healing (Panacea, MT damage recovery, serenade, Mystech, etc.) and what injuries are being healed. For example, the Panacea when reacting to MT damage where more than likely organs and bones are severely damaged, will work on the inside first. However, if a wound is present that continues to allow damage to the internal structures, the vox will reroute efforts to close the wound and then continue on internal efforts. But when the Panacea negates damage normally, it heals part of the damage as fast as it is delivered at the site of the wound, so the character just appears to take less damage. He does not appear to take 10 boxes and then miraculously heal 5 of them within a split second...

"It's just a flesh wound is all it is."

Body Parts

If an immortal enters lethe or is his spirit is spilled to the Blue Air, there is the matter of what happens to the physical remains left behind. If the immortal is still within his first hundred years since awakening his remains may age a few scant years, but will remain relatively intact. If he is beyond that age but still within the first few hundred years his

body will rapidly age and within a few minutes decompose to look as if someone dug up an old corpse. Once he is beyond half a millennium, the body will turn to dust and nearly vaporize within one or two turns.

The same goes for body parts should the immortal lose a tooth or a limb. Hair and nail clippings take a little longer, but they too eventually decompose to the same point. As the immortal heals, even from MT damage, blood lost also remains for a brief time depending on his age.

Regenerative Limits

Since the vox's primary concern is basic viability of the host and it is devoid of what can be considered feelings, it doesn't "care" if the character loses an eye, ear, hand, arm, leg, finger or foot. Internal organs *effectively* regenerate from damage, but the complete loss of an external organ or limb will not be regenerated (the damage will heal, but the character now gains a deformity bane). Cut the tip off a character's finger or earlobe and it will eventually be restored. Cut off fingers or rip off ears and the damage "heals", but it won't look pretty.

Even reconstituting with an ark using various rituals leaves a missing limb or external organ lost. Only lethe — which creates an entirely new and different body — restores lost limbs, eyes, fingers, etc. Even then it is not guaranteed: if the new body is a copy of a young amputee, then the immortal's new body also is missing that limb or part of limb as appropriate. And coming out of lethe, while correcting most



diseases, and minor existing conditions, will not suddenly regenerate something not there to begin with.

That said, the loss of a limb does **not** reduce any attributes, though penalties may exist for various activities (such as targeting large groups of spread out targets with only one eye).

But there are ways to get them back...

From the journal of Malcolm Beckett, Phoenix Juggler...

July 14th, 1873
Nivalea

Don't know how in tarnation Allen horn-swoggled me into this. The duster's tore to shreds, it's freezing, and the colt's got a split barrel. But that was just spit in the horse trough compared to what that D'Arcade carpetbagger did with Allen last night. The poor mortal feller was already dead, but when that carpetbagger took that ... "organ grafter" Mystech trinket and plucked the eye out, I got the most dreadful feelin. Then when he stuck it in the hole where Allen's eye used to be and it started makin that sound like a giant tick sucking on a horse, that made me plum nervous. But Allen's got a brand new eye to replace the one he lost last year. I don't know what in the blazes he had to pay for it, but it's started lookin just like his old one; they did a right bang-up job on it. Hope it was worth the heap of trouble we went through to get here. I'd always heard there was a "black market" for "used parts"...

Didn't believe it until now.

Medical Aid

Immortals heal at the rate of a mortal under full medical care — a number of boxes equal to their End per week — plus they have the Panacea negating amounts of non-living damage and all MT overflow damage. The natural state of an immortal prevents normal over-the-counter remedies and basic prescription drugs from assisting except in large doses; and that runs the risk of overdosing and being poisoned.

The accelerated healing rate simply stops things like headaches, allergies, rashes, sunburn, acne, fungal infections, and common colds from ever getting too bad, if even getting a chance to manifest at all. These ailments usually permanently vanish in the first few years of coming out of lethe, curses notwithstanding. A few stray immortals do keep an ailment here and there, which usually mutates during their first poor interaction with human faith ... silver or garlic allergy anyone?

There are situations where the Medicine skill can benefit an immortal. Foci such as Biofeedback and Acupuncture can assist an immortal under duress from recently rising avatars, traumatic lethe fades and other stress-related issues. A good knowledge of toxicology and herbalism can help one find temporary respite from the pain of poison trapped within the body. And of course emergency medical techniques such as First Aid can provide some quick assistance on the battlefield.

Emergency Medicine Usage

Characters with Medicine skill and appropriate emergency foci such as First



minutes (your discretion as Narrator) after taking such damage, and can only receive aid for health boxes marked off from their most recent blow — other damage by this time has been adjusted to by their body. Even if the Panacea has acted upon some of the damage, emergency medical aid can still be of use if administered within those few minutes.

Mortals can receive emergency aid at any time once they are at the -1 penalty level or greater. If a mortal has reached the incapacitated level and is dying, such aid doesn't actually clear

Aid can render assistance to immortals and mortals alike. A roll is made against the total number of health boxes of damage the target has marked off, plus the number of minutes since the last of the damage was delivered. Every two points clears one marked health box, up to a limit of half the Medicine skill.

Immortals who are at the -2 penalty level or greater can receive the benefits of emergency medical aid. However, they must receive such aid within a few

marked health boxes, but stabilizes the mortal for a number of minutes equal to the total rolled for the Medicine skill. The skill can be used repeatedly at a cumulative -1 penalty each time, until the dying mortal can get full medical treatment.

Life Force Spills

When a living being is destroyed, mortal or immortal, the part of its living aura not traveling into the Blue Air and/or on to the One Soul, spills out into the



immediate area. The size of the spill is a sphere with a radius — in yards — equal to the destroyed character's highest rated attribute. The spill of life force — and immaculum if any — is not something an immortal can just take in for his own use (for example, a character cannot stand in the flow of the spilling life force and replenish attribute points he gave up to his ark). However, such a spill cleanses taint. Two points of spilled attributes cleanse one point of taint (whereas during sinning or lulling, only one point can do the same). The tainted individual nearest to the spill's origin point is cleansed first, points used to cleanse do not travel onward. In addition, each yard the spill travels, one point dissipates and is unable to be used to cleanse any taint at all. It takes less than one combat round for the spill to reach outward and dissipate.

If a creature that thrives on taint is in the radius of the spill (examples: Bête Noire, droveling predators that thrive on taint, soul reapers) the dissipation rate goes from one point per yard to two points per yard as the taint of these creatures naturally feeds on the life force.

Bad Spill

If a being with taint in his auras is destroyed, the spill works differently. First, no cleansing can take place. Second, every living being — and even inanimate objects — are affected by the full number of taint motes racing around within the spill area, they simply do not travel outwards but instead whirl around chaotically in the spill area. Third, the radius of the spill is increased by the number of taint motes in the spill. Bad spills take one turn before it stops

affecting individuals coming into the area. But the taint still lingers for the rest of the scene, affecting those caught in the initial chaotic outbreak.

When a living being is caught in the spill of taint, it creates a nauseating and weakening affect, treated as a penalty equal to half the total motes of taint spilled. This penalty remains for the remainder of the scene (i.e. combat) so long as the character remains in the immediate area of the spill (not just within its radius). If the character can leave the area, the effects wear off in just a few minutes. The Slayer Calling's Darkstop gift negates an amount of this penalty equal to half his WIL (round up). This allows Slayers to wade through small hordes of taint-driven creatures and keep going.

The penalty is not cumulative, if multiple creatures are destroyed at the same time, take the creature with the highest number of taint motes and add 1 for each additional tainted creature. This determines the additional radius of the overall spill and the penalty applied to living beings.

Non-Mystech inanimate objects are also affected if the total number of taint motes from all destroyed beings is greater than six. The points over six are treated as side effects just like if an immortal was carrying the motes; but the effects tend to last longer, sometimes permanently (at your discretion).



CHAPTER 4

BOONS AND BANES

In this chapter we cover supernatural in with mortals and the resulting abilities and hindrances known as gifts and curses. We'll also look into mundane advantages and disadvantages for characters as well. Appendix D contains major or lengthy rules additions, enhancements and/or replacements related to this chapter.

MORTALS AND FAITH

Since the earliest encounters with humanity, they remain a point of contention among the himsati race. Even within individual tribes there are differing views on just what humanity is, their destiny, and what role they may play in the salvation — or destruction — of the himsati race.

The Soulless

- 0 SPT Attribute
- Small portion of the population

The soulless are constantly swayed by popular media and peer pressure; with no real convictions, beliefs or mind of their own. These are the ones mentioned in the Player's Guide, easily controlled by immortals for brief periods. They are the zombie-like student, the flaccid housewife, the office drone, and others who simply don't have the will to become their own person.

Being easily manipulated makes them dangerous when placed in the care of the droves; worse if they become tainted. It

is feared by many that a polarization will eventually occur; humanity will be made up of nothing but soulless (controlled by the forces of darkness) and Believers (fostered and cared for by the tribes); two massive armies waging a war threatening to tear the last bastion of the himsati race to shreds.

The 0 SPT attribute doesn't mean they have no souls. Their souls don't have enough strength to register as anything but the barest wisps to the supernatural senses and abilities of the himsati race. Committing the lullaby or sinning against a soulless has no effect. There is nothing vibrant enough within their auras to cling to and grab hold of. The real danger lies in the possibility of a soulless becoming tainted in the same way an immortal can.

Mundane Humans

- 1 to 2 SPT, on rare occasion a 3
- Vast majority of population

This is the everyday person with beliefs and convictions that hold him through normal everyday living, though his fears and doubts often overshadow them when the going gets tough. The vast majority of mundane mortals pay lip service to greater beliefs, but are rather agnostic within; they rarely admit to such. They wrestle with temptation on a daily basis, failing miserably as often as rising to great heights. Mundane humans want to stand out — they hold secret desires to be so much more — but they fear the spotlight for the flaws it might show



SYSTEM NOTES —

Sensing the Soulless

Soulless and mundane humans are distracted in the presence of immortals speaking in Atrana Cant. After a few minutes, mundane mortals appear lost in thought. Soulless become partially hypnotized and remain so for minutes afterwards unless someone “snaps them out of it”.

Taking “Possession” of the Soulless

Soulless can be possessed once per day. Once partially hypnotized as above, the character makes an uncontested WIL roll against a target of the soulless’s WIL. Each success level provides one minute of control, during which the soulless follows the immortal’s commands. If commands are given in Atrana Cant the soulless believes his actions were his own idea and completely natural. This leaves other mortals unaware of what transpired.

Mantle Beings and Possession.

Beings created by a Maker are technically soulless, but have the effective personality and abilities of a mundane or Believer — even appearing as such to immortal senses and basic sensation serenades. They are real flesh and blood creatures within the mantle. After generations of mingling between mantle beings and outsiders, it is impossible to tell who is who. Makers aware of their true nature get rather “upset” should they discover their people are being taken possession of; retribution is swift and unpleasant.

Chapter 3 Mortals - Categories

Dreamless are Believers, Sandmen are Believers but their faith is only equal to half their SPT attribute. Succubi and Soul Reapers are no longer human.

others.

They are hard to tell apart from the soulless other than the glimmer of light still shining under their eyes and in their hearts. The real strength of the mundane population is their potential to become Believers, standing as bright lights against the darkness. The real threat is in their potential to become soulless or believing thralls of the droves.

The Path to Believing

There are two paths to a mundane human becoming a Believer. The first involves lots of time and effort on the part of someone to cultivate a new world-view. It takes years, finally resulting in an epiphany that changes the mortal’s entire perception of himself and the world around him. During this time many immortals find a potentially willing participant for the lullaby. Some immortals spend time cultivating such in a group of mundane mortals, to not only make them Believers in this cause, but to sometimes guide them to providing him with mystical gifts based on the new-found beliefs.

The second method is an abrupt shaking of the very foundation of everything the mortal believes in. Mortals come out of such an experience questioning their original beliefs. The “near death” experience is an example of such, especially when experienced as part of a supernaturally powered incident. There are two risks associated with this: first, the mortal’s path in life from that point forward is far more difficult for an immortal to influence; second, the experience itself may temporarily curse the immortal, leaving him indirectly



open to other threats.

I'm A Believer

AKA: the mortal faithful, those of true faith, and other similar terms...

- 2 to 3 SPT, on rare occasion a 4 or 5
- Small but growing portion of the population

With real convictions and beliefs, they unwittingly provide the himsati race with curses, gifts and a host of other abilities. Even a devout atheist is a Believer if that conviction stands up to being tested. Being a Believer isn't just a belief in a particular thing (like a particular law); it is believing in something higher, a nobler purpose, guiding force, way of living, or other personal ideology that gives life meaning and direction.

Mundane forces can't sway them from those beliefs and convictions and it can be a hindrance when dealing with the mundane population. Each Believer is unique, thinking "outside the box" when compared to mundane humans with similar beliefs and convictions. Finding themselves alienated from their own community, they don't quite "fit in" with everyone else. The mundane population labels the more extreme as free thinkers and radicals, ostracizing them from their own people.

The majority of Believers practice their ways off to the side, allowing their community to see a mask of acceptance, all the while pursuing their beliefs and purpose in secret. Occasionally they gather in small groups, but rarely speak



of such things to those outside their close personal circles. Occasionally a Believer inspires others, becoming the foundation for a new set of beliefs and convictions for the masses. These leaders are often very powerful, on par with Bright Bloods, as they often learn to master some of the otherworldly forces in use by the himsati race.

In game terms, Believers are normal mortals having a Faith rating (it is like a boon). This rating acts as a defense against sinning, a defense — or bonus at your discretion — during supernatural interactions, and allows the Believer to

NEW MECHANICS —

Faith Rating

All Believers have a faith rating equal to their SPT attribute. The faith rating comes into play during lulling, sinning, and intense supernatural experiences.

Faith as a bonus or penalty

A bonus or penalty equal to the mortal's faith rating can be applied once during a scene. If multiple Believers are present and they have the same worldview (such as a group of followers loyal to a particular immortal) then for every 10 additional Believers of the same worldview, the bonus is increased by one point. The bonus or penalty is applied to a single roll: counting as a bonus if applied to someone acting within the tenants of the Believer's worldview and counting as a penalty if applied to someone acting against the worldview.

The bonus or penalty is applied during sinning at your discretion (the Believer should have a reason for his faith to well up as such).

curse an immortal — or provide a boon in rare cases. The advanced rules on curses explain how faith plays into them.

Religarum Wielders

- Minimum 3 SPT, normally 4 or 5
- Minimum 3 WIL, 3 PRS
- Very small percentage of Believers

A Believer able to consciously command supernatural forces is considered a wielder of Religarum. Most are strong Believers at an early age — as the Believer matures, one or two abilities similar to those of the himsati race begin to develop. The kind of powers developed are normally beneath the notice of human faith, so it rarely interferes with the Religarum wielder's abilities. The ability tends to follow family lines, skipping one or more generations between manifestations.

A few Believers are capable of developing Religarum later in life; they have near legendary strength of conviction and belief. All too often these Believers develop their Religarum as the result of a maddening quest that creating an unquenchable thirst for power. Mortals with such power rarely settle for a “normal life” among the masses. Some rise up to become powerful leaders of their own cults, often coming into conflict with Quiet Cultures or followers of individual immortals.

Rarely do the wielders of Religarum become followers to immortals, but some become allies. This is exactly what many among the tribes strive for: allies in the fight against the darkness, instead of followers to be protected.



Unfortunately other groups, such as the droves, D'Arcade, Apocrypha and clandestine mortal government agencies actively seek out and recruit such individuals to their own causes.

Examples:

- A Native American shaman sending his spirit on a vision quest.
- A sorcerer learning spells from an ancient tome.
- A priest calling upon the divine powers his deity grants him.
- A detective using psychometric ability to learn what happened in a given location.
- A medium contacting spirits.
- A night-stalking street vigilante able to perform athletic feats not achievable by mundane humans

Religarum abilities fall under the same constraints of humanity's collective faith that serenades do. Therefore most wielders either don't develop flashy, attention-drawing powers or quickly learn when it is safe to use ones that do.

Bright Bloods

- 3 SPT and up, normally 4 or higher
- Very small percentage of Religarum Wielders (known).

Carrying the genetic markers of the Milesian bloodline, Bright Bloods may very well be the next step in human evolution. All Bright Bloods are Religarum wielding Believers, but the vast majority never realize their true potential and live their entire life as mundane humans. The process that must be undertaken to help a Bright Blood realize his true potential — if he has not already done so earlier in life —

NEW MECHANICS —

Wielding Religarum

Religarum is treated like a boon, with Faith as a prerequisite. With Religarum, you provide the mortal character with one or two powers: made from serenades, natures, boons, banes. The mortal character uses his Faith rating as a “skill”, along with the most appropriate attribute to use with the powers (even for powers built using the serenade system). There are no limits on the number of powers or what powers they may have; however, most only have one or possibly two powers, ones that human faith doesn't feel the need to interfere with. Next to the SPT attribute of a mortal character, the presence of the notation (-R) indicates he wields Religarum. In order to use a Religarum ability, the wielder expends a mote of immaculum (his own or one he has stored upon his person in a talisman or other vessel)

Sensing Religarum

Immortals can sense beings with Religarum (both Believers and Bright Bloods), but not as easily as sensing another immortal (see page 31). If the total from adding the immortal's PER to the wielder's Faith Rating equals 6 or higher, the immortal senses a supernatural quality to the mortal; there is no roll involved. For every two full points above 6, additional details can be gleaned (as success levels: consult the clarity chart in the Player's Guide), these usually come across as oddities in the visual or auditory perception of the immortal.

is similar to assisting a mundane along the path to becoming a Believer. A number of immortals dedicate



themselves to seeking out potential Milesian descendents and work towards assisting that mortal to realize his true power and heritage; this is known as “brightening a soul”.

Bright Bloods are rare; meeting one is more difficult than finding a shard on Earth. Most of a Bright Blood’s powers manifest as a mix of raw talents: telekinesis, mental domination, pyrokinesis, telepathy, psi-empathy, ESP, clairvoyance, psychometry, spiritual projection or precognition are good examples. In game terms they have very broad serenade-like capabilities mixed with natures, boons and banes.

In fact, Bright Bloods are just like other Believers who wield Religarum, with one incredible difference: neither the Aria or human faith has the power to constrain their abilities. Even though mundane humans witnessing the abilities of Bright Bloods explain them away in their minds and hearts, the collective power of human faith cannot stop them. A few Bright Bloods wield more fantastical powers that humanity would coin as “magic” — such as “casting” spells or shapeshifting — but only one or two have been found in any given era. They are quickly caught up in the invisible war between the tribes and the forces of darkness, often dying at young ages in comparison to those with less “flashy” powers. The stories of their feats fall into the realm of humanity’s urban legends in this modern world.

Bright Bloods tend to be faster, stronger, more durable and more agile than other mortals; their spirits are also strong (a

minimum of SPT 3). Finally, Bright Bloods are powerful dreamers in the Morpheum, the basis for anchors; they also produce large amounts of immaculum, more than enough to power their own abilities.

Others

Proto-humans and “elves” living in far-

Excerpt from “Pythagoreanism and the teachings of the Milesians”...

“A popular theory among the himsati race is that Bright Bloods are fused with the souls of Transcendents — who remained on Earth — that were felled by the forces of darkness. Opponents of the theory state this would make for a potentially large number of Transcendents, considering that the path to such is extremely long and difficult.

Proponents counter that perhaps the mortal portion of the soul rejoins the One Soul; the Transcendent soul does not, returning to Earth and rejoining with another descendent of the Milesian line, “brightening” that mortal’s soul. The Transcendent spirit carries the true memories of past incarnations. If this is true though, no Bright Blood has ever exhibited knowledge or memories of ever having part of the himsati race.”

A small number of immortal scholars believe that all Believers can have their souls “brightened” and that being a Bright Blood has nothing to do with the Milesian bloodline, that is merely a potential enhancer to a Bright Blood’s power. This theory has quickly dwindled in popularity in the last several decades.



flung Dominion worlds, descendants of Dark Age humans living in a mantle, these and more comprise pockets of humanity totally unaware of modern Earth. Where these beings fall into the other four categories is anyone's guess and completely up to the world you build for them to live in. Many pockets of humanity exist that were taken from Earth and have developed completely different from normal humans. There are no hard and fast rules on how to portray them, and even what powers they might have.

Followers

Followers are available to purchase as a boon at the beginning of the game. Doing so requires your approval as the Narrator and is normally reserved for competent and powerful characters. Followers are the supernatural version of having contacts, providing more than just information, mundane resources and occasional support. When we talk about followers we are speaking of Believers. They provide immaculum to the immortal, are a ready source of auras to replenish those the immortal has placed in his ark, and mystically strengthen an immortal's personal sanctuary if he has one, among other benefits.

Gathering followers takes time and patience, and is the result of many interactions and the occasional storyline devoted specifically to such. Followers should have their own personalities and at least some kind of back-story.

FAITH'S EFFECTS

First let's summarize how human faith interacts with immortals (including what

we've listed about the various types of mortals):

- Humanity's collective faith restrains how powerful serenades and most Religarum abilities can manifest on Earth.
- Humanity's collective faith grants a number of special boons (such as the Tribal Gifts) to various groups of immortals.
- Individual faith helps defend against sinning.
- Individual and group faith can inflict curses (both temporary and permanent) on immortals during sinning or other intense supernatural experiences.
- Individual faith can give rise to Religarum, which grants immortal-like powers to Believers.
- Group faith allows mortals to generate and "tithe" their energies to an immortal (for example: fuel an ark for an immortal's reconstitution).
- Individual or group faith can create bonuses or penalties for immortals during supernatural experiences.

The expanded section on serenades will provide more in-depth information on their interaction with human faith; the next book — Tribal Law vs. Dragon's Rule — will provide additional Gifts and Curses that affect entire tribes and special groups within them.

It is important to remember that faith is the basis for gifts and curses, stored within the spiritual spark of the immortal. Shards and voxes have nothing to do with gifts and curses, this is why a splintered avatar loses any gifts or curses that the cardinal immortal has inherited from him, the gift/course has



passed from one spiritual spark to another.

Lulling

Basic information on lulling (or the lullaby as it is known in immortal slang) is provided in the Player's Guide. Since the mortal must be willing, there is no chance of taint or curse. In short, lulling can be used to replace missing attributes, cleanse taint or to create immaculum; the character has no choice as to which attributes the mortal loses. Remember: immaculum cannot be used to replenish missing attributes.

It is impossible to commit lulling upon a soulless; their soul is not a strong enough conduit to the rest of their auras needed for successful lulling to occur. Lulling on mundanes can be difficult as they do not have the faith to accept something more than mundane is

happening as part of the situation, to help fuel the transferal. However, those who are on the path to becoming a Believer may have a glimmer of faith, and even a tiny glimmer is enough to fuel the transfer. Believers are always able to be part of the lullaby as they already have the resident power of faith within them — they have a faith rating.

Gifts

Hundreds of millennia committing the lulling have left a few permanent, pleasant “memories” in the souls of humanity as they traverse their way into the One Soul and new ones come out. This has led to the various mystical boons — known as “gifts” — that various tribes have. In addition, repeated lullings with powerful Believers sometimes cause a single immortal to develop a more personal gift of his own. It has also been recorded



that on occasion, as a mundane becomes a Believer during an intense supernatural experience, he provides an immortal with a gift instead of cursing him.

Characters wanting to take powerful gifts during character creation should have something in their back-story explaining their origins. This makes sure they aren't being "forced" into the character concept to net quick advantages. Once the game has started, characters cannot "purchase" gifts with EP or MP, gifts are given to characters solely at your discretion. There is no sure-fire formula or method a character can use to make sure they gain a certain gift once done with the character creation process. It is a matter of story and circumstances that such a thing happens. Characters usually have at least some minor degree of control over a gift they have been given; a gift should never become a hindrance to the character.

The gaining of any mystical boon (gift) during a game should represent the marking of a milestone in the character's story. Gaining a particularly powerful gift (such as Animal Lord, or Fertile) should be the stuff of legend, generations of mortal followers and worshippers will tell and retell the story of the mighty deed earning such a glorious gift. Individual gifts are not common; on average even competent immortals have no more than just over a half-dozen gifts, a few of which they probably inherited from their avatars. Powerful immortals will have upwards of a dozen, it being likely that one or two are inherited as well. Hopefully this gives you a base to judge how often

characters should be gaining gifts in your game. Gifts should also be unique. Aside from those that can be "learned", gifts should always be at least slightly tailored to the immortal who gains them.

There are multiple ways to obtain a gift:

- Join a group whose combined mystical power retains a gift that spreads to the entire group. For example, joining a tribe.
- Becoming involved in an intense supernatural experience with a group of Believers and being seen by them in a positive manner befitting their belief system. The more directly involved they are the stronger the chance for the immortal to be affected. Gaining a gift in this way is rare — it more often than not results in a curse instead.
- "Learning" a gift from someone who already has it; this does not work for most gifts. Specific gifts in the listing later in the book will note if they can normally be "learned". Learning a gift gives the character a temporary attunement to the individual he learns it from, and usually also involves a few Believers loyal to your teacher. Characters often find the methods used to learn the gift aren't worth any short-term benefits it brings — it should never be easy or just take a few days or weeks, thus the teacher helps insure the student is committed to learning the gift for what it will bring him over the millennia.
- Inheriting a gift from an avatar. Most immortals inherit a few gifts from their avatars over time, though sometimes the gift changes a little as it passes from avatar to cardinal.



- Cultivating a specific gift from a group of Believers. This takes a lot of time and effort; sometimes generations of them must be worked with in order to achieve a desired effect — especially if it is powerful. And even then the character has to show himself in a truly spectacular supernatural visage in order to make it take hold. Using serenades to constantly win at gambling in front of a group of Believers will get a character some kind of lucky-related boon, but it will probably take generations of them coming and going in order to gain it that way.
- Inventive and creative ways that you as the Narrator come up with, perhaps a powerful Mystech artifact from the Shouting War passes its gift to one immortal every thousand years, perhaps a mortal relic imbued with human faith alters the immortal in a beneficial way that results in a gift. You are only limited by your imagination.

A large sample listing of gifts (mystical boons) appears later in this chapter to use in your game or as a basis for creating your own unique and interesting gifts.

Full Rules

For full rules and expanded mechanics on gifts, see Appendix D.

Sinning

Basic information on sinning is provided in the Player's Guide. Sinning can be used to create immaculum, cleanse taint or replenish auras just like lulling. It does not require a willing participant so can be used on mundane mortals as

easily as on Believers — it still cannot be used on soulless. The process takes little time in comparison to the lullaby (no time is spent convincing the target), but is fraught with risk.

Only Bright Bloods stand a chance of healing from the act of sinning and it takes many years. No other immortal can heal such damage within a mortal without mystical aid (i.e. — serenade, Palladium, etc.). Even then there will be penalties to serenades and other forms of standard mystical healing. Just like the lullaby the immortal has no control over which attribute is “ripped” from the mortal.

Mortals do not sit idly by while an immortal drains their aura; once the sinning has begun the mortal can feel that something is dreadfully wrong, as they grow weaker in one of their attributes. Sinning requires physical contact and the mortal may attempt to break free of the immortal's grasp. It takes one turn to rip a point of attribute. During this time the immortal cannot play any additional serenades, activate him/sati natures, etc. — these must be done prior to sinning. If the mortal breaks physical contact prior to the end of the turn, the sinning attempt fails, but no taint or curses are gained since no energy transfers.

After the sinning has completed, the mortal will be left stunned for several minutes as their auras attempt to adjust to the sudden loss. This leaves a permanent spiritual “scarring” on the spirit and mind of the mortal. This kind of event can even cause a mundane mortal to develop a Faith rating, though



this new faith will most likely be twisted and perverted by the experience. Most mortals (unless they are Believers) cannot comprehend what has happened to them and make up events in their minds to rationalize the events.

While sinning is not technically considered a crime by the tribes, those who regularly engage in such an activity become pariahs among their own. However, should the act of sinning directly or indirectly result in the death of a Believer — or worse yet a Bright Blood — the perpetrator will be punished by Scourges from his tribe. And of course, those who consistently risk sinning, also risk gaining curses.

Full Rules

For full rules and expanded mechanics on sinning, see Appendix D.

Curses

Levied upon the immortal soul by human faith, they are done with intent and purpose. They are never “neutral” or beneficial in how they affect the immortal — a curse that doesn’t do anything “bad” isn’t a curse. Curses manifest when appropriate based on how you created the curse and the needs of the story: one character may always require an invitation to enter a dwelling and another may only require it every third Monday.

The gaining of a mystical bane (curse) during a game should represent the marking of a milestone in the character’s story, though usually not a very pleasant one. These are the origins of dark tales told by generations, of mistakes and lessons learned by the larger than life

heroes and villains of the himsati race. As with gifts, curses cannot be purchased once the game begins; they are given out at your discretion and should be uniquely tailored to the immortal. Purchasing any powerful curses during character creation should require a back-story as to their origins. There are no hard and fast rules about how many curses an immortal has on average. Curses tend to be gained more frequently than gifts, but unlike gifts a good deal of them are only temporary.

There are multiple ways to gain a curse:

- Anytime an immortal gains taint into his system (most commonly from sinning and misplayed serenades) it is possible that a curse can be gained from it. Those gained from sinning are always permanent, those gained from misplayed serenades are often temporary.
- Inheriting a curse from an avatar. Most immortals inherit one or two curses from their avatars over time, though sometimes the curse changes a little as it passes from avatar to cardinal, but not very much.
- Join a group whose combined mystical power passes the curse to the entire group. For example, joining a tribe.
- Becoming involved in an intense supernatural experience with a group of Believers and being seen by them in a negative manner befitting their belief system. The more directly involved they are the stronger the chance for the immortal to be affected. Often these are temporary without taint being involved in the experience, but not always. The situation, the strength of the



Believers' faith and all relevant factors are taken into account when deciding how to develop the curse and whether it is permanent or not.

- There is a limited chance to gain a curse from a mundane mortal during an intense supernatural experience, but the incident must truly shake the very foundations of the mortal's worldview or be akin to a near-death experience to stand a chance of passing a curse. It will always be temporary unless taint is involved.
- Inventive and creative ways that you as the Narrator come up with, perhaps a powerful Mystech artifact from the Shouting War passes its curse to one immortal every thousand years, perhaps a mortal relic imbued with human faith alters the immortal in a negative way that results in a curse. You are only limited by your imagination.

Temporary curses last a few days or weeks at most. Permanent curses will most likely stick with the immortal for the entire course of the game's many episodes. The only ways to rid oneself of a curse are by creating a scion or bargaining with a Sin-eater; both are not easily undertaken.

What can a Curse do?

Anything. The curse can permanently transform the immortal in part or whole or even alter how he thinks and acts. It can affect his environment, cause damage or pain, negate certain abilities, or anything else that can be thought of. Some can just be minor hindrances that the immortal must be sure he covers up so to not expose his supernatural nature (example: he cannot be seen in mirrors,

On the origin of the Sin-eaters, speaker unknown...

“The Magdalen Sin-eaters appeared shortly after the formation of the Stratagem Pact in the first Atlantis. Solitaire herself may have taught them the techniques; others believe they used ancient knowledge gleaned from the Abzulim stronghold of Tarterus, before the Eremites flung it off into the far Dominions. Their appearance just after Pride Nimrod — now known as the Shadowen — used the Femme Darkle to place the curse known as the Ban upon the Magdalen, was no coincidence. The Ban — for those of you uninitiated into our history — prevented the entire tribe from collecting life force from a willing mortal, forcing all members to commit the sinning to replenish themselves. By remaining bound to their himsati form (which in those days was abhorrent to the tribe) they are able to take on the curses of others, similar to a scion, but in time the Sin-eater slowly “digests” the curse until it is gone. Though the Ban was broken after the Great Betrayal, they practice their craft still. The price is usually discovery of some previously unknown secret knowledge that is given over to the Sin-eaters and wiped from the discoverer's mind.”

he must eat some strange substance at least once a day). They can even be wild and unique (example: when the character sneezes televisions, radios and other nearby electronic devices suddenly change channels, turn off, etc.)

Curse Abuse ... and Consequences

The long association that droves had



with the Sanguinary, and the fact that it was connected to the subconscious mind of humanity, allows many Progeny to twist their curses into something beneficial — for themselves at least. You are liable to encounter the occasional player whose character either doesn't care what harm his curses bring to others, or if they show his supernatural self to the world, and some will just think the curses are cool and seek ways to make them manifest just to see what happens.

Even Progeny understand that running around allowing their curses to wildly manifest is bound to get the entire humanity race destroyed. Humanity's fear and superstition would rise up against them, manifesting in ways that would make their current curses look very tame in comparison. This is — after all — the "Invisible War" for a reason. It won't just be the character's tribe or cadre that come down on him hard. Characters running around with psychotic glee at the damage their curses bring either wind up in a drove, or face both tribes and droves hunting them down.

Characters should quickly find out that curses gladly mutate, warp or generally change in ways that still make the character's life difficult. Curses need to be enforced as a drawback for characters, and should never be shown with any kind of "coolness" factor. So be sure when you give the character's curses, that they are things the players will generally consider to be bad for those characters. Curses are not an excuse to be in the tribes and act like a Progeny, because even they aren't stupid or insane... well, most of them aren't.

Cursed Humans

It's rare, but humans can get cursed too; they usually don't gain gifts. Normally this happens to Religarum wielders and therefore also Bright Bloods. Feel free to throw in the occasional cursed Believer, scarred by having used his powers at the worst possible time.

Full Rules

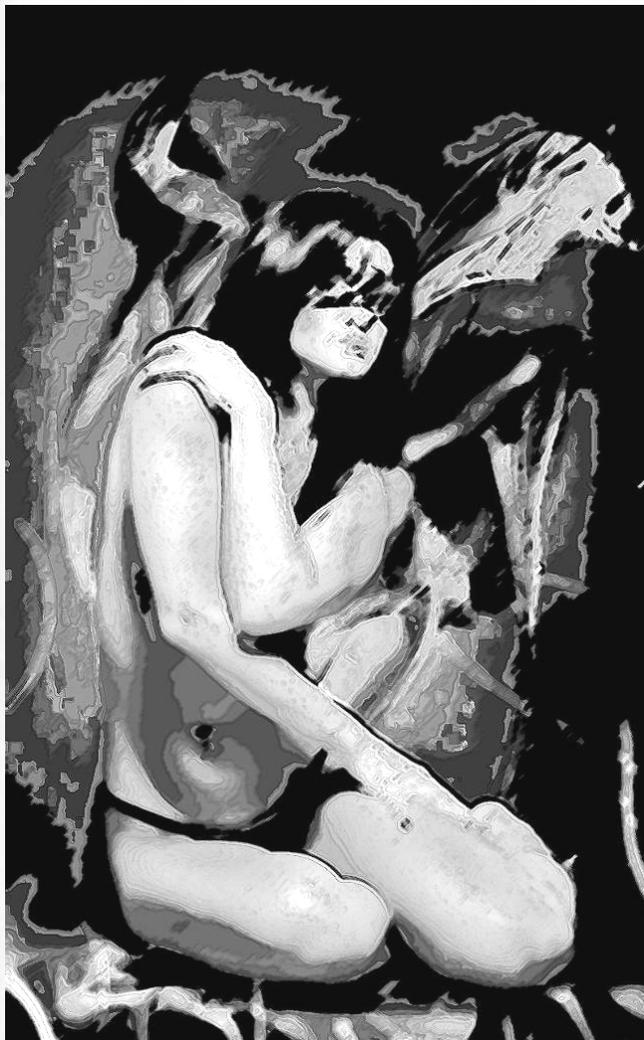
For full rules and expanded mechanics on curses, see Appendix D.

TAINT

As immaculum floats freely among the Aria — too diffuse to collect except from mortals who gather its energies — so too does taint. Taint and immaculum float through the universe like darkness and light; but once taint has coalesced into a form similar to immaculum it becomes dangerous to both mortal and immortal alike.

Side Effects

The diffuse taint in the universe is incapable of infesting itself into the auras of an immortal; their ability to regenerate from the very throes of death prevents it. But when it coalesces into motes, it attaches to their spirit and is akin to a feral animal, lashing out to affect the world around it. Besides fueling curses and making them stronger, taint manifests itself in an immortal's daily life. One of the most popular displays is to "stain" or somehow mar the beauty of items the immortal or his shadow come in contact with for lengthy periods. Often this becomes the basis of a curse in and of itself (ex: the immortal's handprint leaves an aged bloodlike stain on



and body of mortals like an ethereal leech. All things that live (save the himsati race), must eventually die; taint slowly sucks the life energies from mortals, allowing them to (hopefully) age and die with some grace and dignity.

It is difficult for taint to coalesce into motes within the spirit of a mortal, especially within those of a Believer. When it does, it leaves a permanent mark on the mortal — influencing him for the rest of his days. When this does happen, it is most often to the soulless, lacking the strength to resist the collection of taint in their souls. Once infected this way, the soulless becomes easier to manipulate. Often giving in to his darker thoughts and natures, the soulless develops a “anti-faith” rating equal to the number of motes they carry. This leaves many soulless open to extended possession by Progeny, lasting days at a time; they then enact rituals to extend the possession to an indefinite amount of time, creating an unwilling thrall. Progeny can even manipulate the taint present in the mortal.

surfaces).

Taint and Immaculum

Taint and Immaculum are antithetical to one another, but can coexist in an immortal’s auras; the amount of immaculum that can be carried is reduced by the number of motes of taint the immortal has. And getting rid of taint is nowhere near as easy as relieving oneself of immaculum.

Taint in Mortals

As part of the natural entropic forces of the universe, taint infests in the mind

Full Rules

For full rules and expanded mechanics on taint, see Appendix D.

Tainted Drove

The upcoming “Tribal Law vs. Dragon’s Rule” book will give a more comprehensive look at droves: their immortal Progeny leaders, their Believers (known as thralls) and their predator creatures (affectionately known as “drovelings” among non-drove immortals). In order to assist you, we provide a basic summary of abilities that drove members (including some thralls



SYSTEM NOTE —

The Crossing

Before the Great Betrayal, when an immortal's taint equaled his SPT, the One Soul would push him away from the realms of the Habitat, far out into the Dominions. Left to languish, he would have to find a way to rid himself of the excess taint and return, hopefully intact and not ravaged by the myriad of dangers left out there from the Shouting War. In those days drove predators could only come to Earth for brief periods when a misplayed serenade released taint into an area. Eventually they would be pushed back out into the Dominions. This was yet another reason the predecessors of the tribes became careless: they never believed that it would be possible for that situation to change.

Mortals remain unchanged since the Great Betrayal, they and their spirits are native to this world and do not run the risk of "crossing" to the Dominions. But immortals and their supernatural creations are pushed out into the Dominions if they gain a number of taint motes higher than their highest attribute. Fortunately it takes time (a number of hours equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ their SPT) before the crossing occurs. If during this time they get to another realm in the Habitat (mantle, Underground, Gremlin Grid, etc.) they are safe. But if they set foot on Earth again with that much taint, the clock starts counting down again. Anytime taint infests an area, the clock is stopped however (such as when a serenade is misplayed). This now allows many drove predators to roam about Earth for much longer periods than in the past, and for many they can roam with no fear of crossing out into the Dominions.

and predators) can fuel with taint. These abilities have been passed down over the eons from the first droves: Fenris, Jormungard and Hela — the children of the ex-Morrigan Loki and the Sanguinary's first avatar known as the Rime.

Not all Progeny are tainted — in fact most are not tainted at all — but a few carry large amounts of taint with them at all times (though not enough to force them to "cross" into the Dominions). Their use of these abilities is paramount to offsetting the hindrances normally associated with carrying taint. These are not available to non-droves, though rumors abound that recently some of the members of D'Arcade have learned to mimic some of them.

Barbs

Barbs are twisted versions of serenades, using taint to overcome the natural laws of the Aria and even the collective faith of humanity. Anything a barb-based serenade affects becomes marred by the taint that coalesces as part of its singing; it wrestles with human faith until the two come to an "agreement" about how best to present the marring in a way that can be rationalized by humanity. This shows up as odd side-effects to the serenade in the area that it was sung. Anyone directly affected by a barb runs the risk of being infested with a mote of taint, including mortals.

In game terms, the Progeny must have a mote of taint in this system to use a barb. He can either expend the mote of taint (use it up) or he can "feed" it a mote of immaculum instead.



Taint as Defense

Progeny, predators and even thralls — taught to manipulate taint via Religarum — can use taint as a defense mechanism against serenades and similar powers. By expending a mote of taint or “feeding” a mote of immaculum to it, half of the remaining taint can be added to the appropriate defense. Due to the toll this takes on the system, this can only be done once per scene. This rule also applies to tainted soulless caught in the grip of a Progeny, as they develop an “anti-faith” rating during their enslavement to the darkened immortal.

Curses to Gifts

Progeny do not gain many gifts, but typically gain several curses. Over the years they learn to temporarily turn their curses to their advantage. This is at your discretion as the Narrator as to how the benefit derives, and not all curses work very well as temporary gifts. Again, this is something that can be done once per scene due to the toll it takes on the Progeny’s system.

Dark Enchantment

In truth even the tribes can do this, but such items become ‘cursed’ in the process. They invariably pass on some detriment in exchange for the benefit of their primary purpose. This simply involves using taint as part of the creation of Mystech items instead of imbuing them with immaculum.

Extended Possessions

Progeny can take possession of the soulless for days instead of minutes by expending a mote of taint or “feeding” it a mote of immaculum. If the soulless himself is tainted, no taint needs to be

expended.

Scions

Creating a scion is creating a weapon, a gun that can be pointed at anyone. Scions are tormented creatures, carrying both taint and an immortal’s curse. Since they are effectively soulless mortals infested with taint, they have all of their susceptibilities and vulnerabilities. The tribes have deemed an immortal is to be held responsible for all of his scion’s actions.

To create a scion the immortal must learn the ritualized skill at a rank equal or higher than the rank of the curse he wishes to divest (highest rank if divesting multiple curses into one scion). If he does not know the skill, someone must perform the ritual for him. The immortal must have motes of taint (or have them present in some kind of Mystech container) equal to half the rank of all the curse(s) he wishes to divest (add all the ranks together, round up). He must also be present at his ark, with enough energy inside to reconstitute himself. During the ritual his vox is ripped from the body, and as the ark reconstitutes him, his remaining auras coalesce back into a childlike clone, looking almost the same as the immortal did when he first began the journey out of lethe.

A scion knows what it is: a housing for the immortal’s curse(s) and a permanent level of taint that cannot be cleansed or removed without destroying him. The scion never appears to grow older and lives for 10 to 50 years; most scions refer to the immortal as their “parent”. While a few develop wonderful



personalities, most scions never develop beyond being plain copies of the immortal that created them. The taint burdens it with mental and physical problems off and on during its short lifespan. Once created, additional curses cannot be added to the scion, the immortal must create a new one.

Scions gain a number of abilities — equal to the rank of the curse they bear — these are variants of the original curse the immortal passed to them. If the scion bears multiple curses, the number of abilities is equal to the highest ranked curse, plus one for each additional curse. The scion is capable of forcing these abilities to manifest, wielding them as

PRS-based mystical skills when die rolls are needed. The skill rank is equal to the rank of the curse the ability is based on. Once manifested though, the scion does not have complete control over what the manifestation does. It is possible for an ability to be an exact copy of the original curse, but often it is some strange variant from it: use any combination of various powers from the game needed to represent these cursed abilities. For example, if the original curse forced the character to be invited in before crossing a threshold, one of the variant powers may cause doors and windows to all off their hinges, or slam open and shut on their own, or something more ominous and/or dangerous.



Being somewhat unstable and prone to acting on their darker natures makes scions very dangerous if left unchecked. Fortunately, the immortal parent can telepathically communicate with the scion over short distances (Level 3 AoE) and can initiate a contested PRS vs. PRS roll to control the scion (similar to taking possession of a soulless). If the character actually knows the ritual skill for creating a scion, he adds its rank to the roll.

If the scion dies prematurely (not via natural causes) the curse returns to the immortal, permanently shifted one rank higher (which either increases frequency or detriment). If it houses multiple curses, each comes back with a one-rank increase. A premature death includes accidents, being murdered, suicide, poisoned, by serenade or Mystech. Dying at the end of a natural lifespan or from a normal disease are both considered natural. For this reason some immortals are overly protective of their scions, to the point of locking them away, “for their own safety”.

The most famous and individualistic of scions ever created were those by the immortal Dracula. His scions have the ability to continue living by drinking the blood of others. They are known as the Nosferatu: vampires. Oddly, his scions come in all shapes and sizes, even different genders. In addition, Dracula himself does not lose the curse, but can then engender another scion. Dracula and his scions are regularly hunted by both the Hemari and Sharakai tribes.

BOON AND BANE LISTINGS

Boons are character advantages, mystical boons have their own term in the immortal universe known as gifts. Banes are character disadvantages, mystical banes have their own term in the immortal universe known as curses; younger immortals sometimes use the slang term “taboos”.

Boons and banes are listed with a cost — in bonus build points — to purchase them during character creation. The cost for Banes is the number of bonus build points received for taking them. Several are listed with a cost of “BR * x” for cost: you spend/receive “x” points for each rank you take (round up). The higher the rank the better the boon and the worse the bane; ranks are rated 1 - 5 just like skills. Some boons and banes should not be allowed for starting level characters unless they are worked into the story very early on (possibly having come from one of the character’s prior avatars).

Once character creation is finished, you may allow mundane boons to be purchased via EP by paying double the listed point-cost; banes can be “bought off” via the same double-cost in EP. After the cost has been paid, the new boon or loss of the bane is worked into the next few episodes. Gifts and curses cannot be purchased or bought off once character creation is finished, their gain or loss is part of the stories told by playing the game.

The listings provided should not be considered exhaustive or all inclusive;



the sample boons listed here can be used as a basis for determining the cost for new boons and banes for your campaign. “You” in these listings refers to the character, not you the Narrator.

Full Rules

For full rules and expanded mechanics on gifts and curses, see Appendix D.

Mundane Boon Listing

The following are non-mystical

SYSTEM NOTE —

Tribe and Calling Gifts

The tribal and calling gifts are meant for use by members of those particular groups; therefore they are not listed here. However, you may allow players to take them as individual boons even if they are not members of the specific tribe or calling.

It is recommended that players do not purchase such gifts during character creation. It is best to work them out in the story; perhaps a character becomes an honorary member of a tribe (though this will bring the tribal curse with it as well). If you desire to allow a character to have an individual version of a tribe or calling gift at character creation, the cost is 10 if it functions identically, or 8 if just in a similar manner. If it functions identically, there should be an interesting back-story telling how the character came to possess a gift humanity’s overall faith normally associates very strongly with a specific group. The presence of such a gift is sure to raise eyebrows and suspicions among the actual group that normally carries the gift. Some may feel the character is “stepping on their toes” or suspect an ulterior motive or plan.

advantages for characters. The cost is listed in bonus build points. Any references to “half” of a value are be rounded up. Mundane boons come into play as needed and require no special rules other than those presented in the boon itself.

Alert (5)

Add 2 to any rolls to keep from being surprised while awake. Critical failures are treated as normal failures.

Ally (8)

You know a single individual of comparable power to you, who is willing to put himself at risk so long as he believes you will do the same for him. Such individuals usually excel in an area where you are weak (socially, mystically, physically) having better influence in that area than you do.

Ambidextrous (5)

You take no penalties for offhand use of weapons or other implements you are attempting to use.

Ark (5)

You have an ark and begin the game knowing precisely where it is. It starts the game short two attribute points worth of energy needed to reconstitute you. Without this boon you may still have an ark, but you do not know currently where it is and there is no guarantee how many attribute points it has stored in it.

Athletic (5)

Add 2 to any rolls for athletic feats such as jumping, climbing, acrobatics, etc. Critical failures are treated as normal failures. This does not help with combat skills.



Calling / Tribe Status (11)

You have earned the favor of your calling or tribe. You enjoy fine accommodations when visiting the strongholds of your calling or tribe. Your advice is occasionally sought out, and the occasional minor mistake can be overlooked from time to time.

Contacts (BR * 1)

You begin the game knowing varied individuals (or a specific group) willing to provide you with information and minor favors. They will not put themselves at risk for you and often ask for favors and information in return. The rank equates to the overall ability of your contact(s) to gain information or provide favors outside their own direct sphere of influence. They may be well disposed or neutral towards you.

Contortionist (5)

Add 2 to any rolls to escape being tied up, held, grappled or otherwise restrained due to being double-jointed. Critical failures are treated as normal failures.

Debt (8)

You know an individual (or group) with power comparable to yours in at least some area (mystical, social influence, political pull, etc.), that owes you a great debt for some past deed of yours or perhaps one of your avatars. This debt will take some time for the individual or group to repay; once repaid the points spent on it are lost.

Double-Focused (8)

You can purchase up to twice the normal number of foci for a particular skill; this boon may be purchased more than once:

once for each skill benefitting from it.

Eidetic Memory (5)

Add 2 to any rolls to quickly recall facts and figures. The Narrator will provide you with knowledge you may have forgotten from previous episodes.

Enchanted Minor Item

(8 for weapon or armor, 5 for others)

You have a basic Mystech version of a mundane item. Weapons and armor provide a 2-point bonus to appropriate rolls or defenses. The item's own armor value (for use with breaking object rules) is doubled.

Esteem (8)

You have a respected reputation that precedes you in social situations. Even during a hostile situation you can usually get others to at least stop to listen to what you have to say so long as they are neutral or well disposed towards you. Those who follow the same general social rules as you will always give at least a small measure of respect to you. Add 2 to any rolls where this reputation among your peers benefits you. This does not grant the privileges of Calling/Tribe Status, but is more a measure of general courtesy extended you in most situations.

Fleetfooted (5)

Add 2 to any rolls to run away from, or chase someone, on foot (in human or himsati form). Critical failures are treated as normal failures.

Followers/Supporters (BR * 2)

You begin the game knowing varied individuals (or a specific group) willing to assist you in a variety of ways. They will perform moderate favors, attempt to



gain information and will be well disposed towards you; they will put themselves in at least some degree of risk for you. A follower will put himself at greater risk, but will have less influence; these are normally mortals. A supporter will put himself at less risk, but will be comparable or better than you in his spheres of influence; these are normally other immortals or powerful/influential mortals. The rank determines the overall ability to gain information, perform favors and take risks outside of the follower or supporter's own sphere of influence.

Fortitude (5)

Pick a circumstance you are able to withstand for extended periods of time (sleep deprivation, fasting, extreme cold, holding breath, etc.). Add 2 to any rolls made when withstanding the rigors of that circumstance.

Guru (11)

A very powerful immortal has a personal interest in seeing you advance as an immortal (either within your tribe, abilities, etc.). He may aid you directly or secretly through various agents. You have no influence

over this benefactor in terms of asking for favors and information; you may not even know who this benefactor is.

Iron Will (5)

Add 2 to any rolls to resist forms of mental control over your thoughts or feelings; the source of the control can be from any source. This does not work on illusions, but it does work on any side effects that would attempt to alter your thoughts or feelings.

Lightfooted (5)

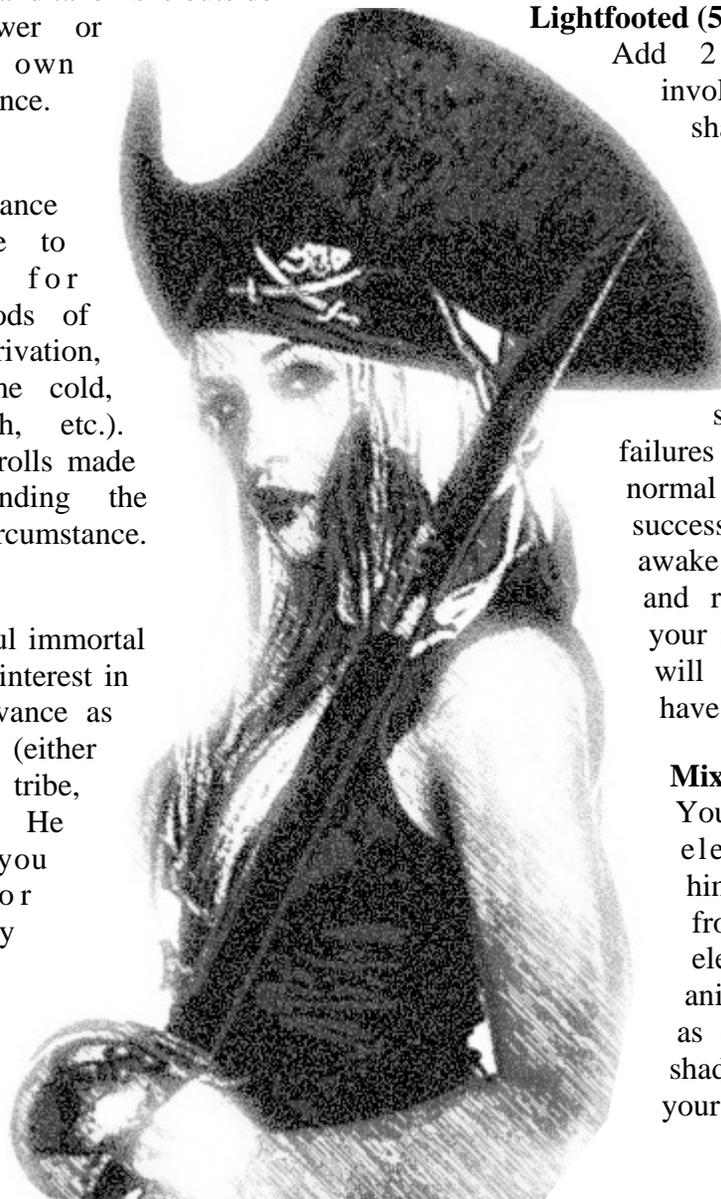
Add 2 to any rolls involving stealth or shadowing.

Light Sleeper (5)

Add 2 to any rolls for surprise while sleeping. Critical failures are treated as normal failures. Critical successes allow you to awake with no penalty, and roll to surprise your assailant — who will not realize you have awoken.

Mixed Himsati (8)

You are a hybrid elemental/animal himsati. Natures from both your elemental type and animal type count as common. Your shade is based on your animal type.





This boon is not needed if you simply have a nature changed due to joining a particular tribe.

Multi-Motif (4, 6 and 10)

You start with additional motifs to build serenades with. A second one costs 4 points, a third costs 6, and a fourth costs 10. Motifs in Chapter 6 has more info.

Professional License (5)

You have a legitimate professional license of some merit and/or respect: attorney, surgeon, psychiatrist, engineer, professor, scientist, etc. The license is applicable to where your mortal identity states you reside. You must have the appropriate skills and foci to have this boon. You can leverage the license in certain situations, to your advantage.

Quick Block (5)

When blocking more attacks than your SPT normally allows, you take a -1 cumulative penalty instead of -2.

Quickdraw (5)

You can draw your weapon as a passive action instead of a standard action.

Sanctuary (8)

You start the game with a safe haven where you can heal and/or hide. It's location is secret to everyone but you and possibly your followers. It gains basic sanctuary benefits as described in the chapter on Mystech. The haven is no larger than a small house. It can be part of a larger structure but only your area counts as the sanctuary.

Sanctuary - Sacred (11)

You start the game with a safe haven where you can heal and/or hide. It's location is secret to everyone but you

and possibly your followers. It gains the basic sanctuary benefits as described in the chapter on Mystech. In addition, the sanctuary is steeped in human belief and/or superstition; it also receives the additional bonuses for such. The haven is no larger than a small house. It can be part of a larger structure but only your area counts as the sanctuary.

Sharp Sense (5)

Add 2 to any rolls involving one specific sense out of the five normal senses (touch, taste, hearing, smell, sight). This does not augment the enhanced senses nature. This can be bought additional times for additional senses.

Special Permit (5)

You have a permit to work with, carry and/or transport a normally illegal substance: concealed weapon, certain types of materials, exotic animals, drugs, etc.

Temporal Power (BR * 2)

You have a ranking or station in the mortal world of influence (political or military office, owner of corporation, member of local authority [police], leader of a large public religious or other organization, etc.). Compare the rank to the success level chart to get an idea of the influence you can exert in the mortal world. Remember that this can bring unwanted attention as well, and it does have certain responsibilities that must be kept up with in order to keep it at the chosen level. Not keeping up with those responsibilities can temporarily or permanently lower the level or even cause it to be lost (points are not regained).



Temporal Resources (BR * 3)

You have access to money and equipment on a regular basis, this is in addition to the means necessary to live a mundane middle-income style for the region you choose as home. This money can be considered part of a higher living standard, or money that you have access to should you need it, but does not accrue from week to week without special arrangements (and permission from the Narrator). Characters should provide a back-story explaining where the income is coming from.

Rank 1 = \$500.00 per week excess

Rank 2 = \$1,000.00 per week excess

Rank 3 = \$5,000 per week excess

Rank 4 = \$10,000 per week excess

Rank 5 = \$50,000 per week excess

(Values are rated in US Dollars)

Tough as Nails (8)

Any penalties you take from marked off health boxes (i.e. pain) are reduced by 1.

Gifts -

Mystical Boon Listing

The following are sample mystical advantages for characters. Mystical boons use the rules presented in Appendix D — “learnable” gifts are marked with (-L). The cost is listed in bonus build points. Any references to “half” of a value are be rounded up unless otherwise noted.

Animal King/Queen (11)

All normal mortal animals fear and/or love you regardless of your species; even when you are tainted, they show a small degree of respect. By expending a mote of immaculum in the presence of a normal mortal animal, it will never attack you for the remainder of its life,

so long as you never attack it. This will not make it a companion of any kind, just cause it to show you utter respect whenever you are near. Even Bête Noire will hesitate before attacking you.

Anonymity (8)

You are immediately aware of any mundane attempts to perform research, detective work, or otherwise trace or track you down. Any attempts are made at -2 until the one attempting to find you — or find out about you — gives up, completely changes tactics, or actually manages to track you down. By expending a mote of immaculum, instead of the -2 penalty, any success levels are halved (round down).

Ark Covenant (8) (-L)

You may use your ark to heal damaged health boxes. Taking back one attribute point from the ark heals all damage, including that caused by mystical means. This does not break the ark, but requires the character to actually have an ark and be able to reach it.

Avatar Control (8)

You possess the ability to temporarily awaken a known avatar, glean a single piece of information from it, and then force it back to sleep. You also add 2 to any rolls to resist a rising avatar.

Avatar Resistant (5) (-L)

Add 2 to any roll to resist a rising avatar.

Ch'I (5) (-L)

Add 2 to the final damage of one unarmed combat attack, this can be done once per turn. Any critical failures are treated as normal ones.

**Dragon Dance (5) (-L)**

Make one dodge roll per round as a passive action and it counts against all attacks made until your next action. This can be done once per turn.

Energized (8)

Electrically powered machines always work well for you, even when giving others trouble just seconds earlier. By expending a mote of immaculum you can cause an apparently nonfunctional machine (broken to a point of almost beyond repair, completely without power, etc.) to spring to life and at least hobble along for you. You add 2 to any rolls made when working with electrical devices. Any critical failures are treated as normal ones.

Evolved (5) (-L)

Add 2 to any rolls made to revert back to human when circumstances or mental state are hindering you from doing so.

Faith Resistance (8)

Add 2 to any rolls or defenses (where appropriate) when resisting effects of human faith on your mind, spirit or physical being; this does not work in lifting constraints on serenades and other powers.

Fertile (11)

Any living thing you spend a significant amount of time with (more than just a scene or two) is becomes fertile. Spend time at a farm and livestock slowly become pregnant, bearing many young; fields yield bumper crops. Aged, infirm and infertile humans become capable of bearing healthy young children. This requires the expenditure of immaculum for each act of fertility (for a small area

such as a field or a single creature such as a mortal human or animal).

Hackles (8) (-L)

You have an innate sense of danger to yourself. Whenever the Narrator is about to surprise you with a direct threat against you, he makes a secret surprise roll for you, adding 2 to the roll. If your secret roll succeeds, he informs you that you sense danger in the area. If you expend an immaculum mote, you may make another surprise roll. If you succeed you know where the danger is coming from and add 2 to any other surprise or defense rolls where the attacker has tried to sneak up on you. If you critically succeed your attacker is not aware that you have noticed; you may now attempt to find a way to surprise your him instead.

Hot Blooded (8)

Your blood does strange things when spilled (turns into flowers, becomes corrosive or flammable like oil, drops of it turn into various predatory insects, etc.). You have no control over the effect itself; but it is never harmful to you or those you are allied with.

This also makes an excellent curse when not under the character's control.

Huckster (8 - Merchant Calling only)

You have the ability to “give” and “receive” the gifts of others as a form of currency. You can only hold one gift at a time, and you cannot use the gift you hold yourself. Only gifts with a build cost of less than 8 points can be bartered this way. If you receive the gift from someone, they lose it permanently and cannot gain it again through interaction with human faith. (Odin gave his “eye”



for knowledge indeed). One immaculum mote is expended to “complete” the transaction.

Incubus (8, 5 - Mystics and Terat) (-L)

You possess the full range of your powers, natures and skills anywhere your mind treads along the telepathic energy web known as the Morpheum (even in the dreamspace of another while you are morphed into a dream “role”). You can willingly connect to the Morpheum and choose to form a dreamspace or appear directly on its strands. “Physical” damage you cause in another’s dream is not temporary but real. This boon does not work in conjunction with mental control serenades like Somnus where you do not actually link to the Morpheum. See Morpheum Rules in Appendix B for more information on the Morpheum.

Many Progeny have this boon from their time intimately connected to the Sanguinary.

Intense Flashbacks (8)

You gain one extra memory point during any session when you’ve had at least one fade at the -6 fade penalty level — that you did not induce yourself. However, all your flashbacks induce a minimum -2 fade penalty as a tradeoff for gaining the extra memory.

Legacy (5) (-L)

Pick a penalty from the Player’s Guide not already covered here. Add 2 to any rolls made where that penalty hinders your roll.

Ley Walker (8) (-L)

You perceive and travel ley lines, hopping from line to line with ease in comparison to others; this is regardless of your PER attribute value. Make a WIL roll against a target number of 4 when stepping on a line to arrive where you wish. The unfamiliarity penalty comes into play for any location you aren’t intimately familiar with or do not clearly know the way to and/or visit often. Normal rules for where you can step on/off a line still apply.

Each success level multiplies the standard speed (run speed * SPT) again by your SPT (example: 2 success levels now make your speed equal to run speed * SPT * SPT * SPT). You do not make WIL rolls for changing lines, though line strength does increase/decrease speed as normal. If you beat the target number but do not generate any success levels, you travel as normal but do not have to make WIL rolls to change lines. If you fail you just reappear a short distance from where you stepped on; if you critically fail you wind up someplace random (Narrator’s discretion) on Earth.

Lucky (5)

Once per game session, reroll one single die.

Mental Link (5) (-L)

You and a willing target share a mental connection. You can each sense when the other is in danger and for one immaculum you can communicate with each other mind-to-mind (though you only “hear” thoughts the other willing sends to you) regardless of distance. This does create an attunement to the individual, you cannot “shut out” the



thoughts they send to you.

This boon became a liability to many immortals in the distant past. Out of paranoia they bound themselves to their entire flock of worshippers to keep a close eye on them. Incessant prayers echoed through their minds, driving them mad. In the modern era, most immortals are more careful with the number of mental links they establish.

Mercurial (5) (-L)

You may activate one himsati nature as a passive action instead of using a standard action. If you want to activate additional natures you'll still have to use a standard action.

Metashifter (5) (-L)

By activating a nature, you can cause a single part of your body related to that nature to shapeshift into full himsati, while leaving the rest of your body in completely human form. You do not gain the benefits of being in full himsati, but there are often other advantages one can temporarily gain based on himsati form and body part shapeshifted.

Many members of the Osiri gain this from their avatars who closely followed the ways of ancient Egypt.

Mighty (5)

When performing any raw physical feats of strength (lifting, pulling, climbing, pushing, etc.) roll the spirit die twice — whether you are focused or not — but add them together instead of taking the higher of the two rolls.

Mortal Strike (5)

Add your SPT attribute value to one

attack; can only be done once per game session.

Panacea, Enhanced (8)

You heal exceptionally fast, still able to tie into Earth's aura to strengthen the Panacea. As long as you remain inactive—rest quietly or sleep — you clear off one marked health box per hour. If you become active you slow down to one box every 12 hours; if you don't stop and rest within a 24-hour period, it slows down to one box every 24 hours until you've received sufficient rest or sleep. Enhanced Panacea heals any damage, regardless of source (living or non-living), except those delivered by toxins.

Pedagogue (8 - Mentor Calling only)

You may mystically teach a single skill, mundane boon or gift to another intelligent living being. You must possess the skill, boon or gift yourself — one that you know is possessed by one of your known avatars also counts as one you possess, even if don't have it yourself in this incarnation. You can teach everything that is needed for a rank 1 in a mundane skill within one day. You can teach all that is needed for a mundane boon within a week, and pass on a copy of one of your gifts within a month (though passing a copy of your gift requires the assistance of Believers who worship/follow/support you). Some boons cannot be passed on (ark, ally, calling status, temporal power, etc.). A gift can only be passed on if it has the (-L) notation after it. An immaculum mote is expended when you first start teaching, if they do not complete the required time, the mote is lost. The gift will only work once on





any one individual (if someone goes into lethe, his next incarnation counts as someone different).

Perfect Pitch (8)

Pick one attention, add 2 to any rolls for serenades using that attention.

Personal Dominance (5 or 8)

You have a personal attunement aside from one to an ark, sanctuary or mystical item, to a person(s), creature(s), place/area or time of day (see Chapter 5 dominance information).

The personal dominance does not have to be directly related to tribe, calling, himsati or even motif. This is not the same as a Sanctuary boon, this is passed to you by one or more mortals, whereas a Sanctuary is a place you have sought out and gained attunement to by your own choice. Add 2 to any roll made for a mystical power or ability when in the presence of your dominance. For the lower cost you can obtain a specific attunement (St. James Cathedral Church, during a solar eclipse), for the higher cost you can take a small group attunement (cemeteries, lions, dogs). Broad general categories should be disallowed

(day, night, winter, Europe, mammals, etc.).

Pious (8) (-L)

You appear to be a mortal human to all forms of detection, save those achieving a level 5 success against you. You must expend all immaculum motes you currently carry (so you must have at least one immaculum to activate the gift) and not carry any items with immaculum stored in them. This does not hide any other type of Mystech items. Any





attempt to play serenades, use himsati natures or other mystical powers ends the boon immediately

Many Solitaires know this boon and use it often.

Poison Resistance (8)

You are immune to all natural / chemical venoms, poisons and drugs (including beneficial and recreational) except those created by the himsati nature or mystical means. This does not apply to radiation.

Pure Voice (5) (-L)

Pick one attention, add 1 to any rolls for serenades using that attention.

Reaper's Denial (8)

A mortal will not die in your presence, no matter how injured — so long as his head and torso are mostly intact — as long as you expend 1 immaculum per day to keep them alive.

Robust (5)

Add 2 to any roll to resist general mortal diseases and illnesses. Any critical failures are treated as normal ones.

Sanguine Hunger (8)

Add 2 to all rolls made for sinning. Critical failures are treated as normal failures.

Scanner (5) (-L)

Make an opposed attribute roll against the same attribute of your target. If successful you can tell the strength of that attribute and any attributes related directly to it. Success levels provide other information (such as specific natures the target possesses that use the attribute, and their strength). The target remains none the wiser of your attempt

unless you critically fail; then they may notice your odd and intense stare, etc.

Sensitive (5)

You are sensitive to some otherworldly force (Shallows, Gossamers, Mantles, etc.) and you tend to tune in on them and sense them when nearby. Add 2 to any roll where you may perceive this otherworldly force. Pick the force when the boon is purchased, and which of the five senses (touch, smell, sight, hearing or taste), is the one that “senses” it.

Shadow Veil (8)

You have a knack for working with the Aria and the constraints of human faith to make your serenades look like natural happenings and events. By expending an immaculum mote you hide yourself as the source not only to mundane detection, but also to mystical forms of detection. You make a PRS roll to create a target number for any mystical means of detection that must be overcome. This boon takes the benefits of hiding the “visibility” of a serenade to another level altogether.

Shroud (8)

You can hide motes of taint infested in your spirit, making them undetectable to shades and harder to detect by mystical means. By expending an immaculum mote, a number of taint motes equal to half the remaining immaculum you carry (round down) become hidden. Any attempts to mystically detect taint on your being face a penalty equal to the number of motes you have hidden.

The Shroud gift has begun to show up with many Progeny in the last few years, as if they were somehow learning it.



Species Loyalty (5)

Creatures of the same species as your himsati form obey your commands as long as it does not endanger their lives. If you are tainted they will still remain somewhat cordial to you. This will not make them companions or love/fear you as Animal King does.

Spirit Friend (8)

No normal untainted spirit will voluntarily attack you. This ability does not influence soul reapers or gossamers — they are not normal spirits. You may also communicate with the spirits of deceased mortal creatures you encounter.

Syrinx (5)

Your voice is so beautiful it inspires awe/passion in those hearing it. Pick a focus within the performance or persuasion skill, requiring the use of your speaking or singing voice. Add 2 to any roll made when using that particular focus within the skill.

Time Flux (5)

Time flows slightly faster/slower in your presence, expend an immaculum mote to reroll your initiative, adding or subtracting 2 to the roll, once per combat. You choose to take the new roll or keep the original one, regardless of which is lower or higher.



Trance (8) (-L)

By expending an immaculum you appear dead to all mundane examinations save mystical ones; you still feel pain but will not flinch or otherwise betray the fact that you are alive. You must remain still (others may move you, but you cannot attempt any movement of your own). You can remain in this state for a number of days equal to your WIL.

Vigil (8)

You have developed a powerful attunement to a very personal combat-



related item (weapon, shield, armor, etc.). By expending an immaculum mote and taking a few minutes prior to the start of a combat, you can choose to not fall under one specific combat penalty for the entire combat (this will not work against mystically generated penalties). You must have a few minutes prior to the combat to sit in vigil with the item.

Mundane Bane Listing

The following are non-mystical disadvantages for characters. The “cost” is listed in bonus build points the character receives during character creation for taking them. Any references to “half” of a value are rounded up. Mundane banes come into play as needed and require no special rules other than those presented in the bane itself. Many of the mundane banes can be given by the Narrator as curses.

Absent-Minded or Slow Thinker (5)

Subtract 2 from all rolls when under pressure to recall facts and information from memory in a hurry.

Archaic (5, 8 or 11)

You are not familiar with Earth’s current advancements in culture and technology and subtract 2 from any rolls involving the use of skills (social or technical) with technology and situations considered “beyond your time”. Perhaps you’ve spent the last several decades in a mantle, are a recently splintered avatar, or are just heavily influenced by your avatars and/or thoughts of your past. Whatever the reason, you are unable to catch on to “modern” times and technology. Even after being exposed several times to a new technological or

cultural concept you still undergo periods of “culture” shock and technophobia.

For 5 points, you are unfamiliar with any technology created in the latter half of the 20th century and forward to today. Modern computers, ATM machines, text messaging, modern fashion, fax machines, Eyz units, net kiosks, Velcro, DVD players, video games, the world wide web, the hustle and bustle of today’s cities (as compared to those say 60 or more years ago), levels of cultural diversity and mixing, modern slang, and any other social and cultural developments since the “Cold War” of the 1960’s began.

For 8 points, you have all the hindrances of the 5-point level and are also unfamiliar with any technological and cultural developments starting with the Industrial Revolutions (late 18th and early 19th century).

For 11 points, you have all the hindrances of the 8-point level and are also unfamiliar with any technological and cultural developments starting with the Renaissance (14th—16th centuries).

Avatar Submissive

Subtract 2 from any rolls when dealing with a rising avatar.

Clumsy (5)

Subtract 2 from any rolls for raw physical feats of athletic agility where you do not have a specific focus.

Compulsion (BR * 2)

You have a physical/mental addiction (drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, etc.) —



usually a holdover from your most recent mortal life. You take a penalty equal to the rank taken whenever you attempt to resist the addiction. This can also be treated as a curse for both mundane or more “exotic” addictions, especially those gained from an avatar.

Dark Secret (BR * 1)

You have a dark secret about your past you hide from everyone you meet or know. The Narrator presents situations where you must work to keep your secret. If discovered, the rank determines how detrimental the consequences are, this curse is then replaced with the Notoriety bane.

Dawdler (5)

Subtract 2 from any initiative rolls.

Deep Sleeper (5)

The only way for another to wake you prior to waking up naturally is for you to be violently shaken, exposed to extremely loud noises, etc. During the first turn after you awake, subtract 2 from all rolls involving perception (including surprise tests) and physical activity (combat, athletic feats, etc.)

Deformity (BR * 2)

You have some form of natural physical deformity. Perhaps you lost a limb in a fight, or it was from before your immortal heritage reinstated itself. This could be a hunch, a mangled arm, a missing limb, etc. Take a penalty equal to the rank for all rolls where the deformity will hinder you; the Narrator may deem some actions just cannot be done. Other mild deformities can be as simple as a speech impediment (it would

not affect your ability to play serenades however).

Dependant (BR * 2)

A mortal (Maker child, mortal lover, etc.) depends on you for safety, nurturing, livelihood, love, etc. The rank determines how much this interferes with your life; the dependant may not even be aware of your immortal heritage or the potential danger they are in because of it. This bane does not have to always take the shape of actual danger; merely a choice between taking care of the dependant’s needs and those of your immortal life.

Driving Goal (8)

You have some driving goal, to find a lost love, to seek vengeance, etc. Perhaps this is due to flashbacks of something that happened to one of your avatars, a holdover from your mortal life, etc. For whatever reason this need drives you and sometimes causes you to take risks, or places you in danger. If you achieve the goal, the bane is considered “bought off”. Every game session if you are able to you must commit some act or perform some task to try and bring yourself closer to your goal. This does not mean you will automatically sacrifice your current comrades or endanger others. Your EP award is reduced by one in any session where you to not take advantage of a Narrator-given opportunity to get closer to your goal.

Dull Sense (5)

Subtract 2 from any rolls using one of the five mundane senses (touch, taste, smell, hearing, sight).



Enemy (8 or 11)

An individual (or group) of comparable or greater power than you seeks to harm you either physically, mentally or socially, with long-term harmful consequences. 8 points for one of comparable power, 11 for one of greater power.

Exiled (11)

You have been exiled from the tribes or Solitaires for some reason. They will not seek your destruction or imprisonment unless you do something against them, but they will not think of or treat you well; gaining their aid will be difficult. Most consider you a pariah and shun you.

Government Record (BR * 1)

You have had a run-in with the authorities during your last mortal life and they have a file on you (you are most likely aware of this fact). This easily makes you a suspect when you are spotted or known to have been involved in odd goings on. The rank determines how the influence on your life of those agencies that hold such records. For a rank 1, someone would have a minor police record in a local community. At rank 5, groups such as the CIA, Interpol and other agencies with international ties have a record on you or alternatively you have a massive local file that every police officer in town constantly watches you.

Illiterate (8)

You cannot read or write. Serenades that make use of reading or writing will grant you some limited ability but subtract 2 from the serenade roll or any reading or writing ability granted you by the serenade.

Immortal Aire (5)

Your heritage as a member of the himsati race peeks through in your human guise. Perhaps your eyes seem to glow in any kind of light, your facial features have a strong resemblance to the look of your himsati, or your skin has just the slightest feel of fur, etc. Even when in himsati form there is just a hint that you are more than a normal





animal as you cannot hide the intelligence in your eyes, the obvious non-instinctual movements you occasionally make, etc. This is something you can usually hide without the need for a serenade, but even then it still shows from time to time.

This can also be used as a curse requiring serenades to hide.

Imperfect Tone (5)

Pick one attention, subtract 2 from any rolls for serenades using that attention when you go outside its focus. This is on top of other penalties for using related and unrelated foci.

Lucid Dreamer (5)

You have little control over whether you dream or what you dream about. You tend to dream even when you do not want to (at the Narrator's discretion), subtract 2 from any rolls made for actions you take that go against the subconscious flow of any dream you are in (even if you are somehow brought to another's dream).

Motif Bound (8)

The maximum number of motifs you may ever know is equal to your SPT divided by two. You are too focused on certain aspects of reality to work with a broad scope of motifs. This also stops you from using unrelated motifs and effects "on the fly" with your serenades.

Mundane Allergy (5)

A specific class of mundane venoms or drugs raises its die value by two levels against you.

Notoriety (5)

Something about your past, or some secret about you was recently made public. Perhaps a mentor fell to the forces of darkness, perhaps you had a secret identity recently revealed, or you failed in a mission that cost your tribe dearly. Whatever the case, you subtract 2 from any rolls during social conflicts with others who know of and might be influenced by your notoriety.

Owned (BR * 2)

You owe a debt to some individual or organization, you cannot simply repay it in money or a single deed; the one you owe the debt to has the power to enforce your continued "payments" on the debt. The rank determines how much this interferes with your life; at rank 1 you are called upon to run minor errands, at rank 5 you may be called on to perform secret activities that go against your moral code or tribal laws.

Personal Code (5 or 11)

You have a personal code, be it of honor, not to kill, etc. While it may bring you some degree of respect, most often it gets in the way somehow. If you will not abandon it for any reason it is worth 11 points, if you will abandon it in a life or death situation it is worth 5 points.

Personality Quirk (BR * 1)

You suffer from a mundane, emotional unbalance. Individuals will act accordingly and you will receive penalties equal to the rank — where appropriate — in social conflicts. You might be an egomaniac, shy, see constant reminders about a recurring nightmare you have, be extremely short



tempered, have a phobia about a particular object, substance or type of place, etc. The personality quirk is only considered a bane if it is difficult for you to restrain it and causes additional difficulties in your life.

Ponderous (8)

Subtract 2 from your combat move, recalculate your climbing, running, sprinting and swimming rates based on the new lowered combat move value.

Poor (5)

You have little to no money, barely have food to eat or a place to live; perhaps you live on the streets sleeping where you can. Taking this bane causes things to happen that seriously hinder you due to the lack of income and stability. You may have a wonderful mansion-like mantle that you live in, but the minute you step outside of it, the possibility exists that circumstances will arise where things won't go your way due to lack of money.

Public Face (8)

You are well known among certain circles of individuals that you run into on a consistent basis; they continually vie for your attention, pulling you away from and distracting you from urgent responsibilities, tasks and needs as an immortal. Alternatively you might be a local celebrity (such as a local radio or TV personality) and the local mortal community does the same. This bane usually has little do with your life as an immortal and instead concentrates on your life as a mortal; but the Narrator can allow it for immortal social circles if he deems it appropriate.

Ritualistic (11)

You cannot simply “sing” a serenade, but must perform a ritual with all the props, pomp and circumstance. Only at the climax of the ritual do you finally sing the serenade and roll the dice; if interrupted you must start over. The more powerful an effect level you are attempting, the more complex and longer the ritual. This type of bane usually comes from your belief system prior to realizing you are an immortal.

Rival (5)

An individual (or group) of comparable power to you seeks to compete with you in many areas of your life as an immortal. Your rival causes hindrances, — occasionally putting you at minor risk — and attempts to reach many of the same goals as you. At times only one of you will be able to reach that goal.

Secret Identity (BR * 1)

In addition to the identity everyone knows you as, you maintain a separate identity that you use to interact with others in certain situations. You use this to cover up certain activities from the prying eyes of those normally close to you. If discovered, the rank determines how detrimental the consequences are; then it is replaced with the Notoriety bane.

Species Animosity (8)

Your himsati gives off a feral scent, you tend to move in a predatory-like manner, or otherwise irritate normal animals of the same species as your himsati. You are seen as a threat to their territory, food, mating, etc. They dislike you in general, and seek to keep you away from them or possibly attack if you get too



close. Subtract 4 from any rolls made to influence their behavior, intimidate them, befriend them, etc. Regardless, you will never have a companion.

This makes an excellent bane and can also be used as a form or rivalry with a mythological rival species: dog vs. cat, snake vs. ape, mouse vs. elephant, etc.

Susceptibility (BR * 2 or BR * 3)

You are allergic to a mundane substance that individuals do not normally develop an allergy to. Exposure to the substance is treated as a venom with the die value determined by the rank (1 = d4, 2 = d6, 3 = d8, 4 = d10, 5 = d12); you only receive half your normal defense value against it. When used as a major part of a weapon, the rank adds to the damage points (a silver bullet as opposed to a normal bullet). Common substances are BR * 3 (wood for example) and uncommon ones easily avoided are BR * 2 (silver for example).

Though this comes up as a curse far more often than a mundane bane, the same basic mechanics are used.

Wage-Slave (BR * 1)

You are hindered from your activities as an immortal by some mortal structure/organization that you are part of. The rank determines how much negative influence this may have on your activities as an immortal. For example: a normal day job would be rank 2, being an active low-ranking member of a mortal government military would be

rank 4. Taking this bane means there will be serious in-story consequences to not showing up to work, etc.

Weak Will (5)

Subtract 2 from any roll to resist forms of mental control over your thoughts or feelings, the source of the control can be from any outside source (not internal such as an avatar). This does not work on illusions, but it does work on any side effects that would attempt to alter your thoughts or feelings.

Weakling (5)

Subtract 2 from all rolls involving physical feats of raw strength.





Unfocused Vox (8)

You must use gestures and/or speak phrases to sing your serenades. Without them you take a -2 penalty to any serenades you sing.

Unlucky (5)

Once per game session the Narrator can force you to use the smaller of your two die rolls when making a focused skill roll.

The Curses - Mystical Bane Examples

The following is a list of curse ideas that you can use in your game. There are no assigned ranks to the curses; it is up to you as the Narrator, based on how you feel the exposure, hindrance and frequency will be. The bonus points a character gets from taking these at creation are equal to the rank you assign multiplied by 2. Some of the samples can be considered for more than one type depending on how you decide to run them. Mystical banes (curses) use the rules presented in Appendix D.

Restriction Curses

- You cannot cross a threshold without knocking, announcing yourself, being invited in or some other requirement being met.
- You cannot leave/enter an area if anyone is watching you.
- You cannot open doors for yourself or pass through some kind of specific barrier under your own power.
- You may not set foot onto any property empowered by mortal faith (i.e.—sacred/holy ground) other than your own sanctuary.
- You may not speak unless asked a

question or spoken to first.

- You may not activate your natures during the day, or unless there is a full moon out.
- You cannot successfully sing serenades during the day, you may be able to generate small side effects of your serenades however.
- Machines will not work unless you expend immaculum, play an appropriate serenade such as Gremlin, pray to the great machine god, etc.
- You may not speak unless you shout/whisper. You may not tell a lie without whispering/shouting.
- You may not directly tell a lie, you may not directly tell the truth.
- You cannot play serenades unless you remain chaste, if you engage in intimacy you lose the ability for 24 hours.
- You cannot commit the lullaby, you must sin, find a rialla or use talismans to gain life force and immaculum

Consequence Curses:

- When you are angry (or passionate, lustful, overjoyed, etc.) your eyes glow (or you make sounds like your himsati or partially shapeshift, etc.)
- Anytime you yell, everything you've said suddenly appears as graffiti on nearby walls.
- When you touch metal (or wood/plastic/etc.) objects they tarnish (or rust, stain, change colors, etc.)
- Small objects made of metal/wood/plastic/cheese inch away from you when you come near them.
- Toys animate in your presence.
- If you are not paying attention when walking through a doorway you



wind up in a different place nearby, but not the actual area that was on the other side of the doorway when you entered it.

- Storms come up out of nowhere and herald your approach to a city.
- You cannot be seen in mirrors, captured on film/video/audio or some combination. Your image remains in mirrors for several minutes after you've already walked away from them, or reacts to cameras regardless of what your actions at the moment actually are.
- Your shadow pushes other shadows out of the way in crowded rooms.
- Your shadow shows hints of your himsati while you are still in human form. Alternatively you have your human shadow while in himsati and vice versa.
- Wherever your shadow falls, that area collects dust at one hundred times the normal rate.
- Shadows are deeper around you, or it is always colder, darker, warmer, brighter directly around you.
- When you come near flames they burn cold, an unusual color, go out, flicker, dim, etc.
- Candles, oil lamps, fireplaces, etc. will not burn in your presence.
- Plants wither/warp/move/flourish/bloom in your presence. They begin reach for and try to grab people when you are near them.
- Food rots/spoils/comes to life in your presence.
- You attract a type of animal (small birds, mice, cats, etc.), mortal media, crime, plagues, children fascinated with your magical nature, etc., wherever you go.
- Objects fall from shelves, pictures on

walls tilt at odd angles, objects become "lost", candles and wax melt into strange shapes, etc. in your presence.

- Buttons and clasps fall off of others in your presence.
- Dwellings you enter act on their own accord (becoming cluttered, disorganized, doors slamming on their own, furniture rearranging itself when no one is looking, etc.)
- Knives (or other bladed weaponry) become dull in your hands, normal items become edged and cut those who handle them, including you.
- Your presence causes bygone radio broadcasts to repeat over radios playing in the vicinity, or scrambles television and/or radio signals, or turns non-immortal made music twisted and warped sounding, movies talk interactively with you.
- Mortals in your presence constantly get "goose bumps", become nauseous, have nightmares or hallucinations after being with you for too long, etc.
- Mirrors crack when you look into them. When you sing glass breaks regardless of how high or loud you sing.
- Liquids evaporate rapidly when you are nearby. Water turns to blood when you touch it. Beverages effervesce in your presence.
- Mortal's you think about can hear your thoughts.
- Electrical devices in your vicinity experience surges, brown out, or begin to act wildly and strange. Machines will not work for you without the use of serenades such as Gremlin.
- Things run backwards (watches,



drains, running water, etc.) in your vicinity.

- Animals cry out whenever your name is mentioned, birds speak your thoughts aloud, thunder cracks whenever you are struck, or other odd sources of sound can occur.
- Your presence causes animals to fight one another.
- Anyone you kill reanimates and hunts for you until you kill them again.
- Printed words you read become scrambled on the page.
- Mortals age slightly in your presence.
- Mortal spirits dislike you, they plague you whenever you come near them, some may attack you if the curse's rank is high enough.

Weakness Curses:

- The smell/sight of some common thing (roses, garlic, milk, perfume, human sweat, certain symbols, food, etc.) becomes nauseating to you as if you were highly allergic to it. While in its presence you take a penalty as if it were a venom or drug.
- You cannot eat when anyone is near you, you must consume five times the amount of a normal person your size, you eat what and how much your himsati would eat while in human.
- You have mental delusions of being watched, followed, hearing voices that aren't there,, etc.)
- You become fascinated with certain objects, symbols, smells, etc.
- You are allergic to a certain substance (sunlight, silver, garlic, wood, holy items), and take a venom/drug penalty when exposed

to it or additional damage when struck by it.

- You cannot abide the presence of blood (even a menstruating woman), or great beauty.
- Your senses of pleasure and pain are reversed.
- You only gain nutrition from eating a certain thing or performing a certain act (raw meat, flesh, drinking blood, liquids, plants, sex, marbles, etc.); you can only eat certain things, all other things force you to vomit by the end of the scene.
- You cannot refuse a request for aid.
- You can only sleep surrounded in earth or in some other circumstance.
- You have the overwhelming urge to kill your sexual partners.
- Anyone you love becomes a magnet for danger (like the dependant bane).
- You must visit your ark at least once every month/week/day or you begin to weaken (increasing penalty against certain types of actions).
- You have difficulty shapeshifting from himsati back to terrene form.

Alteration Curses:

- You develop a deformity that is clearly supernatural: forked tongue, pure white hair, odd eyes (colored, like your himsati), extra digits, clawed nails, fangs, cloven feet, etc.
- Your voice reverberates when you talk, causing physical pain to mortals around you. You speak with the combined voice of your known avatars.
- Your hair randomly turns into snakes or tentacles and strikes out at others around you.
- Your hair and clothes constantly move as if blown by an unseen wind.



- You are constantly mistaken for someone else, a mortal's dead loved ones, lost friends, famous people, etc.
- You become magnetized.
- You cry tears of blood.
- You cough up strange objects.
- You shed your skin like a snake once a month or every season.
- You give off a strange smell not normally associated with a human or your himsati type. Alternatively you smell like your himsati in its natural environment.
- Your hair, skin, and nails turn to glass or metal whenever they are removed from your body (such as when cut).
- You suffer from stigmata or the psychosomatic appearance of wounds that do not invoke pain.
- Your skin is an odd shade (bluish, greenish, rosy, etc. but not enough to truly look bizarre.) or feels like fur, scales, bark, etc. but looks completely normal
- Your skin is hot/cold to the touch
- You leave wet footprints or animal footprints in human form (and vice versa) wherever you go.
- Your heartbeat is faintly audible from a few feet away, even when invisible.
- Your breath is like frost and coats objects.
- Sunlight turns you to stone or burns you; you glow in moonlight.
- Your kiss is poisonous, your touch causes orgasms or pain in other immortals.
- You assume the form of one of your avatars on the avatar's birthday and cannot change back until the day has passed. You change into one of your

avatars at random each night and change back at dawn. You assume the form of a child in the presence of other children.

- You automatically assume full himsati during certain conditions (full moon, while in water) or you can only change back and forth during certain times or conditions.
- You are a plague carrier, be it mortal or technical (a computer virus for example).
- You heal at the rate of a normal human or the Panacea does not aid you against non-living damage.
- You carry the spiritual stench of taint on you even when not tainted, leading many to believe you are associated with one of the droves.

Curse Examples by Himsati

We provide a number of curses that you can look at from the viewpoint of the type of himsati. These fall under the other categories but are here for ease of reference for those times a curse should fit the character's himsati.

Insects / Arachnids

- Buzzing insect sounds accompany the immortal, the immortal makes insect sounds while sleeping
- The immortal is afraid of birds, spiders, etc.
- Things the immortal touches become covered in webbing
- The immortal has compound eyes
- Alcohol harms the immortal or the immortal cannot abide it
- The immortal is inactive in colder temperatures
- The immortal's blood turns into stinging/biting insects that attack all around the immortal (including the



immortal) when it is spilled.

- Insects double in size and become aggressive around the immortal
- The immortal undergoes a complete metamorphosis of his human form each season
- The immortal's touch leaves painful insect bite marks on those he cares for

Reptiles / Amphibians

- The immortal's eyes turn reptilian or he makes reptilian or amphibious noises when angry, lustful, etc.
- The immortal leaves a slimy coating on anything he sits on (like a frog)
- The immortal is attracted to water
- The immortal snores by croaking like a frog when asleep
- The immortal is completely hairless except his head
- The immortal has a set of retractable fangs or forked tongue
- The immortal's hands and feet are webbed, or shaped more like a slender lizard
- He sheds his skin, eats insects, smells like a reptile, can't breathe air
- His tongue is elongated and sticky and gives him a speech impairment
- Makes rattlesnake noises when about to attack (even if attempting stealth)
- Tadpoles spontaneously generate in any water the immortal touches,



drinks, etc.

- Is fascinated or afraid of reptiles, considers/treats humans as prey
- His hair transforms to snakes, is legless in water, becomes too stiff to move in cold temperatures

Birds / Avians

- Feathers appear in the area after the immortal leaves
- Casts a bird shadow, his reflection in human form is that of his himsati
- Only has four digits on each hand, sleeps standing up
- Makes a goose honk sound when startled
 - Migrates each fall, is fascinated by high places, builds a nest out of handy materials to sleep in
 - Must swallow small stones to grind food up
 - Part of his body is feathered
 - Can only see well at great distances
 - Can't speak but must sing like a bird
 - Causes females he touches to become pregnant and lay an egg that hatches into a bird
 - Is fascinated with small and/or shiny objects

Mammals

- The immortal is hairy, has unusual ears, pants like a dog when hot, has whiskers
- Becomes exceedingly territorial
- Acts like he has fleas all the time
- Must sleep outdoors
- Head only changes into himsati form



at specific times or circumstances

- Is a carrier of rabies
- Has hooved feet and animal like legs
- Sleepwalks in himsati form during full moons
- Presence in an area sends mammals into killing frenzies

Aquatic Himsati

- Leaves wet footprints
- Fresh water turns salty near the immortal
- Bleeds salt water instead of blood
- Smells like brine
- Has no eyelids
- Must keep skin wet or loses youth and beauty until the skin is made wet again.
- Has a barbel (fleshy whiskers around the mouth like a catfish).
- Can only see in shades of green, blue and violet like a fish
- Has gill slits
- Presence causes rip tides, high winds, large waves
- Body becomes encrusted with barnacles
- Arms turn into tentacles
- Must submerge self in water to turn into himsati or to turn back

ESOTERIC HIMSATI

(Elementals and Plant Himsati)

- Fire burns weird colors near the immortal
- Rooms get darker when the immortal enters
- Plants touched suddenly bloom
- Metal tarnishes around the immortal or at his touch
- Ice melts into strange shapes
- Flames burn cold in his presence
- His voice just shatters glass
- His human shadow bites anything in

the area, painful but causes no wounds

- Touch cracks stone
- Must remain in the sunlight to digest his food
- Touch causes frostbite
- If the immortal shouts, lightning strikes nearby. His voice is as loud as thunder.
- Sunlight burns the immortal

Tribal Curses

The Tribal curses have no rank, they are gained by association with the tribe and its ties to human faith as a whole. So as the Narrator you are free to “tweak” the levels of exposure, hindrance and durations as needed to reflect the current situations.

Though they only manifest while a character is tainted, some of the additional rules from this book can be applied to the Tribal curses to provide more variety and depth to those curses. Here we also provide some additional possible consequences and optional rules involving the Tribal Curses.

Arachne — Himsati Frenzy

Type: Weakness

Each successive combat during an act where the character is tainted and the curse has not been able to manifest increases the initial target number (twice the character’s own SPT) as the curse makes more aggressive attempts to manifest.

Eremite — Missionary

Type: Weakness

If the Eremite refuses additional requests during the same episode, an additional spirit die level is lost.



Hemari — Blood Mar

Type: Alteration

Start the curse at Rank 1, plus one rank for every two points of taint. Each time the Hemari character manages to counter the curse from manifesting, it will immediately attempt to manifest just prior to any social encounter, gaining in strength each time until it successfully manifests.

Magdalen — Limbo

Type: Restriction

If the character gains additional taint while under the effects of the Limbo curse, the duration can be increased or the second-most used skill for the last few acts can be chosen and Limbo will have developed over two skills (each tracking their own separate duration).

Morrigan — The Challenge

Type: Weakness

Aside from the potential social stigma among his peers, gaining additional taint while under the effects of The Challenge curse raises its effects to a penalty equal to the full SPT instead of just half the SPT of the character.

Osiri — Haunted

Type: Consequences

The Narrator can use the same chart as the Tuatha Rapt curse as a more solid gauge of how the spirits will interact with the Osiri and to what level of manifestation they may reach. This allows for minor, less intrusive levels when only a few points of taint are present.

Peri — Cursed Form

Type: Consequences

Peri characters typically only pass on

curse whose rank is equal or less than the number of motes of taint they carry. As stated, the character cannot transform back from his Artifice form while any curses are currently active upon his wielder. Alternatively, if the character has multiple curses of a certain rank, they can be traded for having one higher ranked curse passed at your discretion as the Narrator. You should not inform the player which curse(s) you are passing on to his wielder.

Phoenix — Wishbound

Type: Restriction

If the Phoenix gains additional taint while already Wishbound, the number of wishes can be increased to equal his SPT, or he can gain a second master. If either of the two masters are separated from his presence, he is unable to grant any wishes to either master. If the two masters make a conflicting wish and the character cannot find a way to resolve both, as Narrator you are free to resolve such in whatever manner seems most appropriate based on the character, the two masters, the situation and the wishes at hand.

Protean — Cheval

Type: Alteration

As noted in the Player's Guide, stress induces the curse to manifest more frequently; as can additional taint gained. When additional taint is first gained, the loss of form control can temporarily boost for a few turns. Attempting to regain human form would require a roll against the original target number, but with a -2 penalty. Loss of form control normally fades at the end of the scene, but once the curse successfully manifests, it can last longer



with lighter effects.

Sharakai — Sharakai's Wrath

Type: Restriction

As Narrator, you can choose to have the character — upon gaining additional taint—reduce the number of natures he can empower with the tribal gift by one extra (beyond those already affected). In exchange for this, the inability to use the gift on those natures only lasts for the scene, instead of an infinite period (until he relieves himself of some taint).

Terat — Monstrosity

This doubling of a Terat's curses does not normally occur in the waking world, but allows them to manifest in the Morpheum (at twice the effective strength). However, such can be creatively applied to cause odd effects to leak out from the connection between the character and the Morpheum through daydreaming mortals in the character's presence. This is especially helpful for those Terat that embrace their animal nature more than their connection to the Morpheum and rarely link to it.

Tuatha — Rapt

Fewer Glamour beings are created in exchange for a greater duration or threat level. We have received several

questions about how the curse appears to others. Glamour beings are real in every sense, but only for the character affected by the curse. At the higher levels of threat (Taint 7 and up), if the Glamour beings attempted to bind the character and throw him into the street, others watching see the character's body react as if something "odd" was indeed happening to him; but there would be no one there present doing anything as far as others could tell. At this point human faith forces mortals to rationalize what they are witnessing, "he had a seizure and fell into the road..."





CHAPTER 5

MYSTECH

Mystech is the name given to all vox, shard and serenade-driven technology used by the himsati race. In addition there is a lost art known as Biotechnology, known only to the ancient Abzulim who once ruled over the immortals; the only evidence remaining of this technology are the living lighters. These living creatures, implanted with multiple shards, are capable of sailing directly through the Blue Air. The greatest of these ships, the Spirestrike, is larger than even the Leviathan ship of the Proteans. It was last seen prior to the Great Betrayal, with multiple communities of Terat and Solitaires living aboard, vying for control over the ship and its course.

ATTUNEMENT

All immortals are capable of attunement, and do not need to learn a “skill” in it. The vox’s ability to “tune” itself is the driving force behind an immortal’s ability to commit lullaby, sin, carry immaculum in his auras, create arks, talismans and personal sanctuaries. It also serves as the basis for carnals.

Attuning requires the character to spend time working with the object, or performing activities within the location, he wishes to attune to. During this time he allows his vox to adjust to the frequencies of the Aria that interact with the object or location. Similar to Atrana Cant, the immortal uses his vox to instinctively “hum” allowing it to explore and adjust to those frequencies.

Younger immortals have difficulty attuning at first, because they expect some grand ritual or special process they must follow to bring the attunement into being. Their rational minds, still fresh from lethe, lead them down the path of television and movies, replete with wizards and sorcerers. All they need to rely on is what they already know and have by instinct. A few members of the Mentor Calling do learn this ability as a skill, in order to assist immortals coming out of lethe with their own attempts at attunement. The Mentor’s skill rank adds to rolls made by the learning character. The base cost as a skill is 3.

Dominance

Attuning to an object or location creates a slight mystical bond with it. Depending on what the character attunes to, the bond gives him additional mystical power in certain circumstances — acting as a bonus to certain die rolls. Personal sanctuaries, arks, bonded weapons/items and even the character’s motifs are capable of providing a bonus. The character can even attune to items another immortal is already attuned to, gaining an advantage in dealing with him. For this reason immortals are careful about what they attune to and rarely leave such items unguarded.

Creating a Sanctuary

Attuning to a location for it to become a personal sanctuary requires a few months of a character’s time. The base time is 10 weeks, assuming the character spends about 1/3 of each day in the



SYSTEM NOTES —

Sharing a Sanctuary

Multiple immortals can share a sanctuary and all receive the same level of benefits from it. The base time is 10 weeks plus one week for each additional immortal attuned; this time cannot be reduced through extra effort or the presence of Believers. If any of the members of the group are not truly desirous to share the sanctuary (for example, someone secretly desires to usurp it when the process is finished), the process will fail at the end of the time period. Once the process is done however, changes in personal feelings will not cause the sanctuary to falter. The penalty against mystical detection is based on the lowest SPT in the group for regular sanctuaries.

Spirits and Sanctuaries

Mortal spirits are unable to enter a sanctuary unless a shallows occupies the same area. Gossamers may attempt to force their way into a sanctuary by rolling their SPT against a target number equal to 6 plus appropriate dominance bonuses. If the owner is present, it instead becomes a contested roll against the owner's SPT plus dominance bonuses as he is alerted to the attempted intrusion. The owner, if present, can also purposely allow a gossamer to enter his sanctuary, negating the need to roll.

And of course the Gossamer can enter his own sanctuary with no roll, as long as he can get to it.

Sanctified Ground

If a location has a Faith rating it will be equal to the highest Faith rating of the Believers who frequent it or live nearby it, plus one point.

location. The character and location become “accustomed” to one another as he spends time sleeping, eating, practicing skills, studying and working with his mortal friends and followers. It is ill advised to have multiple immortals present unless they intend to share the sanctuary together. Extra time spent reduces the base time as does having a strong SPT attribute — for each point above a 4 SPT the time is reduced by one week. If there are at least a small number of Believers present, it also reduces the time by roughly one week.

Once the above is accomplished, the character gains a form of dominance whenever he is within the boundaries of his sanctuary. The dominance provides a number of benefits:

- A 2-point bonus to all rolls made for mystical abilities or powers (natures, serenades, Mystech items, boons, etc.).
- The character and all items he is attuned to gain a form of protection from mystical detection, due to the natural ward that forms at the sanctuary's boundaries. The character's SPT becomes a penalty against all mystical detection attempts. This allows the sanctuary to safely store items for the character — especially his ark.

The largest area encompassed by the boundaries of the sanctuary is equal to a radius of the character's SPT * 2 in yards. The sanctuary does not have to encompass an entire structure, but will form itself to a portion of the structure closest to the maximum size (a room or group of rooms within a building, a single cave in a network of caverns, the



bell tower of an old church, a gazebo at the center of a hedge maze, a rooftop atrium, a basement, a child's tree house, etc. The character can choose a smaller area if he desires. Regardless, the sanctuary should be able to stand out as a specific area within the location: half of a room, a space in the yard, a phone booth (which is an object technically), or a parking spot cannot serve as personal sanctuaries.

The choice of location must reflect the overall concept of the character; if not the character only receives a 1-point bonus. For example, a jungle parrot himsati of the Tuatha Tribe — with a Bohemian predilection — should not choose a dank, dark basement for his personal sanctuary if he wants to receive the full 2-point bonus. A rooftop atrium is a much better choice, in line with the character's concept and how he fits into the grand scheme of reality. Additionally, a character may choose a location already steeped in mystical power for his sanctuary; these locations have additional rules.

Mantles

The character must first convince/train/intimidate the maker into the belief that the immortal has every right to establish his sanctuary in the mantle (or the entire mantle if it is relatively small). Once that is established he can begin the attunement process. The Maker serves as the basis for all dominance effects. If that belief is ever doubted the dominance ends until the Maker's belief in such is restored.

The base time is increased by a number of weeks equal to the Maker's SPT, it

cannot be decreased through extra time spent or the presence of Believers. The bonus for mystical rolls is half the Maker's SPT instead of 2 points. The penalty against mystical forms of protection is equal to the Maker's full SPT instead of the character's.

Shallows

The character needs to find a way to establish a rapport with the strongest mortal spirit in the shallows prior to beginning attunement. If the spirit becomes unhappy with the character, the dominance ends until things are set right. If the spirit ever leaves while still on good terms with the character, the dominance drops by one point; the character needs to establish a good rapport with the next strongest spirit as it will slowly take over as the source of the dominance.

The base time is not increased, and any Believers with a faith similar to the strongest spirit can count towards gaining the one-week reduction. The bonus for mystical rolls and the penalty against mystical detection is equal to the spirit's SPT.

Sanctified Ground

The only way an immortal can attune to a place with its own Faith rating is if his overall concept is in line with the belief and faith resident in the location and the Believers that help supply and maintain the locations rating. If that relationship ever changes, the sanctuary's benefits fall completely apart; should things come back in line the immortal must start over with a new attunement process.



If another supernatural entity “takes up residence” in any area of the location that houses the Faith rating — not necessarily within the boundaries of the part forming the sanctuary — and it is more conceptually in line with the Faith of the location, the dominance is disrupted until the entity is driven out or chooses to leave.

There is no change in base time, the Believers negate the additional time that would be required to overcome the Faith rating. The Faith rating of the location acts as the dominance bonus and the mystical detection penalty. Locations gain Faith ratings by being regularly visited by Believers, or having a number of them live close by; the Believers need to have deep superstitious or theological beliefs regarding the location. Having a

“reputation” doesn’t guarantee a Faith rating.

Such “sacred” sanctuaries include places like the old “haunted” house, the mausoleum in the cemetery, the bell tower of the town church, the ancient castle ruins, and other places that tend to draw the human faithful. The art deco apartment building and the botanical gardens downtown might make fine sanctuaries, but they would not be “sacred” sanctuaries. Regular sanctuaries cannot turn into sacred ones, a sacred sanctuary must start out sanctified prior to the attunement process.

Sanctuary Maintenance

For the dominance to remain in effect, the character must return and spend a



day in the sanctuary once every “x” years, where “x” is equal to his SPT attribute. The time is extended further as follows:

- If at least one Believer regularly visits the sanctuary, multiply the time by ten.
- If the character’s ark is in the sanctuary, multiply the time by ten.

Thus, if a character with a 5 SPT has a sanctuary housing his ark and Believers regularly visit it, he can go 500 years between visits (5 years x 10 x 10) and still keep the dominance in effect. If a character enters lethe, the length of time is based on his SPT when he entered lethe, not his SPT as he comes out.

Immortals take great pains to safeguard their sanctuary from being located and usurped. Since hundreds of years can pass between visits, an immortal often turns to his mortal friends and followers — and the generations of their families that follow — to watch over the sanctuary and prize possessions. In the Age of Myth, the sanctuary often served as a temple for worshippers to come and practice their faith. These Believers would then erect temples and shrines around the region, their faith connecting them back to the sanctuary, allowing them to help maintain it even from a distance.

If Believers develop their own connection to the sanctuary and then create a remote location dedicated to the sanctuary and its owner, simply visiting the remote location counts as if they are visiting the actual sanctuary. This bond is through their faith, and cannot be used to track back to the sanctuary via

mystical means. There are no mechanics necessary, it is up to you as Narrator to decide if their belief in the sanctuary as an icon of their faith is strong enough to support such a bond.

Usurping a Sanctuary

Often a character’s enemies would rather “steal” the sanctuary than destroy it. As long as the owner is not present, it is possible to quietly attune to another’s sanctuary, without the owner becoming aware until the end of the attunement. As long as the owner does not return during the attunement period, the usurper stands a chance to stealing away the current owner’s attunement.

If the usurper is discovered by any Believers faithful to the owner and the sanctuary, the usurper’s attunement is stopped. Once this happens the Believers need to be removed or brought over to the usurper’s cause; if they are brought over, he gains the reduction in base time from their presence. Remote locations do not assist in detecting or blocking a usurper, the Believers must be present in the sanctuary itself. If they leave or are converted to his cause, he can start the process over again.

If the usurper gets to the end of the attunement period, he makes a contested SPT roll against the current owner (who is now alerted that someone has been in his sanctuary for quite some time). Even though he is not present in the sanctuary, the owner gets his dominance bonus, plus an additional point if his Believers are there at the time of the roll, plus an additional 2 points if his ark is present in the sanctuary. If the owner is a gossamer, then instead of a contested



roll, the roll is made against the gossamer's SPT attribute plus any applicable bonuses as described above.

If the usurper is successful, he now gains the dominance of the sanctuary. He does not become attuned to any items (or the ark) present within — though he does now know their exact locations unless they are separately warded. Any Believers are cut off and can feel the sudden shift as even their remote shrines and temples lose the connection to the sanctuary.

Arks

Arks are objects that occupy more space than the character in his human guise. The entire ark must be larger than the character in human form, but there is no need for a hollow space inside to hold the character. They do often serve a secondary purpose as a place to house items of importance: a sarcophagus is the most well-known example.

Attuning to the ark requires a number of days equal to the character's SPT, he must spend about a 1/3 of each day in the presence of his ark (physical contact is best). For this reason many immortals create or choose an item they can simply sleep inside each night. When the time has passed the character must sacrifice the first attribute point to the ark (this cannot be SPT). Unfortunately this point does not go into the ark for later use, but is used up fully aligning the ark to hold future attribute points and immaculum.

If the character builds his own ark, the process of building it becomes the attunement process, plus that first

SYSTEM NOTES —

Replenishing Attribute Points

Immaculum cannot be used to replenish points given to an ark. The character must sin or lullaby actual attribute points from a mortal in order to replace those he has given to the ark. Once the character has given points to the ark, he must replenish *all* the points he gave before he can give to the ark again.

The same goes for any other immortals he has allowed to attune to his ark; Believers that tithe directly to it or a talisman must "heal" back the tithed point before being able to give another.

attribute point is not lost and is available for later rejuvenation. Such items cannot be something the character commissions, uses "robots" or serenades to build. He must make the ark himself, by his own hands for it to count as the attunement process (only gossamers can avoid this with the help of a Religarum wielder).

Now, by coming into contact with the ark, the immortal gives up a maximum number of attribute points equal to half his SPT. He must replenish all those missing points before attempting to divest more. It is an act of will and no roll is required. Immaculum can be given up to the ark as well, with no limit on how much can be deposited at any one time. A character cannot lower an attribute to a value of zero through giving up points.

The character can assist in attuning any Believers that follow him, to the ark. If they have learned the ability of tithing, this attunement allows them to donate their attributes directly to the ark. He



may also — though with obvious risk — assist in attuning other immortals to his ark. When an attribute point is given to the ark, it is no longer associated with a specific attribute: just as a point of a mortal's STR can be used to replenish the WIL of an immortal, an immortal's STR point placed in the ark may later fuel his AGL after rejuvenation.

Talismans

A talisman is a small object capable of holding immaculum and attribute points for later deposit into the ark they are attuned to. In this way the immortal can gather a cache of attribute points and replenish them before visiting the ark. A talisman can hold a number of attribute points equal to the character's SPT. Believers — but not other immortals — can be attuned to the character's talisman; they can also fill it and bring it to the ark at a later date using tithing to deposit the points into the ark.

If a talisman is separated from its owner, it can be mystically detected as a living thing with a target number equal to 12 minus the number of attribute points currently within it (minimum target number is 6). If another being obtains the talisman and attunes to it, that being gains a bonus to all mystical rolls against the owner (equal to half the number of attribute points in the talisman, round up). However, each time the bonus is used an attribute point fades from the talisman and the bonus must be recalculated. For this reason immortals create few talismans and ensure they are safeguarded upon their person or with devoted followers or allies.

The talisman must be attuned to both the

character and his ark and not just any item will work. The character must create the talisman himself or other immortals — or Believers — can create the talisman for the character so long as he is deeply involved in the process (design, approval, handling materials, etc.). Once created, the immortal gives up an attribute point to align the talisman, which is then lost — unless he created the talisman on his own, in which case it becomes the first point stored in the talisman to give to the ark.

Losing an Ark

Arks can be mystically detected as if they were living entities. The base target number to detect an ark is 12; the total number of attribute points in the ark, divided by ten, is subtracted from the base target number (minimum base target number is 6). Unfamiliarity penalties, bonuses from being inside the bounds of a sanctuary, and others where appropriate, should be applied to attempts to locate it.

Before attempting to take someone else's ark, the usurper must remove it from the bounds of any sanctuary or ward; or the sanctuary/ward must be claimed or destroyed. The usurper goes through the same process as initially attuning to an ark. At the end of this process he makes a contested SPT roll against the current owner. At this point (as when usurping a sanctuary) the current owner and anyone else attuned to the ark become aware of the attempt. The owner receives an automatic 2-point bonus to the roll since the ark is already his. If there are Believers attuned to the ark the owner receives another 1-point bonus, and yet another 2-point bonus if



any other immortals are cooperatively attuned to it.

Most enemies will find it easier to destroy the ark: normal object breaking rules are followed, with the ark receiving an armor bonus equal to the SPT of the owner. Breaking the ark causes a standard spill of life force and any immaculum contained within.

Rejuvenation

No special die rolls are needed to rejuvenate from an ark. When the ark rejuvenates an immortal, creates a scion, splinters an avatar, etc., it is physically destroyed. It cannot be used again — even the pieces cannot be used to build another. Excess immaculum beyond what the character can hold in his auras and excess attributes beyond those needed to rejuvenate, splinter, etc. are lost in a spill.

The most interesting aspect is how it looks as the character bursts forth from his ark. A stone statue may crumble revealing the character underneath; a phone booth's glass shatters outwards as the character tumbles out having not been inside a moment before; a sarcophagus lid breaks in two and the rest of it falls to pieces as the immortal rises out of it.

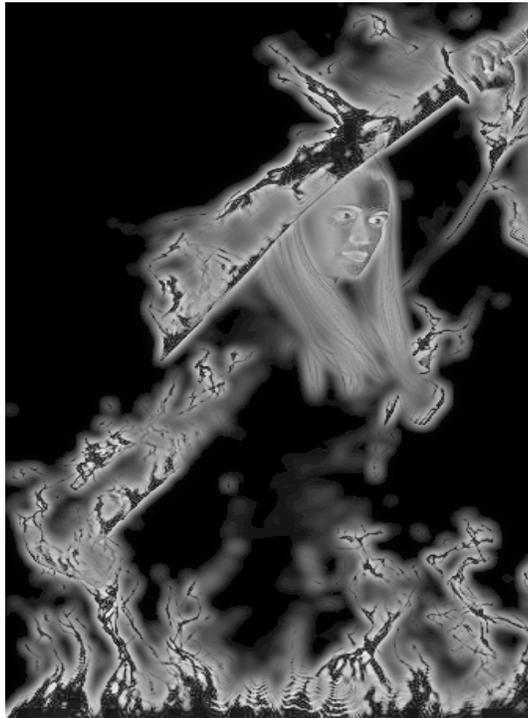
Avatar Splintering

Splintering is the result of knowledge gleaned from failed attempts in the ancient past to mimic Abzulim Biotechnology. Performance of the ritual is forbidden among the tribes without consent of the Paragon Council. There are many dangers inherent in doing so; failure in the ritual results in insanity or a trip into the Blue Air for the

avatar and/or the current incarnation of the immortal. There are few actually skilled in the ritual and of those most only know specific parts of the ritual. The tribes keep a strict watch on who learns the ritual and how much of it they learn.

The ritual must take place within a sanctuary or other warded area — this keeps outside energies from potentially

interfering. The character's ark is needed, as well as a vox to bond with the character's spilling aura and the avatar's spiritual spark. When finished, the avatar has a new body and access to all his abilities, save those gifts and curses the character inherited from him. The splintered avatar will have half the fugue rating he possessed when he entered lethe. Any mundane boons or banes no longer making sense (i.e. Temporal





Power) are no longer available to the splintered avatar. The character no longer has that avatar within the personality matrix of his vox — it is gone forever. He will no longer have flashbacks or memories of the avatar beyond those he already experienced.

Nearly all avatars come from before the Great Betrayal and were members of either the Prides or the Courts. These avatars become rather upset over the full realization of all that happened since they entered lethe. The special powers and gifts they had from their association with those old groupings are gone. The avatar is taken to the tribe holding the remnants of his former Pride or Court. He is trained and initiated into the modern world if possible, eventually joining that tribe.

There is one case in which the Paragon Council will immediately approve the use of the Splintering — this is the Venery. A rumored attempt at recreating Abzulim Biotechnology, the Venery is a process by which an avatar or current immortal attempts to completely consume the other. It is forbidden knowledge and anyone caught using it is splintered and then consigned to the Blue Air or worse.

Other Uses of Attunement

Characters can make basic attunements to other objects as well, often to use the abilities of enchanted items. Immortals carefully guard their mystical objects; characters can attune to someone else's objects, gaining bonuses when dealing with or acting against them.

To receive the bonus, the target must

have specifically attuned to the item in question, or it must be considered to “belong” to the target — this is up to you as Narrator to decide if a normal object can be considered a personal possession of an individual. In order to gain the bonus the immortal spends a day with the item, attuning to it, and then expends an immaculum mote. If the object is mystical in nature, the character must make a contested PRS roll against the current owner of the item (if the owner is another object or location — such as attuning to a piece of a much larger object — use the appropriate defense value as the target number, minimum 6). If the object is mystically protected by some form of ward the character cannot attune to it in this manner. If successfully attuned, the character chooses a foci of one of his skills. Whenever he uses the skill and foci in relation to the individual/location/object the object is tied to, he removes all penalties for unfamiliarity and gains a +1 bonus to all rolls made. The bonus lies dormant until needed; once activated it lasts for the remainder of the act.

Immortals often use this to assist in tracking down someone or something bonded to the item. Most immortals are careful about how many items they make permanent bonds with beyond their sanctuary, ark and truly personal items. Many use carnals to trap their items and others seek out those skilled in enchanting to ward them. During the day the character spends carrying the item, it is possible for the original owner to track him through it. Many immortals skip attunement in favor of learning a serenade to perform such tracking; it is quicker and more effective though does



not usually last as long.

CARNALS

Carnals let the character link serenades and skills together, performing various tricks and feats with skill foci, or temporarily working serenades into items they handle using mundane skills. The singer of the serenade expends a mote of immaculum to make the initial link between the skill focus and the serenade effect. Carnals are difficult to run as a Narrator since players often create them on the spur of the moment. What follow are a few rules for creating carnals, and guidelines for running them with your players. There is no skill to learn, carnals mix existing abilities such as attunement and serenades with skills the character already possesses.

Whispers

Known in the Player's Guide as "Minor Serenade Effects", they provide quick and simple effects with no dice rolls, rounding out a character's mystical abilities. Ignoring the details of the serenade, they concentrate solely on the motif with regard to the attention and general description of the effect. They are the basis for skill carnals and serenade trapping.

- Whispers use the rule that if the effect level desired is less than the serenade skill rank, no roll is needed; in fact, if a roll is needed it is not considered a whisper.
- Whispers are barely audible to other immortals and never have a visible connection to the character. The base target number to hear a character's whisper on a standard

PER roll is 6 plus the character's rank in the serenade and the character's own PER attribute.

- The effect of a whisper cannot directly cause damage or alter the physiology of another living being (physically, mentally or spiritually).
- The effect of a whisper must either be beneath the notice of human faith, or allow humans to rationalize it somehow, since human faith will not force mortals to ignore the effect.
- Some attentions and serenades are not suited for use as whispers; be careful when players go beyond what whispers are meant to do.

Examples using the Player's Guide

- Ember — Light candles without actually damaging them.
- Surge — Give someone a small static shock.
- Filament — The character can cause cobwebs to appear in various places.
- Weld — Fix a broken chair leg
- Manifesto — Alter the wording of a note.

Skill Carnals

Skill carnals mingle serenade effects with skill, making the nearly impossible seem possible. Characters accomplish feats that mundane humans only envision in books, movies and art: they catch bullets with their teeth, knock dozens of flying arrows out of the sky with swords, maneuver vehicles like stunt drivers, pull aces out of their sleeves (where none were a moment ago), and much more. Mythic Defenses are a popular use of carnals, allowing for spectacular dodges, blocks and defensive use of non-combat skills. Skill carnals use whispers to add the serenade's rank



to a skill for use with a specific focus. As with whispers, skill carnals ignore the details of the serenade and concentrate on the attention and general description of the effect. Unlike carnals, even the motif is downplayed — only a tiny manifestation is noticeable.

Examples:

- Link a force-field serenade to the short sword focus and whirl the blades at extreme speed to deflect a huge volley of incoming arrows.
- Link a serenade that causes objects to come the character by happenstance with a gambling focus; while playing cards the character always draws the card he needs.
- Link an obstruction serenade using magnetism to a car/truck focus (ground vehicles skill). The car is pulled towards metallic objects of the character's desire, allowing him to easily maneuver through traffic and around hair-pin turns.

In each example above there is no real serenade effect. The serenade rank is added to the skill to represent the whisper finding a way to assist the character with his skill rolls when using the desired focus. One mote of immaculum is expended to link the whisper to the skill focus.

- A skill cannot be more than doubled when adding the serenade rank to it.
- Human faith limits apply: character's can catch a bullet but not a nuclear missile.
- Skill carnals take effect immediately and last until the current need is done, but not for longer than the scene.

- Only one skill carnal can be active at a time, using another skill carnal cancels a currently active one.
- Skill carnals only apply to a single focus, not to the entire skill.
- Some combinations of whispers and skills do not work well together.

Serenade Trapping

A serenade can temporarily be trapped in an object to activate at a later time based on a set circumstance or situation as defined by the character. Serenade trapping forms an activation “trigger” to manifest the serenade's effects remotely or at a later time. One mote of immaculum is expended to set the “trap”, and a circumstance, situation or action is chosen to activate the serenade. As with any attunement, the vox quickly tunes itself to the serenade and the item.

Characters can only trap items in objects which they have an appropriate skill and foci for working with. For example, a character with a skill in Artistry and a Sculpture focus could trap serenades within a sculpture or a set of sculpting tools; if he wanted to work with paintings, paintbrushes or cans of paint he'd need the Painting focus.

Serenades lay dormant, waiting to activate, for a maximum number of days equal to the ranks of the mundane skill plus the serenade skill. Additional immaculum motes expended increase the time: each point expended beyond the first doubles the time. (2 motes doubles, 3 motes quadruples, 4 motes increase by eight times, and 5 increases by sixteen times). Characters cannot expend more total motes than their rank in the serenade. To make something



wait longer requires enchanting.

- Serenade trapping cannot be used on an item already altered by Enchantment or any object with a SPT attribute.
- Serenade trapping cannot trap whispers, skill carnals or serenades with immaculum-driven changes to secondary elements (AoE, Duration, Visibility). It must trap the serenade in its original form (including the original focus and motif).
- Choruses and Melds cannot be trapped.
- The character may pick a lower strength (and therefore lower effect) than indicated by the die roll.
- The maximum effect level achievable is the character's rank in the serenade skill. Example: A character with a rank 2 in a serenade cannot achieve higher than a success level of 2, regardless of what he rolls. But if the character personally created the object the serenade is trapped in, this limit is removed.
- Serenades can be trapped in an object so the current bearer of the object may activate the serenade as though he were its singer. It allows serenades usable only on oneself to be used by another. The character must specifically state he is trapping the serenade to work this way.

Items with serenades trapped in them count as being “attuned” to the character. This allows others to attune to it in order to gain advantages over the character. Once a trapped serenade has played out, the object goes back to normal and any attunements are gone.

ENCHANTING

Special Skill (Base Cost 7)

Characters with the enchanting skill use various facets of archaic immortal science to imbue objects with powers beyond those available to the instinctual use of carnals. Enchanting requires a good deal of immaculum — usually stored within a talisman — at the character's disposal. Enchanters can even invest a small portion of their life force to make limited items of power.

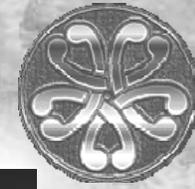
Most characters do fine just with carnals. You need to be careful about allowing characters to learn enchanting. It is a time-consuming process and requires a great number of serenades in the character's arsenal to work properly. Often, it leads to rampant abuse by characters without them realizing that they are doing so.

Enchanting items larger than size 0 incurs an additional penalty to all enchanting rolls equal to two times the size category.

Carnal Enchanting

Enchanters can take objects with serenades trapped in them via carnals and alter the serenade. The less the enchanter knows about an object (the singer of the serenade, the attention, the motif, the activation circumstances) the higher an unfamiliarity penalty should be against the roll. If successful on a non-contested roll against the strength of the serenade trapped in the object, the enchanter can make one change per success level (i.e. a level 2 success would allow for two changes):

- Expend one mote of immaculum per



success level to increase the dormancy time; this can go past the 5 mote limit (i.e. a 6th mote increase to thirty-two times, and so on).

- Expend a mote of immaculum to alter the circumstances, situation or action(s) that causes the serenade to manifest.
- Expend a mote of immaculum to change the duration up or down one level. The enchanter must have a serenade with the same attention to do this however. The duration cannot be made permanent, but the notation of (-E) can be added to any serenade that would normally allow such, and it would follow the standard rules for having the (-E) added to it.
- Expend a mote of immaculum to change the AoE up or down one level. The enchanter must have a serenade with the same attention to do this.
- Expend a mote of immaculum to hide the connection to the object. The enchanter must have a serenade with the same attention to do this.
- Create a trigger to end the serenade early (-T). The enchanter must have a serenade with the same attention to do this.
- Expend a mote of immaculum to help mask the attunement between the object and its owner (this uses the enchanter's skill rank as a penalty against someone else if they try to mystically detect or attune to



the object).

- Expend a mote to remove any and all attunements others may have made with the object aside from the owner.
- Expend a mote to lower the strength of the serenade by two points; this can be repeated to continue to lower, but not raise the strength..

Altering a serenade already trapped in an object does not create an attunement between the enchanting character and the object.

Full Enchanting

Full enchanting goes to the next level. An attunement to the object is required, taking the normal day to perform — just



like attuning to any object. The character uses his enchanting skill to prepare the object, and then expends a single attribute point (this can alternatively come from a talisman rather than his own attributes). The process gives the item a SPT rating of one point. The character has a choice of increasing the durability of the item or making the item “rechargeable”. Full enchanting can do everything that Carnal enchanting can do, with the following changes and exceptions:

- If the character chooses to make the item more durable it gains +1 to its normal BODY rating. After armor and health boxes have been recalculated, it also gains an additional point of armor.
- If made rechargeable, each immaculum expended creates one charge. This allows the item to be used again under the same circumstances, situation or actions. If the item was made “rechargeable”, motes can again be added later by anyone skilled in enchanting. An item can hold a total number of “charges” at any one time equal to the creating enchanter’s skill rank. The item must be recharged before using the last charge resident within; otherwise it loses the ability to recharge and has to be reworked.
- The dormancy period is rated in years, equal to the enchanting skill rank plus the rank of the highest serenade trapped in the object. Each time this period passes one charge is used. If the item runs out of charges it loses the ability to recharge.
- Enchantments can trap any type of serenade, there are no restrictions;

even serenades with altered secondary elements can be trapped.

- Trapping a chorus or a meld done by more than one immortal requires all participants to attune to the object prior to the final chorus or meld being sung.
- The enchanter can pick a lower strength than indicated by the roll.
- There are no limits on maximum effect levels.
- The bearer of the object can be treated as the singer — even the object itself can be treated as the singer — for serenades that are designed to affect the singer.
- The enchanter can require individuals to attune to the object before using it (beings with Faith may be able to use their faith to attune at your discretion) or allow them to use it at will.

Multiple Serenades

Rather than a meld, multiple serenades can be individually trapped within the object; each with their own circumstances, situation or actions to activate them and sharing the charges. The serenades are played individually, and the lowest roll becomes the strength for all the serenades. Buildup will occur immediately if the character attempts the serenades again on the object.

Warding

Enchanting is dangerous because the object is now attuned to the enchanter. Enchanting characters can provide the object with the same benefit a sanctuary gives to items stored within it. By expending a second attribute point, the character creates protection around the item. Though others may attune to it —



if that is required in order for them to use it — a penalty equal to the enchanter's PRS is applied against any attempts to use the object for the purpose of tracking down the enchanter, or in order to gain a bonus against him.

Warding items without specifically enchanting them is done via permanent (-P) serenades. If an item is protected by multiple wards (enchanted object with ward is placed inside building with serenade ward), then one-half of the lower value is added to the higher value for increased protection. If a third, fourth, etc. ward is in place, then one more point is added to the total ward value for that object.

Size Matters

Anything can be warded, even huge items. Anything that allows constant passage of living beings into and out of it (building, cruise ship, lighter, etc.) is only warded at the enchanter's PRS - 1. There is also the risk — when warding large structures — that someone using a detection serenade will notice his detection serenade doesn't see the building at all (yet he can see it with his own eyes: a sure sign that something is amiss). Most wards are placed on specific rooms or containers within a structure so a visual comparison cannot be easily made against the results of the serenade.

SHARDING

Special Skill (Base Cost 8)

Sharding uses pre-shaped shards to imbue an object with both a SPT and MIND attribute. This makes the item more than just a dormant object waiting

to be charged up and used. The shard must be worked into the item, so most often the character must create the object after he has the shard; it is rare that shards can simply be inserted into existing objects.

The character can sacrifice attribute points — a maximum equal to half his SPT or twice his Sharding skill, whichever is lower — to provide the

Excerpt from “Alchemy Diffused”...

“During the open warfare that occurred after the first dissolution of the Strategem pact — prior to the Great Fire of 1666 — Bloodshields were a popular and pricey commodity among our eternal warriors. They provided a level of protection beyond anything a quick meld of serenades could provide. The first known Bloodshields were actually a gift to the mortal Mayan king Shield Jaguar. With the bloodshields he continued his reign for nearly 100 mortal years until his death at the age of 95. The gift was from his consort and — unknown to him — immortal patron Lady Xoc (pronounced ‘Shoke’).

The first bloodshields are far more powerful than those today, created using older more ritualistic forms of serenades. Modern bloodshields involve infusing shard material into a set of cerise diamonds. Serenades of flight and protection are imbued within. At the telepathic command of the bearer, the diamonds float up into the air in a complex pattern, forming a protective field around the bearer that blocks most physical and mystical forms of attack at a very high level.”



object with a SPT and MIND attributes. The object then increases its natural BODY rating by the lower of the SPT and MIND values; it gains additional armor equal to the higher of the two values. If the object is destroyed, the shard remains. Otherwise Sharding uses the same rules as Enchantment for what can be done to the object (including skill rolls, penalties for size, warding, individual changes and immaculum expenditures), with the following changes:

- There is no choice concerning durability or making the item rechargeable, the item gains durability by default and does not use any charges. The item decides when to use each power, a maximum number of times in a day equal to its MIND or SPT, whichever is higher.
- The character can choose to give the object a 0 MIND attribute (therefore the BODY gains no increase, only the armor value does). Objects with a 0 MIND need the current bearer of the item to initiate the serenade, through whatever means are chosen by the character who created the item.
- The (-P) notation can be added to make a serenade played by the object permanent. The duration has to be increased to Level 5 and then one last mote is expended to make it that particular effect permanent.
- The character cannot pick a lower strength roll, that is now the object's decision to use it at a lower power during any particular use.
- The object is always treated as the singer of the trapped serenade(s).



Unless the object is created with a 0 MIND, it is no longer under anyone's particular control. It takes on part of the personality and demeanor of its creator and is normally kindly disposed towards him. If the item has permanent serenades played upon it — that grant permanent abilities such as mobility, the ability to express itself, etc. — it is harder to deal with in the event it decides not to comply with the bearer's wishes.

Shaping Shards

Only select individuals among the Solitaires learn the rituals and powers to cut and shape shards for specific applications. Most immortals go through arduous tasks of finding shards



of a size and shape meeting their general needs. Then they create the object to work well with the existing shard.

Lighters

Very few lighters are made at this point in time, there is very little travel beyond Earth and its nearby realms. Creating a lighter takes tremendous time and the efforts of multiple immortals with skills in sharding and enchantment. Each function of the lighter is a set of enchanted objects, tied to shards not only embedded within them, but also to other shard-embedded objects meant to link together the various systems of the lighter.

Lighters have a MIND, SPT and BODY rating. They are not truly living entities in the sense of having flesh and blood, but are living in the same sense as any magical item is. Working with a lighter is not the same as working with a mortal ship or aircraft. Lighters require their own skill (listed in Chapter 3) in order to manipulate the shards and interact with the MIND, BODY and SPT of the ship itself.

These are still nothing compared to the actual real living lighters, built millions of years ago from living creatures deep in the Dominions; only these ships can sail directly through the Blue Air and disregard traveling the Nadir.

MYSTECH EP COSTS

In addition to the time, immaculum and sometimes attributes that must be sacrificed to create or attune to various Mystech items, EP and/or MP must also be spent — even if no fades/flashbacks

are involved, MP can always be spent on Mystech. Costs are listed below, and are for the character who performs the attunement, enchantment or sharding; this is not necessarily the character who ultimately becomes the “owner” of the item.

Attunement Costs

- Sanctuaries: SPT * 3
- Special Sanctuary (mantle, shallow, sacred ground): SPT * 5
- Ark: 5 EP
- Talisman: No Cost
- Temporary Attunement: No Cost
- When required to wield enchanted item: half (round up) of the creation cost.

Carnal Costs

No cost for whispers, skill carnals or serenade trapping

Enchantment Costs

Carnal enchantments have no cost. Full Enchanting has a base cost of 8 EP. Making any changes to a trapped serenade’s secondary elements increases the cost by 1 EP — it does not matter if the duration is increased 3 levels, it is 1 EP for changing the duration. The following also cost an additional 1 EP each:

- Trapping a meld or chorus
- Requiring attunement
- Increasing dormancy time
- Attaching a ward

These costs are paid even if the enchantment is being placed on an object for someone else.

Sharding Costs

- The base cost for a sharding-based



enchantment (creating an enchanted item with MIND, BODY, SPT) is 12 EP. After this it uses the same additional costs as for enchantment. In addition if any power is given the (-P) notation that is another 1 EP. Any abilities given to the item itself (such as permanent mobility or self-expression serenades through vivification) cost another 1 EP each.

These costs are paid even if the sharding is done to an object for someone else.

The Benefits

Characters regain half the points spent on an item (all given in EP regardless of what was used to purchase it) if the item is permanently lost to them during the game through no fault of their own. However, if their direct actions resulted in the loss of the item (gave it away, misused it, destroyed it themselves) they do not receive any points. If the character enters lethe, you make alternative arrangements. For example, give the next character a free sanctuary, enchanted item or ark boon. They can discover the lost item quickly after they start the game.

ABZULIM BIOTECH

The Abzulim disdained physical technology of any kind, the use of tools was a pathetic attempt to improve oneself with toys; it was a sign of weakness. Abzulim technology did not use metal, wood or plastic; it used flesh, genetics, and the occasional vox or shard. Their only weapons, the Kai Ra, were the first — and last — tools they ever forged and even these were living creatures. Their biotechnology knew no

ethical or technical limits. They created entire races throughout their dominions, enslaving indigenous beings and divining their genetic data for use elsewhere in the empire. Their work gave nearly every species on Earth the capacity to adapt to their environment over generations: evolution.

The Abzulim long ago mastered their own faith, and this allowed them to reach unthinkable levels of genetic manipulation as well as matter and energy transference. Most believe they were able to wield pure attentions through sheer willpower and the manipulation of their own genetic structure.

Patterning

They transformed a physical objects into energy patterns which they inscribed as tattoos on their hide. The warlords literally covered themselves with entire planets. They absorbed the best of the worlds they visited and carried entire empires engraved on their skins; traveling deeper into the unknown reaches of the Dominions. Today, various serenades mimic a small fraction of the genetic potential of Patterning, but no immortal can wield a serenade at the levels made available by Abzulim Patterning.

Emotion Control

The Abzulim installed a near perfect control mechanism in their slaves races: emotion. All the creations and slaves of the warlords have them. They began as a set of programmed responses to simple stimuli from the master: a flick of the tail or a slight nod of the head induced fear, while a raise eyebrow or stern look



SYSTEM NOTES —

Beckoning

Abzulim grant their emotional control ability to their servants for brief periods. When used, the controller and target make opposed WIL rolls. If the controller wins, the target obeys the basic impulse given to him from the nuances of the controller's body language. A success level of five is required for the target to do something that might harm himself.

The ability causes more than just obedience, it can trigger other types of base emotional responses including fear, lust, anger, lassitude, greed, hunger and more. It only triggers an emotional response, not true complex human-like emotions. Once the target leaves the presence of the controller, the effects quickly wear off.

fostered obedience. The Abzulim have perfect emotional control over most other immortals — but not each other as they have no emotions like the kind implanted in the hearts of their created and slave races. Young immortals, born after their supremacy, have some resistance to this control, but the shard network has spread this to all immortals. The Deepwalkers train their agents and trusted servants in the subtle arts of this control. But, as the Abzulim found out when their slaves rose up against them, constant use of the ability can make a creature immune to that particular master's use of it.

The level, intensity and variety of emotions experienced by the himsati race today is due to their transformation at the hands of human faith. Humanity's complex emotional capacity is far

beyond anything the Abzulim ever dreamed of.

Genetic Manipulation

Several ancient legends shared among Drove Anopheles speak of the very reason for their creation. When Samiel returned from the first Crucible he created the original Shadowen; using them as spies, he sought out other Abzulim that would pose a threat to his dominance. Using the Shadowen and Abzulim loyal to him, he secretly abducted those who appeared to be a threat. To find further use for them, he melded together the flesh of their fallen bodies into the first inter-dimensional warships; he now had a fleet with which to guard his loyal realm. But after other Abzulim found out about the origin of these lighters, he required a bloodthirsty race of shock troops; thus the vampire immortals known as the Anopheles were borne into the empire to assist in cutting down threats, and being given as rewards to the loyal.

Inspection of existing living lighters indicates the story is false; however, it is clearly evident that living lighters were once actual living creatures, imbued with multiple voxes and shards to represent powerful control systems under the influence of Abzulim Beckoning. Of course, the very existence of entire breeds of immortals — such as the Shadowen — is a dark testament to the power of genetic manipulation, made possible through the sheer indomitable will of the Abzulim.

Osculation

The tale of the Abzulim empire is recounted in three periods. The Enim



period, during which the invading shards drove some of the dinosaurs insane, causing them to prowl the universe like maddened monsters; the Zamzummin period, which began the rise of Samiel and his empire; and the Raphaim period, during which the jaded Abzulim warred with the Primals after Samiel's death, and eventually fled Earth.

The Abzulim discovered some slaves suffered from Fugue. Realizing the potential for them to become like the Enim terrors, they devised a way to salvage the slaves. The vox was ripped from the body and the spiritual essence drank in. They then literally "licked" the vox clean of all traces of the slave. All that was left was a carcass to serve as a small snack. Simply put, the immortal slave ceased to exist and the vox was again a clean shard, ready to be used in the creation of a fresh slave.

Excerpt from "Dragon Hordes"...

"...legends still speak of the Vault of Skins, a trove of skins taken from the hides of defeated Abzulim at the end of our rebellion against them, locked in some mantle here in the Habitat. Searches for this hoard, and the unimaginable treasure contained on them, have been in vain. There have been mentions of a guardian, not seen since the days the vault was closed.

The accuracy of the legends remains in doubt as there are references to Samiel using a different name, that of Mammon. Of course other texts from the time also refer to Samiel possibly having a son of that same name. Still others believe that Samiel did not bite himself to death and instead returned under this assumed name and form, only to be beaten by the Primals after he destroyed the master Sunedrion at Gynnah in 7 Million B.C."



CHAPTER 6

ENHANCED SERENADES

While the Player's Guide provides a number of starting sample serenades, players may find it increasingly difficult to take them and make adjustments in order to match their unique motif and desired foci. The following rules show how to create custom serenades for use in the game.

THE BIG THREE

There are three things that serenades simply cannot allow a character to do.

Divine Creation

Characters cannot create a living being complete with its own spirit; they cannot cause an entity to spring into existence from nothing. They can create the "seeming" of life (using the new attention of Vivification for example), but true life has to come from an existing source: enchanters sacrifice their own spirit to Mystech, wolves appear by summoning them from another location, etc. Only the "appearance" of creating life can be achieved.

Time Alteration

"Expanding Strands" is the theory most immortals rely on to explain how time works, using a principle of alternate timelines (see Brahma excerpt). Characters cannot directly alter the past or future of their own timeline, they can only influence its future by temporarily connecting to alternate timelines. Serenades of portent and omen connect to similar alternate timelines that are

further ahead in time than the character's own strand; the drawback is that they cause the alternate timeline to have influence over the progression of the current strand. The clearer the vision, the stronger the influence.

Time Serenade Warning

Many time-based serenades in the Player's Guide are earmarked as unbalancing, and for good reason. Turn a 60-year old mortal into a toad, no one will realize or believe that the toad in the pond at the end of the street is actually

Excerpt from a monologue given by Brahma, Arachne Merchant...

"It is easiest to conceive of time as an infinite number of unraveling strands leading outwards from the Crucible. At the tip of each strand is the present; with each strand traveling at varying speeds. Nearby strands, though at very different stages of their own 'timeline' will be similar.

By finding and using our own spirit as a conduit, we connect our own strand with another. In this way we can glimpse likely futures for our own strand, or similar pasts (which may very well be the present for that one). However, doing so lightly influences both the strand we touch and our own strand. In the grand scheme of things we are a leaf alighting upon the water; creating a light ripple within the area we land, but leaving the greater portion of the pond as it has always been."



Bob from down the lane. But turn back the clock on Bob using Ambrosia so he is now only 20 years old? Time's plan for Bob has been permanently altered in a fundamental way. Human faith and the Aria can't change Bob back, the serenade has already been sung and the effect complete. Humanity has difficulty rationalizing Bob's change and yet they cannot ignore it either; neither can government agencies, religious groups, the Apocrypha or anyone else finding out Bob has suddenly been given back 40 years of his life. Now consider how doubtful it is that this will be the last time the character uses the serenade. What happens when thirty "Bobs" start de-aging as such?

Serenades like Ambrosia (and Entropy) come as close to breaking the rule on time alteration as possible. By making a change in the present, they effectively alter the future (Bob will likely live an extra 40 years). There are repercussions when characters get carried away, but it won't be through any cut-and-dried mechanics. As Narrator, it is up to you to determine the effects of ripples in time, as the universe fights back against someone pushing against the rule.

Time Travel

Characters cannot travel through time, the very act of doing so alters time from the period they travel to. There are serenades that effectively let them relive the past, or glimpse potential futures. If a character attempts to "travel back in time", he actually connects to the "present" of a nearby strand (see excerpt from Brahma) and lives through the events as he would if that strand were his own. This way you can allow a

character to take whatever actions he desires and play out scenes of a character's past; it is a great way to develop a character's background further. It may have some bearing on the future, but will not change what actually occurred in the past of his own strand, what he did was merely experience how his past played out in another similar strand.

THE ELEMENTS OF A SERENADE

Serenades are combinations of one or more attentions (basic powers), motifs (special effect through which the serenade manifests) and a focus (specific aspect the attention affects). The attention determines what the character is doing (destruction, obstruction, control, movement). His attunement to the motif allows the creation of a conduit from the Blue Air, allowing the energies of the serenade to physically manifest (through lightning, fire, ice, sand, snakes, roses, etc.). The focus determines what aspect is being affected by the power, or how an aspect is being affected (for example, control can be over a part of the mind, body, or an inanimate object).

Each combination, once brought together to form a serenade, cannot be changed. Characters cannot spend EP to alter a serenade's attention or motif, only to purchase additional foci per the rules on page 155 of the Player's Guide. They can make temporary changes to the serenade as they sing them, allowing one serenade to accomplish a variety of closely related effects (rather than spending points on multiple serenades to



accomplish several similar effects). This is accomplished by singing the serenade with a very similar focus (related) or one that is somewhat similar and still within the same major category (unrelated). Using the example of control, if the primary focus is a form of amnesia, anything else related to memory alteration would be a related focus; anything related to other aspects of the mind would be unrelated. The serenade could not be changed to control the body as is too far removed from the primary focus (amnesia).

Depending on the exact motif used to build the serenade — and what other motifs a character may have — it is possible for a character to temporarily alter the motif of a serenade. When doing so, he may not use any unrelated foci (only the original focus or a related one); but he does sing the serenade as if using an unrelated foci for purposes of the serenade skill roll.

MOTIFS

The attunement to a motif provides a conduit between the target, the serenade singer and the Blue Air; allowing the singer's intent to manipulate the Blue Air's energies and manifest in the physical world, thereby affecting the target. In simple terms, the motif is the serenade's "special effect": the form it takes when it manifests and affects the target. Any motif can be used to manifest any attention: lightning can manifest the power of not only



destruction, but also of movement, obstruction, control, mimicry, etc.

All motifs work equally well with all attentions. But they do not all work as well once a focus is added; they may face additional penalties at times. Remember that human faith influences the Aria: using a fire motif to manifest the movement attention in order to swim underwater, will likely be problematic when sung in front of hundreds of mundane human witnesses.

Exactly how the serenade looks is up to the character. The player picks a standard look when he creates the



serenade, but can modify the look each time his character sings it. If the character uses lightning as the motif for a serenade, it could strike down out of the sky into his hand, and then be “thrown” at his opponent (of course there is no physical attack roll, it is just the special effect). Alternatively he could have lightning come out of his eyes and shoot at the target. So long as the motif is used and it is apparent the character is the source of the manifestation, it doesn’t really matter how it looks — an exception to this is when the motif itself is used as the focus such as in destruction serenades, explained in the next section on Foci.

Characters start the game with one motif for free; a boon from Chapter 4 allows them to start the game with more than one.

The Vogues

There are a few serenades known as the Vogues, listed in the Player’s Guide. Most were the first serenades ever learned by the himsati race — taught by the Shadowen millions of years ago — in anticipation of the slave revolt against the Abzulim. Vogues bend the rules on how motifs (and foci) are used, and manifest in very basic ways. It is easy for an immortal to learn them, regardless of what motifs he may have. They are ingrained into the very heart of the shard network, having been around for millions of years.

For example, Shout is the only destruction-based serenade not requiring an immortal to use a motif as the focus. There are many ways in which the serenade may manifest. Where animal

himsati may use their natural ‘voice’, elementals may bellow forth a crackling roar like a bonfire, the sound of surf pounding against a rocky shore, the whistling wind of a tornado, or the rumble of tectonic plates causing an earthquake. Even plant himsati may give forth a simultaneous compression of hundreds of years of roots breaking through rock, or the splitting of thousand year old pieces of petrified bark. These are just some examples of what sounds those type of himsati might make with Shout.

Happenstance

Character’s don’t need a mundane supply of their motif handy to sing their serenades; the motif just “magically” appears. Over time the Aria finds a way to make the excess material “vanish” or meld properly with the surrounding environment, fixing what should not be.

But what if the character’s motif just happens to already be present in his immediate surroundings? What happens if a character with the lightning motif attempts a serenade in a thunderstorm, or a character with a rose motif attempts one while standing in a rose garden? There are two possible effects a character can choose from: first he may avoid human faith from constraining his serenade, or secondly he can gain a dominance bonus due to his attunement to the motif; he cannot do both. To use either effect the character expends a mote of immaculum.

Faith Avoidance

Human faith limits what serenades can do. But when the serenade appears to be a completely normal mundane event —



human faith easily rationalizes even improbable happenings — more powerful effect levels and manifestations can occur.

Characters can use this to their advantage, causing serenades to occur using the already present mundane version of their motif. For example, a character with a serenade using the motif of electricity may cause a nearby downed power line to suddenly spark to life, hitting a puddle the target is standing in. As the target is seemingly electrocuted, it is actually the serenade's effect taking place instead. Witnesses will remember how the target "miraculously" survived being electrocuted, never realizing a completely different effect took place. A lightning bolt can easily strike down from a thunderstorm already in progress nearby, rather than having it strike from an empty sky or come out of the character's eyes.

If the character is unable to achieve at least some effect level against his intended target(s), the serenade fails. However, the manifestation doesn't simply end, it continues on as any normal mundane event of its kind. The downed power line may not land in the puddle and "electrocute" the target, but instead continue flailing out, really electrocuting innocent bystanders or even the character's allies. If the character critically fails, he then becomes the target of the manifestation and any potential side effects as a result. In short, when a serenade mimics natural reality too well, even the smallest error on the character's part leads to unintended — often disastrous —

results. So character's are usually very careful when working with happenstance in this way.

Using happenstance to avoid faith is another method of hiding the mundanely detectable connection the manifestation has to the singer of the serenade. It does not provide protection against mystical forms of detection.

Dominance Bonus

If the mundane occurrence of the motif is significant, unique, extreme, or in large quantities during the scene, the character can add a one-time bonus during the same scene, to a serenade sung using that motif.

Serenades using motifs with a very broad scope (water, sand, trees, mammals, etc.) or that appear regularly in the physical realm the character is in receive a +2 bonus. Those using a motif with a more narrow focus (snakes, roses, oak trees) or that appear rarely (such as water in a desert world) receive a +3 bonus. Broad motifs require a greater degree of presence as opposed to narrow ones (a few lions as opposed to a very large body of water)

Some examples to use as a reference for what is considered significant (including but not limited to):

- Electricity: standing in or by a power plant, or a large generator, grabbing onto a major power line connecting two cities together, etc.
- Water: standing next to a huge waterfall, lake, or along the shore of a major ocean, or a fire hydrant that bursts and sprays water everywhere.



- Lions: A small pride of lions, or a pair of lions at the zoo.
- Lightning: A good storm in the same general area as the character with the ability to see the lightning striking the ground.
- Diamonds: A diamond mine, a large jewelry store specializing in diamond-based jewelry.
- Ice: Standing on or next to a frozen lake, or amidst a major snowfall.
- Fire: A huge bonfire at a school rally or some large structure currently on fire.
- Roses: Standing in the middle of a large rose garden

In order for the dominance bonus to be used, the character must incorporate the mundane occurrence of his motif into the serenade's manifestation.

Narrative License With Happenstance

During play testing, one of the characters incorporated a nearby metal chain link fence into his serenade. It used metal bands that wrap around a target to bind it. As soon as the player announced that he would make the chain link fence break apart and wrap around the target as part of the serenade, another player spoke up with a question. He wondered if the character shouldn't have to use another serenade to break up the fence or use some kind of meld; isn't breaking up the fence a separate effect, doesn't it let the character accomplish multiple things with a single serenade?

The answer is yes and no. If you recall on page 194 of the Player's Guide: intent is everything when it comes to serenades. The same applies to using happenstance. Therefore we look to

Narrative License (known commonly as poetic or artistic license) to find an answer to the question.

It is perfectly okay to allow someone to "bend" or "fudge" the rules as they say, so long as the serenade's original intent is kept and the bending of the rules is inconsequential to the story. There is also an in-game reason for this having to do with how the vox focuses itself when playing a serenade. Let's use an example having a similar issue...

Example:

The characters find themselves trapped between a massive stone wall blocking the passageway, and their assailants that slowly creep towards them. One character has a serenade causing stones to pile up over the targets, trapping them beneath. The character plays the serenade, using the stone wall on the one side to trap their assailants on the other. The stone wall breaks apart, opening a passage to get through.

Will this work? No. The vox requires the character to properly focus his concentration in order to bring together all the components (attention, motif and focus) correctly. In the example, the wall is a significant element of the scene, plus the singer's intention at the moment is not in line with the serenade's designed intention (the serenade's primary purpose becomes just a side effect to what the character is really trying to accomplish — open a passage). It is likely the serenade may still work, but with penalties; plus the wall will most likely remain standing afterwards.

This means that players may come up



with an idea, turn to you and ask “Will it work?” or “Can I do that?”. Unless you are certain that it has no chance at all of success — and the character should already know that fact — the answer is simple: “It might work, it might not, are you going to do it?” If you do feel the character should know that it has absolutely no chance and he should not waste his time trying, at least tell him that based on how you are running your game/human faith/etc. that he knows it will not work.

Remember, if it doesn't hurt the story, is not a flimsy method to avoid having the appropriate ability, and has even a remote chance of working, let the

character try and enjoy his creativity.

Anthems

Each vox is unique, and each serenade sung by the character has a unique signature to them; an underlying current in every serenade heard. This anthem allows droves and other supernatural beings to track down the source of a ripple, as the character's anthem is broadcast loud and clear within the ripple's range.

It is possible to distinguish someone's anthem when listening to serenades. It is a complex action taking one full round to perform, it must be done within one round after the serenade is sung or the



anthem is no longer audible. The character makes an unopposed PER roll against a target number of 6 plus the rank of the target's skill in the serenade sung. If the target has expended a mote of immaculum to hide his mundane connection to the serenade, then the target number is 6 plus one and a half times his rank in the serenade's skill (round up). If successful the character can distinguish the anthem. If the character has heard this same attention and motif used before by the singer, he can identify if it is the same individual he heard earlier. The clarity chart from the Player's Guide can provide other details depending on success levels.

The Ripple

Ripples spread outwards in all directions from the character, carrying his anthem quite clearly to all in range. Ripples can be heard and tracked back with a simple PER roll — by any aware being — with a target number of 6. Success levels are compared to the clarity chart to determine how much can be gleaned (direction to source, how far away, how powerful a being the singer might be, motif and attention used, etc.).

To clarify the note on page 154 of the Player's Guide: there is no distance chart. The singer's SPT should be compared to the Area of Effect chart in Appendix A on page 238.

Gaining Motifs

Gaining a new motif in the game is about more than just spending EP. A new motif is part of

the character's (and the story's) overall development. There are no set rules on how a character connects to a new motif. He might find an ancient immortal that shows him the way of lightning: making him watch it endlessly for months, having him struck by it repeatedly, and forcing him to sit through hours of stories and legends about the phenomenon. Maybe he'll find himself caught in a mystical rainstorm for days on end; during that time he'll have epiphanies about the very nature of rain. Perhaps he'll have intense flashbacks about an avatar who once wielded the power of sand, through them he discovers his own connection to its power.

When you feel the character has learned what he needs to make the permanent bond between his spirit and the new aspect of reality, allow the player to spend the EP to purchase the motif for his character. The normal cost to learn a new motif is based on how many motifs the character already has. The cost can be paid with MP if lethe fades were involved in creating the bond. Now the character can use the new motif in additional serenades he builds.

When the character gains a new motif, his existing serenades do not change. But he may be able to occasionally use the new motif in place of the existing one with some of this serenades.

Substituting Motifs

If a serenade's existing motif shares a close

Number of Motifs Already Possessed by Character	Cost for new motif (in EP)
One — Starting Character	8
Two	12
Three	20
Four	32



relationship with another of the character's motifs, he can temporarily use the other motif in place of the existing one. It is treated as if the character is singing with a unrelated foci. In addition, he can only use the original or an related foci with the serenade. A character cannot both exchange motifs and use an unrelated foci at the same time.

A close relationship is defined as a small change to a more narrow/broad category of motif or any motifs that humanity tends to associate together as complimentary to one another. This cannot be done with opposites (such as fire and water) even if humanity tends to associate them as complimentary. Thunder and lightning are considered complimentary as are wind and rain. Hail is a slightly narrower version of ice, ice is a slightly narrower version of water; but hail and water cannot be exchanged as it is too big a change between them (but hail and rain could).

This encourages additional motifs to form a solid theme for the character, making him into a god of the storms, spring, the Northern winds, etc. When the motif *is* the focus of a serenade — destruction and many obstruction serenades — there are special rules noted under the next section on Foci.

Multi-Motif Serenades

Another interesting use of multiple motifs is to make a single serenade using multiple motifs. There is no additional cost when building the serenade using the rules presented in this book. When this is done the character cannot substitute any other motifs, he must

always use the motifs he has built the serenade with. In terms of using happenstance for avoiding faith or for dominance bonuses, this must be taken on a case-by-case basis. The guideline is that all motifs must be present to gain the full bonus, otherwise the bonus is reduced by one point. If all the motifs are in the same category (ice and water for example), then the presence of either, or some mixture - i.e. nearly freezing water for example - can still provide the full bonus.

The destruction attention cannot be used to build serenades where the motif is the focus.

FOCI

A focus is the specific aspect of the target the attention is “focusing” on. This relates to the aspect being changed or targeted by the power. Some are easy to identify: the illusion attention's focus is always what the illusion is supposed to represent, the control attention's focus is what aspect of the target is being controlled, the mimicry attention's focus is the aspect being mimicked. A few are more about how the attention manifests, such as the communication, destruction, and obstruction attentions. Serenades treat foci in a manner similar to other skills. The foci represents the core aspect the character knows how to work with. The difference is in how other potential foci work with the serenade skill.

Those foci that are very closely “related” to the primary focus grant the character some measure of ability, and are treated the same as using other skills without a



focus (the character rolls only one die for the serenade skill). Serenades then stretch the rules a bit further and work with unrelated foci as well. Unrelated foci are not *directly related* to the primary focus of the serenade, but they are in the same general category. Think magic, think mythology, do not think hard science when you consider unrelated foci. The character must have a rank 3 or higher in the serenade skill to use unrelated foci. At this point he not only rolls one die, but takes a -3 penalty to the roll.

Broad foci allow for very few unrelated foci. “Wilderness predators” provides a large number of primary and related foci, but almost no unrelated foci. Broad foci like such as trees, mammals and earth are discouraged in the game, the same as they are for motifs. It leaves no room to break down the foci, and often has no room for other bonuses the character might be able to get due to the diffuse nature of the focus he has chosen. The guidelines from the Player’s Guide on page 155 are still in place when designing new serenades.

Motif as Focus

All destruction serenades and many obstruction serenades use the character’s motif as the focus. They conjure up the motif as raw power to deal (or block) raw unfettered damaging energies in the most powerful form possible (the character’s direct connections to reality). The two exceptions are Shout and Bastian, as explained earlier under the section on Vogues. Characters cannot use unrelated foci with these serenades, only related and they must be another form of the focus: a fireball can become

EXAMPLES —

Related and Unrelated Foci

If an illusion serenade has a focus of clowns, then related foci would be closely related to clowns, typically various parts of the circus and its performers. The clown represents the character’s best focus within the serenade’s ability and other circus related items are things he can do fairly well “on the fly”.

But if the character can make a circus with the smell of cotton candy, the bright tents and the sounds of sideshow barkers, then a carnival or parade is only a bit further of a stretch. They too are forms of entertainment with brightly colored performers typically found in similar environments.

Looking at this from even a more scientific viewpoint a good example would be an illusion serenade with a focus of wolves. Related foci would be coyotes, dingoes, jackals and dogs (other animals in the Canidae family). However, stretch a bit further and look at hunting cats; they are carnivorous four-legged furry mammals that exist within the same general order (Carnivora). Looking at a bison, it is furry mammal but it is a bovine herbivore and far too much of a stretch. Even in mythology and from human association, felines and canines have had a long (though not always friendly) historical relationship. In terms of motifs they would be considered opposites, but in terms of foci for an illusion it is not so much a stretch.

a fire spear, a firestorm, or a fire dart; it cannot become a heat blast, a blinding shaft of light or a laser beam. Leaving



the range of the motif in these cases leaves both the focus and motif, creating a new serenade, which cannot be done.

Additional Foci

Additional foci cannot be purchased for serenades that use the motif as the focus, unless the new foci is another form of the motif (i.e. related). In game terms the character can have multiple versions of the same attack, gaining the benefit of rolling two dice with each version. To attempt to purchase another motif as a focus violates the rule on changing a serenade after it is built; you are not just adding a focus, you are altering the motif.

Substituting Motifs as Foci

If the character has another motif in his arsenal (that he started the game with, purchased, or was given by you), he can treat it as an unrelated foci and use it with the serenade, temporarily substituting the existing motif/foci. Doing so requires the expenditure of an immaculum mote in addition to any other immaculum expended for other purposes. This creates an exception to the rules on page 155 of the Player's Guide to account for the new serenade building rules. Otherwise the ruling on not being able to use unrelated foci with motifs as the focus still stands.

Multi-Motif Serenades

If a multi-motif serenade is built where the motif serves as the focus, it can never be changed or altered in any way: no related or unrelated foci of any kind, no changing motifs, no use of happenstance to avoid faith. Dominance bonuses can be gained if all the motifs involved are mundanely present though.

EXAMPLES —

New Motifs as unrelated foci

A character with an ice motif has a destruction serenade that rains hail down upon his opponents (i.e. his motif serves as the focus for the serenade). This means he can use various forms of ice and water as related foci, but nothing else — for example he could not use fire or birds. But if he then takes fire as a new motif, he can now count fire as related foci for that serenade, causing small fireballs to rain down on his opponents.

Additionally the serenade looks exactly the same every time, the look of how it manifests cannot be changed. If an immaculum is expended to hide the connection between the singer and the serenade, it can only be altered just enough to hide the mundane connection and nothing more. No other changes to the manifestation can be made.

NEW ATTENTIONS

New attentions are available to characters; these are rarely used by the himsati race, taking quite a long time to learn and often backfiring on the singer of the serenade. They are far more complex than the attentions in the Player's Guide.

Attention of Vivification

Vivification serenades are powerful warps of control, movement, sensation and communication; they provide lifelike, animated qualities to inanimate objects for a period of time. Vivification takes the place of animate and progenerate as mentioned on page 195 of the Player's Guide.



Target: BODY or 6 (see below)
 Duration: Scene (-E)
 AoE: 0 — Selective
 Resistance: Enhanced quality
 Focus: Special (see below)

Effect: Each effect level allows one quality to be added to the object (s MIND attribute, Locomotion, Manual Dexterity, Communication, and/or Senses). MIND is always the first quality given — so the object can use the other qualities received. The total MIND attribute gained is equal to the effect level. If an object already has a MIND (such as a computer), the first effect level does nothing.

Visibility: Vivification serenades clearly connect to the singer of the serenade as the source.

Focus: The focus of the serenade is the category of objects that can be animated as well as the purpose for animating them. Similar purposes become related foci, loosely related purposes — as well as similar categories of objects — become unrelated foci. The broader the category the higher the base cost; the section on serenade building provides examples and base costs.

Target and Resistance: The target of the serenade is the object's BODY unless

the object is part of the living environment (trees, boulders, etc.) in which case the target number is 6.

The character maintains some measure of control over the object by rolling his WIL against the target's MIND, the Influence Chart determines how much control the character has. A critical failure on any type of control role results in the object turning against its creator. The serenade creates a temporary attunement between the character and the object that others can exploit.

The Qualities:

Qualities come in two forms: basic and enhanced. To grant enhanced qualities creates a -1 penalty to the serenade skill roll for each quality the character attempts to provide an enhanced level to.

Locomotion: Objects have basic movement capability, based on their normal form and function: chairs wobble on their legs, tree roots drag them across the ground, model planes roll along and sail up into the air, toy sailboats alter their sails to catch the wind and move on the water. Enhanced movement warps the form of the object, allowing for articulated movement and appropriate movement abilities: chairs can now climb stairs and trees can jump small gaps. If anything further is desired it requires a different movement-based serenade be sung on the object.

Manual Coordination: Objects perform basic interactions with other objects, based on their normal form and function: trees swing their limbs like clubs, chairs push and shove other objects (those with chair arms can slide objects off low

Effect Level	Number of Abilities Granted
1	1 MIND
2	2 MIND plus one quality
3	3 MIND plus two qualities
4	4 MIND plus three qualities
5 & up	5 MIND plus all four qualities



tables and onto their seat), planes can tip over other items with their wings. Enhanced coordination warps the form of the object, allowing for more articulate and subtle manipulation of other objects: The chair arms develop stubby fingers, the model plane's wings curl around and carry objects, smaller tree branches grasp objects and push buttons.

Senses: All objects have touch automatically, even if no senses are granted. Objects gain minimal sight and hearing at the basic level: they cannot make out fine details of sound and sight nor communicate back what they see or hear. Enhanced senses provide smell

and taste, but more importantly they allow full normal sensory input with details. Features akin to eyes, ears, noses, and mouths can “appear” on the object.

Communication: Objects have limited communication abilities at the basic level: chairs tap out answers with their legs, trees shake their branches and leaves, radio stations quickly change channels to “speak” in broken sentences. Enhanced communication warps the objects form, allowing for more enhanced communication: chairs might grow raised letters, trees may rustle their leaves to create whispering winds, etc. When combined with enhanced senses or enhanced coordination there is no limit to the forms of communication capable. Only one form of enhanced communication is provide to the item, another -1 can be taken to the role for each additional enhanced form of communication — allowing the object multiple ways to express itself.



Attention of Aperture

Aperture serenades are powerful warps that open portals to other nearby realms: the character can cross through, allow things on the other side to come through to the realm where he is, or attempt to force someone through to the other side.

Target: 6 + Familiarity

Duration: By extra effect levels

AoE: 0 — Selective

Resistance: Wards, Unwilling SPT

Focus: Realm connecting to. There are *no* related or unrelated foci for aperture serenades except for reversing the



direction of travel possible through the portal. When the serenade is designed it must be decided if it is used to travel from the current location to a destination, or if the portal is opened at the destination to allow others to come to the character. Reversing the portal's initially designed direction of travel is a related focus.

Effect: The character creates a tear in the metaphysical boundary between his current realm and the one he is entering. Where he appears within the target realm is based on the effect level he achieves.

Visibility: These are highly visible, especially if connected to certain realms that “bleed over” (crossing between Earth and the Maelstrom, for example). Characters must expend two motes of immaculum to hide the connection to the serenade instead of the usual one, and happenstance cannot be used to avoid faith or gain a dominance bonus.

Aperture is a dangerous serenade for those who do not understand the possible consequences of opening portals to other realms. Few elders among the tribes are willing to teach younger immortals even the most basic of aperture serenades for fear of reckless youth attempting to take their newfound skill and use it to access areas they have little to no understanding of.

All travel to other realms starts with a base target number of 6. This is increased depending on how unfamiliar the character is with the realm and their desired destination within. Knowing both very well is +2 to the base target

Effect Level	Aperture Attention Destination Accuracy
1	Within the realm (Narrator's Discretion)
2	Within same large region (province, state, small country)
3	Within same small region (within the same city)
4	Within same general vicinity (same neighborhood, blocks away)
5 & up	Exactly where intended

for a total target number of 8; knowing one well but being only vaguely familiar with the other is +4 for a total of 10, knowing both only vaguely is +6 for a total of 12. If the character has no real knowledge or familiarity with either he cannot make the serenade work. The character has to have had at least some exposure to or gained some factual knowledge about the target realm before he can learn a serenade to reach it. In addition, any wards around the destination location add their value to the target number.

When the character rolls the serenade, he must first state how accurate he is attempting to be (based on the effect level chart for the aperture attention). The base time is one act (on the Duration Chart this is level 3). Each additional effect level beyond that needed to reach the desired accuracy level, reduces the duration level by one. Three additional effect levels would create an instant transition for the character, taking a single round to travel between origin and destination.

Portals remain open for a maximum of



one turn or until someone crosses into it; at which point it closes. Penalties can be taken to increase the number of targets (page 156 Player's Guide under Area of Effect rules for Level 0 — Selective) that can cross through the portal before it closes. Whether the individual crosses over willingly or is pushed/thrown/pulled holds no influence on how long the portal remains open. Small inanimate objects can be passed through the portal with relative ease. Any object with a weight, length, width and/or height that approaches Size 0 or 1 on the Size Chart counts as one target. Immaculum must be spent to increase the AoE if larger targets need to go through the portal.

The length of time it takes to travel between realms is dependent on the extra success levels beyond those needed to reach the target (this may mean giving up some desired accuracy to ensure a timely transition). At that point, the portal opens in the destination realm depositing the traveler(s) and immediately closing. If the serenade is actually reversing the portal (opening it on the other side for someone to cross through to the realm the character is currently in), then the portal initially opens on the other side at the desired location (adjusted for accuracy) and remains open until all allowed targets have crossed through or the maximum one turn. Then the portal closes, the length of time goes by based on extra success levels, and the portal opens in the character's own realm, depositing the traveler(s).

Each of the accessible realms connected to Earth has particular issues for opening

portals to them, as explained below. Additionally, some realms are only accessible from certain areas; most serenades built with this attention are very limited as to when they work and how. It is possible to cross from other nearby realms the character is in, to the destination realm; this is considered an unrelated focus.

Ley Membrane

While not technically a realm, it allows travel from one location on Earth to another. Therefore familiarity is not added to the base target number of 6, but the standard unfamiliarity penalty concerning the destination does (as the character is riding ley lines and performing a small amount of navigation in the process). Characters do not need any real prior exposure to the Ley Membrane before learning the serenade as it is technically part of the Earth.

When traveling the Ley via serenade, the Membrane breaks apart into tendrils, scooping up the character (or others if penalties are taken to increase the number of targets) and depositing him upon the nearest line. The serenade then navigates the various lines to the nearest point to the destination it can reach. There it again breaks apart as tendrils, depositing the character as close to the desired target as the effect level merits. Additional effect levels also reduce the duration of travel. Using aperture to make short hops along the Ley is effective as a means of “teleporting”.

Characters cannot be deposited inside a structure, liquid, solid object or ward. Likewise someone cannot be pulled to the Ley from inside a structure, liquid,



solid object or ward. But wards are still factored into the target number; this helps determine how close to the warded structure or object the serenade places the character.

If not for the difficulty in learning the attention in general, the Ley serenade would be considered one of the Vogues of the himsati race's serenade arsenal.

Other Realms Near Earth

Gremlin Grid:

The entire Gremlin Grid is effectively warded when attempting to cross over, adding +6 to the target number. This increase to the target number can be avoided by crossing directly from a location on Earth or other realm to its matching node in the Grid, if one exists. The Net Spiders of the Arachne know "codes" to bypass the wards, accessing the Gremlin Grid from anywhere. Others find internet cafes, collections of net kiosks, electronics stores, or anywhere else that enough technology and data is present to have a node in the Grid to match up with.

Ys:

Only those who can withstand its great pressures dare travel to this realm without the aid of a lighter or some form of protection. If the portal is set to allow something to come through from Ys, a violent torrent of water gushes out of the portal for the entire turn, making it impossible for the portal to close early. This torrential flow does d12 damage once per round to anything caught in its



flow, leaving enough water to fill an Olympic size swimming pool by the time the portal closes. The only purely safe form of entry or egress is to connect to one of the few "dry areas" within the mammoth waterways (where no water is present), but that adds an additional +2 to the target number.

Sanctuary Mantles:

The droves had to use Zuzog trees to physically cross the void between Sheol and Sanctuary, and pierce into its mantles. All mantles are warded by the faith of the Maker, adding the +6 to target numbers for entry via aperture serenades. Any entry into a mantle in this method is immediately detected by the Maker and often seen as an intrusion.



The only mantles that can be entered in this method are those that exist to the outside of the cluster of mantles (think of Sanctuary as a collection of mini-realms — the mantles — in a cluster or sac-like formation). Each mantle requires a separate serenade. Those few who expend the time and effort to learn a serenade to enter a particular mantle have most likely lived there a long time and use it as a quick means to “return home”.

Sheol:

Occupying the same dimensional space as Sanctuary, Sheol also adds +6 to target numbers for its effective ward. There is an inherent danger in attempting to enter Sheol by creating a portal; it requires an effect level of three or better to safely enter Sheol in this method. Otherwise characters find themselves pulled into the Oblivion Void instead of to Sheol’s shores.

Nadir:

There are a few places where the Ley Membrane still connects to the rest of the Nadir; by using a variant of a typical Ley travel serenade, one can launch himself along the paths of the Nadir into the rest of the cosmos. The Nadir — as a realm — is just a cosmic highway, and a hopelessly tangled, partially broken one at that. Characters attempting to reach the Dominions away from Earth will need the protection of a lighter to safely navigate the Nadir once they enter it. Otherwise they may reach a dead-end they cannot return from, or wind up in the Blue Air for those precious few moments before their physical body is destroyed. The effect level achieved doesn’t provide the character a

destination, so much as a bonus to navigation rolls made while traveling along the Nadir, in attempts to find pathways still good enough to continue the journey along.

Maelstrom:

The violent forces of the Maelstrom are so powerful, that opening a portal in any direction immediately results in a violent rush of raw elemental material immediately pouring out of the portal for 30 seconds, the portal cannot be closed until the full one turn is over.

The forces of the Maelstrom would immediately tear apart everything within an area the size of a small town if not for human faith and the Aria forcibly blocking most of the outpouring. Anything caught directly in front of the portal is effectively caught in the equivalent of a very small self-contained Nuclear explosion; it immediately destroys anything it touches save for shards and voxes. Even elementals are not safe due to the volatile mix of different elements contained in the torrent pouring forth from the portal.

Individuals do not learn about the Maelstrom by first-hand experience, they do it through research and a misguided ideal that they can control the portal or create the opening into a stable area. The truth is that the Maelstrom is so fluid there are rarely any stable areas, and they are all temporary. The vast majority of the time the first attempt to open a portal to the Maelstrom is the character's last attempt as well... Opening a portal to the Maelstrom generates a massive uncontrolled attack that spreads out from the portal in all



directions based on how much human faith is present in the nearby area to stop its spread. All too often the singer of the serenade finds himself quickly consigned to the Blue Air, not realizing how far the effects can reach. The vicinity is left in ruins: noxious gases fill every crack and crevice, the water becomes undrinkable, the ground bears no seed and is scorched deep below the surface, and jagged rocks uproot and thrust into the air as if a small earthquake just occurred. It takes years, sometimes decades before the area around the portal is even habitable again. It looks as if a massive explosion took place, complete with chemical agents lethal to living things.

The Blue Air:

Travel directly into the Blue Air results in the same effect as opening portal into the Maelstrom: the character is torn apart by the energies inherent in the Blue Air. It takes longer since it happens after the character passes through the portal; but ultimately the vox drops back out of the Blue Air to where the portal was located. Opening a portal to the Blue Air is like creating a few-second shallows; indeed the Saturna members of the Osiri Tribe use this along with divination techniques to rescue gossamers near Earth. Unfortunately, it is also highly possible something undesirable will come through the portal from the other side.

Labyrinth:

The labyrinth itself is said to exist at the metaphysical center of the universe, a great seed-like object spinning out the strands of time, the birthplace of the Eidolon and prison of the Sanguinary for

untold ages. Though physically accessing the core labyrinth appears impossible — efforts to find it have proven fruitless to the himsati race — a version of it appears to exist at all times and in all places in the universe. It was originally discovered by the former Tribe Shadowen when they and the Phoenix Tribe were one. The immortal Daedalus used the first known version of a Labyrinth serenade to trap the monstrous Asterion (the Minotaur) within it for several years, until Theseus was able to combat it and rip out its vox.

It is seemingly different each time it is entered as the portal taps into the ancient seed of power to create a small variant of the true Labyrinth. The better the roll, the closer to the center those who enter the portal find themselves. There are those among the Phoenix who still teach this as a means of temporarily trapping a foe by using a variant of Daedalus's ancient serenade.

Underworld:

Each combination of tier (of the seven) and region (of the six) is considered a separate serenade (making 42 distinctly different “realms” that can have a serenade crafted for them), with the ability to visit a tier above or below as related foci, and visiting other regions as unrelated foci. This is an exception to the rules on foci for the aperture serenade, due to the unique mix of dimensional realms that form the realm. Some regions and tiers of the Underworld are almost as dangerous as attempting to portal into the Maelstrom, Sheol or the Blue Air. When creating a serenade to travel to the Underworld, players are wise to choose tier/region



combinations that are relatively safe to enter on a regular basis. The lowest tiers are at the outermost reaches of the aperture attention: directly reaching the 5th adds +2 to the target number, the 6th tier adds +4 and the 7th tier adds +6. Almost all the main features (Moor Lock, the Furnace, Undersky, etc.) are warded for another +6 to the target number to reach them. One particular note: the Foundry carries the maximum base target number of 20 (an unheard of +8 from the ward and +6 unfamiliarity since no one knows anything about the Abzulim installation save for a few of the outer areas).

Other Nearby Realms:

There are other small pocket worlds mingling close to Earth, which you as the Narrator can detail, providing a place to travel to through this serenade. The vast majority won't be larger in scope than a small moon, but the possibilities in the Immortal universe are endless.

Dominions & Other Planets

The aperture serenade will not allow travel from Earth directly to any of the far flung dominions — a lighter and travel into the Nadir is required. Nor will it allow travel to other planets in the solar system or beyond as they are in the same realm — again a lighter would be needed as the other nearby physical planets have no connections left to the Nadir, they are dead worlds.

SERENADE BUILDING

The following is a system to design custom-made serenades for characters. Building a custom serenade takes a little time, and you should encourage your



players to think carefully about the serenades they design. All designed serenades are subject to your approval. There is no right or wrong way in the story for the character to learn a new serenade. He may stumble across it by accident, work at copying the effects of a mundane event and forging them into a mystical version, or may simply be taught by another immortal. When considering a player created serenade for approval, remember to factor in game balance. It is important to consider it on more levels than simply the point total: consider the style of the game (both as written, and with regard to your own personal style); consider the impacts of human belief, the Aria, mythology and other relevant factors.



Step 1: Attention

The first step in designing the serenade is to choose an attention most appropriate to accomplishing the effect desired; again intent is everything. Once the attention is chosen the base cost is noted, but this is not the final cost for the player. Other steps may raise and lower the cost. For details on an individual serenade's standard elements such as target, duration, area of effect (AoE), range, resistance, visibility, etc., please see that serenade's description in the Player or Narrator Guides as appropriate.

Aperture (Base Cost 6)

Creates portals to other realms/worlds/dimensions.

Communication (Base Cost 3)

Creates forms of communication, translation, directed thoughts, messages, etc.

Control (Base Cost 5)

Force specific emotions, feelings, thoughts, or actions by the target.

Destruction (Base Cost 5)

Does damage to the target. The SPT attribute cannot be directly targeted via destruction serenades.

Illusion (Base Cost 3)

Physical or Mental, against various senses both organic or technological.

Mimicry (Base Cost 4)

Copy aspects of the target to oneself or something else.

Movement (Base Cost 4)

Provides alternate or enhanced forms of locomotion.

Obstruction (Base Cost 4)

Block passage or restrain the target.

Probability (Base Cost 5)

Manipulates odds in favor of — or against — the target.

Protection (Base Cost 4)

Resists or repels damage and other unwanted effects.

Sensation (Base Cost 3)

Grants new, or enhances existing sensory capabilities.

Summon (Base Cost 5)

Causes target to make its way to the character.

Time (Base Cost 5)

Alter how the aspects of the target interact with time, speeding up or slowing down.

Transference (Base Cost 5)

Steal or switch aspects of targets, rather than copy them as Mimicry does.

Transform (Base Cost 5)

Alter aspects of the target into something completely different (not copying/switching from another target) for a brief period. Partial Transformations not necessarily altering the target fully — the alteration lasts much longer — have a starting base cost of 4 instead of 5.

Vivification (Base Cost 5)

Provides living, animated qualities to non-living — or inanimate living — objects.

Step 1a: Warps

If it is determined that the effect requires



the use of more than one of the attentions listed above, start with the attention having the highest base cost. The base cost is then increased by +0.75 for having a second attention. If additional attentions need to be used, the base cost increases by another +0.25 for each additional attention. Do not round off numbers yet, further steps may make additional changes to this value.

Some warps use the attentions of Control or Time as nothing more than an activation or delay mechanism. When these attentions are used only for the purpose of activating the effect they never count as the first attention, even if their cost is higher than the other attentions in the warp.

The base level of the secondary elements (AoE, Duration, Range, Target, Resistance, and Visibility) are chosen from the attentions used to make the warp. For example, if the warp is using two attentions — one with a base duration of 2 and the other with a base duration of 1 — those are the two choices for base duration. It is important that these choices are made at this step, they serve as guidelines for any changes required in step 3.

When choosing resistances, the player must have at least as many resistances as the lowest number available to the attentions being used. If one of the attentions has no resistances, the player can choose to have no resistances. If one of the attentions has three resistances listed and the other has two resistances listed, the player must have at least two resistances, chosen from the five listed between the two attentions.

Note: Aperture, Probability, Summon and Vivification are technically warps, but are so ingrained in the vox network that they are not treated as warps; for the purpose of the new serenade rules they are treated as normal attentions, even when used to create other warps.

Effect

The effect of a warp may easily match up with an existing chart, attention or sample serenade already created for the game. If not, the player must work together with you to come up with appropriate effect levels. Some serenades, regardless of what combination of attentions used, need to use certain charts — you cannot alter the damage system so that one point of damage marks off a box of health for example. If the effect levels of an existing chart need to be altered to fit the needs of the warp serenade, it adds an additional +0.50 to the base cost.

Step 2: Focus and Motif

The player now chooses the focus and motif for the serenade, defining how or what it affects as well as how it normally looks. These choices are important to be made at this point as they serve as guidelines for potentially needed changes in step 3.

All attentions list the type of foci normally associated with them. If the character chooses to narrow the focus further than normally required, subtract -1.50 from the base cost — foci cannot be broadened. If the focus is tightened, all other aspects of the original broader focus become related foci. Control, Mimicry, Summoning, Transference, Transformation and Vivification are



common for tightening the focus with.

Examples:

- Control (generate fear only)
- Mimicry/Transfer (copy/steal flight nature only)
- Summon (summon Doberman pinchers only)
- Transform (turn into a Doberman pincher only)
- Vivification (animate oak trees only)

Next the player must pick from his available motifs and decide how the serenade looks when normally played. If the character only has a connection to one motif then the choice is easy. If the character has multiple motifs he may choose to use one, some or all of these motifs in the serenade's manifestation — be aware of the restrictions involved with this as discussed in the section on motifs and foci earlier in the chapter.

Step 3: Enhancers

The player may now alter the secondary elements to enhance the serenade in order to better match the effect he desires. Each enhancement (positive or negative) alters the base cost. Once the secondary elements have been altered in this way — and the serenade purchased — they can only be temporarily altered as per the normal rules; EP may not be spent later to change them again. If the player wants his character to play the serenade with and without a specific enhancement, he must create and pay the cost for two different serenades or expend immaculum notes to alter it each time he desires to play it in the altered manner.

There is a limit to the amount of

enhancements that can be made. The player temporarily converts all the negative enhancements to positive ones and adds the value of all the enhancements together. That total cannot exceed 2.50. Do not include additions and reductions from steps 1 through 2 during this calculation.

Each secondary element lists the addition or reduction to the base cost for changing it as follows:

Target:

If the normal target is altered the base cost is increased by +0.50. If the serenade is a warp (created from more than one of the listed attentions) the increase is +0.75.

Range:

All attentions (save Probability) start at Line of Sight. Reducing the range to Touch is a -0.50 reduction to the base cost; reducing the range even further to Self Only is another -0.50 reduction to the base cost. Probability serenades can be reduced to Line of Sight for -0.50 and then again to Touch for another -0.50; they can't be reduced to Self Only.

Area of Effect (AoE):

Each increase in AoE from the attention's normal level is +0.50 to the base cost; each decrease is -0.50.

Any level of Area of Effect beyond 0 can also be made Selective, there is no change to the base cost for doing so. The maximum number of targets is equal to the character's SPT. To increase the base number of targets beyond the character's SPT adds to the base cost as follows:



+0.25 = SPT x 2
+0.50 = SPT x SPT
+1.00 = SPT x SPT x SPT (i.e. SPT³)

Duration:

Each increase in base duration level is +0.50 to the base cost; each decrease is -0.50. Making a serenade extended (-E), triggered (-T), or Permanent (-P) increases the base cost by +0.5 per notation added. Removing any of those notations from an attention that normally uses them decreases the cost by -0.50 per notation removed.

To add a delay prior to the serenade's effect taking place, or to add a requirement for the serenade's effect to take place, the player must create a warp using Control or Time, or he must use Mystech carnals.

Visibility:

Attentions with visible connections to the character can be permanently hidden for +0.50 to the cost. Attentions that normally hide the visible connection to the character can be permanently made visible for -0.50 to the cost. The rules on using immaculum and faith avoidance can still be used to temporarily hide it however.

Resistances:

If any resistances are added to the serenade, the base cost is reduced -0.25 (not per resistance added, but a one-time reduction regardless of the number added). Exchanging one or more existing resistances for others also creates a one-time +0.25 addition to the cost (regardless of how many are exchanged). For each resistance removed, there is a +0.25 addition to the

SYSTEM NOTE —

Corrections on Destruction Attention

The last paragraph on page 162 concerning the description of the Destruction Attention starting with “When a destruction serenade is increased,...” should read “When a destruction serenade’s duration is increased via immaculum,...”.

Custom built Destruction serenades may not have their duration increased during step 3, only the (-E) and (-T) notations added.

When a destruction serenade’s duration has the (-E) notation added (by design or via expenditure of an immaculum mote), not only does the serenade strength drop each round, the total effect level also drops (unlike other serenades where the effect level remains at the original level). This means each round the serenade does less damage (whereas, for example, a control serenade over emotions keeps the same level of emotional control until the strength drops too low to maintain it).

However, if the serenade is originally built with both the (-E) and the (-T) notations added to it, the effect level does not drop each round; only the serenade strength drops (with the trigger able to end the serenade immediately).

base cost however.

Step 4: Final adjustments

The player now reviews the serenade and presents it to you. At this point you should suggest any last changes, double-check to see that the enhancers do not exceed a total of 2.50 points, and check to see if the serenade will have any



<u>Experience Point (EP) Cost table for Custom Serenades</u>				
Base Cost	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
3	+4	+7	+11	+18
4	+6	+10	+16	+26
5	+8	+13	+21	+34
6	+10	+16	+26	+42
7	+12	+19	+31	+50
8	+14	+22	+36	+58
9	+16	+25	+41	+66
10	+18	+28	+46	+74

problems being used in relation to the specifics of how you will run the game. If you feel there are any other adjustments not covered here, just decide what they will be worth. An example might be a *conditional* trigger that immediately ends a serenade for a specific target, but may allow it to continue to function for other targets, another would be immunities that prevent the serenade from working against certain types of targets that it would otherwise work with. The typical value is +/- 0.25 per change.

Final Calculation:

At this point all of the various additions and reductions to the base cost are applied and the final number rounded up to the nearest whole number. Standard serenades have a minimum final base cost of 3, warps have a minimum final base cost of 4. Any final base cost over 10 is immediately rejected; the serenade must be reworked to bring down the cost. Serenades with a final base cost over 8 should be carefully reviewed for game balance, it might be best to have the character use a meld of two separate





serenades to achieve the effect when needed.

A new EP cost table shows costs for all the base cost levels for custom serenades (simply removing the base cost of 2 and adding in base costs of 9 and 10).

Vogues

If you create a new serenade to be used as a Vogue in your game, subtract one from the base cost after final calculation. The minimum final base cost is still 3.

Step 5: Name & Record It

The character decides on the name for the serenade, if he has not done so already, and records its information. Normal information recorded for serenades is as follows:

Serenade Name (Base Cost)

Warp: If the serenade uses multiple attentions they should be listed here.

Focus: list here

Range: list here

AoE: list here

Duration: list here, including notations)

Resistances: list here

Visibility: list here

Effect: Describe the general effect, charts to use, any special conditions, etc.

Serenade Samples

Appendix E provides walk-through samples of building serenades and examples of several serenades already built using the new attentions of Aperture and Vivification.

SYSTEM NOTE —

Tribal Affinities

If a character of a particular tribe has at least two serenades (not warps) using one of the listed attentions below, he reduces the cost of future serenades (not warps) built using that same attention by -0.50 during the final calculation phase of step 4. This cost reduction is not applied to pre-built serenades from the Player's Guide. The rule regarding minimum base cost of 3 is still in effect.

If the character changes tribes, his existing serenades keep the cost reduction. But he only receives the reduction on new serenades built based on his new tribe's affinities.

For example, an Arachne character has two Probability-based serenades: any future Probability serenades built receive -0.50 off the base cost during final calculation. If the character leaves the Arachne to join the Magdalen, his existing serenades stay the same. But he now gets reductions based on the attentions of Mimicry and Sensation.

Affinity Listing

- Arachne: Probability and Time
- Eremite: Control and Probability
- Hemari: Control and Illusion
- Magdalen: Mimicry and Sensation
- Morrigan: Destruction and Summoning
- Osiri: Protection and Transference
- Peri: Obstruction and Protection
- Phoenix: Communication, Illusion and Sensation
- Protean: Transference and Transformation
- Sharakai: Illusion and Mimicry
- Terat: Transformation and Control
- Tuatha: Time and Transformation



CHAPTER 7

NARRATOR ASSISTANCE

In a role playing game, the players are charged with making decisions for their characters. They speak for the characters, describe how they will battle or haggle or love, and how they react to the world around them. A hard job, to be sure, especially given how absolutely vital characterization is to a good story.

You do everything else, narrating not one, but dozens of characters at your disposal. These Narrator characters will be the cadre's allies and enemies, people on the street and fervent worshipers, Tribal masterminds, mad Progeny, cunning Outlanders, even the ineffable Transcendents. While players work to develop deep and complex characterization for their solitary roles, you quickly move between many roles. It isn't an easy job, but there are some tricks that will help make it manageable.

Besides acting out supporting roles in the game, you'll create the game's story arc. The arc is what propels the game's story forward. External events, the villains' master plans, broad political shifts, a neighborhood crime, a love affair that must end badly — these are all examples of the ways you'll move the arc forward. There are many ways for you to organize a storyline and the individual sessions therein, and we've put some of the best ideas together for you in this section.

Finally, you are responsible for being the last word on any question that may come up about the game and the settings you

created. You must, in turn, either be willing to study everything in advance or know where to get the answers. The rulebooks have most of the answers regarding rules arbitration, but you'll have to go outside this book for the substance on which this game is based. *Immortal—Invisible War* is a game about the personalities of the world's mythology; every good Narrator should know something about the subject.

THE MASKS OF GOD

One might say the Narrator's function in a role playing game is that of the game's "god." He creates the world, sets events in motion, and acts as the player characters' sensory input. If the Narrator is a game's "god," then the cast of characters at his disposal are the masks of god.

Narrator characters serve many functions on your behalf. Here are some ideas to keep in mind when deciding what your Narrator character can do for *you*. Also keep in mind that the most intricate and interesting Narrator characters will fulfill more than one function.

Obstacles

The role most often served by Narrator characters is that of *obstacle*. An obstacle delays the player character's plans or forces them to rethink their plans. Examples of obstacles might include mortal thralls or predators sent by the Progeny to interfere with a cadre,



Believer cults who ambush characters investigating ancient ruins, or spirits protecting their haunts. Obstacles can also perform less violent but equally vexing actions. An unhelpful tribunal from one of the tribes would be an obstacle. Mortals who have lost faith in their immortal devotee and are being seduced by others would be an obstacle.

The point of an obstacle is that they cause passive, sometimes not particularly inventive, delays. An obstacle shouldn't be mortally dangerous or impossible to overcome. At best, an obstacle lets the Immortals show off their abilities and further define their roles. At worst, an obstacle will force the players to think on their feet as their clever plans fall apart.



If you want Narrator characters that present a real danger to the player characters, what you want are villains.

Villains

Villains are obstacles with motivation, means, and ingenuity. The thing that makes villains stand out from hordes of obstacles is their motivation. They have chosen to be an enemy to the player characters, or they have chosen a purpose that directly opposes that of the player characters. In any case, a villain

won't abandon his motivation if he doesn't have to.

The best villains don't acknowledge serving "evil" or some dark purpose. To them, their motivation is not dark at all. Keep this in mind: the best villains believe they are the heroes; anyone who gets in their way is, in turn, a villain. Villains might be aware that their methods are abhorrent, but to some even the worst acts can be justified if they serve a greater purpose.



Ambition, particularly full-fledged megalomania, is a common villain motivation. It's common because it works. But what would lead a villain to believe they are destined to rule? Answer that and you're a long way toward fleshing out an interesting villain. Other good villain motivations include vengeance (for anything from dishonor to robbery to violence), maintaining or changing the status quo, fulfillment of a duty, survival, rivalry or jealousy, love or greed, and the old standby — madness.

Villains who will present a real threat to the cadre must also have the means to carry out their motivation. This can be personal power in the form of resources, influence, supernatural power, or a network of allies. This is another opportunity to define the villain: Is he a loner or a leader?

Truly great villains of myth and fiction are often ingenious, not mere beasts or buffoons. Loki, the Norse trickster god, schemed to kill his brother Baldur by manipulating those around him. The Japanese storm god, Susano, battled his sister Amaterasu in a clever tête-à-tête of creation and destruction as they vied for control of the world. As indicated by these tales, other Immortals make excellent ingenious villains. The Progeny also qualify for this kind of villainy.

There are, of course, also more monstrous villains in myth and legend: Grendel in the story of Beowulf, the hydra destroyed by Hercules, or the dragon Vritra slain by Indra, warrior god-king of the Hindi. Monstrous

villains are often mutated mortal creatures or predators created by the Abzulim or the droves and their servants.

As gods represent the way things are and heroes represent the way we wish things could be, mythic villains represent the ills of the world. Keep this symbolism in mind as you develop memorable villains.

Librarians

Librarians are the Narrator characters charged with delivering information to the players via interactions with their characters. Sometimes referred to in fiction as the “voice of God”, librarians may be villains, allies, or even anonymous bystanders. Using Narrator characters this way is a clever and less obvious way to educate the players on current events, to deliver clues, and to provide insights into the storyline the players may not be attuned to. The librarian in many plays throughout the world is often a fool or clown, a character nobody takes seriously but who views the world with more clarity than the self-absorbed heroes.

Allies

Whether they are members of the vast tribes, or rogue immortals on the fringe of the Perpetual Society, immortals often have allies. These allies can be servants, friends, family, mentors, or any other Narrator characters that actively help and support the player characters. Besides substantial or physical assistance, allies can also help the player characters by providing moral support. In this regard they are librarians in a sense, letting the players know your



moral or emotional judgment of them through the allies' support (or lack thereof).

Moral support might come in the form of friendship, sponsorship by an elder or more powerful being, or loyalty from those who may have once opposed the characters. Villains may be transformed into allies in this way. A Narrator character who becomes a companion or lover of a player character would be considered an ally for this reason as well. Mentors, a particular kind of ally, also often play the role of librarian, feeding the players information by way of missions, lessons, or tales of the mentor's past.

Creating Memorable Masks

As the story progresses, more and more Narrator characters will join the ranks of the supporting cast. How do you differentiate between them? More importantly, how do you let the players know who they're talking to?

Here are some tips for creating memorable Narrator characters:

Function

Know the character's function; we talked about the various functions of Narrator characters in the previous section. Keeping this function in mind allows you to think more clearly about the character's role and motivation. You don't have to make it obvious to the players — in fact, you really shouldn't — but always turn an eye toward what the Narrator character is doing in a scene in the first place.

Quirks

A quirk is a visual or audible cue that indicates which role you are playing. Simple costume bits like hats and sunglasses are an easy way to indicate who is talking, and it's a good alternative if you aren't yet comfortable with your acting ability. Other quirks include notable turns of phrase, accents (funny or accurate, if you can pull it off), a change in demeanor, facial expressions, hand gestures, an overstated posture, or other physical elements your player's come to identify the character with.

Abuse

Don't overuse any single mask. Not even the most brilliant and fascinating villain you've spent weeks developing needs to be on stage full-time. Circulate between many Narrator characters so they all stay fresh.

Prioritize.

Minor characters — obstacles and bystander librarians — don't need a lot of characterization. The Narrator should give them a simple defining quality, such as an item of clothing or a physical artifact, but save the really deep characterization for long-running Narrator characters such as allies and villains.

CONSTRUCTING THE MYTH

Your most important job is laying the groundwork for the adventure in which the players are about to participate. Just as a novelist plans the broad themes and directions of the story before writing the first word, you also set up the game's



plots, themes, and setting before the first game begins.

Here are some guidelines for building a game that will be exciting and compelling, will lead to solid, rewarding character development, and be a good value for your entertainment time budget.

Plotting

Plotting starts with identifying the fundamental conflict or conflicts at the heart of the story you want to tell. Is your story about an intrepid pantheon of young Immortals trying to fight against the staid conservatism of the elder Perpetual Society? Are there foul Abzulim predators or Progeny lurking in the city?

Conflict is the essence of drama. Immortal is designed with character-based drama in mind. Players want their characters to grow — dramatically. There are many, many lines of conflict built into the overall immortal storyline, each waiting to be introduced into your game's needs. Here's a breakdown to get you started:

Reborn versus the Unknown

A game of discovery, in which the characters are completely unaware of the true nature of reality around them and only slowly come to understand their Immortal nature.

Immortal versus Immortal

Character faces another Immortal, either a tribe member, Solitaire, or an agent of an outside force.



Immortal versus Cadre/Tribe

Tribes, and even other cadres, are powerful enemies against a single Immortal. Or turn it around: the player character cadre is vexed by a powerful and dangerous individual immortal.

Immortal versus Self

Character is faced with unresolved issues from past lives. Maybe a previous incarnation was a bad person who has to atone for his crimes, but the current incarnation feels less than



responsible. Perhaps an old talisman of an avatar is still in existence, and the avatar has passed on this link to the new incarnation, and neither realizes it yet, a link that others can use to attack them in their shared body.

Normally, only links to sharded objects, sanctuaries and arks are held by the avatar and passed to the current incarnation, other minor attunements are normally lost upon entering lethe. But in the world of Immortal anything is possible.

Cadre versus Cadre

A group of Immortals versus another group of Immortals. Possibly all the cadres are comprised of groups of player characters, making it a particularly good vehicle for live-action role play.

Cadre versus itself

Internal strife in the cadre. An unfortunately classic theme in many mythologies. Also good for live action.

Cadre versus Tribe

A smaller group of Immortals finds itself opposed by a larger ideological group. The opposition could be in the ideology itself — a particular cadre may disagree with, say, the Tribe of Sharakai and its methods — or it could be more political. Perhaps a member of the cadre has withdrawn from a tribe that seeks to recover its lost member.

Tribe versus Tribe

Ideological warfare can occur, as ancient feuds flare up or current allies find themselves competing for the same prize. Though as a whole the tribes work together against the forces of

darkness, this does not mean that there are no problems between them. Perhaps a particular faction with one tribe seeks vengeance against a faction within another tribe for some ages-old action long-forgotten by the himsati race as a whole.

Immortal/Cadre versus Mortals

There are many mortal organizations with an interest in the himsati race. Major world governments regularly investigate mysterious goings-on, especially if they're a threat to the status quo. The Progeny may manipulate their mortal thralls to work against the characters. Religarum wielding secret societies constantly work to join or destroy Immortals; many spend their every waking hour obsessing over the secrets of a world kept from their view.

Immortal/Cadre versus D'Arcade

An association with the Dark Arcade can be a valuable asset — or it can lead to a lot of trouble. They are the worst kinds of criminals, after all, existing only to promote their own pleasure. Their members are also Immortals, making them difficult — if not impossible — to defeat through simple conflict.

Immortal/Cadre versus the Drovers

The Progeny and their agents vie for control over world events and work to turn all mortal civilization against their old gods. Progeny agents actively persecute immortals and their cadres when they find them — can the characters dream of thriving in a new world when they're busy just surviving? The characters may find themselves making deals with rogue immortals, Dark Arcade crime bosses, shady mortal



organizations, even Abzulim agents, to help save themselves.

Immortal/Cadre/Tribe versus Abzulim:

While the Abzulim are the great villains of the Immortal universe, they are behind the scenes villains, waging war against the Transcendents; the immortals rarely glimpse this world, in the same way that mortals rarely glimpse the world of the himsati race. The droves and their Progeny leaders are the great villains of the himsati race. But still, there are time when characters may stumble across some remnant of Abzulim Biotechnology, a predator or agent not part of the droves or controlled by Progeny.

Themes

Once you've decided what your primary conflicts will be, you should decide on an overriding theme for the story. This is what gives the story its own identity, and holds the sessions together in a cohesive whole. Some basic ideas to help you get started are:

Secrets revealed

Archaeology, self-discovery, exploration of the world and worlds beyond (mantles, ruins, etc.), a treasure hunt.

Dragon Slaying

Perhaps not literally dragons — the Abzulim are nigh impossible to slay, even with all the tribes working together. But all manner of foul beasts can be found in the world, if one knows where to look. Most foul beasts can be traced either to the Abzulim's dragonspawn or to surviving species from the Age of Myth — or even before — set loose in

the world.

Power

Characters try to improve their lot in the Perpetual Society and the world. Everyone has his own agenda, and player characters can have conflicting goals. Cadre-level power building through expanding quiet cultures and influencing world events can be a central concern.

Heroism

Defeating the wicked, saving the weak, etc. Even the anti-hero will commit heroic acts. For that matter even the most self-serving can be a hero if it means ensuring his survival and place on top when all is said and done.

Survival

Crank up the aggressiveness of the various enemies of the Perpetual Society and put the characters on the run. Only their sanctuaries are safe, and even they are not completely intrusion-proof.

Quest

The Immortal or cadre finds itself searching for a specific person, place, or thing, perhaps in an effort to bring about (or derail) a prophesy.

War

The cadre goes on the offensive against some enemy. See the lines of conflict presented in *Plotting*, above.

ORGANIZING YOUR GAME SESSIONS

A tabletop session can have dozens of Narrator characters, many settings, and narrated effects and special effects that



are impossible to physically create and present in the game.

Open-ended Planning

This is a general guideline: Don't plan your scenes, acts, or story arcs so tightly that the player characters' actions either become irrelevant or threaten to derail your story. As you plan out the story, give it room to breathe. Be prepared for your players to lay waste to whatever you had planned for them.

Most importantly, always keep your theme and plot firmly in mind. Even if the players decide their characters should zip off in some completely unexpected direction, you can always nudge them back down the story path by reintroducing thematic elements or bringing the conflict to the characters (if the characters won't face the conflict).

Planning should be done with the characters' predilections in mind. Predilections serve as a basis for how characters will generally react to a given situation. Though they don't cover all eventualities - at times a player's view of how the character would react may differ radically from your own - they still assist you in predicting the course of a given scene. This allows you be prepared, but still flexible.

Scenes

The basic unit of dramatic measure in a tabletop role playing game is the *scene*. Within a scene there may or may not be several turns comprised of individual actions. As you plan your session, think about it in terms of scenes. A scene is like a little story of its own. There's an opening, a beginning, and an end. How

SYSTEM NOTE —

Drop-Ins

Characters can easily go off on tangents during a gaming session, wandering off from the main plot or story path. A simple way to bring players back into the game — and still let them enjoy the path they are currently on — is to use “drop-in” scenes.

A drop-in scene is not tied to the continuity of the overall plot, but is designed to take place when most convenient. They do not have beginnings like regular scenes, but are designed to be inserted into an ongoing scene to dramatically change the action. Ambushes, the sudden appearance of an unknown element, the arrival of an unexpected ally or villain; these can all be made into drop-in scenes.

As the story progresses, the actions taken by Narrator characters can change to reflect the actions taken by the player characters, therefore these sudden changes can make excellent opportunities to craft a drop-in scene as you go. It helps you to look at changes to your storyline made by the player characters as opportunities instead of obstacles.

do the characters enter the scene? How might it end?

In movies, both elaborate fight scenes and clever dialogue scenes are called *set pieces*. Think about your scenes this way as well. Is the cadre just meeting with Tribal elders, or is there a complex negotiation at stake? Is the Immortal just going to smite a drove predator, or will the battle take place atop a high-rise with thralls approaching in armed



helicopters to capture the Immortal while he's weak?

There are three basic types of scenes: *Fight scenes*, *dialogue scenes*, and *information scenes*. Each scene achieves a different story goal, and you must prepare for each differently.

Fight Scene

The most important part of a fight scene is its physical description. Every setting detail you provide adds color as well as strategic choices for the characters and their opponents.

Dialogue Scene

The most important part of a dialogue scene is the characters. Who will be present? What Narrator characters will participate? Most importantly, what are the possible outcomes and the implications for the larger story?

Exposition Scene

Which leaves us with information scenes. Obviously the most important part of this scene is the information imparted. The Narrator should also think about how the characters will receive this information and the story implications of the delivery. Exposition scenes are often created via *lethe* fades where one or more characters are central to the flashback being presented. Their own choices and actions in the flashback provide more depth to their background and the game setting.

When does a scene come to an end? Whenever you want it to. In most cases it will be obvious when a scene has come to a close: your goals are achieved, the big fight has a winner, the

long conversation comes to a close.

Between Scenes

Not everything in the game has to happen inside a scene. In fact, the time between scenes is best for handling the boring events of an Immortal's life. Don't bother playing through every purchase at the grocery store, or even every appearance the characters make in front of their quiet cultures. Use the time between scenes to do whatever chores need to be done before the next scene is started, or the session comes to a close.

Sometimes the time in between scenes is used for simple exposition, or to skip an uneventful trip from one location to another.

Scene-Based Durations

Many effects in the game have a duration of "scene", or extend through multiple scenes. When powers are played at the end of a scene and there is little in-game time being represented between scenes. It is a good idea to allow the power to continue on through the following scene. If a lengthy period of time is happening between scenes, it is usually good to count that time as its own scene, even if it is not played through as one.

Acts and Episodes

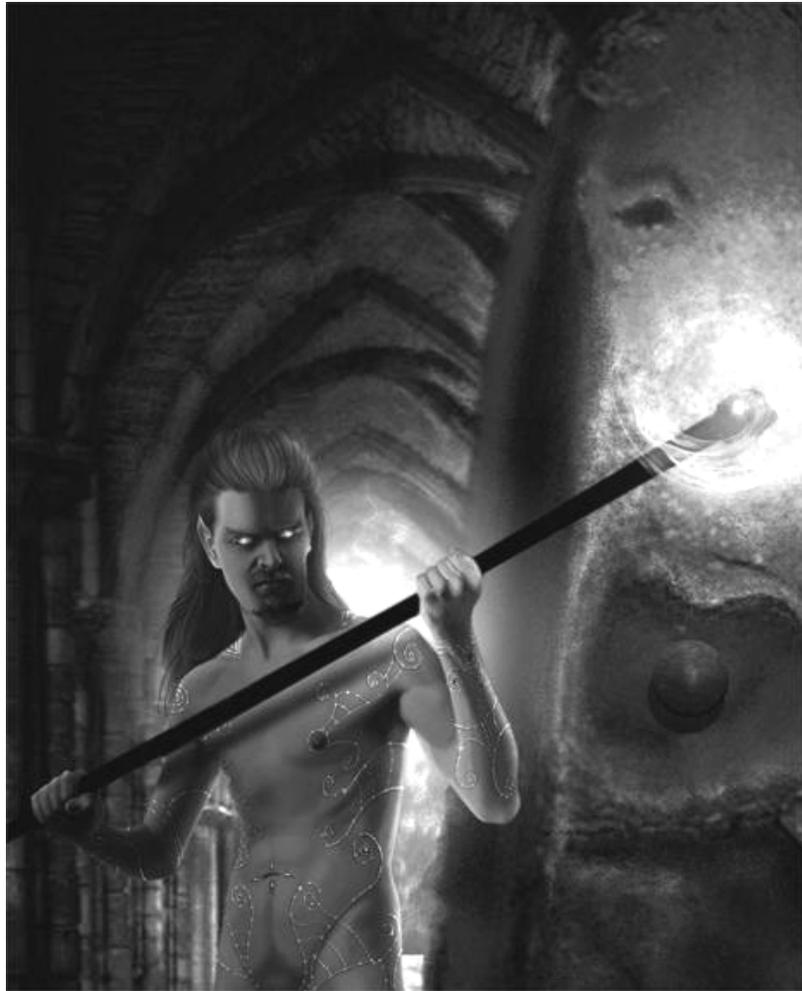
An act is a collection of related scenes. Acts are often seen in plays and even in movies and television. Acts define the three central points of a particular story arc. The first set of scenes set up the plot and the characters' involvement. The second set of scenes moves through the main portion of the plot as the



characters make their major interactions with other characters to establish their own role in the plot and slowly begin to affect the outcome; this is the development act. In the third act, the climax of the story, resolution and aftermath typically occur; this is the finale.

Episodes are complete role playing sessions, from the moment the players sit down until everyone decides to end the session. Episodes do not have to contain three acts, just as often an episode might have only two acts, allowing for a “cliff-hanger” to be resolved in a one-act finale episode the following session.

If you are playing for only a couple of hours, your entire episode may only consist of one act, made up of a few scenes. Assume that your fight scenes take the longest, followed by dialogue scenes, then finally exposition scenes. If you can set aside an entire afternoon or evening you can easily get through two acts, possibly completing a third. It’s usually a good idea to know the rough breakdown of your scenes and which acts they fall into. Cliff-hangers are great, but if every episode ends with too much left unresolved because the act wasn’t finished, then the real cliff-hangers lose their ability to awe your players. If you know you’ll only get through the first



scene of an act, it might be best to wait until the next episode to begin that act.

Another good tip for planning acts is to pick a focus character. By circulating this spotlight among all the players over various acts, they each get a chance to shine in the course of the larger story. A great method to use when crafting a story involving a particular character’s background is to give a portion of the spotlight to one of the other characters. In this way the two characters have a story that interconnects and adds to both of their backgrounds and influences future development for both.



Between Acts

Just as events can happen between scenes, players may also want their characters to be busy between acts and episodes. Unless the episode ends with a cliffhanger, the characters should be able to do business between acts and episodes. This is also a good way to gloss over travel time or fast forward through time, by days or weeks, to the next set of interesting scenes. Not every moment of every character's life needs to be played out.

THE STORY ARC

The story arc is the big picture: The story of two feuding cadres, or the story of an Abzulim agent's invasion of a major city, or the story of a newly awakened immortal's introduction to the himsati race. The story arc is built of many episodes as described in the previous section. Each episode should help build the story's theme and keep it moving forward. Even if an act or episode seems unrelated to the story, you should always keep the big picture in mind.

How many acts or episodes make a story arc? As many as you would like. If you want the players to see and sense the arc developing, keep it short: five to eight sessions. The beginning sessions setup the situation and communicate the theme (not necessarily the plot) to the players. The stories told in these episodes are used to introduce recurring Narrator characters and establish the power structures at work in the world.

The middle episodes are the meat of the story. These episodes are where the plot

is revealed to the players, and events take on a life of their own. You may want to make some of the middle episodes into cliffhangers, to maintain interest and enthusiasm about the game between episodes. Pay attention to reinforcing your theme throughout these middle sessions, to give the arc a purpose and senses of forward motion.

The final episodes wrap up various plots and "loose threads", leading to a final episode which resolves the overall story arc. These may involve the climactic battle with the master villain behind the other villains faced in previous episodes; or the revelation of the big secret, and the resulting fallout.

When planning out a story arc, you are going to tell multiple stories to get there. Consider the finale early on if you can, so that all your stories work towards it. This helps ensure the forward movement of the story so you don't get bogged down — after the introduction — with too many story choices to make.

The End of the Story Arc

Eventually, your story arc will come to an end. Let it finish and give the players a sense of closure. Don't plan and plot out the outcome of this finale though, the characters should provide input based on the actions they take leading up to — and during — that finale.

Just because your story arc ended doesn't mean the game has to end. Not at all — just look at the hundreds of arcs that have come and gone in soap operas over the past 30 years. You can plan sessions without regard to a larger story, and play them out for a few weeks.



When you're ready, you'll introduce another arc — it may even introduce itself.

GOOD NARRATING

In a noncompetitive environment like a role playing game, it might seem strange to declare play styles “good” and “bad.” There are, of course, no bad ways to play a role playing game as long as everyone is having fun. However, there are some narration techniques that make for a more enjoyable experience for everyone.

Narrating is a hard job, but no harder than playing a detailed character. It's hard in different ways, because you have to serve so many functions: entertainer, organizer, fair adjudicator, and teacher. But don't forget the players have a hard job too. They may not be juggling setting details and extra characters, but they're constantly thinking about their character's plans, motivations, abilities, and future scenes. Players and Narrators are neither more nor less important than one another.

Here are five ideas on how to become a better Narrator for this and all other role playing games.

Empowerment

The simplest way to describe the appeal of role playing games is that they are empowerment fantasies. Players spend hours in a game defining their characters and directing their actions in ways they can never do in real life. Role playing is empowering, at least during the session. Your first and [most important] job is to make sure everyone is having a good

time. In a role playing game, the best way to do this is to make sure everyone is fulfilling the empowerment fantasy they hoped for when they signed up for the game.

Pay close attention to what the characters are good at, and always give players a chance to show off their characters' strengths. Build opportunities into the storyline for everyone to take charge and be heroic. Not every character can be the star every act, but everyone should get a chance to shine at least once in the storyline.

A common mistake is making your planned storyline the most important aspect of the game. All the great stories of fiction are about characters, not plots; the fictional experience of a role playing game is no different. Without characters that the players — or you, the Narrator — care about, the plot doesn't matter. Give the players a reason to care about their characters by making them the stars of the story, and they will care more about the plot.

Fairness

The rules exist to create a balanced playing field for everyone, players and Narrator alike. However, the rules can't possibly describe every situation that will come up in your game. Think of them as a framework: once you understand how to adjudicate opposed and unopposed conflicts and how to apply penalties, you can make up your own rules for special cases.

In many cases, a player will want to do something that is conceivable according to his character's description but is not



explicitly allowed by the rules. In these cases, you should rule on the side of fun and excitement. If something makes the story better or the game more fun, by all means allow it. At the same time, if you come up with something interesting for an opponent to do, don't hesitate to let them, as well.

The trick to all this rules breaking is to maintain fairness. In other words, don't give the players *or* the villains what they want all the time. Keep it balanced, and keep them guessing.

Immersion

People begin playing a role playing game with some expectation of what it's about. The accuracy with which the you model the game's subject — its verisimilitude — in turn creates a greater sense of immersion in a real, vibrant world. Several factors add up to a strongly immersive role playing experience:

Mood

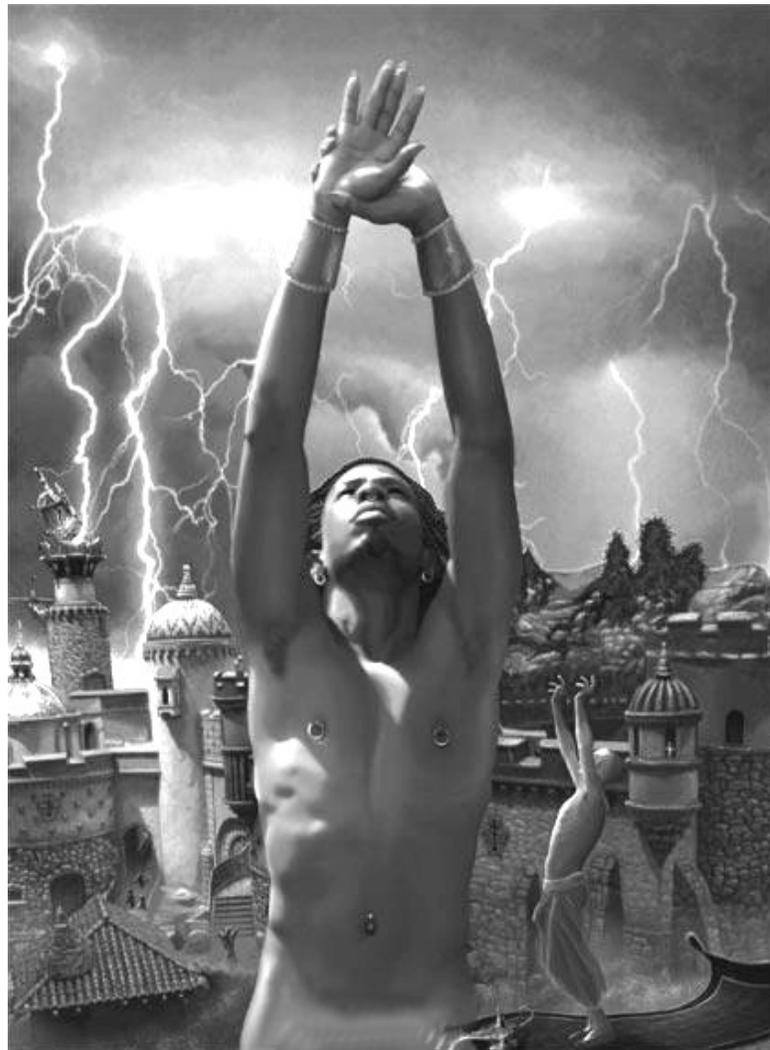
Consider the mood you're trying to convey. This mood may last only until the end of a scene, or throughout a session, or an entire story arc. Is this a dark tale of betrayal or a humorous look at intercadre rivalries? A technical, perhaps even military, approach to global domination or a sappy love story?

Whatever your intention, be

aware that you will create a mood even if you don't do it on purpose. Controlling the story's mood will create a greater sense of drama.

Setting

As you plan for your upcoming act or an entirely new story arc, where exactly will the bulk of the scenes take place? Is this an urban story, set in high-rises and industrial parks? Or is it a road show, with the characters traveling through many settings en route to a final destination (and dramatic climax)? Knowing your setting in advance will





allow you to develop only the setting details you need. There is nothing more frustrating than planning out an interesting setting only to find the player characters heading in the opposite direction.

Theme

Consider also the theme of the story you want to tell. Classical mythology, regardless of its nation of origin, is always thematic: rebellion, for example, in the story of Zeus's destruction of his father and the imprisonment of the Titans; or devotion to duty in the story of Yu the Great channeling flood waters off the land and into the sea in the name of Emperor Shun. While it is impractical to retell the origin of every aspect of the world in game terms, having a theme in mind will help your story feel more legendary, even mythic.

Knowledge

To accurately create a verisimilitude of mythology, you have to know something about mythology. The more you know, the better a Narrator you can be. Do some reading in classical mythology and it will pay off in the game. Even the smallest libraries usually have books on world mythology.

Challenge

Challenges can come in many shapes: a puzzle or riddle that must be solved, a murder mystery, a conspiracy, a painfully hard choice. Challenge engages another part of the players' creative process, different but not necessarily separate from the role playing part. Part of the role playing game experience is the *game*; give your players enough game challenges to

engage them beyond simple fights or negotiations.

Trust

A good role playing experience starts with an unspoken contract of trust between you and the players. You trust the players to act out their characters as they've described them, and in turn the players trust you to give them the experience they want. As soon as either side breaks that trust, the game inevitably suffers.

After players create their characters, they should remain faithful to the character's description. This allows you to plan scenes and acts around those characters' strengths, weaknesses, and interests. If you aren't clear on some aspect of a player's character, don't hesitate to ask. Push the players for more details: past life experiences, modern relationships, political feelings, whatever.

Another part of trust is consistency; if you make a decision you should make it apply every time the same type of circumstance arises. If you change the same ruling over and over; your players will no longer consider you fair, and that affects their trust in you.

Likewise, the players must be able to trust that you will carry out your part of the bargain: to be fair when adjudicating and to give them the experience they're hoping for (even if it isn't exactly as they expected).

USING THE TOOLS

Between the Player and Narrator guides



we have provided a number of useful tools to assist in adjudicating and running your episodes. So we'd like to provide some tips and advice on how to use a few of them in particular.

Time and Distance

Time in the game, beyond combat time, is not measured in minutes or hours, instead it is measured in scenes, acts and episodes. This is done purposely to give you flexibility. It also helps to better simulate how mystical powers work. Mystical powers don't work for 10 minutes and 23 seconds. They work for a rough period of time based on how much energy and how well the character performed; in this way there is no guarantee on how long a particular effect will last. This is on purpose to add a more dynamic element of the unknown to the game.

Distances, beyond short distances, are measured more in terms of large areas such as regions. Sometimes the local vicinity is going to be a single room, sometimes it is more fitting to be the size of small house. Basing areas on a character attribute - or on general areas such as regions - makes the game more dynamic, and allows you the freedom to arbitrate based on the needs of the story.

Learning how to gauge time and distance to best serve the needs of your story - rather than relying on fixed, immutable distances - will lend a more dynamic air to your games, allowing greater immersion and challenge. Don't always rule in favor of the characters, don't always rule against them; sometimes it is better to let them wonder and decide if they want to take the risk.

The Answer Is...

When the character asks you if they can do something, or exactly how far away the target is; there is no rule that you have to tell them yes, no or the exact distance. Sometimes, figuring it out for oneself and then putting in the extra effort to succeed is half the fun.

Instead, ask them "I'm not sure, are you going to attempt it? Is there anything you want to do to help ensure your success?" Give them a rough range instead of an exact distance. Let them decide how much risk and preparation they want to take to succeed. Obviously if the character should be completely aware that he is unable to succeed or that there should be no difficulties, by all means let them know. Some of the most fun comes when there is a level of uncertainty; the suspense that comes with knowing you have to roll the die and aren't sure exactly what you need to succeed.

Conflict Notes

We've talked a bit about conflict earlier, let's look again at the three main types of conflict: Physical, Social and Supernatural.

Physical

Aside from possible ability tests — like athletics — that can happen in any scene, most physical conflict occurs as part of a fight scene. Often a split-second decision by you or one of the players initiates a fight scene.

Remember to prioritize. Having a good overview of your fight scene's setting first is more important than providing initial details at a level quickly forgotten



by your players — or worse — that accidentally traps you into a course of action when you'd rather have the room to do things differently. Of course, if the fight scene is intended that way — to give the villain an upper hand — then by all means provide as much detail as is needed right up front.

A quick trick is to setup an imaginary camera in your mind that gives an overhead angled view of the setting of the fight. At the end of each round, quickly pan through the setting and look over what happened for a few seconds. Adjust where items are, what's been broken, who can see what, what forces — external or hidden — are about to be revealed. In doing so you can quickly answer most questions that come up and then add extra details over the course of the next round as needed.

Social

Social conflict most often occurs as part of a dialogue scene, though playing through a character's attempt to seduce his opponent during a fight scene is highly entertaining for all as well. Social conflicts provide the greatest chance for character development. For those characters who are not designed for a lot of combat, this is where a character focus on them can give them the greatly needed spotlight. Game sessions that are nothing but endless series of dice rolling quickly become boring for those interested in more than a Monty Haul type of game.

As mentioned earlier, Predilections should be taken into account when planning your game sessions, especially when social conflict may occur. We've

also given you new Predilection rules as well. Just remember the most important rule of predilections: no two people will view them the same way, so whatever promotes the most enjoyment for you and your players is always the best route to take.

Additionally, for those characters comfortable with playing out their social skills, being able to use them as knowledge skills and allowing pure role playing to determine the outcome is quite satisfying to those who really enjoy the acting part of a role playing game. It is quite easy to add in various bonuses, penalties and other external forces upon your Narrator characters, without having to rely on the dice. It is also a good idea to have players take a few moments before a game session (or at least before a dialogue scene) to review their predilections and the various strengths and weaknesses that they need to be cognizant of and remember to role play through.

Supernatural

This type of conflict — especially in dealing with serenades — occurs during all types of scenes. It also tends to be the most dynamic force at shifting the focus of a scene, or even transforming one type of scene into another.

The best way to prepare is to know the serenades your player characters have, and when they tend to use them. Of course, knowing the second part only comes with paying close attention to what they use during gaming sessions.

Supernatural conflict is one of the primary reasons we suggest open-ended



planning and creating one or two drop-in scenes to use in an act. One of the best ways to deal with supernatural conflict is to carefully watch over character balance. Is the character extremely weak and pushing his supernatural abilities to levels that just don't make sense for the type of character, or his power level? Is he taking serenades that he really should be playing out the time in game to find a mentor to teach him? There is nothing wrong with having powerful serenades - or with having serenades as a primary part of the character - just don't let that override character development or game balance.

When characters reach a point that the answer to everything is a serenade, the character is most likely becoming unbalanced in relation to the other characters in the group and the power level your game is set at. The best response is to not allow it to happen. Work closely with your players, so that they (and you) can be happy with their characters. You are the director of the movie, you can help supply motivation, direction and suggested alternatives that might allow the player to expand his character into areas he didn't realize he would enjoy.

Penalties and Bonuses

Sometimes the characters don't need to know about all the penalties, sometimes you can instead apply them as a bonus to a Narrator character's defense. This is especially helpful when you want to keep something secret from the players that their characters should not be aware of yet (like that magical item of defense everyone has yet to detect). But remember to be fair and keep the trust of

your players. Don't make up things like this in the middle of a fight scene. Sometimes its just as nice to provide a secret bonus because the characters are trying hard, they should be winning, but the dice are just not kind that day.

Non-Level Based Rolls

Several new mechanics are introduced in the Narrator's Guide (Fugue, Ennui, various physical feats, rising avatars, ley walking, etc.) that give a target number to roll against but do not make use of success levels. Unless specified otherwise (stating an exact achievement of target number, bonus points or success levels), the target number needs to be beaten by only one point to be successful. In unusual circumstances, extra points provide success levels if needed (as per page 92 of the Player's Guide). In general this rule applies to any unopposed roll that does not need success levels.

The Benefits of Zero-Level Success

In the midst of combat, many players overlook the potential benefits of rolling that single point over the target number or over their opponent's contested roll. In terms of damage this level represents those minor cuts, scrapes and bruises that do no real damage. But that does mean that a 0 success level means *something* happened.

Encourage players to be creative. One point won't force an opponent to mark off boxes of health, but it might cut off a tiny bit of hair, slice the belt holding up his trousers, pop a button or flick a switch. Don't underestimate the value of a zero-level success and don't let your player's do so either.



POWER LEVELS

The Player's Guide is designed for use by starting level characters — the Reborn. However, the Narrator's Guide introduces the options for more powerful characters; after all the Reborn are eventually going to get more powerful or you may desire to play characters of a higher starting level — those who already have experience.

Running the Reborn

Even if the players have had characters in a particular story arc prior, playing the Reborn is always something of a game of discovery. The first thing most players are going to notice about the information and new rules from the Narrator's Guide is that they can be very difficult for a Reborn character to achieve. This is on purpose; the Reborn aren't meant to start with the advantages and capacity to achieve all that is presented in the Narrators Guide. Many will find themselves taking a particular path, picking out elements from the Narrator's Guide they can grow into befits their personal character development.

Be careful about how much you throw at Reborn characters from the Narrator's Guide; it might be a lot more than they are ready to handle long-term. It's easy to ramp up the aggression level and put the characters on the run. When playing characters that are still relatively close to human level, the thrill of the chase is quickly lost on the prey. Without respite, or a chance to shine, and without successes and victories that move the story forward, it can quickly flounder.

One of the other interesting aspects of playing a Reborn is the effective world of intrigue that he finds himself thrust into. There are still older immortals with ages-old grudges from their time in the Stratagem of the Prides; not every immortal is as altruistic as he or she appears to be. Regardless of how much further the tribes have come in terms of working together; for some old habits die hard, and the Reborn make the most excellent of pawns in the schemes of older immortals.

Fortunately, Reborn tend to gain EP and MP at a rather quick rate compared to their older, more archaic counterparts. So the playing field can even out a lot faster than it would for a non-Reborn spending up to a century trying to shake off his lethe.

Handling Lethe

Coming out of lethe is one of the most important aspects of personal development for Reborn characters. But running characters through the experience can be somewhat daunting.

The first hurdle to overcome is detailing the first bits and pieces of the character's avatars. If the player hasn't done a lot of research, that leaves some open-ended items to take care of. First, you could ask the player to do some research and present you with a fact sheet of some kind. Alternatively you could do the research on your own, and this allows you to surprise the player.

If one or more avatars are based on famous historical, fictional or mythological characters, there are even more questions to answer outside of real



life research. Was this the original first immortal to bear that name? Or perhaps this was a splintered avatar, another incarnation, or just another similar immortal to wield the name as well? Was this an immortal who gained one of the legendary, theoretical sparks of a Transcendent? The answers to these questions are going to heavily influence information presented to the character.

Flashbacks can be an enjoyable experience, but can be difficult when no other players' characters are involved. By finding ways to involve the other characters, complete adventures can be run as a flashback, independent of the current story arc. The knowledge and power gained from those flashbacks may even be of use when returning to the current story arc. Often the cadres that come together as Reborn were those that bonded together before they vanished in 1666. This can make running flashbacks for the most recent avatar easy since it is likely that the other characters will have played roles in that avatar's experiences.

And what of the over 300 years since 1666 that the Reborn lived and died as mortals? There are no avatars, but there may be a faint memory or two of a human lifetime to be had. Entire quests can be undertaken in an attempt to determine the Reborn's mortal identities during those long years.

Running the Competent

That is exactly what they are — competent. Immortals who were reborn a decade or so ago (or those who have shaken off the last of the nearly 100-year lethe process), they have now risen in power level and knowledge to

understand all the basic workings of the Immortal universe. They are fairly well able to hold their own, even when dealing with powerful immortals far older than they. Competent immortals make up a large portion of those found traversing the Earth and fighting the forces of darkness.

Many competent immortals of today were the Reborn of the 1990's, and they suffered greatly in terms of political intrigue and time spent as other immortals' pawns. Many of them have a healthy respect for the plight of a Reborn and find themselves looking after them when they meet them. These immortals had not even shaken off the last vestiges of lethe when the Great Betrayal fell upon them.

Others may have come out of lethe within the last few decades before the Great Betrayal, and were still considered minor bit players in the grand scheme of things at that time. Now with so many consigned to the Blue Air, they simply filled in the voids left behind.

Competent immortals aren't going to progress as fast as Reborn, they are already at a higher level and the EP costs for things tend to go up quickly. They also tend to gain fewer EP and MP per story arc, having likely already experienced such situations and gained EP from them; they just aren't going to get as much EP from repeating the same basic lessons learned.

Competent immortals are the first line of defense for the tribes against the forces of darkness on Earth. They are at a level where their tribes can call upon them



and feel confident that they can put to use the skills and abilities their himsati and calling grant them. Missions of some importance are regularly assigned to such immortals by the tribes. Rogue immortals of this level often find themselves embroiled in the plots of both the droves and tribes alike.

Average mortals stand little chance against one of these immortals; even if they attack in small numbers, a single competent immortal can easily outwit, outlast and overpower them. At this stage other immortals, predators and Religarum wielding mortal agents provide more of a challenge. These immortals are not easily led to becoming pawns, but still show more than enough of their human memories and patterns to have those turned against them. You've got a good mix of potential sources to challenge characters at this stage, toned down versions of things that powerful immortals would face, plus ramped up versions of Reborn challenges, can provide enough diversity and entertainment for a group at this level.

You can still have some fun with the occasional lethe fade, and the emerging of a previously unknown avatar or a prior secret, ability, curse or gift that the character has been unaware of. Many of these

immortals have established strong personal sanctuaries and gathered a few followers to their cause. They wield resources that they would never have had while under the guise of a human during lethe. Though they are not all millionaires with the ear of every politician, they'll know people of mid-level importance in various human agencies, have contacts outside their local region, and possibly a few allies and favors owed them (and that they owe) as well. All these can easily lead to plot hooks to draw characters into your various story arcs.





Running the Powerful

At this stage things are quite different. These are the immortals that run the affairs of their tribe for an entire small region. They are the ones called upon to traverse the globe on behalf of their tribe; defeating the big monsters and laying low the plans of powerful Progeny and Abzulim agents alike.

Many of these are jaded, some are even resentful of the young, upstart Reborn - both those from the 1990's and those emerging today. They have long memories and have been away from lethe for at least a century or two. They know who their avatars are, they are left in charge of important items, places, tasks, missions. They negotiate pacts, lead teams of immortals into battle — and into non-combat missions as well — and employ grand schemes to cover up the existence of the himsati race. They study items of power that no Reborn would touch except in his dreams. They travel to the nearby Dominions in the Mystech lighters of their tribe.

They walk into mantles of the Godlike immortals who are their mentors and hurl their own powers across pocket dimensions at their enemies. These immortals don't just have personal sanctuaries, they have strongholds with a great number of followers and allies, perhaps even a mantle over which they lord, a few enchanted items, and serenades of true power.

Immortals at this level not only survived the Great Betrayal, but many were even around during the Great Fire of 1666 in London. There is little that fazes them; because of this they are a bit jaded and

even more archaic than their competent brothers and sisters. Therefore their progress is even a bit slower. At this level you are playing for the plot, the intrigue, the sheer epic nature of the tale; rather than for gaining EP or MP.

The most powerful of human agents, groups of Progeny, small hordes of drove predators, even other powerful immortals are usually required to keep a character at this stage challenged. The mugger in the alley is barely worth playing the scene through, except for the possible humor, as it won't last enough to make a real scene.

Rate of EP / MP

Different power levels gain EP and MP at differing rates. If the starting character is a Reborn, they would be out of lethe and to the level of competent immortal within 10 years. Of course as the stars of the tale, the characters in your game will most likely rise up even a bit faster. The EP and MP awards listed in the Player's Guide work well for them. But those award guides do not work as well for older, more experienced characters. You gain experience from doing things, by repeating it over and over you gain not experience, but expertise. Most skills in the game take very little EP to reach a competent level, to show how quickly immortals tend to learn things. Normal humans would never gain even close to the amount of experience and memory that even a powerful immortal does.

Oddly enough the Godlike immortals (if they were considered playable in the game) would gain experience slower than any other, even slower than



humans. This is because immortals — for all the dynamic power of their shapeshifting DNA and their attunement to the ever-changing forces of the Aria — are prone to be static and archaic by nature. This is the trade-off, the fight against Fugue and a world that changes around them while they do not change at all, save for what change they force upon themselves. In reality they are not changing. As they gain new natures, remember old skills and powers, they are actually going back to what they were over and over, each time they come out of lethe. They are creatures of habit and the more powerful they get, the harder it is to fight that fact. Immortals don't take well to the rapidly changing pace of human society, technology and culture. Older immortals don't retreat into their mantles just because they are so powerful, but because for all that power, mental acumen, and raw physical ability, they have a hard time keeping up with the constant changes on Earth.

Competent

Once at this level — or if starting at this level — characters can expect to receive up to roughly 6 or 7 EP in a gaming session. They can expect to gain MP about half as often as they did when they were starting characters. Characters really need to show you as the Narrator that they put a lot of time and effort into something before they should be spending points on it. Monitoring what they spend their points on is a bit more important at this stage.

Powerful

At this level characters should expect to receive 4 to 5 EP in a gaming session. MP should come rarely, maybe once

NARRATOR WARNING —

Unbalanced Growth

Beware the character who pushes one attribute higher and higher at the expense of all others. If an attribute equals its associated calculated attribute the character begins to experience problems. The other two attributes that form the calculated one aren't able to handle the one extremely high attribute.

For example: if a character's AGL equals his BODY, he becomes extremely quick; but his STR and END aren't developed enough to handle the stress of moving that fast. The character literally tears muscles, becomes winded extremely easily, etc. Another example: a character's PER equals his MIND. His WIL and PRS aren't strong enough to process and interact with everything his senses take in. A character's SPT can often equal the BODY and/or MIND. Exceeding them may cause an immortal to develop problems controlling his spirit and its power, as the physical and mental auras are no longer sufficient to wield his spiritual might. Those few humans with a faith rating that go beyond a 5 SPT do not suffer from these problems; their Faith helps maintain control.

every several episodes. Often characters at this level have flashbacks into their own past rather than that of an avatar, so there is no MP award.

NARRATOR CHARACTERS

Earlier we talked about the functions of Narrator characters in your story arcs. Now let's take a moment to look into some ideas when designing them.



Extras

Rarely having their name in the end credits of the movie, and glimpsed only briefly during that one scene, extras are the functional equivalent of “throw-away” characters. You’ll make them all the time your games: the group of government agents, the uniformed minions of a Progeny, the small pack of generic drove predators. They are minor obstacles rarely meant to truly stop your characters; even when they do it isn’t for long.

They don’t need detailed backgrounds, listings of skills and abilities, they don’t even normally need names. They need a BODY, a MIND, a SPT (and therefore the appropriate Spirit Die) and a quick list of abilities, powers and equipment. Often those don’t need any numbers. Just roll the Spirit Die and add the appropriate attribute. Remember that BODY and MIND are normally calculated attributes for a full-fledged characters, so the BODY and MIND can easily represent the combination of most regular attributes plus a point or two in necessary skills or abilities to show competence.

Extras have “group motivation”, they all share the same basic predilection, goals, fears, etc. Any PRS-based effect on one of them, tends to have at least some effect on the others. Even mystical powers, when they suddenly affect one extra, tend to make the others carefully consider their next move.

In other words, don’t put too much time into fleshing these guys out. If you want to make them a bit more competent, increase the Spirit Die one level. Be

careful about increasing MIND or BODY since those are going to resist serenades and other supernatural powers more easily.

The great thing about extras is that the same basic design for one set of extras can be used over and over for other similar groups of extras. Just change the uniform, the group name, the setting, the equipment and possibly powers and you have a whole new set of minions ready to be thwarted by your players’ characters.

Mundane Creatures

Animals generally fall into the category of extras, including dark creatures such as Bête Noire. Mundane creatures may not have the complex emotional responses of humans and immortals, but those that become companions can become changed forever, generally becoming bit players.

Animals have the equivalent of natures, after all, natures are just mystical versions of most normal animal abilities, occasionally starting off as weaker but growing to become far greater. For example, most animals that are known as jumpers tend to jump about 3x their length (sans tail) and then exceptional jumpers will double that with the equivalent of one level of leap nature. Swimmers, runners, climbers, the same basic concept applies.

When creating animals and other mundane creatures, the human average for an attribute is 3 with an upper limit of 5. A few animals can break that rule, but the trade-off is that most animals have a maximum of a 1 SPT with an



upper limit of 3. It is possible to sin or lullaby from animals that reach this maximum SPT, but there are side effects, as the immortal can take on feral behaviors associated with the creature for weeks afterwards. The Terat usually stand the best chance of coping with the side effects. Mundane animals do not produce immaculum, though creatures that become companions have known to produce a few motes over their lifetime. Animals take the same amount of time as humans to heal attributes taken through lullaby.

Bit Players

Bit Players are designed like Extras, but have individual names, motivations and a small bit of background. Some bit players go on to become full recurring characters. When a character has a small group of followers, they tend to be bit players, with their mortal leader going on to become a full character in his own right. Character contacts and other immortals interacted with for brief periods at a time can easily fall into this category.

Bit players show up here and there, they tend to get reused. With bit players sometimes it is advisable to push up the BODY or MIND a point or two, in order to give them a better survival rate in an epic tale like those told in the Immortal universe.

Central Players

The master villain, the elder immortal



that the cadre goes to for advice, the romantic interest, the leader of the group of Believers, the head of a mortal agency with the power to stand up to the characters. Central players need to be fleshed out a lot more. Their core skills, powers and abilities should be available as well as their actual attributes. They should have names, predilections, somewhat developed backgrounds and complex motivations. To add in quirks and defining characteristics throw some color into their description and let some boons and banes show through.

A central player may only last for one



story arc (especially when they are a main villain that is defeated during the final act), but often become recurring characters. So you'll definitely want to save your information on them and be ready to flesh them out further, for possible future use.

You should also feel free to allow central players to receive the benefits of critical successes, but if you do also allow them the horrors of critical failures to be fair to your players.

Believers

Invariably many characters go looking for followers. Though the average John or Jane Doe will do as a temporary solution, what the character really wants are Believers. Often starting as bit players and graduating to some form of minor central player, Believers can become an important part of a character's story. So how to find them, how to bring them to the character's cause, and how to maintain them?

Believers, most often in their personal life, tend to buck the trends and live a life outside the mainstream. Though many will return to the mainstream for purposes of education, employment and basic life needs; they won't be found where John and Jane Doe are found after school and work finish for the day. Believers, in Immortal, have something better to do than go club hopping, or constantly jacking into the Net through an Eyz unit.

However, this doesn't mean that every charm-wearing renaissance actress and every black-garbed goth poet is a Believer. Even among these groups

there are those that stand out. Which ren-faire actress made her entire costume by hand in the traditional method of the era she represents? Which of those goth poets actually shows the extra reverence for the symbols he carries? There are subtle clues to show the character who the real potential Believers are, and those that are just using the belief system for show. It is up to you as the Narrator to slowly point them out as the character searches.

Once found, introductions must be made. But the biggest mistake a character will make is to just jump right in with some flashy show of supernatural power and expect the Believer to drop to his knees, thanking his beliefs for sending proof. Often the poor character winds up a victim of the Believer's faith; they forgot that their show might make them appear to be an abhorrent creature within the mortal's belief system. Better to test the waters slowly and carefully.

Remember, normal humans rationalize away most supernatural events they witness; encourage your players to start out with smaller, subtler shows, see if the potential Believer notices them and how he reacts. Then let them work their way up to slightly bigger shows, finally introducing themselves. Even then the mortal doesn't need to know this person is a shapeshifting wielder of magic. Once it is clear that this mortal's belief system will accept the character, then it is time to reveal the truth (or at least a version of it that the Believer can work with).

The initial "usefulness" of the new



follower depends on who you've allowed the character to recruit to his cause. A small group of high school students living at home, are only going to provide the keys to their parents' car and possibly their attic to hide out in when the character is wounded. But a Believer now in service to, or allied with, an immortal has proof and justification of his belief; he now has a cause, and a human with a cause is a powerful thing indeed. The Believer begins to network with others, gaining his own contacts and slowly bringing others into the fold. While the character may have contacts of his own, so too does his group of followers.

Make no mistake, the followers expect something in return; they want their faith in this supernatural being justified. They expect protection — or perhaps even vengeance — against what they perceive to be the forces of darkness that stand against their own faith. In this day and age in the Immortal universe, unquestioning loyalty and devotion with nothing in return is rare to find in most Believers.

Faith Can Change a Person

Another nice benefit of followers is the possibility to cultivate a group to gain a specific boon. Over the course of generations, Believers gave their “gods” various boons during the Age of Myth. The same can happen here too. In fact, the faith of Believers in general can alter existing boons and curses in an immortal rather than providing a new one. They can even remove a curse or boon! These kind of changes are always at your discretion as the Narrator.

Avatars

Avatars are a special case as Narrator characters go, because they *are* the player character in a sense. Normally it is quite hard for an avatar to gain control over the body. The character is rolling against his own Fugue and not actually rolling against the avatar; but, various penalties can easily cause the character to begin failing fugue rolls. During a fade (and with the associated penalty) is one of the most opportune periods for an avatar to emerge and take control (if that is what the avatar desires).

Should an avatar take full control, forcing the character to slumber (or in cases where the character willing lets the avatar out to “play”), you can allow the character's player to also play the avatar. This is assuming that you and the player are both comfortable with it. It can provide interesting role playing opportunities for your players and enhance your story. In general though, be careful about pulling avatars out too often, or having too many accessible avatars for a particular character. It's no fun for the player to sit there for lengthy times waiting to get control back.

Avatars are alien beings in a sense, coming from a bygone era and not fully aware of the cultures and technology of the modern world. They should not emerge and suddenly become comfortable with human technology and modern customs. You'll want to remember to play them up that way, the technology older immortals are familiar with is Mystech, not human tech. Over time, the avatar can become more accustomed to the modern world; but remember, immortals eventually become



creatures of archaic habit. Their eventual inability to deal with the changing times is one of the very reasons so many entered lethe in the first place. Just because they are now avatars, doesn't mean that they have suddenly gotten better at dealing with the even more rapidly changing times of today.

Also remember that older immortals, when emerging as an avatar, aren't going to have the same physical attributes (only a slight increase above the character's own, from his fugue rating). They may very well attempt feats that they aren't quite able to accomplish those first few times they emerge.

The Healing Earth

The Earth once held far more power than it does now; the great war taking place after the Great Betrayal was surely to be the Ragnarök of the immortal race, the final battles. Both sides used excessive amounts of power, as the Eidolon Sanguinary drained more and more in a last bid to escape its prison in the Morpheum.

Now the Earth's own aura is far lower, many old boons and powers no longer work; but that doesn't mean the Earth is dying. It may have been wounded but the forces of light managed to save the day — there was just a cost to do so. Quite the contrary, the Earth now begins a healing process. But as the Earth grew in power last time, it was the Age of Myth, and the himsati race had

stewardship over humanity. This time the droves have just as much hold on the human race — especially since a good number of Progeny are former members of the what are now the tribes.

Will the characters rise to the challenge and bring about a new age of prosperity for both immortals and humans? Will they choose a path of personal limitless power, or perhaps tread darker trails? Are they to be champions of the One Soul, bringing light into the souls of countless mortals? Or perhaps they will be the harbingers of humanity's doom, enslaving or destroying all?

The world is at a pivotal moment in time. It is now up to these new Reborn, and those who have chosen to follow that same path, to see if this very central "character" to the game — their last bastion Earth — survives and thrives, or withers and dies.





APPENDIX A

PLAYER'S GUIDE ERRATA

Calling Gift Rolls

PAGE 104 — The statement: "... the target number does not have to be beaten to achieve success" is incorrect. It should read: "... the target number only needs to be beaten by one point to achieve success. Success levels of 1 or higher provide additional details or bonuses to the effect.

Carnivorous Plants

For plant himsati such as Flytraps, Sundew, Bladderworts and Pitcher Plants, Blood Drain is considered a common nature.

Destruction Attention

PAGE 162 — The last paragraph concerning the description of the Destruction Attention starting with "When a destruction serenade is increased,..." should read "When a destruction serenade's **duration** is increased **via immaculum,...**".

Destruction Attention—Clarification

When destruction serenades gain the (–E) notation — through Immaculum or when custom built — the effect level drops along with the serenade strength, unlike other types of serenades. Each round damage is recalculated using the new lower serenade strength.

This can be avoided for custom built serenades by placing a trigger (-T) notation allowing the serenade to immediately end. If this is done (and approved by the Narrator) the serenade

will do damage each time until the serenade strength drops low enough or the trigger is activated.

Hyper Nature

PAGES 126 to 128 — Hyper is common to all himsati species.

Ichor Serenade

PAGE 192 — After you apply END and armor, remaining damage **points** transfer to the item and it then also resists per the "Breaking Thing" rules on page 201.

Mien

PAGE 193 — The Focus should be "Terrene Form", not Contortion

Peri Stronghold

PAGE 113 — The main Peri stronghold is the Hearth; they do maintain a tight reign on the outer areas of the Foundry.

Rounds and Count

Rounds are broken down into initiative counts, starting at the highest initiative rolled. When the count reaches zero, a new initiative is rolled to start a new round. Per page 200, initiative counts determine when you can use your allotted actions during a round.

Terrible Countenance

PAGE 138 — When directing the nature at a single target, the target rolls his WIL against your PRS *plus half your SPT*, not just against your PRS. The mechanics of Terrible Countenance and Beauty are identical, though the outcomes rather different.



APPENDIX B: EXPANDED MECHANICS FROM CHAPTER I

This section contains expanded mechanics from topics covered in Chapter 1, appearing in the same order.

FUGUE AND ENNUI

Reborn level characters start with a fugue rating of 1, Competent with a 2 and Powerful with a 3. Each time a character encounters a situation seriously threatening his sense of identity or place in the immortal world, he makes an uncontested PRS roll against a target of 6 plus his current fugue rating. Penalties for pain, confusion or other mental detriments also apply. If the character fails he gains one point of fugue rating.

Ennu Checks

Whenever the character fails a fugue roll — starting after he gains his 3rd point of fugue rating — he must check to see if he is forced to enter Ennu. He makes an uncontested PRS roll against a target of 6 plus his new fugue rating. If he fails, he is forced into Ennu in a number of hours equal to his WIL; he may voluntarily enter earlier if he wishes. But if the full amount of time goes by, regardless of his location or activities engaged in, at that moment he slips into Ennu.

If the character encounters a situation very similar to one where he gained Fugue in the past, but it is not strong enough to merit a fugue roll, you can

rule that the character must still make an ennui roll. Even during intense flashbacks, memories or dreams that bring up memories or similar circumstances of those times he gained Fugue in the past he can be forced to make an ennui roll.

It is possible to hold off Ennu for a time at certain levels by voluntarily (i.e. not due to ennui rolls) entering Ennu for extended periods to quiet the babler within.

Fugue Levels

The levels of Fugue are based on the fugue rating of the character, and determine how long he enters Ennu, how easy it is to rouse him (thus interrupting any voluntary Ennu), how strong the babler is (which tells the character how strong his Fugue is) and whether or not he can attempt to remain within that level and how.

Fugue Rating 1 - 2

- There are no Ennu periods as the character does not experience babler. Failing an Ennu check only increases the fugue rating, there is no ennui roll.

Fugue Rating 3 - 4

- Ennu lasts for nearly a month whenever entered.
- Character can be roused while in Ennu as if in a light sleep, thus interrupting Ennu. Characters



interrupted from Ennui at this level face a -1 penalty to all rolls for one day as they did not complete the full Ennui period. Boons such as alertness, lightsleep, etc. still function as normal.

- Babblers are only heard during heavy sleep periods or deep rest. It does not interfere with waking thoughts, though it does confuse what the character was remembering or dreaming about.
- While at the 4th point of Fugue, if the character can voluntarily — not due to ennui rolls — enter and complete Ennui twice with no fugue or ennui rolls in the interim, he can reduce his fugue rating back to a 3. If either Ennui period is interrupted, the character must start over with the first period again. Voluntarily entering Ennui while at a 3 only quiets babblers.

Fugue Rating 5 - 6

- Ennui lasts for nearly a year whenever entered.
- Character can be roused while in Ennui as if in a deep sleep, thus interrupting Ennui. Characters interrupted from Ennui at this level face a -2 penalty to all rolls for one week as they did not complete the full Ennui period. Boons such as alertness, lightsleep, etc. are negated during Ennui and during the week of recovery.
- Babblers are now also heard during idle moments, quiet reflection and while daydreaming.
- While at the 6th point of Fugue, if the character can voluntarily — not due to ennui rolls — enter and complete Ennui twice with no fugue

or ennui rolls in the interim, he can reduce his fugue rating back to a 5. If either Ennui period is interrupted, the character must start over with the first period again. Voluntarily entering Ennui while at a 5 only quiets babblers.

Fugue Rating 7 - 8

- Ennui lasts for nearly a decade whenever entered.
- Character can only be roused by the equivalent of light damage, thus interrupting Ennui. Characters interrupted from Ennui at this level face a -3 penalty to all rolls for one month as they did not complete the full Ennui period. Boons such as alertness, lightsleep, etc. are negated during Ennui and during the first week of recovery.
- Babblers are now also heard intermittently during waking thoughts, occasionally causing the immortal to “talk to himself” and misconstrue things said by others.
- While at the 8th point of Fugue, if the character can voluntarily — not due to ennui rolls — enter and complete Ennui twice with no fugue or ennui rolls in the interim, he can reduce his fugue rating back to a 7. If either Ennui period is interrupted, the character must start over with the first period again. Voluntarily entering Ennui while at a 7 only quiets babblers.

Fugue Rating 9

- Ennui lasts for roughly one century whenever entered.
- Character must roll for Ennui even if fugue rolls are successful.
- Character can only be roused by the



equivalent of serious damage, thus interrupting Ennui. Characters interrupted from Ennui at this level face a -4 penalty to all rolls for one year as they did not complete the full Ennui period. Boons such as alertness, lightsleep, etc. are negated during Ennui and during the first month of recovery.

- Babblers is now continuous during waking thoughts and difficult to distinguish from real voices (PER roll at -2 against target number of 9) whenever babblers become highly audible in the character's mind.
- Voluntarily entering Ennui while at a only quiets babblers, but is less effective each time, with the babblers coming on faster each time it is done.

If a character reaches a 10 fugue rating, he remains in Ennui for hundreds of years at a time, only awakening for a few days in between Ennui periods as the babblers makes it impossible to tell his normal thoughts from real voices within days of awakening. Even a successful fugue roll forces him into Ennui within minutes. The character is a living statue, completely unaware of anything done to him while in Ennui; he can easily have his vox ripped from his throat while in this state unless he is well protected as he will not awaken.

Note: The very first time an avatar rises in a character still emerging from lethe, he gains an automatic fugue point (no roll), but doesn't enter Ennui regardless of what fugue rating the new point brings him to.

FADES

These rules incorporate the rules on page 211 of the Player's Guide with new additions and slight modifications for fades (or "flashbacks", as immortals tend to call them once someone has finished emerging from lethe). Fades distort a character's perception of the real world based on which senses are currently experiencing the ancient memory. The stronger the fade, the longer it lasts and the more senses it distorts, making it seem more real to the character.

When you decide to place a character into a fade, he may attempt to resist by making an uncontested WIL roll against target of 4 plus the fade penalty (ex: a light fade would be a target number of 6). The fade penalty is against all actions the character takes when attempting to interact with the real world while caught in the fade.

When attempting to resist a fully immersive fade, the target number is 10. If the character falls into a fade lasting more than one turn, he receives one attempt to break free from it at the end of the first turn of the fade. He makes a second uncontested WIL roll against the original target number, but at an additional 2-point penalty.

Characters can attempt to self-induce a fade regarding any specific avatar he is already aware of. He makes an uncontested WIL roll against a target of twice his own SPT (no fade penalty since it is self induced). If he fails there is no fade, if he critically fails he falls into a fully immersive fade.



Penalty	Fade Strength and details
2 pts.	<p>Light Fade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 30 seconds (one turn) • Only one sense distorted (typically sight or sound) • Causes partial interference with perception of ongoing situation and events • Can be roused from fade with no penalty by someone simply getting his attention
4 pts.	<p>Moderate Fade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minute or so • Two to three senses distorted • Causes difficulty distinguishing between fade and current situation • Can be roused by light shaking, direct command of attention, etc. • If roused before fade ends normally, he takes a -2 penalty to all actions for one turn after
6 pts.	<p>Strong Fade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several minutes • All senses distorted, current situation feels like a fade and fade feels like real situation • Can be roused only by forceful shaking, damage and so forth • If roused before fade ends normally, he takes a -3 penalty to all actions for one turn after
n/a	<p>Full Immersion</p> <p>The equivalent of real damage is required for someone else to break the character free from this level of fade. The penalty is -4 for several turns, ending at your discretion.</p>

Characters cannot break free from a self-induced fade regardless of how long it is. Someone else must break them free.

If the fade concerns a particular avatar that has been roused recently or is currently roused, it can immediately assume the third level of control (see avatar rules), the character is unable to roll against this.

RISING AVATARS

Avatars awaken and “appear” in the back of a character’s mind at your discretion. This happens most often as a character successfully resists or first comes out of a fade; during fully immersive fades the avatar may simply emerge fully. This happens rarely during periods of Ennui, sleep or while otherwise unconscious; it cannot happen while characters are incapacitated and in the healing “coma” state prior to awakening or while actively dreaming.

By concentrating on a known avatar, a character can cause it to stir, but whether it appears in the back of the mind or ignores the “summons” and continues to slumber is up to you. Forcing an avatar to rouse and appear in the back of the mind requires a serenade, Mystech or boon.

Control Levels

Awakened avatars remain in the back of the mind for roughly a number of minutes equal to the character’s fugue rating. During this time the avatar can mentally “speak” with the character sees and hears. Occasionally they have been known to smell, touch or taste as well (this is at your discretion and usually the



result of a strong fade). Avatars can emerge further, gaining more control over the character's body if they desire. Characters can resist this initial attempt — in order to stop it from emerging further and/or push it back into slumber — by making an uncontested PRS roll against twice their fugue rating; appropriate penalties (fade, pain, etc.) apply. If the character fails the avatar reaches the first level of control; on a critical failure the avatar immediately assumes the third level.

First Level Control

The avatar now controls a specific area of the body: mouth, eyes, an arm and hand, one or both legs. This control continues for a number of minutes equal to twice the character's fugue rating, after which it slips back into slumber. During this time it can attempt to emerge further and gain more control. Characters can resist this initial attempt — to stop it from emerging further only — by making an uncontested PRS roll against twice their fugue rating; appropriate penalties (fade, pain, etc.) apply. If the character fails the avatar reaches the second level of control; on a critical failure the avatar immediately assumes the third level.

Second Level Control

The avatar now controls the entire physical body and the character is now trapped in the back of the physical mind in the “mental speaking” role. When the avatar reaches this level the first few times, he only has access to his skills and serenades; for everything else (human/himsati form, gifts, curses, natures, etc.) the avatar uses those of the main character. After successfully

reaching the second level of control a few times, he can access his own himsati form and natures, as well as his gifts and boons — and curses and appropriate banes as well. Though he still retains the character's human form, hints of the avatar's original form will peek through by slightly altering the eyes, hair, skin tone and voice.

The avatar remains at this level of control until he needs to rest (boons, serenades and other powers can assist him in remaining awake longer). If the avatar becomes distracted by constant penalties (such as pain for example), the character makes an uncontested PRS roll against three times his own fugue rating to push the avatar back to the first level, a critical failure causes the avatar to immediately assume the third level. If the avatar attempts to move to the third level of control, the same roll is made to stop him, but not to push him back to the first level — that can only be done if the avatar becomes distracted or with the help of outside assistance.

Third Level Control

At this level the character now slumbers as if he is the avatar. If the avatar has successfully reached the second level of control a few times, the human form now completely transforms to that of the avatar. The only thing that remains the same are the attributes; however the avatar adds up to half the character's fugue rating (round up) to his attributes — but not SPT — only to get them to look more like the ratio of his original attributes when he entered lethe. He may not increase an attribute higher than it was when he entered lethe.



Lethe and Death

An avatar cannot purposely enter lethe while in control of the body. If for any reason the vox forces the character into lethe, the main character momentarily returns to the forefront of the body at the moment he enters lethe. If the body is destroyed while the avatar is in control, the avatar immediately shuts down and the character re-emerges at the moment the auras spill and the spirit is shunted into the Blue Air.

HIMSATI RULES

There are a number of new rules and enhancements to the himsati rules.

Shapeshifting

The very act of shapeshifting has its own problems, especially when taking the surrounding environment or current circumstances into account. The character in the midst of a supernatural leap that shifts into an ant himsati most likely finds his trajectory severely altered by a strong wind. The character changing into a giraffe in a small phone booth not only breaks the phone booth, but takes some damage in the process (fortunately the Panacea heals most of it). Players should be reminded that activating natures and shapeshifting sometimes come with drawbacks.

Shifting only part of the body into full himsati is a boon discussed in Chapter 4; characters can purchase it during character creation or they can learn it from another immortal as the game progresses. Many members of the Osiri specialized in shifting only their heads into himsati form during their reign over ancient Egypt.

Clothing and Gear

Any basic clothing, jewelry and small gear worn by the character shapeshift with him. These items become inaccessible while shapeshifted — he must shapeshift back towards human enough for the item to naturally reappear in order to make use of it.

There are limits:

- A character cannot shapeshift more items than his own weight.
- An item does not shapeshift if the character cannot consider it to be truly his.
- By expending a single immaculum, semi-large items the character is wearing — like a small backpack — shapeshift; otherwise they fall to the ground with the straps torn, etc.
- If the character is wearing 5 layers of shirts or pants, only the first layer or so shapeshifts, unless immaculum is spent as per semi-large items.
- Large items do not shapeshift unless they are bonded through Mystech.
- Items that are carried and not being worn do not shapeshift. If the character's knife is holstered at his side it shapeshifts; if he has it in his hands it doesn't — unless he's bonded with it via Mystech.

Size and Health Boxes

Changes in size from shapeshifting or due to the Size nature do not change the number of health boxes a character has. Health boxes are based on attribute values, not on physical mass.

Versus Serenade Effects

A serenade completely loses effect if shapeshifting logically negates it. An iron grate stops a human, but not a snake



slipping through the bars; a small paper bag *might* trap an ant himsati, but won't when he returns to human form. Such is the price required from the Aria once a serenade has been played and left to be ravaged by the expectations of reality.

While Tainted

If a character carries more taint notes than half his PRS, he must make a PRS roll vs. twice the number of taint notes to shift back to human. Failure forces him to full himsati for a number of hours equal to his taint notes. Critical failures cause him to turn savage and bestial, losing his human intelligence (for the same number of hours). He'll only have vague memories of what he did during that time, maybe not even those depending on how bad it was. As always, appropriate penalties (such as pain for example) are applied against the roll. Appendix D has more information.

Human Tool Penalties

As a character shapeshifts to himsati, he has increasing difficulty in using various types of human tools. Penalties increase as he gets closer to full himsati. A character with a wolf himsati activates his Armor nature and nothing else; his somewhat brutish hairy hands will have some difficulty operating the television remote control or other tools requiring fine manipulation — a 1-point penalty to any rolls involving the use of such a tool. However, he could easily turn a doorknob, use a hammer, etc. The more natures he activates the worse the penalty gets until he simply cannot use the tool in his current state.

If the character's himsati has limbs that

are comparable to a human (such as a gorilla for example), the penalties won't start accruing until after several natures are activated. He can still use those tools in full himsati, but with a minor or moderate penalty as appropriate.

Atrana Cant

Atrana Cant uses the vox; immortals can speak and perceive it regardless of how far they have shapeshifted.

Natures

It takes one standard action to activate one or more natures. Four natures can all be activated simultaneously in one standard action; not one action per nature. If all natures are activated then you are considered to be in full himsati (and the special rules for full himsati — such as aura shifting — may now be used).

Activation Versus Use

In the Player's Guide, a nature marked by  means that activating it doesn't cause its effects to happen at that moment. For example, activating Beauty makes it ready to use; opponents do not roll their WIL until the character consciously uses a standard action to direct its power at a target. Another example would be the Charge nature; activating it doesn't automatically send someone hurtling towards a target. He consciously uses a standard action to move towards a target, making use of the nature's ability.

A nature marked by  also means that activating it doesn't cause its effects to happen at that moment. But it only requires a passive action — instead of a full standard action — to use the



nature's effects. An example of this would be the Cling nature. When activated characters don't automatically start sticking to everything they touch; they can stick to whatever they desire at the time of their choosing; but it does not require a standard action to stick to something, only a passive one.

Durations

The durations listed for various natures are approximate, if it makes sense to let one run longer allow it. However, leaving a nature's effects running far longer without good reason is not fair — especially when used against the players. As stated in the Player's Guide: a combat counts as one scene for the purpose of durations.

Full Himsati

A few special rules exist only while the immortal is in full himsati (i.e. every single one of his natures are activated).

Perceiving the Spirit World

When in full himsati, immortals see glimpses of the spirit world out of the corner of their eyes: gossamers, mortal spirits and other strange things resident in the Blue Air and shallows. By simply concentrating, he fully perceives the spirit world — a pale reflection of the corporeal one — populated by spirits and illusions. In this state, the himsati can affect gossamers and mortal spirits — and vice versa (see the new rules on Gossamers) — but nothing else in the Blue Air. Any attempts to interact with the corporeal world while fully perceiving the Blue Air are at a -4 penalty. It takes one normal action to change perceptions between the corporeal world and the Blue Air.

NEW MECHANIC —

Bower Nature

The Plant himsati appears as a small area of large perfect, exotic specimens of the type of plant she represents; she will blend in with existing plants if available. It covers a radius equal to her SPT (Size Growth doubles this for each level). In this form she gains half her SPT as armor against non-area affect attacks, excluding fire.

Tribes: Plant himsati only, not Terat

If a character in full himsati is perceiving the Blue Air (partially or fully) he sees an immortal's himsati features overlaying his human form. He only needs to be within a number of yards roughly equal to his PER attribute to see this.

Aura Shifting

When in full himsati, the character may reduce his spirit die by one level and add one point to any attribute. This can be done until the die value is reduced to d4 (he cannot go below d4). This does not reduce the SPT attribute, only the die; it does not affect calculated attributes. The character can add points (or rearrange existing ones) once every 30 seconds (1 combat turn). He can cancel the shifting at any time, his attributes and die level returning to normal at the beginning of the following round; but he must wait 30 seconds before adding points again.

TOXIN RULES

Toxins are rated using a die value of d4 through d12 that create a penalty and/or damage. Die values of d4 and d6 rarely threaten an adult mortal; d8 and d10 can seriously impair and often kill a mortal or hurt an immortal; a d12 almost always



seriously incapacitates or kills mortals and can even hurt moderately powerful immortals. The total rolled is considered the toxin's total "strength".

Durations are rated turn, scene, act or episode as appropriate — the duration is always extended. Short durations cause damage to build quickly and penalties to wear off quickly. Longer durations make damage and penalties long and drawn out affairs. With each pass the strength is reduced by one point for mortals, ½ point for immortals and any other shard-based entity. Penalties remain at their existing level until the strength equals the penalty; at that point the penalty drops one point each time the duration passes. Damage is recalculated each turn (round up for the half points), applying the reduced strength against appropriate defenses with each pass of the duration.

If a character is continuously exposed to a toxin, the strength does not drop until the exposure stops. Every time the duration passes, the die value goes up one level and is rolled again. If the new roll is higher it becomes the new strength. If it does not roll higher, then the existing strength is kept. Alternatively, toxins can be administered with the specific intent of simply keeping the strength from dropping and not increasing the die value; this is usually done via a precise medical venue (such as a form of chemical sedation).

Venoms / Drugs

An uncontested roll is made using the die value of the venom or drug, against a target of the BODY value of a supernatural being (for mortal beings the

target is their END). If the roll fails nothing happens; if it succeeds, a penalty is created equal to half the die's numerical value (a d4 creates a 2-point penalty, a d6 creates a 3-point penalty, etc.).

Bee stings, small spider venom, and most alcohol have starting die values of d4 and d6 respectively and a "200-proof" alcohol a d8. In general these toxins rarely go above d8 unless of a supernatural nature. Incapacitating venoms have a standard extended duration of turn, after each turn the penalty is reduced by one point. Drugs have a standard extended duration of scene, after each the penalty is reduced by one point. If there is significant time between scenes, you can decide it wore off between scenes. If a drug is consumed too quickly, the die value goes up before the duration passes allowing for another roll (often the case with alcohol and recreational drugs).

Lethal venoms, drug overdoses, alcohol poisoning, and venoms/drugs to which a character is allergic, should all be treated as poisons, with the die value increasing one level automatically. For a strong allergy the die value should increase two levels.

Medicinal Drugs

Drugs designed to aid in healing damage are covered in Chapter 3. In short, their value negates a penalty instead of creating one; but overdosing turns them into poisons.

Poisons

An uncontested roll is made using the die value of the poison against a target



of the END value of both immortals and mortals (other supernatural entities use BODY or END at your discretion). Every two points over the target number does one box of damage — END and armor do not defend against poison.

Fast acting poisons have a standard extended duration of one turn, slow acting of one scene. Poisons have higher die values than non-lethal drugs and venoms, usually starting at d6 with standard values around d8 and d10.

If the poison must be ingested, it does not take effect unless it gets into the bloodstream. If this type of poison is delivered via a weapon, the weapon must make contact and have at least a zero-level success (1 point over the appropriate defense to represent a cut or scratch) for the poison to be effective. Damage from such weapons is calculated separately from the poison's damage.

Once all the health boxes of an immortal character are marked off, he stops taking further damage from the poison. However, the poison's strength must be tracked until it drops completely to zero; until then no natural healing of any kind (including via natures) can take place. Even if it is not actively damaging the character, it is still in his system and inhibiting his healing.

Poison Nature

Immortals with this nature metabolize venoms/drugs and poisons at the normal rate of 1 point per pass of the duration instead of ½ point per pass. This nature has no beneficial effect on radiation.

Radiation

Radiation creates a penalty and does damage, following both the rules for venoms/drugs and poisons simultaneously (against END for both mortals and mortals). The die value is rolled twice, once for the penalty and once for the poison. Duration is completely at your discretion, easily leaving a penalty and doing damage for hundreds of years. No healing can take place until the strength of the radiation has reached zero: natures, boons, serenades, etc. cannot heal this, only Palladium can.

Mystical Poisons

When Semiramis of the Shadowen poisoned the Horned Lord of the Phoenix, it was with a mystically created poison. Such poisons are often treated using the radiation rules.

Palladium

One "charge" from a piece of soul-amber removes all penalty points from a single source of any toxin save radiation. For radiation, a single charge removes one penalty point. It will also heal any damage caused by any form of taint or toxin (one box per charge). A Palladium piece the size of an acorn has three to five of these "charges" available.

The One Flame

A Palladium chunk of tremendous size kept by Tribe Phoenix, it has unlimited healing powers; most believe it is somehow still tied to the Sunedrion, perhaps through the Horned Lord himself. All Phoenix able to, pay pilgrimage to the soul-amber once per year to be tested by its energies, showing that their souls are free from corruption.



APPENDIX C: EXPANDED MECHANICS FROM CHAPTER II

This section contains expanded mechanics from topics covered in Chapter 2, appearing in the same order.

MORPHEUM AND DREAMING RULES

Since it is a mental energy grid and not a physical place, walking a set distance along the strands does not equate to the same distance in the waking world; even in a cocoon, distance is based on the dreamer's interpretation. Distance in the Morpheum is subjective and as much a matter of perception as anything else.

Even though the Morpheum appears as a giant web mass full of strands, anchors, thick cables and cocoons, it is not possible to walk to its "edge". The various parts of the web turn back on the mass at some point; like the famous Escher "Relativity" painting the concepts of normal direction and gravity don't quite apply. What little can be seen beyond the web appears as a hazy, translucent blue-gray mist with something akin to stars floating in it. Even sound does not carry as expected, forcing people several yards away to yell at one another in order to be heard; everything has a "muffled" quality to it. The only thing that carries true and long through the Morpheum are the vibrations of those supernatural entities who "walk" the strands.

Time is also open to some interpretation;

though on the strands it corresponds closely with time in the waking world. Once in a dreamspace cocoon, time flows at an alarming rate as entire dreams occur in the blink of an eye. Dreams slow down and match the time of the waking world when an external force enters a cocoon or influences the dreamer (via serenades, Mystech or other powers). The time a character spends in the Morpheum is a scene; if an entire adventure takes place there it is an act, with each dream treated as a different scene.

Abilities

Many abilities work differently in the Morpheum; dependant on how the character is connecting to it and where he "is" at the time.

Physical Attributes

When interacting in the Morpheum, the physical attribute values of STR, AGL and END and BODY are ignored. They are substituted with their associated mental attribute values. This affects all associated skills, natures, target numbers, defenses, boons/banes, etc. Do not recalculate the secondary attributes for health, initiative and movement, they remain the same as normal.

- STR uses the PRS value
- AGL uses the PER value
- END uses the WIL value
- BODY uses the MIND value



Skills

Skills function normally in the Morpheum, on strands and in cocoons. Serenade use while in someone else's cocoon is limited however. A character cannot sing a serenade in another's cocoon unless the dreamer grants a similar power to the "dream-character" role he occupies. If the role does not have a power similar enough to the character's serenade, he must influence the dream so that his current role suddenly gains the ability, or "jump" to another role that already has it.

Natures

Natures function normally while the character is inhabiting his own cocoon. Outside on the strands, a character gains no benefit from his natures; though in the waking world his natures may activate when trying to use them. A character cannot use a nature in another's cocoon unless the dreamer grants a similar power to the "dream-character" role he occupies. If the role does not have a power similar enough to the character's nature, he must influence the dream so that his current role suddenly gains the ability, or "jump" to another role that already has it.

Boons and Banes

Boons and Banes work in the Morpheum where appropriate, as do Gifts and Curses — they are based on the subconscious power of humanity's faith. They may require slight adjustments in order to make sense in the dream or out on the strands. A super-strength boon, for example, uses the PRS value instead of the normal STR value, while a curse forcing an immortal to be invited before entering a domicile will still work the

same in his own dream or another's.

Immaculum

Immaculum adds "weight" to the character's cocoon and his footsteps on the strands. For each mote of Immaculum the character carries, add one to any rolls made by others for detection or pursuit of the character.

Entering a Dreamscape

The character must fall asleep and reach the stage of REM-sleep (Rapid Eye Movement) before connecting to the Morpheum. Without an external force or some form of training, it takes the same amount of time as it does for a normal human — which can be from one to several hours. Those trained in dreaming (via some knowledge skill or with the Incubus boon) can fall asleep and enter REM-sleep in one turn.

Once in REM-sleep, the character "awakens" in a dream occurring within his own cocoon, fully aware he is dreaming. Characters are confined to their own cocoon and dreams unless they have some way of leaving it (via serenade, Mystech, boon or assistance from another). If the character has a way to leave his own dreamspace cocoon and appear on the strands, his cocoon will partially wither but remain in place.

Navigating the Web

The character requires a physical link to a dreamer in order to find his specific cocoon. This is normally accomplished by attuning to an object of high personal value or attachment to the dreamer: a lock of his hair, his lucky rabbit's foot that he always carries, his favorite comb,



etc. If the dreamer is in the same locale (small region as defined in the AoE chart) the character makes an uncontested PER roll against a target number of 6. Each success level reduces the “distance” that must be covered along the strands until the character finds the dreamer’s cocoon. This distance is not necessarily a straight-line walk; and the less distance traveled, the less likely the character is to be noticed by droves or to have some form of random encounter with a dream denizen. Each success level after the first “halves” the distance traveled.

If the dreamer is beyond the local area, but still in the same large region as defined by the AoE chart, it is still possible to find the dreamer before they might wake up, but it will require the assistance of serenades or Mystech. Otherwise the target number is 12 and follows the same rules. Anything beyond the same large region cannot be accomplished without serenades or Mystech, and relies on the rules for that serenade or Mystech to locate the dreamer. Of course, if the character enters the Morpheum while in the physical presence of the target in the waking world, no link or searching is needed; the character’s cocoon appears in the Morpheum within visual distance of the dreamer’s cocoon.

A sect within the Terat know how to use Religarum wielders with telepathic abilities to transport them instantly around the Morpheum. Their enemies the Sandmen know the same techniques.

Entering a Cocoon

The character simply touches the desired

cocoon, making an opposed PRS roll with the dreamer. If successful he enters the cocoon; either way the dreamer is unaware of the attempt. If the character has some kind of boon, Mystech or serenade that injects his mind into the cocoon of his target, he can also make physical contact with the target and use of the power prior to going to sleep. Then he’ll “wake up” inside the target’s cocoon instead of his own.

Once inside the dreamer’s cocoon, the character is placed into the role of a “dream-character”, or a third-person point of view if none are available. Note that dream-characters can be anything the dreamer considers capable of interacting with, and can include people, animals, animated talking chairs, clouds with faces, moving pictures on posters, etc. Initial placement of the character is at your discretion as Narrator.

Daydreaming

A “daydreaming” mortal — not just distracted, but truly lost in the thoughts of a waking dream — makes a fragmented connection to the Morpheum. Immortals can enter these cocoons, but take a 2-point penalty to the opposed PRS roll. These cocoons are easily differentiated from those fully sleeping: they flutter about wildly as if about to wither, yet still struggling to maintain a presence in the Morpheum.

Other Powers

When using a serenade (such as Somnus) to control an individual’s dream, the character is not entering the dreamscape through the Morpheum; he is using a serenade to manipulate the dream in its entirety — including



characters and environment — he uses the rules of the serenade and the Influence chart instead of these rules.

Influencing the Dream

The character can switch to a different dream-character role at any time by making an uncontested PRS roll, adding any relevant psychological or dream-manipulation skill he has, against a target equal to the dreamer's PRS. If the character has no relevant skill, the unskilled penalty applies. If successful he transitions to the new dream-character and the former dream-character falls back under control of the dreamer's subconscious expectations. The character can also willingly transition to a 3rd-person point of view by making the same roll with a 2-point penalty. If the dreamer transitions to a new dream or scene that doesn't contain the character's current role, the character is forcibly switched to a new role; he takes a 2-point penalty for one turn to all actions as he adjusts to the unexpected change. If the character was in a 3rd-person point of view during the transition, he remains that way and does not take any penalty.

The currently occupied dream-character can be altered by the character. The character can only grant abilities that he already possesses (natures, serenades, boons, etc.) to the dream-character. He cannot grant abilities he doesn't have himself. A contested roll is made, pitting the character's PRS against the dreamer's WIL; the character may add any relevant psychological or dream manipulation skill to the roll (it is not considered unskilled if he does not have a relevant skill). Changes are all or

nothing, there are no success levels. Instead, the dreamer gains a bonus of 1 to 5 points to his roll if the change goes against the expectations and/or desires of his subconscious mind. If the change coincides with a strong expectation or desire by the dreamer — always wished the dream-character could fly and the character changes it so he can activate his flight nature — then no bonus is given to the dreamer's roll. Sleepers (those with the Incubus boon) do not roll to alter a dream-character, their changes are automatically successful.

Example ideas for point bonuses:

- 1: Trivial changes normally occurring in human dreams such as hair or eye color changing.
- 2: Minor changes normally occurring in human dreams such as making slight to moderate changes in clothing, weight, height, hair length
- 3: Moderate changes, such as providing minor abilities and powers, or skills not expected by the dreamer.
- 4: Major changes such as gender, powers and abilities well beyond those expected
- 5: Completely changing the dream-character into someone or something else.

The use of various serenades and natures manifest based on the dreamer's expectations, modified by how much change the character is making — not just on how they normally manifest and look in the waking world. It is easier to make the changes so they coincide more with the dreamer's expectations rather than attempt to duplicate the ability as it normally appears.



Waking up

Immortals are fully aware they are dreaming; while in their own cocoon they simply decide to wake up and immediately begin emerging from REM-sleep to wake up normally. If they are out on strands they simply “snap back” to their own cocoon (space is subjective after all) upon the decision to awaken and start leaving REM-sleep.

While inside another’s cocoon, characters must first transition to a 3rd-person point of view; then a simple act of will allows them to leave the cocoon and “snap back” to their own. Only characters with the Incubus boon or a dream manipulation skill are capable of simply leaving another’s cocoon in this way; without such a skill they must wait in the 3rd-person perspective until the dream transitions and leaves them behind, or simply remain in various dream-character roles until the dreamer awakens and they are “dumped out”.

Dumping Out

Characters are dumped out of a dreamer’s cocoon if the dreamer awakens or is otherwise interrupted from the dream. He takes a –3 penalty to his actions for one turn until he recuperates. He cannot snap back to his cocoon until the turn ends.

Forced Awakening

A character can be awakened via normal means if he is still in his own cocoon. Once outside of his own cocoon, he can no longer sense what is being done to his body. Any violent or intensely physical actions taken against him causes the character to sense that *something* is happening, but the character will not

know what. Once he reaches his own cocoon he awakens as normal, based on what is being done to him. If the character is in another’s cocoon, he has no idea what is happening to his body, no matter how violent the actions are against him. For this reason many immortals who traverse the Morpheum have various “alarm” serenades, alerting them to anyone approaching their body while they are in the Morpheum.

Escape

Whenever another force (another entity in the Morpheum, a dreamer whose cocoon the character is in, another’s serenade, Mystech, faith, tempest, etc.) interacts with or focuses on the character, he loses some abilities:

- He may not switch to another dream-character or to a 3rd-person point of view in another’s cocoon.
- He may not leave another’s cocoon.
- He may not snap back to his own cocoon while out on strands.
- He may not will himself to start waking up in his own cocoon — external forces may still awaken him or he may awaken normally.

In order to regain these abilities the character must remove himself from the interaction, evade pursuing entities, get the dreamer to focus on something other than the dream-character being inhabited at the time, or escape the confinement or restraint he finds himself in.

Morpheum Pursuit

The character uses whatever skills, powers and abilities are available — dependant upon whether he is on the strands, in his own cocoon or another’s — to evade the pursuing entity or force



(or to pursue another attempting to evade him). If successful, he regains the lost abilities; you may require several successful rolls for the character to fully evade and reach a point where he regains his lost abilities. When inside their own dream cocoon immortals make all pursuit and evasion rolls at +2, even if they are not aware they are dreaming.

Confinement

It is quite possible that an evading character is unsuccessful and is “caught” by the pursuer, or finds himself somehow confined or restrained. The form this confinement or restraint takes is based on the circumstances and/or abilities used on the character (serenade, faith, Mystech, etc.). He may be under the effects of an obstruction serenade out on the strands, or circumstances in a dreamscape’s current scene might place him in a jail, pinned under a log, chained to a boulder, etc.

In his own cocoon he just keeps dreaming until he wakes up by external force or due waking up normally; he just can’t “decide” to wake up and will himself to exit the REM sleep stage.

In another’s cocoon, the danger lies in the dreamer transitioning to another dream or scene. When this happens, the character is caught in a “mini-dream” that only exists in the new scene or dream as an item or feature of the scene that serves as a symbol of the character’s predicament. This at least gives potential rescuers a clue of where to find the connection between the minds of the dreamer and character, and hopefully free the character. Normal rules — including those for influencing the

dream — still apply, but all rolls use the character’s WIL attribute. If the dreamer awakens, the character is dumped out normally. Various powers can be used to keep the dreamer asleep, thus trapping the character inside the mini-dream indefinitely. Should the dreamer die, the dump-out penalty lasts for one day per point of the dreamer’s MIND attribute (and the character is likely to gain a curse from being directly in the mind of the dying dreamer).

Confinement or restraint out on the strands is the most dangerous. There is no dumping out to free the character and he cannot snap back to his own cocoon until he gets free... if he gets free.

Long-term confinement in another’s dreamscape or out on the strands causes problems for the character’s physical body: it begins to weaken over extended periods (lack of food, water, etc. as measured against the character’s normal physical attributes). Eventually the character’s body lapses into an actual coma and the vox attempts lethe, or if truly necessary allows the body to decay so that it can be freed — yanking the mind back to the body in time to spill the spirit to the Blue Air.

Anchors

Anchors appear as large masses or thick cables within the Morpheum. Cocoons in an anchor always cluster together and touch; any Believers dreaming in the anchor constantly influence the dreams of the others. Every anchor has at least one fully active, Religarum wielding Bright Blood tied to it. His subconscious mind directs the overall shared dreamspace at the heart of the



anchor, even while he is awake. Other members of the anchor whose cocoons appear within are people living in the same small region as the Bright Blood; they have regular contact with him and are heavily influenced by him. Not all Bright Bloods form anchors; when they do, it is from the numerous connections he makes with other mortals in his small region, who perceive him as a leader.

Any member of the anchor with a PRS equal or higher than the Bright Blood's does not form a cocoon. Instead, they inhabit the larger shared dream within the anchor; other members still form their own cocoons and dream in them. If the Bright Blood leaves the physical small region the anchor co-exists with, it slowly dwindles away until the various cocoons separate and drift away to other nearby strands.

Reaching an individual cocoon in an anchor requires the character to first enter the shared dreamspace (the cocoons reside inside the anchor). The character must sift through the symbolism present in the shared dreamspace in order to find the lesser powered members, asleep in their own cocoons.

Anchor Ratings

Anchors have a rating equal to the two highest PRS values among its Bright Bloods, added together. If only one Bright Blood is tied to the anchor (this is normally the case), the highest PRS from the other members is added to the Bright Blood's PRS.

Characters making uncontested rolls in the shared dreamspace roll against the

anchor's rating when influencing the shared dream, jumping dream-character roles, etc. In individual cocoons normal rules apply, don't use the anchor rating.

Characters making contested rolls always roll against the currently dreaming member with the highest PRS — regardless of what attributes are being used in the roll. The dreaming member receives a +1 to his roll for every Bright Blood currently dreaming within the anchor (if the member with the highest PRS is a Bright Blood, he counts himself towards the bonus).

Characters receive a +1 bonus to any rolls made while standing in/on the anchor if such actions defend or assist the anchor's members. They also receive an additional +1 to all rolls if at least one currently dreaming member in the shared dreamspace has some form of allegiance or loyalty to the character. These bonuses do not apply when in an individual's cocoon.

Tainted characters that come in contact with the anchor take a -4 penalty to all rolls, including attempts to enter it and for any rolls made in either the shared dreamspace or an individual cocoon.

Damage

Physical damage in the Morpheum is only temporary, not real damage; characters "killed" in the Morpheum enter a comatose state. Subtract the character's WIL from 10 and compare the result to the Duration chart to see how long it takes for their mind to recover and wake up. Any health boxes marked off are restored by the time the character wakes.



Damage done to the mind (such as serenades specifically targeting the MIND attribute) is real damage and fills in health boxes normally: it must be healed normally. The effects of the damage may not be apparent on the physical body — i.e. using a serenade to engulf someone in flames does not cause their physical body to erupt into flames, but likely causes severe hemorrhaging from the nose, ears, etc. For this reason many who specialize in traversing the Morpheum have serenades that target the MIND, but have physical-looking effects. Additionally, there are a few beings able to cause physical damage that translates into the waking world...

Sleepers

When using the Incubus Boon, the character gains a number of benefits. Any time these benefits conflict with the Morpheum rules, those standard rules are overridden:

- Sleepers wake up and go to sleep within one round instead of one turn.
- Sleepers may appear within their cocoon or directly on the strands.
- Sleepers choose none, any or all of their physical attributes to remain at their normal waking value.
- Sleepers have full access to all skills, serenades and natures whether they are on the strands, in their own cocoon, or in another's.
- Sleepers do not roll to influence the dream of a mortal human, but must roll for any other creatures/entities.
- Sleepers gain a bonus equal to one half their PER when searching for the specific dream of someone they met in the waking world that is physically located in the same small region as the Sleeper.

- Dreamers are incapable of waking up without a strong external influence (violent shaking, shock, etc.) while a Sleeper is in their cocoon.
- Sleepers choose each time they cause physical damage, whether it is temporary or real.

GOSSAMER AND SPIRIT RULES

When the gossamer first re-enters the physical world, it has no physical or mental attributes, only a SPT attribute. While in this form it cannot be affected by serenades unless those serenades specifically target SPT. Weapons must have a SPT rating or be invested with immaculum to affect it; the base damage when being used against a gossamer is equal to the weapon's SPT or ½ the number of immaculum invested in it (if it doesn't have a SPT rating). Other spiritual entities affect gossamers normally. Gossamers cannot "shapeshift" and remain in a small spiritual version of their full himsati.

Manifesting

Gossamers use a spiritual form of aura shifting that replaces the normal aura shifting rules. Instead of reducing the SPT die, the gossamer has a pool of points equal to its SPT. The points are used to create temporary physical and mental attributes, allowing the gossamer to perceive, interact with — and be perceived by — the physical world.

One point from the pool "manifests" one point of STR, AGL, PER, WIL and/or PRE. The gossamer can use this ability once per day and the effect lasts for one scene. By investing multiple points into



one attribute the gossamer can interact with the physical world very strongly through one aspect. By investing only one or two points into multiple attributes the gossamer can perform weaker but more dynamic interactions with the physical world. The attributes created cannot be higher than they were prior to the destruction of the gossamer's corporeal form. When living beings pass through a space currently occupied by a gossamer manifesting STR, AGL or PER, they can "feel" something strange, but they still cannot grasp or touch the gossamer directly. The following abilities are gained depending on which attribute(s) are manifested:

STR

Creates brute force: the gossamer can knock books off tables, punch walls, kick doors, etc. There is no fine manipulation of small items nor the ability to pick up and hold items: books can be knocked off a table, but cannot be picked up and carried.

AGL

Creates fine manipulation: pick up books, flip light switches, turn pages in a book, turn a dial, push radio buttons, etc. Fine manipulation requires at least one point in STR first.

END

Gossamers cannot manifest END, they have no physical resistances.

PER

Creates physical sensory input: the gossamer can see/hear/smell/taste and feel the physical world.

WIL

Creates the ability to possess normal mundane creatures and soulless humans: The gossamer makes a contested WIL roll with the target. If the gossamer wins, the difference between the two rolls is compared to the duration chart. At least a full day must pass before the gossamer can attempt another possession. The gossamer uses its own SPT and manifested WIL during possession; for all other attributes (including secondary ones) it uses the target's — any other manifested attributes are ignored.

PRS

Creates a visible presence, allowing the gossamer to be seen, heard, smelled and to some extent felt, but the gossamer remains intangible. Anyone attempting to touch the gossamer or pass through the space it occupies feels as if they are passing through an exceptionally thick fog, light spider webs, etc.

PRS	Size Category
1 - 2	Size Category -2
3 - 4	Size Category -1
5 - 6	Size Category 0
7 - 8	Size Category +1
9	Size Category +2

When PRS is manifested the gossamer appears in its himsati form; any attempts at human speech are difficult for others to understand. The gossamer's "size" is based on the PRS rating manifested (see table)

and cannot be larger than his normal full himsati size (including size nature).

Full Manifestations

Manifesting STR, AGL and PRS causes the gossamer to actually become corporeal and it loses its "ghostly" look. The gossamer is now in phase with physical reality, but retains its



immunities to weapons with no SPT or immaculum and to serenades that target BODY/MIND. Even though fully manifested, the gossamer is still a spirit, so it doesn't need to breathe, eat, etc.

Health

The number of health boxes is equal to twice the gossamer's SPT. If all its health boxes are marked off, it is thrust back into the Blue Air far away from where it was on Earth. It starts again, the arduous journey to find a shallows to get back to Earth.

Other Attributes

If needed, use the SPT attribute in place of both BODY and MIND. Initiative is equal to twice the gossamer's SPT and actions are still equal to SPT/2.

Movement

All gossamers "glide" along the ethereal currents of energy from the Blue Air that permeate the physical world. They can gain and lose a small amount of altitude, but cannot go any higher than three or four yards above the ground/floor. Physical barriers not warded by Mystech or a serenade are passed through as if not there. The base combat move of a gossamer is equal to its SPT and base running speed is twice that.

The gossamer hasn't gained flight, disincorporate or phasing natures; it is just not fully in sync with the physical world, so the normal laws of physics ignore it. If the gossamer manifests enough to become corporeal it becomes bound to the standard laws of physics and matter.

Natures

Gossamers can use any nature they have,

but must manifest any attributes the nature uses (ex: 360° Vision doesn't work without PER manifested); otherwise they only give the appearance of the nature but have no actual effect (they can never use natures requiring END; Aquatic never works, but then again isn't needed by the gossamer anyway).

Possessed creatures gain a bonus "level" to any level-based natures they have, if the gossamer has the same nature. The gossamer cannot cause possessed creatures to exhibit natures they don't have; the gossamer cannot manifest its own natures unless the creature has the nature. Most animals have one level in appropriate natures.

Mystech

Gossamers still have their existing attunements to people, places, and objects (arks, sanctuaries, talismans, etc.). They are only able to use attunement with the help of a Religarum wielder (the "master" they bond to), and cannot use any other forms of Mystech. Gossamers can still sin and lullaby however if they become corporeal.

Serenades

No vox, no serenades. However, if the gossamer occupies the same physical space as a vox — not a shard — that is not currently in use (i.e. in the throat of another immortal, part of a Mystech item, etc.), the gossamer can use it to sing serenades (but at a -2 penalty). The gossamer uses his SPT instead of his PER even if he has manifested a PER attribute in order to perceive his target. The gossamer cannot play serenades while using its possession ability.



This also means that while they can understand Atrana Cant, gossamers cannot speak it unless occupying the same physical space as a vox.

Reconstitution

The gossamer needs an ark and a vox; the vox doesn't need to be the gossamer's original one. Using a different vox means gaining different avatars from the ones the gossamer had before. The ark must have enough attribute points to reconstitute the body at the point of physical destruction.

The gossamer also requires a Religarum wielder that it can form a bond with. This normally requires manifesting itself to the mortal and creating a level of trust. Once established, the gossamer instinctively bonds his spirit to this new "master" so long as the mortal accepts the bonding. The only way to break the bond is to harm the master, return to the Blue Air or finish reconstituting a new body. Historically, gossamers in these relationships are referred to as "familiars". The familiar and master share a telepathic connection whenever they are near one another (based on the gossamer's SPT at Level 3 AoE). A gossamer can bond with a number of Religarum wielders equal to its SPT.

Gaining Attribute Points

By harnessing the master's Religarum through their bond, the gossamer is able to use the Mystech rules to create an ark and/or talismans as needed. Talismans made using a master transmit attribute points directly to the gossamer's ark without having to travel to it, but can only hold one point at a time. It takes one week for a talisman to align the

point to transmit directly and be ready for another point. Each master can have their own talisman, working only for the master that helped create it. The gossamer can still use any of its own talismans that were created prior to the destruction of its physical body. If the ark is present, the master can tithe directly to the ark.

Alternatively, the gossamer can take attribute points from the master, directly into its own auras. As with a talisman, it takes a week before the point can be transferred to the ark — or it can then be used by the gossamer as a "permanent" attribute point of its own. The gossamer chooses which attribute (STR, AGL, END PER, WIL or PRS) to place the point into. This means the gossamer can hold 6 points maximum at any given time. Most gossamers with a high SPT rely on talismans and do not take more than a point or two into their own spirit. There are specific rules for using the attributes in place of SPT pool points:

- Only one point can be placed into a particular attribute, it can be removed later and immediately placed into the ark or pre-existing talisman by making physical contact with them. If the point is still resident in the gossamer's auras during reconstitution, it is lost. Any attribute given one of these points cannot make use of the pool of points generated by the gossamer's SPT, but other attributes can continue to manifest using the pool.
- This is the only way a gossamer can have END and use END-based natures.
- Any visible or physical



manifestation is limited to size category -2 (the size nature can still alter this when activated).

- If the gossamer places attribute points into three or more attributes it automatically takes on a 2 MIND, 2 BODY, 3 Base Initiative, 3 Health Boxes (no penalties are assessed until the first health box is marked off), a Combat Move of 1 and a Running Move of 2. The gossamer's new form is frail and weak, if destroyed the gossamer is thrust into the Blue Air.

Regardless of the method used, the moment the gossamer has fulfilled both requirements — in contact with a vox and enough points in his ark — he is immediately transported to it and reconstituted.

Spiritual Combat

Unless they manifest appropriate attributes, gossamers cannot affect the physical world. While in the Blue Air or against other spirits, the gossamer uses its SPT. If it manifests appropriate attributes it can use them for physical combat (adjusted for the rules in the preceding sections). The only way to destroy a spirit is to destroy it while it is resident in the Blue Air. A few immortals remain as gossamers, using Mystech or serenades, tethering them to a shallows, so they can enter the Blue Air to hunt down dark spirits.

In the Blue Air, serenades and natures all work even though the gossamer has no vox. Serenades, however, only work using their specific focus and automatically target the SPT — with no penalty — regardless of what they target

in the physical world. A gossamer with the Endue serenade from the Player's Guide can fashion a blade from its own spirit, but can not go outside that weapon focus to make a tool of some kind. Other skills are used normally, but all use the SPT attribute; some skills are not usable in the Blue Air (for example, blade combat is useless without a serenade like Endue).

While in the Blue Air the gossamer's number of health boxes are equal to twice its SPT. Should all the health boxes be marked off while the gossamer is in the Blue Air, it is destroyed. Other calculated attributes remain the same, but it doubles its initiative and gains one extra action per round.

Full Himsati

The perceptions of an immortal in full himsati focus primarily on the Blue Air and not the physical world. Immortals can see other spirits within a few dozen yards — near shallows this distance increases at your discretion. Spirits in the Blue Air can see immortals in full himsati very clearly and from much further away.

In full himsati, the physical body of an immortal is capable of affecting spirits, the immortal uses his normal attributes, skills and natures. If he has any serenades that target SPT they are also usable. Spirits treat the immortal as any other spiritual entity, automatically targeting his SPT with their various attacks.

Ghosts

Mortal spirits use the same rules as gossamers in the Blue Air; and the same



rules in the physical world (with a few modifications):

- Ghosts are unable to leave the immediate area of the shallows that spawned them, if trapped in a container of some kind and then released beyond it, they are pulled back to the Blue Air and — if they have their own shallows that spawned them — emerge there again sometime later (at your discretion).
- Ghosts receive half their SPT for the pool of points
- Ghosts may not manifest END or WIL and may only manifest 1 point of PRS at most.
- Ghosts appear in a form best suited to how they died or their unresolved issue (this can change each time they manifest).
- Ghosts only have their SPT in health boxes, have no natures, cannot use Mystech or serenades, and cannot reconstitute.

Shallows Size

The size of a shallows is based on the SPT of the mortal that created it. Consult the Area of Effect chart using the mortal's SPT at the moment he died to determine the approximate size.

Ghosts and Religarum

Religarum wielders have access to their abilities when they become ghosts, though you may have to adjust those powers based on their new spiritual status and form. They also gain the benefits of any faith resident in their shallows. Bright Blooded ghosts differ even further from other ghosts as they:

- May leave their shallows for a number of days equal to their SPT

and are then pulled back to the shallows instead of the Blue Air.

- Receive their full SPT for their pool.
- May manifest WIL and END, but only if needed for a particular Religarum power or ability.
- Receive twice their SPT in health boxes.

MAKER AND MANTLE RULES

Trysts

Trysts have the longer lifespan of a Bright Blood, but no access to their Religarum without a shard. There is no special ritual to prepare a tryst to become a maker, and there are no guarantees.

One parent must be a mortal human Bright Blood, the other can be either an immortal or a maker. If the male parent is an immortal or maker, he gives up one point of SPT during the conception attempt. Makers heal this back over several months, immortals must sin or lullaby to regain the point. If the female is immortal she does not give up any SPT. During the first week of the seventh month of gestation, she must make an END roll to activate natures and can only activate one at a time. The base target number is 7 for the first nature, it goes up by one for each nature already active. The base target number goes up to 8 on the first week of the eighth month and up to 9 on the first week of the ninth month. So in the ninth month, trying to activate a nature when two are already active creates a target number of $9 + 1 + 1 = 11$.



Trysts have normal human attributes, though their SPT is usually in the range of 4 to 6. Trysts with a SPT higher than 6 are very rare, highly coveted, and sometimes fought over. A Tryst with a SPT of 7 and above is extremely dangerous and nearly unstoppable within their own mantle — even against powerful immortals.

Makers

A tryst must have a SPT of 3 or greater to successfully bond with a shard. The shard must come in direct contact with the tryst's forehead; the process is quick, taking a few minutes. During this the maker goes into a near catatonic state and remains this way until the bonding is complete, even if he is attacked and hurt. When finished the maker immediately contributes to the mantle's creation or maintenance as appropriate. The Maker still is not fully aware of what he is unless he is provided direct knowledge or a clue to his origins and powers.

Creating New Mantles

The reality bubble immediately envelops the new maker and he vanishes from the physical world. Nothing gains entry into a new mantle until it has finished the initial setup and the interior dimensions are set. The length of this process — and the final size and contents — is based on the maker's SPT and uses the Mantle Statistics table. If the mantle is smaller than the maker is capable of making, shift down on the chart for creation time and contents (as if the maker had a larger SPT).

Contents

Contents are limited by the maker's SPT. The table provides guidelines for

contents along with size. Small adjustments can be made — a SPT 4 made mantle could have one or two intelligent beings, but not an entire town's worth. Similarly a SPT 3 made mantle might be just a large shrine and have a few avian creatures flitting about.

Physics

If the mantle's physics and laws of reality deviate from Earth's, the size must be reduced to compensate. Allowing fish to swim in the sky, gravity going sideways, or giving humans extra arms or wings, all require a reduction. Making the intelligent beings elves that can see in the dark or making the sky green and the grass purple would not.

Merging Mantles

There are no hard and fast rules for two makers merging together their mantles. It is a mere act of will by the two to force the merger. They now have one larger mantle with a combined size equal to the larger SPT plus 1. If one maker goes away and is not replaced, the mantle slowly shrinks back to match the remaining maker's SPT (use the disintegration column in the table). In order for mantles to purposefully merge, both makers must have some realization of what they are. Control of the mantle is initially divided up based on their respective SPT values, with each equaling a percentage of the total mantle.

Maker Conflict

Maker conflict is a contested SPT roll between the makers. Success grants the winner more of the loser's "territory". Each must wait for a time based on their SPT (use the equivalent creation time)



MANTLE STATISTICS

SPT	Creation Time	Maximum Size and Contents	Disintegration
0 - 2	n/a	n/a	n/a
3	1 month	A large mansion with vegetation and basic weather.	Takes one day to begin, one day to finish
4	3 weeks	A huge multi-structure estate with moderate vegetation and small fauna.	Takes a few days to begin, one week to finish
5	2 weeks	A small town-size region with flora, fauna and spare population.	Takes one week to start, two weeks to finish
6	1 week	A small city-size region, fully populated, with complex weather and simple terrain.	Takes two weeks to start, one month to finish
7	5 days	A territory with multiple cities, multiple weather patterns and complex terrain.	Takes one month to start, several months to finish
8	3 days	A continent with complete weather, terrain features, population, etc.	Takes a few months to start, a year to finish
9+	1 day	An entire, fully populated, small planet	Takes a year to start, a decade to finish.

before forcing another roll. If one maker manages to claim the entire mantle, the overall mantle alters to suit the winning maker. The losing maker can be shut out or left with just a small piece of “land” to work with. At this point any attempts by the losing maker to reclaim territory face a -3 penalty.

Conflict with Immortals

Anything an immortal attempts to do against the maker’s subconscious belief system (for example sing a serenade that would alter a feature of the mantle), faces a minimum target number of twice the maker’s SPT — if the maker is aware of the action as it happens. If the maker is not present, he is immediately alerted to any significant change in the environment, death of a significant

mantle-person, etc. Makers of very large mantles tend to ignore a lot of changes due to the inability to concentrate their focus on every aspect of such a huge mantle at once. The death of a single person in a planet-sized mantle is not an urgent issue to the maker. The death of a loved one, or an earthquake that damages a major city or population center is another story.

The maker cannot simply will things back to the way they were immediately. He makes a roll based on twice his SPT against the serenade strength. If he succeeds, he turns it back immediately. If he fails, the serenade strength and any ongoing effect are reduced by his roll. From that point things will eventually return to normal. Most makers do not



interfere with what an immortal does because they simply don't realize they are that powerful in comparison.

The sheer rending of the metaphysical exterior boundary of a mantle has only ever been accomplished by the dark Zuzog trees of Sheol. No other immortal-borne force is capable of tearing apart the boundaries of a mantle.

Dissipation of Mantles

Should a mantle find itself with no maker, it eventually breaks down. How long until disintegration begins and how quickly until it finishes are both based on the SPT of the maker (see the Mantle Statistics table) that last controlled the mantle. If a new maker takes control before the mantle finishes disintegrating it stops, and immediately begins expanding based on the new maker's SPT. How much it resembles the old mantle is dependent on the new maker and how much of the old mantle remained.

The presence of mortals with true faith slows the disintegration of a mantle; take the highest faith rating and add it to the departed maker's SPT to determine when disintegration begins and how long until it finishes. If there are multiple mortals with true faith, add another point; if Bright Bloods are present, add one point per Bright Blood. Immaculum hoards also delay the initial disintegration at your discretion, but do not slow it after it starts.

As the mantle shrinks, everything adjusts accordingly. People with long distance relatives seemingly forget about them and don't bother to contact them

any longer, when that part of the mantle vanishes. The mantle just gets smaller, moving its way back up the chart as time passes. A planet-size mantle will be the size of a continent when a year is left to go, it will be the size of a territory when only several months are left, etc.



APPENDIX D: EXPANDED MECHANICS FROM CHAPTER IV

This section contains expanded mechanics from topics covered in Chapter 4, appearing in the same order.

GIFTS

Gifts come in many varieties and there are few set rules on how gifts work. Most are self-explanatory. When coming up with a concept for a gift, you'll find that most manifest in one of three ways:

- **Personal** — the character consciously activates the gift by expending a mote of immaculum. Gifts that provide a bonus to a die roll are one example of those that fall into this category. These kind of gifts, once activated, continue to function for the duration of the scene.
- **Situational** — the gift activates without conscious control by the character and lasts for as long as it is needed. Such gifts are often defensive in nature and serve to protect the character physically, mentally, spiritually, socially or some combination thereof. The duration of such gifts can be highly variable, but average one scene.
- **Split** — these gifts activate on their own — usually some form of defensive measure — like a situational gift. However, the character can then expend an immaculum mote to activate a latent part of the gift, increase its

capability, or maybe turn the gift from defensive to offensive. Durations for these are highly variable and there is no typical duration.

Using the above concepts you can quickly create concepts for gifts based on how the immortal is gaining it.

Learning Gifts

As noted in Chapter 4, those sample gifts marked with a “-L” are learnable. Members of the Mentor and Merchant callings actually have gifts that enable them to teach gifts to others or transfer them between individuals.

Huckster and Pedagogue

With your permission, a player can take Huckster instead of Soul-price when he creates a Merchant character; the same goes for Mentor characters receiving Pedagogue instead of Lore. If the character wishes Soul-price or Lore later, he has to find someone that can pass it to him and properly connect him to the calling. Character's that start off with Huckster or Pedagogue instead of the normal Soul-price or Lore are looked upon as oddities by other members of their calling and sometimes kept from achieving any form of political or social power within it.

Gifts And Other Powers

Gifts (and when appropriate mundane boons) can “stack” with other powers



when they make sense. For example, if a gift and a serenade both provide the same benefit, but in a way that doesn't force one to override the other, then the benefits of the two can add together. The same goes for mixing gifts and mundane boons with Mystech, natures and any other power or ability you bring into the game.

Gifts and other powers cannot stack if both require a roll to create their effect and provide the same basic effect in terms of system mechanics. However, any side bonuses from the gift or ability may still be used with the other. Often it is best to roll both and — if both are successful — apply whichever provides the best overall benefit as the overriding effect.

SINNING

These rules replace the sinning rules found on page 213 of the Player's Guide.

Basic Mechanics

The character makes an uncontested WILL roll, with a target number equal to the mortal's MIND or BODY (whichever is higher). If the mortal has a Faith rating that is added to the target number. Each full success level rips one attribute point from the target, though the character can choose to rip away less than the roll indicates. The character does not choose which attribute to pull the points from, it is at your discretion.

A point can be used as follows:

- Replenish one missing point of the character's attributes
- Convert into one free immaculum

mote

- Cleanse two motes of taint (taint must always be cleansed first, before the other two can be done).

If the character fails he gains a number of taint motes equal to the number of points he failed by, divided by two (round up). If the target is a Believer the character automatically gains a curse. If the target is a Religarum wielder, the curse is increased by one rank.

A critical failure against a mundane human causes the character to gain the taint motes plus a curse with a rank equal to the motes of taint gained. Against a Believer or Religarum wielder he gains a second curse, one rank lower than the first one.

Cleansing Taint and Mortals

If a mortal's attribute is taken to cleanse taint, the taint moves into the mortal to occupy the vacated space; it does not diffuse back into the Aria. The mortal cannot heal back the attribute, nor can normal serenades heal the damage. The taint must first be removed via Mystech or Palladium.

Immaculum in Mortals

If a mortal carries immaculum in his auras, it must be taken prior to taking any attributes. A failure while sinning for immaculum still causes the character to gain taint, but no curses.

CURSES

These rules replace those found on pages 214 and 215 of the Player's Guide for curses. The creation of a curse is done in steps: first deciding on the type of curse, then determining its rank and then



finally any details about how it manifests, based on how the character gained it and who he gained it from.

Types

First decide on the type of curse that is being inflicted on the character:

Restriction

Stops the immortal from doing what is considered a normal activity by most mortals. May have a built-in way for the immortal to still perform the activity.

Example: The character cannot enter a dwelling without being invited in.

Consequences

The immortal's presence or actions cause things to happen that are not normal or possible by mortal standards. The incidents do not necessarily directly reveal the immortal as their source.

Example: Animals act strange or aggressive whenever the immortal is near.

Weakness

The immortal develops a vulnerability, compulsion or addiction. This is typically in relation to something a normal mortal would not have a problem with, or it can be an exaggerated version of a normal mortal problem.

Example: The character's skin literally burns in sunlight; he takes damage from silver or holy objects.

Alteration

The immortal is physiologically changed in some way and needs to hide or cover up this change from mortal eyes.

Example: Cries tears of blood, sheds skin like a snake, feet always remain in himsati (cloven hooves).

Ranking

A curse's rank is equal to the higher of the faith rating of the mortal(s) imparting the curse, or the motes of taint gained (failed sinning, misplayed serenade, etc.); the maximum rank for a curse is 5. If the curse is imparted by a mundane mortal, it is equal to the mortal's SPT minus one.

Three factors determine if a curse is of the correct power level to match its assigned rank: exposure, hindrance and frequency. An easy way to gauge if the curse is too powerful, or not powerful enough, is to assign a scale of one to five for each factor and then average the three together. The average should be equal to the assigned rank or one point below it at most.

Exposure

Human minds quickly attempt to explain away the effects of curses, just as they do serenades. A curse is generated by human faith — perhaps a subconscious cry for humanity to realize the truth of “what is out there”. This means that curses create a greater risk of exposure and require additional effort by Jugglers to cover them up. A one in this factor creates no risk at all, even after repeated manifestations. A five indicates immediate exposure of the immortal's supernatural heritage and great difficulty in covering up.

Hindrance

How much will the manifestation of the curse get in the immortal's way or possibly harm him — or others around him? A one is just an annoyance with no adverse affects, while a five in this factor indicates severe harm or



destruction with long-lasting consequences.

Frequency

During game sessions, how often will the curse attempt to manifest? A one in this factor only occurs a few times over the many stories you tell. A five creates a problem in every waking moment — and maybe even every sleeping moment — of the character's existence.

Manifestations

The effects of a curse manifest whenever it makes sense, there is no die roll. If a die roll is needed to create an effect, overcome resistance, etc., use the curse's rank to determine the die to roll (1 = d4, 2 = d6, 3 = d8, 4 = d10, 5 = d12). Roll the die and add the curse's rank to the roll to determine the strength of the manifestation.

Countering the Manifestation

Characters can try to keep the curse from manifesting by making a contested PRS roll against the curse (the curse makes a roll as above). If the character rolls higher the curse doesn't manifest. However, every time a curse is countered it gains a cumulative 2-point bonus to its strength for the next manifestation. Eventually the character will be unable to counter it and the effects will be much stronger. Once the curse has successfully manifested it loses the bonus for future manifestations.

Duration

Most curses have a self-explanatory duration based on the description of the effects. Otherwise, assume the effects last for the remainder of the scene when

appropriate. Do not confuse duration with frequency, how often the curse manifests has nothing to do with how long it stays for, except in rare cases.

Boons vs. Curses

Gifts and curses do not cancel each other out. Both take effect, with curses taking effect first and then boons and gifts making appropriate alterations. Characters cannot take a boon that increases the PRS-based countering roll.

Curses and Taint

Taint generates its own effects — rules appear later in this appendix — but also empowers and evolves curses. Whenever a character carries motes of taint, the number of motes adds to the strength of a curse when it manifests. In addition, the taint consumes one mote of immaculum if the character is carrying any on his person (but not from an external container such as a Mystech device).

Countering Curses when Tainted

If a curse is countered while the character is tainted, the curse becomes more aggressive. In addition to the cumulative 2-point bonus to the strength, less and less time occurs between attempted manifestations. The taint will also cause the conditions under which the curse manifests to broaden slightly to increase the potential frequency. Once the curse has successfully manifested these bonuses and increases in frequency cease.

Example: A character with taint has countered his curse requiring him to be invited into a dwelling twice in a row; the next time he approaches a dwelling



he finds himself struggling to cross the property line into the yard; the curse now is attempting to manifest and require him to be invited onto the property. Since this is the third time he is trying to counter it, the curse strength has increased by 6 points; it is doubtful he'll counter it now.

Palladium and Curses

Palladium negates any active curses when held by the curse bearer. It uses up one of its charges to negate all active curses for the remainder of the act. If the character is tainted, the taint must be cleansed before the Palladium can negate the curse.

TAINT

These rules replace those for taint, starting on page 214 of the Player's Guide.

Gaining Taint

Aside from sinning as mentioned above, taint can be gained from a variety of other sources.

Via Serenade

When a character misplays (critically fails) a serenade, he gains one mote of taint. If critical failure rules are not in use, he gains a mote of taint if he fails the roll by more than 5 points. If the character misplays another serenade in the same scene, he gains two motes of taint from that misplayed serenade (for a total of 3 gained); if he misplays a third serenade during the same scene, he gains three motes (bringing his total to 6), and so on.

Via Barb (taint-based serenade)

If a character is the direct target of a

successful barb, and the success level of the barb is equal or higher than the character's SPT attribute value, the character gains a mote of taint. For Area of Effect barbs, a number of motes are created equal to the AoE level (see Area of Effect chart). Anyone affected by the serenade is a potential target; motes first infect the individual with the highest total attribute points (add all attribute values together), with SPT breaking ties. Once that character is infected with a mote, the next highest is infected with a mote, until everyone is infected or there is no taint left. Mortals with a Faith rating and members of the Slayer Calling are immune to receiving taint from barbs.

Other Sources

Strange phenomena in distant Dominions, once powerful and but now broken Mystech devices, strange relics from the Shouting War, trapped artifacts from the time of the Abzulim, or even a radioactive shard (along with its other obvious toxic effects) can all make excellent sources of taint. Let your imagination run free.

Taint Effects

Side effects of taint are gauged by subtracting the character's lowest attribute from the total taint he carries (anything less than zero is considered a zero). This is compared to whatever chart is appropriate at the time (transformation, influence and illusion are the most common). Negligible changes are not permanent, and it is rare to carry enough taint to make truly devastating changes.

Curses are driven by taint, but taint has



other more subtle ways that it affects the world around it. Taint in and of itself manifests as its own curse, along with fueling other curses the character has (such as his tribal curse). Most often taint tends to aesthetically “stain” anything it comes in contact with like an entropic force, allowing what could naturally go wrong to do so. The more taint the character carries, the longer the taint’s manifestation lasts and the more noticeable its effects. The tables on pages 214 and 215 of the Player’s Guide are still used for die values and durations. Die values are only used if the taint must overcome some form of resistance (like a ward or serenade for example) or if the character attempts to suppress the taint. Taint manifests randomly at your discretion, like small, slithering, vile vermin looking for opportunities to steal a tiny bit of brightness from life in general.

Some Examples:

- Sharply defined edges dull, square corners look and feel rounded as if dulled with age.
- Makeup smudges, clothes wrinkle, brightly colored fabrics darken, glossy coatings wear a thin.
- A pleasant scene begins to feel uncomfortable, as an overall “bad vibe” creeps into the moods of those around the character.

Remember that taint is unpleasant, uncomfortable, and irritating to all but those Progeny, thrall and drowelings that know how to use it.

Suppressing Taint Effects

The character can attempt to keep the taint from manifesting and bypass its

effects by making a contested PRS roll against the taint’s die value (per page 214 of the Player’s Guide). If the character rolls higher the taint is suppressed, for now. Suppressing taint requires a standard action, during which the character can feel the taint; a bitter distaste in his mouth, a light puff of acrid smell in his nostrils, and a gritty haze in his eyes.

Taint and Himsati

Taint has very specific effects on characters in himsati (see Appendix B) if the number of motes becomes too many for the character’s force of personality (PRS) to handle. This is regardless of manifestation or not. When taint actually manifests for a character in full himsati form, half of the taint motes are subtracted from any rolls based on animal/elemental/etc. instinct — flight of flight, survival, food, territory, etc.

Characters should be encouraged to act a little more feral and bestial. For elementals they should look to humanity’s fears about the elements (fire burns, water drowns). The character will have a aura of menace about them while in full himsati; the more taint they carry, the worse it gets.

Cleansing Taint

Taint can be cleansed via any of the following methods:

- Two motes of immaculum can be expended to remove a mote of taint from the character.
- One attribute point of a mortal’s aura can be used — at the moment it is taken during lulling or sinning — to remove two motes of taint.
- A single charge from a piece of



Palladium removes all motes of taint in an individual immortal.

- The spilling of an untainted being's life force also cleanses taint (see Spill Rules).
- You can come up with other methods such as a Mystech device, but it should always require some form of pure living force.

Tainted Soulless

A tainted soulless, who is possessed by a Progeny using taint manipulation techniques, remains possessed for days instead of minutes. Each mote of taint also acts as one success level on the influence chart towards the mortal acting upon his darker thoughts and instincts. This taint also provides additional serenade resistance equal to a Faith rating (but does not protect against barbs).

Other Drove Abilities

An explanation of basic drove abilities with taint, appears on page 128. Other abilities, and full game mechanics, will be available in the forthcoming Tribal Law vs. Dragon's Rule.



APPENDIX E: SERENADE EXAMPLES

The following contains two examples of how to build custom serenades and is followed by a list of sample serenades for the Aperture and Vivification attentions.

Custom Build Example #1

Step 1: Choose Attention
Destruction (Base Cost 5)

Step1a: Add-in Warp Attentions
No warp being used

Step 2: Choose focus and look
Focus is the character's motif of lightning: a bolt jumps from target to target.

- Step 3: Adjust secondary elements**
- A) Leave AoE at Level 0 (selective), but make base number of selectable targets equal to twice SPT. (+0.25 Base Cost)
 - B) Increase Duration to 0 (-E), Round Extended. Each turn all targets take damage as lightning keeps jumping among them. (+0.5 Base Cost)
 - C) The total enhancers are .75 (0.25 + 0.5) so it falls within the acceptable range of enhancer totals.

Step 4: Final adjustments
The Narrator reviews the serenade; currently the Base Cost is 5 + 0.25 + 0.5 for a total of 5.75 and it rounds up to a base cost of 6. The Narrator then suggests a trigger that if the target becomes grounded, the serenade stops effecting him immediately (or will not

affect a grounded target). This provides a -0.25 decrease to the cost, though it still rounds up to 6.

Step 5: Name and Record
Chain Lightning (Base Cost 7)
Focus: Arcing Lightning Bolts
AoE: 0 Selective (SPT * 2)
Duration: 0 (-E, -T)
Effect: An arc of lightning jumps between the selected targets each round doing damage (serenade strength decreases each round but keeps the same damage level as initially rolled; it includes a trigger allowing anyone that has or gets grounding protection to be immediately immune to the damage).

Custom Build Example #2

Step 1: Choose Attention
Transform Partial (Base Cost 4)

Step1a: Add-in Warp Attentions
Control: to add in a condition for the transformation to take place. (+1.0 Base Cost)
Target: BODY (from Transformation)
Visibility: Clearly visible from serenade singer to target.

Other secondary elements are the same for both serenades.

Control has a higher base cost than a partial transform, but since it is only being used as an activation trigger for the main effect, it is counted as the second serenade in the warp...



Step 2: Choose focus and look

The target gains an increase in muscle mass and begins to look more brutish as he becomes stronger. The trigger condition is set based on the target performing a multi-part task, the serenade effect activates to give him the strength to finish the task. For example, the target of the serenade is assigned to infiltrate a secret society and kill the leader. Once he realizes that he has been successful in his infiltration, the serenade activates, giving him the strength to eliminate the man in charge.

Step 3: Adjust secondary elements

No adjustments to secondary elements need to be made. The conditional activation trigger is paid for by the +1.0 cost increase from using a warp.

Step 4: Final adjustments

The Narrator decides that this needs a small restriction that it cannot take a penalty to affect multiple targets (-0.25). It is not meant to create small armies of brutes, and the Narrator feels it would be unbalanced if it did. This makes the final calculated cost 4.75, but that still rounds up to a Base Cost of 5.

Step 5: Name and Record

Brute Force (Base Cost 5)

Warp: Partial Transform & Control

Focus: Add STR to target

AoE: 0 Selective

Duration: 2 Scene

Effect: The target is sent to perform a multi-part task. When he realizes he has finishing performing the first parts, he immediately gains a number of points of STR equal to the effect level, thus allowing him to complete the second part of his tasks. Multiple individuals

can never be targeted by the serenade.

Sample Serenades

The following samples were built using the build system for use with the new attentions presented in Chapter 6.

APERTURE SERENADES:

Ley (Base Cost 6)

Focus: Earth via Ley

Effect: The character chooses a location on Earth he wishes to travel to. Strands of the Ley Membrane grab the character and place him on the nearest Ley Line. The serenade hops him from line to line and deposits him as near to his destination as the effect level determines. Extra effect levels (the character can choose to just reach a general area near the destination in order to lower the needed effect level) reduce the amount of time (duration) it takes to get there.

Zodiac (Base Cost 7)

Focus: Nadir

AoE: 1

Resistance: Vehicle MIND

Effect: This serenade is used to pilot a lighter into the Ley Membrane but, instead of returning to Earth, it reaches the nearest crossroads and forces open a way into the Nadir, launching the lighter out into the rest of the universe along its twisted paths.

The lighter's MIND is added as resistance to the serenade; if the character has a lighter navigation or piloting skill equal or higher than the lighter's MIND value, then he can



successfully program the ship to remove the resistance.

Synergy (Base Cost 6)

Focus: Gremlin Grid

Effect: This serenade allows a character to travel to the Gremlin Grid via any location on Earth that correlates to a node in the Gremlin Grid.

Deep Dweller (Base Cost 6)

Focus: Underworld

Effect: The character arrives in the 4th tier of the Underworld in Arcadia. Most travelers requiring an exact location find themselves on the Walk, as that is the area those who travel there are most familiar with.

VIVIFICATION SERENADES:

Valet (Base Cost 6)

Focus: Chairs

Effect: Animate a chair to take on the role of a servant, fetch items, etc.

Sky Spy (Base Cost 6)

Focus: Model Planes, Helicopters, etc.

Effect: Animate a small flying model to fly about and return to you with information about what it has seen.

Garden Guardians (Base Cost 7)

Focus: Small animal statuary

AoE: 1

Effect: Animate all small animal statues in your vicinity which become guardians

for the area you designate.

Treants (Base Cost 7)

Focus: Trees

AoE: 1 — Selective

Effect: A number of trees equal to your SPT attribute become animated to attack your foes.

Galatea (Base Cost 7)

Focus: Art Objects

Effect: The targeted object of art springs to life. It acts based on the type of art it is (painting, sculpture, etc.) and what the art object is supposed to represent.



EPILOGUE

“Reimagining Mythology”

Today I issue you a challenge...
to reimagine mythology.

Today’s world is one of fast paces, quick fixes and heroes of the moment. Today’s glamorous rising star quickly becomes tomorrow’s tabloid fodder. There are many discussions about the concepts of mythology as they still relate to some modern media, especially comics, manga and anime. It has been said that these forms of entertainment are the closest we may ever again come to the epic sweeping notions of ancient mythology. Even today movies make quick short work of grand novels, cutting hours of imagination-inspiring reading into quick cinematic fests that at best get put into trilogies to try and preserve some of the awe of those stories.

The modern world rarely takes time to wield the awesome might of its own imagination, instead it wants it served up more akin to fast food than a sumptuous feast. I challenge you to believe that you can have both. A never-ending buffet of epic adventure, fast action and imagination inspiring stories that entertain you for hours, days, weeks, months and even years.

The himsati race is from a time of ancient tales of power and wonder. But the truth is that most of those tales are only a small part of most mythological stories. Political intrigue, romance, tragedy, morality tales and more, all fill a large gap mostly ignored by the

modern world. Few are the brave and the bold who seek to encompass it all. Those immortals awakening into the modern world of Immortal Invisible War often find a bitter taste in their mouth, as they gaze at mortals “plugged in” to Eyz units for longer periods than they spend actually living a real life.

When faced with the challenge of a world that has completely lost touch with the wonder of old, and has become only interested in the quick fixes of the new media mythology, many immortals assume the stance of opposing it, thanking it for keeping at least some spark alive, or just embracing it and hoping for the best. The real challenge is to do something different with it and take it somewhere it hasn’t been before. And that is also your challenge as Narrator: for you and your players to tell your own original stories and not just rehash what you’ve seen dozens of times at the local movie theatre or during some late evening science fiction and fantasy fest on the local television station.

So one last time, I challenge you. Take what you have here and run with it, make it your own, take it places you and your players have never been before ...

Reimagine Mythology

Rick Don
Designer, 3rd Edition



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NARRATOR NOTES



Now, nearly half a decade after the Betrayal War has ended, take your game to the next level with this, the Narrator's Guide!

Nearly 270 pages of information on Mystech, playing advanced characters, a new serenade design system, advanced combat rules, interactions with human faith and mystical gifts and curses are all available to add to your game! Written specifically for you the Narrator, you can introduce new concepts to your players, allowing them to grow in power and scope. Add a great deal of new background material to your game, with ideas for new plots, anecdotes from immortals past and present and more!

"The present is the opening and closing of a gate, leaving those who merely peer through but a glimpse of a moment. The past has gates that lie broken, failing to keep those precincts undivulged. The future's gates are locked; only by observing the other gates can we understand what lies on the other side. Heed well any gates you come upon for they are an opportunity to move forward, but if not used wisely they become an open doorway to a display of your failures.

- - Magdalen Proverb