



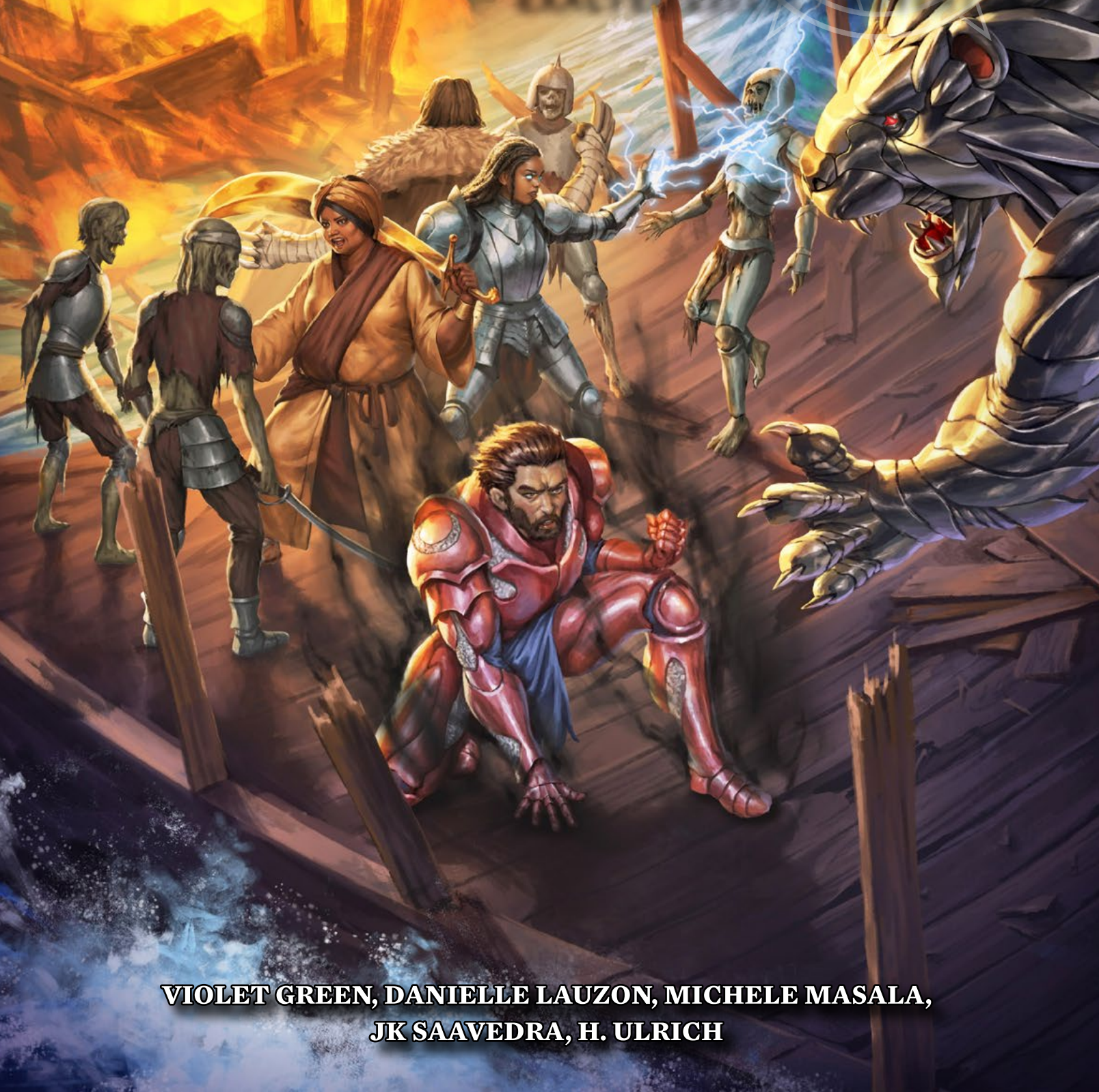
DEEDS YET UNDONE

EXALTED: ESSENCE ADVENTURES

PERILOUS THREATS AND WORLD-CHANGING
ADVENTURES IN EXALTED: ESSENCE

DEEDS YET UNDONE

EXALTED: ESSENCE ADVENTURES



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Requires the use of the
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Introduction

Creation is an enormous world; the possibilities for adventure, danger, and discovery for the Exalted are nearly limitless and equally dizzying. This book makes some of those possibilities concrete, offering adventures for Storytellers to run for circles of **Exalted: Essence** characters of all types. They offer great threats to stop and tasks to undertake to win glory, preserve life, or simply witness strange deeds of Creation's Second Age.

The scope and intensity of Exalted characters can make running adventures for circles of characters, especially experienced characters, challenging. In many other tabletop RPGs, an invading army might serve primarily as a backdrop to clashes with small groups of the enemy and avoiding capture as the land is overtaken. When a character can train an army from backwater villagers in a fortnight, call forth an army slaying cloud of obsidian butterflies, or transform into a battalion devouring monstrosity from the opening scene, an invading army ceases to be a backdrop with stakes.

Similarly, gods and empresses are often distant figures to be sworn by or obeyed in other settings and games. When the gods are characters who make their desires manifest in the world, determining their actions by fiat and assuming their positions are inviolable is unsatisfying. And even experienced Storytellers may find presenting Creation as a world of numinous strangeness challenging, especially for characters as mystically powerful as the Exalted.

This book offers wars to be won and divinities to foil. The adventures within both demonstrate the

mechanics of **Exalted: Essence** and serve as templates for other stories involving war and grand, supernatural plots. We hope that Storytellers new and old enjoy running these plots, but we encourage them to remix elements from these adventures into their own stories. Shining Mulberry's wily manipulations could easily be those of another god in another part of Creation. The ambitious goddess (here an antagonist) might make a powerful ally for the right circle of the Exalted. The deathknights threatening the Jasmine Isles work as a band of terrors or individual threats in any game, and the nautical disasters and trials that pave the way to the Sea of Milk provide examples and inspiration for all manner of ocean-bound tales.

Storytellers should feel free to remix elements of these adventures that they find compelling and tailor them to their play groups. Bringing a Deathlord to the climax of "A Shadow Falls" might provide a capstone for a long-running campaign or a worthy challenge for particularly mighty circles. Turning Ardent Comet from "The Crucible of Progress" might make a good potential love interest or boon companion for players who like romance or NPC-collecting. Modify, use, and play with these adventures as you see fit; there's no wrong way to engage the material.

Behemoths forged in Creation's past may be stopped and bound, the machinations of Deathlords may be foiled, and strange vistas beyond the very edge of the ocean may be discovered. Give life to these adventures, and who knows what the Exalted may achieve?





CHAPTER ONE

The Crucible of Progress

Ever since the ancient titans brought Creation into being, power determines who controls the reins of history, shaping the world for the generations to come. A lesson history taught the world again and again, though, is that the balance of power inevitably shifts. For more than 700 years, the Realm has ruled uncontested, but with the Scarlet Empress gone and the return of the Solars, the status quo lends itself to change like it hasn't done in centuries. Factions noble and vile look to this time of tumult as their long-awaited opportunity, competing to determine who will emerge victorious. As new conflicts join old grudges, the past and present merge in the crucible that will forge the future. Within this raging fire stand the Exalted, extraordinary champions blessed with both the power to change history and the will to use it.

The Crucible of Progress is a scenario meant to introduce players to the **Exalted** setting, offering a chance for their characters to shine while also showcasing some of the factions, threats, and complexities of Creation.

Set in Volsorra, a satrapy located in a remote corner of the Threshold, the adventure begins during a chaotic time for the formerly peaceful kingdom. Like other satrapies, Volsorra is a nation whose independence is a façade, being subservient to the Realm, which draws resources and riches from its subject kingdom, profiting from its people's labor. While the satrapy prepares for an important celebration, a mighty behemoth, a

furious relic of ancient ages, attacks Volsorra again and again. Seemingly unstoppable, the beast rages without apparent rhyme or reason, destroying anything it encounters upon its path, only to vanish right after. It's a fearsome threat that prompts the satrapy's patron goddess to issue a call for help. Characters can approach the behemoth issue with righteous straightforwardness, but the situation in Volsorra is more complex than it appears at first sight. The attacks began right after the current Realm official assigned to rule over the satrapy — the satrap — took office, a disaster happening during the succession of power nobody could ignore. As tensions keep rising, each faction in the satrapy blames their opponents for the monster's advent. Local forces rebel against the yoke of the Realm, galvanized like never before, while the satrap prepares to repress any upheaval. Unbeknownst to all of them, the very same goddess who claims neutrality and prays for peace holds the behemoth's reins, pursuing an intricate scheme to increase her power and status.

This adventure offers opportunities for diverse stories. While the behemoth's threat functions as a catalyst for Exalts of potentially disparate natures to join forces, what happens next is up to them—as it should be. Whether they strive to find a way to slay the beast and leave as heroes, investigate the crisis' true nature, indulge in court intrigues, take a side in the conflict to determine its winner, or even claim power over the behemoth for themselves, the characters hold *The Crucible of Progress* within their hands.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

Here you'll find a list of the characters holding a central role in the scenario's events, along with a brief description of their Virtues and some of their Intimacies (with the option for you to add more as you deem appropriate) to guide how to roleplay them. For their traits, refer to the **Antagonist** section on p. 22.

Ragara Nisho (he/him)

A proud scion of House Ragara, Nisho obtained the role of satrap despite his young age. He didn't do it out of sheer political ambition. After years spent demonstrating his scholarly talents, Nisho determined the existence of a powerful, dormant manse in Volsorra and, eager to find it without interference, asked Ragara himself to be assigned to the small satrapy, promising more

decisive benefits for House Ragara than mere riches. Despite all the intentions to pay due respect to his role, being a satrap is only a means to an end for Nisho, one the behemoth's attacks and the stirring rebellion interfere with. The troubles grate against Nisho's patience, causing him to answer with increasingly violent retaliation. With an attitude that causes him further problems as the crisis escalates, the Dragon-Blooded stubbornly refuses to consider the opinion of anyone without actual ties to the Realm.

VIRTUES

Ambition (Major Virtue). Nisho intends to use his talents to become the greatest savant House Ragara ever counted within its annals.

Wonder (Minor Virtue). Beneath his disciplined approach to academics, Nisho holds a sincere love for discoveries and knowledge.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Ambition): “The Realm is the lynchpin of civilization and must receive proper deference.”

Minor Tie (Ambition): Fangs of the Hungry (Righteous Annoyance)

Talina Sor (she/her)

When the Realm conquered Volsorra almost five hundred years ago, an agreement taken right next to the previous ruler’s decapitated head allowed the Sor family to maintain their crown, if only as a symbolic gesture. Centuries later, the legacy of that day sits on Talina’s brow in more ways than one. Devoted to the Realm and the Immaculate Philosophy, while Talina holds some doubts as to Nisho’s governmental skills, she dutifully keeps those for herself. The current troubles ask for unity and strength, not doubt.

VIRTUES

Discipline (Major Virtue). A controlled approach and a disdain for rushed decisions served Talina well all her life.

Loyalty (Minor Virtue). The Realm saved Volsorra from itself, earning eternal gratitude.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Loyalty): Yavhani (Love)

Minor Principle (Discipline): “A princess must embody her role.”

Yavhani Sor (he/him)

The prince consort of Volsorra, Yavhani married into the Sor from another of the satrapy’s aristocratic families. Whereas he never gave much thought to dreams of greatness, the Scarlet Empress’s disappearance (along with the rebel activities and the behemoth the Realm seems unable to stop) caused Yavhani to consider for the first time in his life if perhaps the Sor have any chance to be more than puppet princes. Struck by how strongly Talina rebuked these thoughts when he shared them, the prince maintains a dutiful façade while secretly hoping the opportunity to do something will drop on his lap.

VIRTUES

Loyalty (Major Virtue). Despite his lack of formal power, Yavhani considers his duties toward Volsorra and its people the goal of his life.

Ambition (Minor Virtue). Yavhani dreams of restoring his nation’s independence, with the Sor as its true guide once again.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Loyalty): Talina (Love)

Minor Tie (Ambition): The rebels (Admiration)

Fangs of the Hungry (they/them)

Fangs of the Hungry’s unexpected Dragon-Blooded heritage awakened within them during one of Garlen’s rampages. Digging their way out of the rubble, the lone survivor of their family, they embraced their current name and gathered all those who suffered because of the regime’s carelessness under a single banner. Before they could even notice, the Wood Aspect played a crucial role in shaping the Volsorra rebellion, becoming its leader by popular acclaim. If asked, Fangs doesn’t hesitate a moment to draw a connection between Ragara Nisho’s arrival and the behemoth: It’s no secret the scholar came to Volsorra looking for ancient treasures, and Fangs believes Garlen’s rampages are a direct consequence of reckless research. Their feelings about Nisho aside, though, Fangs gives voice to generations of malcontent brewing in Volsorra’s lower classes, too often forced into poverty by the Realm and the satrapy’s own ancient families. While Fangs recognizes the mission has good odds of claiming their life, they won’t rest until all oppressors are either chased away from their nation, in chains waiting for judgment, or — if circumstances require — killed outright.

VIRTUES

Justice (Major Virtue). Fangs of the Hungry will either see people freed from the tyrants keeping them under their heel or die trying.

Courage (Minor Virtue). There’s too much at stake to be afraid of anything.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Courage): “The lives of the common people matter more than anything else, including my safety.”

Minor Tie (Justice): Nisho (Hatred)

Ardent Comet of the Hallowed Night (she/her)

Always cheery and energetic, Ardent Comet Exalted when Ember Fountain, a minor god of



fireworks and wonder, sacrificed themselves to make her an Exigent. The god saw in the young woman the living embodiment of their own brightest ideals and offered their life to grant her the opportunity to change the world where a little divinity could not. Holding the gesture close to her heart, Ardent Comet has traveled across Creation ever since, guided by her own anima from festival to festival so she can brighten the common people's lives. A newcomer to Volsorra and eager to help, the Exigent turned to Shining Mulberry for guidance, unaware of the goddess' role behind the behemoth's attacks. Ardent Comet spends all her time bringing comfort to the people and helping them rebuild, but she will eagerly step into the fray against any villain she sees upon her path — whether her assessment is correct or not.

VIRTUES

Compassion (Major Virtue). Comet firmly believes everyone deserves a happy life full of passion and joy.

Courage (Minor Virtue). The beauty of Creation and its inhabitants is well worth defending.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Compassion): "I must be a light that brightens the lives of those I meet."

Minor Principle (Compassion): "The gods have our best interests in mind."

Shining Mulberry (she/her)

Once a minor goddess of silkworms, Shining Mulberry saw a chance to increase her influence when the silk trade flourished across Creation during the Great Contagion's aftermath. Her association with Volsorra's local Guild, an organization that owes its entire existence, power, and prosperity to the silk trade, was a natural consequence, if one she always kept secret. Despite her ambitions, Shining Mulberry plays a long game: When the Realm invaded Volsorra, the key role she had in ensuring a smooth transition from independent kingdom into satrapy allowed her to keep her position of national patron within the Immaculate doctrine, along with the added benefit of granting her access to the Realm's trading system. Ever since the Scarlet Empress's disappearance, Shining Mulberry waited for the right moment to play a card she had kept covered since the Usurpation: The goddess owns a First Age artifact, Garlen's Pride, that allows her to summon and command the behemoth from its prison under Volsorra. Using the satrap change as cover, Shining Mulberry unleashed the creature to sow chaos

and discontent, coordinating with Guild agents to maneuver other factions so that when the dust settles, the goddess will be in the right position to gain absolute control over the satrapy's economy, at which point expanding through other foreign Guild instances will only be a matter of patience and care — virtues the goddess has no lack of. The way Shining Mulberry sees it, this is but another step in her ascension through divine ranks, her goal of becoming the patron goddess of silk and trade for all of Creation draws closer each day.

VIRTUES

Ambition (Major Virtue). Shining Mulberry will do anything it takes to obtain the greatness she knows she deserves.

Discipline (Minor Virtue). Well aware her goals require careful planning and masterful deceit, Shining Mulberry knows better than to let impulsivity guide her actions.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Ambition): "Volsorra's Guild and I are one; we helped each other gain power before they could even claim that name. My triumphs are theirs."

Minor Principle (Ambition): "The Realm and Heaven always underestimated me, and I owe them nothing."

Garlen, the Lion Whose Roar Melts Iron (he/him)

With theories on his birth ranging from being the masterwork of a fallen master of Creation to him arising from a kiln of elemental power to terrorize this world's enemies, Garlen bows to no one, an attitude finding expression in his immense strength and portentous immortality. When the Exalted rose to power, though, the behemoth could do little to oppose their might. Sealed under the earth and bound into servitude through a wicked artifact, the colossal metallic lion stood trapped for centuries, the raging fire within his belly unable to cause but a scratch against the walls of his prison. While Garlen despises having to obey Shining Mulberry and being used as an engine of destruction, the behemoth bides his time while making the best out of a bad situation, eager to fight against worthy foes. Although his captor believes him to be a mindless beast, Garlen's more cunning than his actions suggest. He perceives how Shining Mulberry's reckless use of his control artifact weakens the item with each activation and waits to break the chains and finally roam free once again. While the behemoth is eager to

unleash almost a millennium of wrath — with the puny goddess daring to maneuver him like a puppet being at the top of his list of targets — Garlen maintains the savage pride and nobility that define him: Those who earn his respect may very well manage to convince him not to turn Volsorra into a burned ruin.

VIRTUES

Courage (Major Virtue). Proud of his strength and ferocity, Garlen fears nothing.

Justice (Minor Virtue). The behemoth despises his captivity, eager to turn his anger against the world.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Justice): Shining Mulberry (Hatred)

Major Principle (Courage): “I will never run away from a foe, whether big or small.”

SCENE MAP

The following section includes a short description of the scenario's scenes. Bear in mind the scenes are meant to be used as guidelines, providing a general direction to follow rather than a strict, exhaustive structure where each scene must be played through. Exalted characters always prove to be extremely powerful and versatile, qualities the natures, approaches, and powers of several working together inevitably enhance, so there's no wrong way to play a scenario as long as the characters — and their players — face their challenges with determination and excitement.

- **The Wounded City Endures:** An opening scene meant to introduce the characters to Volsorra, familiarize them with both the upcoming festival and the conflicts brewing under the surface, and gather together. Leads to **The Behemoth Attacks!**

- **The Behemoth Attacks!** A recurring scene that can happen at various stages of the scenario where Garlen rampages through Volsorra or the surrounding countryside before vanishing. The scene allows characters to demonstrate their value against the behemoth's destruction, gain the attention of the satrapy's factions — for good or ill — and even talk with Garlen. Depending on the characters' decisions, it can lead to **An Official Dinner**, **Meeting the Rebellion**, or **Audience with the Goddess**.

- **An Official Dinner.** An early scene where the characters spend an evening with the satrap and the princes, with the potential to make allies and enemies alike. It can lead to **Searching for the Lion's Lair**, **Audience with the Goddess**, **Meeting the Rebellion**, or **Assassin Ambush**, depending on the impression the characters make.

- **Meeting the Rebellion.** An early scene where the characters encounter the rebels and their leader, allowing them to either confront them or become their allies (or pretend to be so). Leads to either **Searching for the Lion's Lair** or **Assassin Ambush**.

- **Audience with the Goddess.** An early scene where the characters encounter Shining Mulberry. While the goddess is happy to provide empty support and give them carefully curated information, Mulberry also tries to ensure all their suspects and hostilities are aimed elsewhere. Always leads to **The Behemoth Attacks!** If Shining Mulberry has reasons to want the characters distracted or gone, leads first to **Assassin Ambush**, then **The Bright Spark of Hope**.

- **Searching for the Lion's Lair.** An intermediate scene where the characters gather information and old tales about Garlen's fabled prison, hoping to locate its location. Leads to **The Manse**.

- **Assassin Ambush.** An intermediate scene that can happen several times, where Imperial soldiers, rebels, or Guild agents pretending to be either of the former attack the characters.

- **The Bright Spark of Hope.** An intermediate scene where Ardent Comet, maneuvered by Shining Mulberry, confronts the characters, directs public opinion against them and even directly attacks them if she thinks that's the right thing to do. If the characters gain Ardent Comet's trust, leads to **The Manse**.

- **The Manse.** A late scene where the characters explore the manse under Volsorra, confront Shining

Mulberry and reach Garlen's cage. If the characters can't convince Shining Mulberry to surrender, leads to **The Lion Breaks Free**.

- **The Lion Breaks Free.** A final scene where Garlen emerges from the manse, bound no longer. Depending on the characters' actions, what happens to Garlen determines the fate of Volsorra itself.

KEY SCENES

This section describes each important scene of the scenario in detail, providing indications for the Storyteller on how to run and connect them throughout the adventure.

The Wounded City Endures

In this initial scene, characters find the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Volsorra, its atmosphere, and its troubles. Offer them chances to move around and get a general impression of the satrapy, asking questions if they want to. People on the street don't have meaningful information to offer, but nobody hides what's going on with Garlen, nor do they bother keeping political feelings to themselves except when the affiliation of those they speak with is clear and opinions could cause them trouble.

Volsorra being a satrapy with a history of loyalty and devotion toward the Realm and the Immaculate faith, its people hold the kind of wariness — if not outright hostility — that non-Dragon-Blooded Exalted characters can expect to find in the rest of the Threshold, but the kingdom's isolated position and recent troubles make things more complex. New Exalted making their appearance are going to endure scrutiny as everyone worries their presence heralds more problems, but at the same time, the population craves the coming of anyone with the power to help, increasing the tolerance people have for Anathema of all sorts.

The introduction to the scenario happens in the middle of the morning, right inside the city of Volsorra itself. Whereas the surrounding countryside has been

bustling with activity since the first light of dawn, the city woke up later as if refusing to absolve its function. Only at this later time do people fill the streets while going on with their day. Animals drag carriages along the roads while sellers debate with visitors about the prices of goods in their stands. Merchants and silk traders share the space with farmers selling their produce, just as soldiers from the Realm circulate while keeping an eye on what happens around them.

Festoons and decorations, along with a host of musicians, jugglers, and puppeteers, hint at the upcoming festival celebrating 500 years of imperial dominance, but unsettling clues indicate the atmosphere is anything but festive. The constant beat of hammers joins the laments of the wounded, both consequences of a disaster haunting the city. People murmur with distress about a threat they hesitate to name out loud, some taking out their fear and frustration on whoever offers them the opportunity. Local guards do little to defuse the tension, further fueling malcontent with brutal yet ineffective tactics. Soldiers from the island of Nightbloom, arrived in Volsorra via ship to help fight Garlen, soon discovered they could do little against the behemoth's might. Only the limited presence of Realm garrison forces prevents the situation from escalating, a demonstration of power and fear that nevertheless won't hold for long. Volsorra endures a fragile status quo, a mere spark away from a fire that might change it forever.

If the characters didn't form a Circle before the beginning of the adventure, this scene offers the

INSPIRATION

With its focus on sericulture and trade, Volsorra takes after imperial China both in economy and aesthetics, merging those elements with aspects of Italian medieval communes such as Florence and Venice when it comes to describing small yet rich nations centered around a prosperous city. Garlen's effect on the relationship between Volsorra and the Realm can be compared to the descent of Frederick Barbarossa on those communes.



Storyteller a chance to have them come together. Volsorra's festival preparations provide many set pieces for the characters to enjoy; a firework spectacle organized by Ardent Comet of the Hallowed Night presents the perfect opportunity to briefly introduce the Exigent and to have all characters gather in a single place.

Once you feel the characters have had enough time to get a taste of Volsorra or the rhythm slows down, Garlen materializes into town, moving to **The Behemoth Attacks!** scene.

The Behemoth Attacks!

This scene is a recurring event with the potential to happen several times throughout the scenario.

With an ear-splitting metallic roar, Garlen, the Lion Whose Roar Melts Iron, appears in the middle of Volsorra in a hurricane of fire, proceeding to cut a blazing path through the city before disappearing into thin air soon after. Even in this limited time, the destruction the behemoth can cause to the city is nothing short of catastrophic, a disaster nobody has yet managed to stop.

During each instance of **The Behemoth Attacks!**, characters can pursue several courses of action.

- **Interact with Garlen.** The behemoth's fiercely hostile and craves a good fight, meaning he'll be far too happy to violently confront any Exalted he meets upon his path. Garlen vanishes after a number of rounds equal to the number of player characters or whenever slain, although the behemoth's immortality ensures he won't stay down for long.

- **Protect the city.** Defending the city to prevent critical harm to its infrastructure, defenses, or economy not only helps the satrapy but also earns the gratitude of its upper classes and of the rulers themselves.

- **Protect the people.** Standing between the behemoth's wrath and those who can't defend themselves helps Volsorra survive while also earning the gratitude of the lower classes and the respect of the rebels.

The scene's dramatic moments, such as lifting a wall to save a family from a burning building, preventing a warehouse from collapsing, stopping a herd of panicked animals, or calming a terrorized crowd and guiding them to safety, are all good opportunities to ask for appropriate ability rolls. The Storyteller might invoke ventures such as crafting to prevent damaged structures from crumbling with emergency repairs or

INFLUENCING GARLEN

The Lion Whose Roar Melts Iron is a difficult interlocutor whose presence intimidates most, but Exalted aren't ordinary people: Conversing with a raging behemoth is exactly the sort of feat Chosen can aspire to realize.

For the sake of Influence actions, Garlen's Resolve starts at four, along with a two-dice penalty because of his antiquated dialect, which Exalts can bypass with a successful Sagacity roll (Difficulty 4) or appropriate powers. The behemoth's fury at his own captivity triggers his Minor Virtue, further raising the Resolve to six against most attempts to dialogue with him.

Despite his Principle to never run away from any foe, Garlen respects strong enemies. Any Exalt who ever played a major role in lowering the behemoth's Health below half gains a two-success bonus on all Influence actions.

Likewise, characters aware of Shining Mulberry's control over Garlen can leverage the creature's hatred against his master — his Major Virtue — to lower his Resolve by three.

In this scene, Garlen's bound to follow Shining Mulberry's orders, a directive enforced by a single word: *destroy*. Still, despite Garlen being unable to attack places Mulberry wishes to protect, characters can convince the behemoth to focus its anger either on themselves (with all the danger that entails), dissuade him from attacking a given place, or persuade him to focus on specific targets.

Characters wishing to obtain information from Garlen discover the behemoth isn't one for idle chat, but the right questions and attitude can do wonders. Players can gain information from their social interactions with Garlen (most likely carried over through Persuade or Read Intentions actions) or by spending extra successes to learn them. Garlen opens up gradually: First, he reveals he is under the control of a First Age artifact, then he tells the players he is trapped in a subterranean manse whenever not sent on a rampage, and as his final secret, he laughs and outs Shining Mulberry as his captor.

racers to get ahead of terrorized cattle and stop them before they can trample someone or hurt themselves.

After the characters survive Garlen's attack for the first time, their actions during the rampage help determine what happens next:

- If the characters defend local infrastructures or match an idea of heroes the Realm accepts, they are invited to the royal family's palace for **An Official Dinner**.
- If the characters defend the population or seem like the kind of Exalted eager to confront the Realm, **Meeting the Rebellion** is an option for them, as rebel agents get in touch soon after the dust settles.
- If the characters prefer to take no sides yet or managed to have Garlen mention Shining Mulberry, they might want to arrange an **Audience with the Goddess**.

The Storyteller should consider having Garlen attack multiple times during the adventure, both to make clear how dire the situation in Volsorra is and to give characters more chances to speak with the behemoth should they decide to pursue that route.

An Official Dinner

Prompted by Ragara Nisho, the Sor invite the characters to the Peacock Palace, the opulent residence Volsorra's royal family maintains in town. The satrapy's ruler and the princes wish to evaluate the characters, eager to discern if they're friends, foes, or useful tools for their political aspirations.

Although splendid per the common folks' standards, the Peacock Palace reveals clues about Volsorra's history for those who know where to look. An Awareness or Craft roll with difficulty 3 — the standard those without a listed difficulty default to — highlights that the palace and most of its furniture aren't as old as the hosts claim, while an Embassy or Sagacity roll (Difficulty 3) likewise allows characters to remember that the Realm claimed the Sor's original mansion for itself during the conquest, converting it to the satrap's residence ever since.

As the characters enter the palace's dining hall and servants guide them to their seats, the Sor greet them with proper etiquette — although only Dragon-Blooded receive due honors. Nisho arrives right after, fashionably late, accompanied by his personal guard, imperial soldiers who starkly contrast against local guards.



INFLUENCING NISHO, TALINA, AND YAVHANI

Ragara Nisho's Resolve starts at three.

Proud of his heritage, Nisho won't stand for any disrespect either to his family or the Realm itself. While he expects deference, any provocatory comment or action increases his Resolve by three. At the same time, trying to find common ground between him and the rebels goes against his Minor Principle, increasing his Resolve by two.

Characters playing to his academic leanings to obtain answers trigger his Minor Virtue and lower his Resolve by two. Nisho isn't immune to flattery, but he isn't a fool: To exploit his Major Virtue and lower the Resolve by three down to the minimum of one, characters need to provide him an opportunity to improve his knowledge and reputation rather than offering mere flattery.

Talina Sor's Resolve starts at four.

Talina is a loyal servant of the Realm and a firm believer in the Immaculate Faith. Any attempt to sway the princess from her beliefs clashes against her Loyalty Virtue and increases her Resolve by two.

Depending on the characters' intentions, Talina can either be a precious ally or a dangerous foe. As long as their actions fall within what the Realm approves, she wastes no energy to support them, but she will likewise use all the tools her role as puppet princess allows to make their life difficult should she come to believe they represent a danger for Volsorra's status quo.

Yavhani Sor's Resolve starts at three.

Despite dreams of grandeur, Yavhani values the well-being of his citizens over everything, raising or lowering his Resolve by three as dictated by his Loyalty Virtue, depending on what he thinks the characters care about.

With a successful Persuade social influence action, characters can lead Yavhani to commit a social faux-pas and blurt out his real thoughts about the Realm and the rebellion, an action that chills the atmosphere but drives Talina to stop talking about politics and Nisho to comply — if only for the sake of appearances.

Dragon-Blooded get no bonuses nor penalties during the dinner, but characters known to be other kinds of Exalted in the Circle receive a two-dice penalty when talking to Nisho and a two-success penalty when talking to Talina.

The stakes for the dinner itself aren't high, but the characters' words will have consequences, and the potential for disaster looms over the entire event. Nisho and the Sor question the Circle about their identities and intentions while at the same time being wary of revealing any meaningful information to people they don't trust.

At the end of the dinner, if either the Sor or Nisho believe the characters can become valuable allies, the Volsorra royals offer them a place to stay in the palace's chambers.

Should Nisho trust the characters, he tells them his research revealed that Garlen resides in a manse whose exact location he has failed to locate so far. The satrap mentions that he believes its entrance to be hidden in the city's underground and asks for help, leading to the **Searching for the Lion's Lair** scene.

If the characters make a good impression on Talina, she suggests that they consult with Shining Mulberry, a

goddess who always helped Volsorra in times of need, leading to the **Audience with the Goddess** scene.

If Yavhani believes the characters have an interest in siding with the rebels, he uses his contacts to arrange for a meeting, leading to the **Meeting the Rebellion** scene.

If the characters offend their hosts (without openly threatening or attacking them), the dinner proceeds until its conclusion, when guards politely escort them outside. Once away from the palace, though, the **Assassin Ambush** scene triggers.

Meeting the Rebellion

Eager to find new allies for their cause, the rebels invite the characters to one of their secret bases, where Fangs of the Hungry wants to speak to them personally to see if the Exalted can be trusted.

Ever since Garlen's attacks started and the Volsorra rebellion took shape, the rebels utilized the city's

network of basements, sewers, and other underground locations to move and organize. Despite the imperial garrison's best efforts to root them out, the rebels' tactics and strong spirits keep their movement alive, with new members joining each day. Survivors of Garlen's wrath, veterans finding newfound purpose, and generations both old and young of those the Realm harmed now gather under a single banner, the strongest rebel force Volsorra ever saw since becoming a satrapy.

The encounter with Fangs of the Hungry takes place in an old, abandoned winery cellar converted into a militia base. Unless the characters fought their way inside, the Dragon-Blooded greets them with sincere warmth. Fangs knows better than to consider them allies straight away but treats them with fairness and heartfelt decorum, caring nothing for aspects such as their Exalted nature, looks, or origin. Even an affiliation with the Realm doesn't faze Fangs: While they hate Nisho and the Sor, the Wood Aspect doesn't extend those feelings to other people right away — unless they make clear they intend to oppose their fight for independence, that is.

Fangs would rather recruit the characters for their cause, but ensuring they stay out of their way is good enough for them. If the Circle makes a good impression, mentions they intend to stop Garlen, or at least promises they won't interfere with the rebellion, the Dragon-Blooded shares what they know about old tales about the behemoth's manse, leading to the **Searching for the Lion's Lair** scene.

If the characters ask Fangs who might know more about Garlen, they point at Shining Mulberry, praising the goddess for the help and support she always provided to those in need, rebels included, leading to the **Audience with the Goddess** scene.

If the Circle threatens or offends Fangs, they firmly invite them to leave while telling the characters that

the next time they encounter each other, it will be as enemies. Fangs ensures the characters leave unscathed, but other rebels attack them later on, leading to the **Assassin Ambush** scene.

Audience with the Goddess

Praised as an example of divine grace and generosity, Shining Mulberry actually manipulates all the factions in Volsorra against each other while maintaining a façade of troubled concern for the wellbeing of the satrapy's citizens and future. Despite her being responsible for Garlen's attacks, Shining Mulberry even made a show of using her connections to issue a call for help beyond Volsorra's borders in an effort to divert potential suspects from herself. In what could spell the doom of an already dangerous plan, Mulberry believes she can maneuver any Exalted just as she maneuvered a chained behemoth and the major factions of the satrapy.

In this scene, the characters meet with Shining Mulberry, looking for either information or support, while the goddess aims to misdirect their efforts so she can have enough time to escalate the situation beyond repair, trying to use the characters' own opinions against them.

Everyone knows where to find Shining Mulberry: The goddess is famous for just how much time she spends in her temple rather than in her spirit sanctum. The temple itself stands as one of Volsorra's oldest structures, a luscious mansion whose internal gardens house hundreds of beautiful silk moths. Within its innermost section, in a room decorated with some of the finest silks of Creation, Shining Mulberry encounters petitioners and esteemed guests alike.

Shining Mulberry's engineering a civil war whose winner actually doesn't matter for her, as long as she gets to increase her own (and the Guild's) influence

INFLUENCING FANGS

Passionate and strong-willed, Fangs of the Hungry's Resolve starts at four.

The Dragon-Blooded holds the firm conviction that the Realm and its satraps, along with the selfish collaboration of the Sor family, are to blame for all the troubles plaguing Volsorra. This includes Garlen's attacks, which Fangs personally blames Nisho for.

Attempts to intimidate Fangs meet fierce resistance, increasing their Resolve by two thanks to their Courage Virtue, while any suggestion to find a diplomatic solution with Nisho or the Sor increases it by three due to their Justice Virtue.

If Yavhani arranged for a meeting between the characters and the rebellion, the connection actually complicates Fangs' attitude, imposing a two-dice penalty should the characters lean on the prince's intercession.

INFLUENCING SHINING MULBERRY

As cunning and deceitful as she is beautiful and endearing, Shining Mulberry's Resolve starts at four.

The goddess considers interactions with characters as a necessary step to ensure her plan proceeds mostly undisturbed, triggering her Major Virtue and raising her Resolve by three. Failures to influence her never cause obviously strong reactions from Shining Mulberry but are rather met with compliments and half-truths.

At this stage of the scenario, Shining Mulberry cannot even conceive the idea of abandoning her plan, treating any attempt to have her surrender or hand over Garlen's control as an unacceptable influence.

Shining Mulberry thinks she can handle any Dragon-Blooded, Solar, Lunar, or Exigent, but the presence of Sidereals and other kinds of Exalted she failed to consider open considerable cracks in her confidence. She suffers a one-die penalty if the Circle includes Sidereals out of sheer fear Yu-Shan is onto her, which increases to two if Abyssals, Infernals, Liminals, Getimians, or Alchemicals are involved in the scene.

over Volsorra in the end. If the characters show appreciation for either side, she'll elegantly encourage acting against the other, while she responds to calls for peace or alternative solutions with empty vagaries and meaningless wishes for a better future. Questions about Garlen or the presumed existence of an ancient manse under the city likewise obtain nothing but feigned ignorance or old First Age stories, but there's a reason the goddess carefully limited any modification to her temple to necessary repairs and surface refurbishing: An entrance to Garlen's prison manse lies right under the goddess' altar, a secret she has kept since the Usurpation.

Shining Mulberry knows better than to keep Garlen's control artifact on herself, but she'll arrange for another instance of **The Behemoth Attacks!** right after this scene ends.

If Shining Mulberry has any reason to fear the characters after their audience, she'll first send Guild assassins after them, leading to the Assassin Ambush scene during Garlen's next attack, and then convince Ardent Comet the Circle needs to be stopped, leading to **The Bright Spark of Hope** scene.

If the characters visit the temple while already aware of the manse's entrance, Shining Mulberry avoids any confrontation in her temple, waiting for them down below in The Manse scene. She likewise flees any attempt to harm her during the audience, retreating into the manse if successful.

Searching for the Lion's Lair

After facing Garlen and meeting some of the major figures in Volsorra, the characters try to succeed where others have failed, looking for the manse from which the behemoth emerges.

The resources available to players depend on whether they earned the trust of any faction in the satrapy (or decide to break into guarded places), but keep in mind Exalted often boast extraordinary contacts and methods. Players can — and should! — tap into networks such as Yu-Shan records or the wisdom of Malfeas' captives. Doing so highlights a character's uniqueness while also celebrating the power of the Exalted.

Characters on good terms with Ragara Nisho or the Sor have access to Realm records and Volsorra's academies, whose entrance is normally reserved for aristocrats. The rebellion can't provide the same benefits, but their network of oral stories and common knowledge still proves invaluable to those intelligent enough to put pieces together. As a whole, the research requires wading through eight centuries of lost history, distinguishing tales and lies from facts.

Considering her network of spies and mercenaries, it's only a matter of time before Shining Mulberry learns if the characters make significant progress. Left with few options and worried she's running out of time, she refrains from sending Garlen after them for fear of being discovered. The goddess knows that changing the behemoth's behavior from chaotic rampages to deliberate murderous precision will draw too much attention, but she proceeds to send Guild assassins after the characters, leading to the **Assassin Ambush** scene, and she convinces Ardent Comet of the Hallowed Night to confront the Circle for her, leading to **The Bright Spark of Hope** scene.

Once the characters discover the entrance to Garlen's lair inside Shining Mulberry's temple (or find an alternative one thanks to advantages), the scene shifts to **The Manse**.

Assassin Ambush

In this scene, enforcers from a given faction attack the characters with the intention of taking them out of the picture. The exact nature of said assassins depends on whoever considers the Circle to be a threat, meaning separate instances of the scene can happen if the Exalts get on multiple factions' bad sides.

The characters' actions in the scenario determine where the ambush takes place, with the location they sleep in, an empty alley, or — if they obtained an invitation — their rooms in the Peacock Palace being but a few options. Keep in mind that assassins only attack in contexts and locations where characters feel reasonably at ease, exploiting a lower guard to strike. Moments of rest or intimacy where the characters are distracted likewise offer perfect opportunities for the attack, with the added benefit of helping Storytellers maintain a tight rhythm.

Despite being an experienced Dragon-Blooded, Ragara Nisho prefers to avoid direct confrontation and sends garrison soldiers (p. 24) after the characters, while the Sor send Volsorra guards (p. 24) instead. If both Nisho and the kingdom's monarch want the characters dead, Immaculate monks join the scene.

Fangs of the Hungry isn't the kind of person to let others fight without them and personally joins any effort to fight the characters, but in this scene, the rebels (p. 24) fighting the characters do so of their own volition without warning their leader about it.

Should Shining Mulberry be the one behind the assassin's ambush, the antagonists are Guild mercenaries (pp. 24-25) pretending to be either Realm soldiers or rebels. Characters can notice something's amiss with them thanks to an Awareness, Sagacity, or War roll (Difficulty 4) and possibly interrogate the mercenaries to know who sent them. The Guild's assassins are seasoned professionals, meaning their Resolve against Influence starts at five thanks to their training and Intimacy of devotion to their organization, but if the Exalts crack their resistance, the mercenaries can reveal both Shining Mulberry's role and her control over Garlen, although they are ignorant of the behemoth's manse location.

The Storyteller should craft the encounter around the characters' strengths to make sure the antagonists have a fair chance of hurting the Exalts without proving overwhelming, with three to five assassins being a reasonable number. Most of the assassins are ordinary, if experienced, mortals, but each group should have at least one significant figure. The "Agent of the Wyl

FINDING THE LAIR

The process of locating the manse takes the shape of either an Investigation or Research Venture with the following parameters:

Prerequisites: None

Time scale: One scene

Base obstacles: 5

Common Ability rolls: Awareness (observation), Presence (interrogation), or Sagacity (deduction)

Obstacles: Usurpation-old mystery (Difficulty 6); Shining Mulberry tampered with the evidence (Difficulty 4); All stories about Garlen are either ancient records or inherited tales (Difficulty 5); Contradicting sources (Difficulty 4); Deliberate misdirection by the Guild (opposed)

Possible advantages: Find a remarkable source, granting +1 success to Sagacity rolls for the rest of the venture (1 success, maximum +3); Gain access to one off-limits resource, place, or information source such as the Royal Library or an old scholar living in isolation (3 successes, 1 with Nisho or the Sor support, maximum two uses); Learn about little known information, allowing players to declare one relevant fact that doesn't contradict what's already known as information the character learns, subject to Storyteller approval (4 successes, 2 with the rebellion support, maximum two facts)

Possible Consequences: A faction discovers the characters are making progress and sends people to gather what they know; Shining Mulberry summons Garlen to distract the characters; Guild mercenaries obstruct the research; The people of Volsorra believe the characters share part of the blame for Garlen's attacks.

WINNING PEOPLE'S HEARTS

To sway people to their side, the characters must debate Ardent Comet in public, a venture working with the following parameters:

Prerequisites: None

Time scale: One turn

Base obstacles: 3

Possible Ability rolls: Embassy, Presence, or War

Obstacles: Ardent Comet argues that the Circle holds malevolent intentions (opposed against 14 dice pool)

Advantages: Persuade someone with great influence, granting a +1 dice bonus to all actions in the venture (1 success, maximum +5); increase the difficulty of Ardent Comet's rolls by one for the rest of this venture (2 successes, maximum +3 difficulty per opponent); gain a Tertiary Contacts Merit with a given group within the mob that lasts for the session (2 successes, purchaseable twice to increase it to Secondary Contacts.)

Consequences: A group of trained combatants joins the mob; a faction catches wind of the situation; Ardent Comet uses one of her Charms without having to commit or spend any motes.

Hunt" or "Young Dynast" traits from the **Exalted:** **Essence** core (p. 329 and p. 332) work very well to represent these leaders.

This scene functions as an interval between others, meant to underline that people keep an eye on the characters, but any Guild mercenary that escapes immediately informs Shining Mulberry, prompting her to use Ardent Comet to stop the characters and leading to **The Bright Spark of Hope** scene.

The Bright Spark of Hope

In this scene, Ardent Comet of the Hallowed Night leads an angry mob against the characters, who can defend themselves from the accusations, convert the people to their side, or even convince the Exigent they aren't the villains Shining Mulberry convinced her of.

An Exalt of strong ideals and passionate determination, Ardent Comet means well, but her naïve attitude made her an easy target for Shining Mulberry.

The Exigent of Fireworks cares deeply for the common people and fell for the goddess' benevolent appearance, trusting her wholeheartedly since her first day in Volsorra. It took little for Shining Mulberry to convince Ardent Comet of the characters' iniquity (regardless of any actual truthfulness), prompting the enthusiastic Exigent to rush against the Circle by using her beloved reputation to unite the city's people around her.

Cornered by Ardent Comet and a crowd eager to chase them away from the satrapy, the Exalted must successfully argue for their innocence or fight to defend themselves.

If Ardent Comet succeeds at the venture, the entire mob charges at the characters with her in the front line, but the Exigent won't surrender even if the Exalted turn the people against her by succeeding at the venture themselves — firmly convinced of her righteousness, she attacks the Circle no matter what. Characters

INFLUENCING ARDENT COMET

Brave and selfless, Ardent Comet's Resolve starts at four.

Her trust in all gods, represented by her Minor Intimacy, raises her Resolve to six, but characters demonstrating they have the people's best interest at heart can trigger her Major Virtue and lower the Resolve to three.

The Exigent holds no prejudice whatsoever against any kind of Exalt, but characters who demonstrated little regard for the lives of innocents or brutalized common people during their stay in Volsorra earn Ardent Comet's enmity, creating a Minor Compassion Tie (Righteous Anger).



can persuade her to stop, either by demonstrating benevolent intentions or persuading her she was used.

Should the characters change Ardent Comet's mind, the Exigent apologizes profusely, her eyes showing traces of tears as she realizes how foolish she has been. Too distressed to consider helping the characters directly, and if convinced that all she can do is keep helping people while more competent Exalted handle Garlen, she'll reveal the entrance to the behemoth's prison if the characters don't know it yet. She'll also confide how Shining Mulberry convinced her to keep the secret for "the sake's of everyone's safety" and how she obeyed despite doubts because of her respect for the gods and the fear she wasn't strong enough to defeat the behemoth alone. This revelation leads to **The Manse** scene.

If they wish, the characters can convince Ardent Comet to join them as they explore the manse, but helping the Exigent regain enough drive to act right away requires a Performance or Presence roll (Difficulty 5).

The Manse

In this scene, the characters explore the hidden manse under Volsorra, dealing with its guardians and discovering the building's backstory as they advance, until they reach the behemoth's cage and an inevitable confrontation with Shining Mulberry takes place, its

outcome determining the difference between triumph and ruin.

The structure itself stands as a remarkable example of First Age architecture, beautiful yet uncanny for just how removed from Creation's current era it looks. Like the veins of a buried giant, tubes carved out of the five magical materials cut through floors and walls alike, arranged in beautiful arboreal patterns hinting at the manse's creator's genius and artistry alike. Characters may make difficulty 2 Awareness or Sagacity rolls to discover the following information. Those with Wonder Crafting Initiation or 3 or more dots in either ability discover it automatically.

- Weeping Aurora, a famous Twilight Caste savant, built the manse during the First Age, a splendid masterwork even for the Solar's excellent standards.
- The manse, along with its functions and purpose, came to be after Weeping Aurora, along with her Circle, confronted Garlen and contrived a solution to the immortal behemoth's wrathful presence.
- By Weeping Aurora's own design, the manse's circular hallways take after the shape of a blooming rose, its "petals" opening just enough at certain points to progress inward. At its center, the behemoth's prison lies right below a balcony where its control artifact can be used to force orders into

the creature's mind and teleport it anywhere in Volsorra.

Manse defense automatons (p. 25) patrol the place, taught to treat anyone bearing Garlen's Pride as master while attacking intruders. Nevertheless, the automatons can be convinced of the characters' rightful presence: Their Resolve starts at four but is affected by a Major Loyalty Intimacy: Obvious Solars and Lunars (Ageless Fidelity). Once the Circle reaches the manse's center, they find Shining Mulberry waiting for them. In front of them, a metallic rose imbued with eternal heat — Garlen's Pride — grants power to the manse's main mechanism, eager to perform its function. In a desperate attempt to buy enough time for the process to finish, Shining Mulberry commands two automatons and the manse's chief guardian (p. 25) to attack the characters. In this scene, Shining Mulberry blocks any attempt to change her course of action as per the Resisting Influence rules (**Exalted: Essence** p. 134), potentially granting characters bonus dice equal to their extra successes if they succeed in a social influence action against her.

After the fight ends, the deceitful goddess loses her distinctive aplomb for the first time. Scared, angry, and cornered, Shining Mulberry readies to unleash Garlen against the Exalts once and for all. At this point, characters have the opportunity to convince Shining Mulberry to surrender, but it won't be easy; her innate determination and Major Virtue raise the silk moth goddess' Resolve to seven. Pointing out just how impulsive and reckless her current actions are proves effective through a Minor Discipline Principle tied to her image of self as an attentive and flawless planner, thus lowering her Resolve to five, but otherwise, Shining Mulberry refuses to admit defeat.

If characters convince the goddess to give up, they stop her plan, the Guild's aspiration, and ensure Garlen can't escape his cage, leading to the **What Comes Next** scene.

If the Exalts fail to persuade Shining Mulberry, however, the goddess uses Garlen's Pride one time too many. Deprived of maintenance since the Usurpation and never designed to be used by mid-rank gods in the first place, the artifact shatters into hundreds of red-hot petals, and the behemoth's prison collapses immediately after. A growl somewhere between laughter and relief precedes a triumphant roar right as The Lion Breaks Free.

The Lion Breaks Free

In this scene, the characters and Garlen confront each other for the last time. Centuries of imprisonment and the humiliation of being used as a puppet instilled a violent fury in the behemoth's molten heart. A terrible warrior from the day he was forged into Creation, Garlen craves vengeance against Shining Mulberry and the Exalts who imprisoned him. While the former is well within his paws, for the latter turning Volsorra into a charred wasteland will have to do.

As his first action, Garlen unleashes a roar that incinerates the manse's roof, opening a passage to the surface. Defense countermeasures spare those on the balcony from annihilation, although the feat destroys the mechanisms. The behemoth then looks at Shining Mulberry and, for the first time ever, deigns to speak to her:

"Little moth, you flew too close to the flame. Now watch as the very inferno you thought was yours to command devours your entire world."

REPAIRING GARLEN'S PRIDE

The process of restoring the behemoth's control artifact to functionality has the following parameters.

Time scale: One turn

Base obstacles: 5

Obstacles: Materials and tools (Difficulty 4); Artifact is heavily damaged (Difficulty 5); Damaged facility (Difficulty 5); Unique artifact without known analogs (Difficulty 4); Debris falls from above (3)

Advantages: Find and read Weeping Aurora's notes, granting a +1 dice bonus to all actions in the venture (1 success, maximum +5); A jolt of power binds Garlen for a while, reducing his dice pools for the next round (2 successes, maximum -5); Convince Shining Mulberry to help, adding a +2 success bonus for the rest of venture (4 successes); Improve the artifact, preventing future breakdowns regardless of user (4 successes); Alter the artifact, preventing anyone from using it to command Garlen out of the cage again (5 successes).

The behemoth then climbs outside, eager to unleash his wrath against the city. With centuries of careful work destroyed in a handful of minutes, Shining Mulberry collapses to the ground and weeps, unable to do anything else.

Without any directives to bind him, Garlen razes anything in his path to the ground. At this point, characters have several options to handle the situation. The following are but a few, possible regardless of the Circle's powers and connections:

- **They can take down Garlen.** Free and eager to face worthy opponents, the behemoth will fight to the death this time, but after his immortality brings him back to life, the creature's honor demands that he listen to whatever his triumphant opponents ask for. While he won't willingly return to his cage, Garlen makes a distinction between his long-dead jailors and the characters. He'll heed any request to leave peacefully, just as he'll

listen to more creative solutions like destroying one of Volsorra's factions or finding new purpose in becoming the satrapy's guardian.

- **They can persuade Garlen to stop**, referring to the "Influencing Garlen" sidebar (p. 12). Merely playing into Garlen's hatred for Shining Mulberry won't help this time, but offering the goddess' life as tribute to him — a brutal if effective decision — grants a three-success bonus to any Influence roll.
- **They can use the instruments of the manse to repair Garlen's control artifact** and force him back into his cage. This works as a crafting venture.

Once characters find a way to stop Garlen's destructive threat, the Circle's triumph takes them to **What Comes Next**.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Emerging victorious from the depths of the earth, the Circle stands as the uncontested heroes of the Garlen crisis. For better or worse, the fate of Volsorra lies within their hands: Wounded, betrayed, and at war with itself, the satrapy begs for guidance, a role the characters can claim for themselves — if they wish to do so.

The Realm, in the shape of Ragara Nisho, holds nothing more than an empty claim over the satrapy by the time the flames die out. Nisho will reorganize and summon help from the Blessed Isle, but he's in a position of weakness. Any attack — especially one with the rebellion's support — holds the potential to send him fleeing.

Exposed and bleeding, the rebels can do little to protect themselves against retaliation. Anyone wishing to re-establish the Realm's hegemony over Volsorra or install a brand-new order finds opportunities both to convince the rebellion to lay down their weapons or beat them into submission.

Mercenary forces and allies from other nations suffered a terrible defeat at the paws of Garlen, their numbers utterly decimated. For some, like the soldiers of Nightbloom slaughtered by the behemoth across his rampages, their sudden disappearance bears heavy consequences for their homelands.

Ardent Comet will remain in Volsorra if she lives, helping to rebuild and cheer up people for the

foreseeable future. Characters who earned her trust find a valuable friend in the enthusiastic Exigent, but anyone with a sincere desire to improve people's lives can count on her as an ally, potentially taking her as a Secondary Ally.

If Shining Mulberry still lives during the epilogue, the goddess has much to answer for. While far from redeemed, her surrender is real. She accepts whatever happens next with dour grace, wholly honest about her goals and the Guild's plans for the first time in several mortal lifetimes. If confronted with the pain she caused, Shining Mulberry has just as many chances to feel guilty and spend the rest of her existence making amends as she does to become bitter and eager to take revenge on the Circle, all depending on the characters' attitudes.

The fate of Garlen can change kingdoms. If imprisoned again, he makes for a powerful weapon. If convinced to become Volsorra's guardian, the behemoth's might and ferocity instill fear in all but the fiercest enemies. Free to roam Creation again, not even Garlen himself knows what happens next.

In any case, the events in Volsorra left a prosperous satrapy and the lands around it in an uncertain state. The new era Volsorra will walk into can be forged in bright ideals or blood — or both — but all it takes for the situation to descend into chaos is for another force to appear on the horizon, something Creation never lacks.

ANTAGONISTS

Enemies and potential allies are presented here along with some new and adjusted antagonist Qualities. Storytellers should feel free to make mechanical or narrative changes to better fit particularly martially inclined or otherwise focused groups. Similarly, Storytellers should add Intimacies as appropriate for their version of the adventure and their players' interests.

Ragara Nisho

Ragara Nisho prefers to act from a distance outside of social situations. He uses the Savant stat block (**Exalted: Essence** p. 331) with all his pools increased by one, his Resolve increased to three, Essence 2, and all the Advantages appropriate to a Dragon-Blooded Exalt. He has the Charms Fivefold Resonance Sense, Granite Curtain of Serenity, and Glorious Exalted Bolt (**Exalted: Essence** p. 231, 234, 208); if engaged in direct conflict with more experienced Exalted Circles, the Storyteller should add Charms as appropriate.

Talina and Yavhani Sor

The Sors use the Sovereign stat block (**Exalted: Essence** p. 332). If pressed into combat, they will focus on supporting actions such as Build Power to bolster their martially inclined defenders.

Garlen, the Lion Whose Roar Melts Iron

A terrifying behemoth imprisoned in the First Age, struggling against the magical compulsion still binding his will. As proud as he is powerful, Garlen will unleash violence and fire upon the world in revenge for his long imprisonment and magical manipulation unless someone can stop or redirect his rage.

Virtues: Courage/Justice

Primary Pool (12): Ruinous Might and Seeking Revenge

Secondary Pool (7): Discerning Lesser Concerns and Restrained Might

Tertiary Pool (4)

Essence: 4

Motes: 12

Health Levels: 15

Resolve: 4

Defense: 4

Hardness: 8

Soak: 7

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic: Garlen counts as a full heroic character for all purposes and can interrupt the initiative order to take actions before the players' characters.

Furious Dragon's Ire: Whenever Garlen is outnumbered, he may take additional turns, up to a number of turns equal to the characters in the opposing Circle, but he may not act twice in a row. When he starts an additional turn, reduce the duration of any multiple-round effects on this character by one round.

Immortal (Bound Beast): If reduced to zero Health Levels, Garlen reforms in his cage in the hidden manse or in the nearby wilderness if the manse is destroyed. Permanently slaying him requires extinguishing his inner flames, whether by immersing him in the Elemental Pole of Water to the far west, tricking him into drinking from the water of six Underworld rivers, or similar efforts and is generally beyond the scope of this adventure.

Impurity Burning Inner Fire: Garlen may reflexively spend 2 motes or one Health Level to remove effects imposed on him by Charms, spells, or other supernatural abilities on Step 1 of any of his actions.

Incandescent Rage: Garlen suffers wound penalties as penalties to his Soak instead of his actions.

Legendary Size: Garlen is gigantic. Extras cannot hurt him, and he cannot suffer more than one damage per turn from any attack unless supplemented by magic or from another creature of Legendary size. Mundane weapons lose all tags when used against him. Withering attacks by smaller individuals suffer a three-success penalty against him. Knockback, knockdown, and pull gambits increase their cost by three. Garlen always has dominance when in a grapple.

Looming (Garlen's Impatience): If Garlen hasn't suffered damage, been hit by an attack, or had his Hardness reduced to 1 by the end of a round, he reflexively makes a decisive attack augmented by The Roar That Melts Iron. If he has insufficient Power, he may pay up to his primary target's Hardness in Health Levels instead.

Army Toppling Roar: Garlen may spend 2 motes on Step 1 to turn his roar into an area of effect attack, targeting any characters within short range. He may increase the range to medium for another 2 motes.

The Roar That Melts Iron: Garlen spends 2 motes on Step 1 when making a Garlen's Roar attack. On Step 5 of a withering attack, the target's surroundings alight, causing a two damage environmental hazard that persists until it damages a character or Garlen uses this power again. On Step 5 of a decisive attack, the target's Soak is halved if it's 6 or higher or reduced by two if it's lower.

Weapons: Murderous Claws (+2 Accuracy, +2 Defense, +2 Damage, 2 Overwhelming, Artifact, Paired)

Garlen's Roar (+1 Accuracy, +3 Damage, 2 Overwhelming, Ranged)

Tactics and Advice

Garlen is incredibly powerful, nigh immortal, and knows it. He fearlessly engages, paying no mind to his wounds or potential danger. Especially in first encounters with an Exalted Circle, he will test different characters' defenses in turn, rapidly moving between foes. On subsequent encounters, he will focus on the most dangerous enemies first, splitting his attention between characters providing the most serious threat.

Warn players about Garlen's Looming effect, giving them a chance to prevent it from occurring. Similarly, make sure that players remember that gambits can be particularly useful in counteracting his high Soak and defensive abilities and that using Charms to modify their attacks allows them to do more than one damage to Garlen per attack due to Legendary Size.

Remember that running out of health levels won't normally kill player characters, and make it clear Garlen ignores enemies who have been taken out. On the other hand, if the fight is close, remind players that their characters can take dramatic injuries in order to stay in the fight (**Exalted: Essence** p. 144).

Against more combat-capable or tactically minded groups, feel free to have Garlen focus his attention more closely on particularly dangerous enemies. Against newer players or less combat-capable groups, continue alternating his attacks against combatants to keep any one player character from getting overwhelmed. Consider removing the soak-reducing effect of The Roar that Melts Iron.

Shining Mulberry, Goddess of the Silk Trade

An ambitious goddess plotting further ascension through her command of Garlen. Beautiful, cunning,

and ruthless, her plans threaten ever greater chaos and bloodshed in pursuit of her goals.

Primary Pool (12): Persuasion, Grace, and Silk Mastery

Secondary Pool (9): Local Knowledge, Self Defense, and Senses

Tertiary Pool (7)

Health Levels: 7

Essence: 4

Motes: 12

Resolve: 3

Defense: 5

Hardness: 6

Soak: 4

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Domain: Silk and Trade

Domain's Beneficence: Silk's Blessing: Spend 1 mote to weave strands of silk to aid a character, granting them a three-dice bonus to a relevant roll. If materialized, Shining Mulberry can spend an additional mote when aiding an ally with Build Power with Silk Mastery to tangle the target of their next attack in threads of silk, granting this bonus to the ally's attack.

Immaterial (Exalted: Essence p. 319): Shining Mulberry must materialize to directly affect combat beyond the use of Silk's Blessing.

Immortal (God) (Exalted: Essence p. 319)

Weapon:

Bright Needle and Endless Thread (+2 Accuracy, +1 Damage, Ranged, Artifact, Flexible, Piercing, Pulling)

Tactics and Advice

Shining Mulberry prefers to rely on others; early on in combat, she'll stay dematerialized, using Silk's Blessing to boost the actions of her allies. Should her allies become injured (or an enemy prove capable of hurting her while she's still dematerialized), she'll materialize and focus on supportive actions. This includes using Silk's Blessing's additional bonuses when building Power and also using Bright Needle and Endless Thread to pull enemies who prefer to fight from far away closer to allies who prefer to fight in melee (such as the automaton guards of the manse).

Ardent Comet of the Hallowed Night

The brave and compassionate Exalt of Ember Fountain, the Chosen of Fireworks, fights to protect the common people to whom she seeks to bring

happiness and joy. Her Charms and anima light up the sky, blazing displays that bring cheer to her friends and burning blindness to those who would hurt her allies.

Primary Pool (10): Combat, Fireworks, and Inspiration

Secondary Pool (8): Medicine and Senses

Tertiary Pool (5): Detecting Deception and Subtlety

Health Levels: 7

Essence: 2

Motes: 7

Resolve: 4

Defense: 5

Hardness: 3

Soak: 3

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic: Ardent Comet will normally be defeated at zero Health Levels but will accept a dramatic injury to fight on if innocents are directly threatened.

Light Up the Sky: Ardent Comet can always produce and set off fireworks as a single action. If at 2 anima or higher, she gains two successes when using fireworks to rally, inspire, or distract characters or battlegroups. At 10 anima, enemies within visual sight of Ardent Comet suffer -2 Defense and -2 successes on any attacks against other characters.

Excellency: Spend 1 mote. Add a four-dice bonus to a roll using her primary pool or three dice to her secondary pools.

The Greatest Show (Looming): If Ardent Comet is not successfully attacked, at the end of a round she spends 2 motes as a Step 1 reflexive action and sets off a fireworks display as a Build Power action with her primary pool. Both she and an allied battle group gain Power generated in this way.

Glorious Exalted Bolt (Resplendent Starburst Petals): Commit 1 mote on Step 1 to use the Glorious Exalted Bolt attack for the scene. Ardent Comet may spend 1 anima when making an attack to make a successful attack count as the *distract* gambit in addition to its normal effects.

Weapon:

Fuse Lighting Pole (+1 Accuracy, +1 Damage, +1 Defense, Overwhelming 1, Melee, Reaching, Disarming)

Resplendent Starburst Petals (+1 Accuracy, +3 Damage, Ranged (Medium), Artifact, Powerful)

Tactics and Advice

Ardent Comet will commit Glorious Exalted Bolt as

soon as she's able. She'll spend motes liberally in combat, boosting her attacks with her Excellency. If she's low on motes, she'll spend a round using Build Power to boost her allies instead. She focuses decisive attacks on enemies who target her mortal allies with their own attacks and will attempt to disarm or knock down particularly dangerous opponents if her side is having trouble hitting them.

Fangs of the Hungry

Young and impetuous, Fangs of the Hungry uses the stats of the Young Dynast (**Exalted: Essence** p. 332) with no Politics and Resolve 4, with all the Advantages appropriate to a Wood Aspect Dragon-Blooded Exalt. They wield a battered melon hammer (Heavy, Smashing, Two Handed) if roused to conflict. If engaged in direct conflict with more experienced Exalted Circles, the Storyteller should add Charms as appropriate.

Assassin Ambush!

Garrison Soldiers, Volsorra Guards, Guild Assassins, and the Rebels are all variations of the Soldier template (**Exalted: Essence** p. 331) with the following modifications:

- Garrison Soldiers fight in small squads; a number of Size 0 battle groups with regular Drill equal to half the number of player characters. They are armed with chopping swords and shields and will use chopping attacks liberally. Remember the bonus from Formation Fighting to their stats.
- Volsorra Guards come with a number of guards with the Extra tag equal to the number of player characters, led by a Champion (**Exalted: Essence** p. 330) with the Opportunistic Threat quality, all armed with straight swords. The guards will reflexively transfer all their Power to the Champion as long as they're in close range.
- If a group of Immaculate Monks is present, they are a Size 1 battle group with elite Drill, fighting with peerless martial arts (Light, Balanced weapons). They will attempt to distract or knock down the most dangerous foes present to provide openings for their allies.
- A number of Rebels equal to the number of player characters. They use the irregular combatant modifications to the Soldier template and replace the Formation Attack quality with the Deadly Ground Outnumber quality.
- A number of Guild Assassins equal to the player



characters appear clad as local soldiers, armed with Paired, Piercing knives. They replace Group Combat with Skullduggery, which they will use to gain concealment and make outmaneuver actions until they can launch Piercing attacks. Replace their qualities with Looming: Fade Away: If not hit by an attack or injured during a round, a Guild Assassin may reflexively move one range band and make a Skullduggery roll to create Concealment or Build Power at round's end.

Manse Guardians

Filigreed figures in humanoid shapes, their metallic forms are lit from within by jeweled lights that mirror the colors of the manse. The chief guardian towers over the others, as much an object of ancient art as automata, and increases all of its pools by one.

Primary Pool (8): Combat and Pursuit

Secondary Pool (5): Senses and Communication

Tertiary Pool (3)

Health Levels: 5 (10 for Chief Guardian)

Resolve: 4

Defense: 2

Hardness: 2 (5 for Chief Guardian)

Soak: 3

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Torrent of Inner Light: A Manse Guardian may pay up to their target's Hardness or a gambit's cost in Health Levels in place of Power. The Chief Guardian may pay with the other Manse Guardians' Health Levels.

Enormous (Chief Guardian): Withering attacks against the Chief Guardian suffer a two-success penalty. Knockback, knockdown, and pull gambits increase their cost by 1.

Oppressive 3: Enemies within close range of the Chief Guardian increase the difficulty of their Build Power actions by 3.

Weapon:

Metal Fists (+1 Accuracy, +1 Defense, +1 Damage, 1 Overwhelming, Smashing, Artifact [Chief Guardian Only])

Burning Gaze (+1 Accuracy, +1 Damage, 1 Overwhelming, Ranged, Powerful)

Tactics and Advice

Single-minded defenders of the manse, the Manse Guardians will burn through their own energy sources to fuel decisive attacks with Torrent of Inner Light against the most obviously dangerous targets. If unable to easily hurt powerful or tough enemies, the lesser guardians will attempt to reveal weakness or knockdown targets so the Chief Guardian can harm them. Against less dangerous foes, they will simply try to use knockback to remove them from the manse.



CHAPTER TWO

A Shadow Falls

When Creation was yet young, the Underworld was already ancient. Two realms separated by nature, tied together by the cycle of reincarnation, the passage of mortal souls from one life to the next. At the dawn of time, the gods and their Chosen won their Divine Revolution by means of the slaughter of their makers, who could not die. Transfixed in their moment of death, they fell into the Underworld, shaking its very foundations and forever changing the nature of death itself. Their corpse-bodies suffused the Underworld's lower reaches, becoming the caliginous Labyrinth where treasures and horrors are born from their dead dreams. Their death throes became the dreaded Whispers, which twisted sympathetic ghosts into nihilistic specters. Foremost among their servants are the Deathlords, ancient dead sworn to bring about Creation's end in exchange for fathomless power.

The action is set on the Jasmine Isles, a Western archipelago situated between the Great Western Archipelago and the rest of Creation. Prosperous and fertile, the islands of the archipelago have warred with one another in the past for dominance over the land but always united before common foes, negotiating a tenuous peace with the Realm. As the Scarlet Dynasty expanded westward over the past century through treaties and subjugation, they gradually isolated the Jasmine Isles from their Western cousins. This has left the Isles without proper allies to call on in crisis. Recent conflicts between the Isles have also seen their warrior ranks decimated even as a delicate truce has been reached. As the dead walk the isle and the ancestors no longer answer prayers, the atamans of Nightbloom, largest of the Jasmine Isles, have dispatched travelers to distant neighbors in search of mercenaries and heroes to provide aid.

An inauspicious land of beauty and decay, the Underworld encroaches upon the land of the living

SCENARIO CUSTOMIZATIONS

A Shadow Falls is as much a template as it is an adventure, providing a model for how to structure a defensive war against an invading force in an *Exalted: Essence* game. Some proposals on how to customize the scenario are included in the scenes below, with an eye toward injecting tension and altering the tone of the situation.

through deadly conflicts among the living and the will of the restless dead. Where the two realms are conjoined, Creation is transformed into shadowlands, places of death that touch all living things within their borders and allow the dead to walk among the living come nightfall. Nightbloom's eastern jungles, home to many of the island's shadowland groves, have grown hostile to the comings and goings of local people.

A Shadow Falls is a scenario for **Exalted: Essence** meant to introduce players to the conflicts between the living and dead in Creation, warfare, and conflict, as well as the perils of leadership. Characters, likely already somewhat established and experienced as Exalted heroes, will face the challenge of protecting others against Creation's dangers.

This scenario sees the player characters thrust into a position of importance to the defense of the Jasmine Isles against a Deathlord's invading forces. Characters will make significant use of ventures and the system for wars in **Exalted: Essence** over the course of this scenario and will make choices regarding how best to prepare Nightbloom and prosecute the conflict against the dead. The tone of this story can be one of optimism and heroism, but also one of fear, the grim realities of war, and the costs of making difficult choices.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

Here you'll find a list of the characters holding a central role in the scenario's events, along with a brief description and their Virtues and Intimacies to guide how to roleplay them. For their traits, refer to the Antagonist section on p. 40.

Atamans Nerul, Gareda, and Agha Janak are the foremost leaders of the assembly.

Ataman Nerul (he/him)

A seasoned and personable warrior, Nerul is young and unused to rulership. After his mother's passing, he inherited the role of Ataman of Narra, Nightbloom's largest settlement, to fanfare as he acquitted himself well during the last rain war. With many of Narra's warriors lost during the rain war, he finds the forces

he would marshal to defend against Fair Folk raiders woefully inadequate, and the other atamans of the Jasmine Isles dismiss the issue of the restless dead as a concern of Nightbloom's alone. With mostly youthful and unseasoned warriors at his command, he is eager to make his personal mark as a leader, to silence those who doubt him, and to prove a worthy successor to his mother as a great hero of his people.

VIRTUES

Courage (Major Virtue). Nerul dreams of living up to his mother's legacy as a great hero of the Jasmine Isles, reuniting the atamans fractured by the rain war.

Loyalty (Family, Minor Virtue). Nerul grieves his mother's death and cares deeply for the protection of his family, including the many branch families living in outlying settlements on Nightbloom.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Courage): "I must demonstrate that I am a worthy successor to my mother."

Minor Tie (Loyalty): Mother (Mourning)

Δqha Janak (he/him)

The owner of much of western Nightbloom's cash crop-producing fields, the elderly Janak never earned the respect of his people as a fighter, but none can gainsay his wealth. Acting as an advisor to Nerul, he has provided the funds to hire mercenaries and rally

heroes to the cause of Nightbloom's defense. While he does not wish to see his home fall to the restless dead, his greatest concern is the protection of his material wealth from the caprices of war while spending the least silver possible.

VIRTUES

Ambition (Major Virtue). Protect my wealth.

Wonder (Minor Virtue). Janak is ever curious about life beyond the Jasmine Isles, hosting foreigners and entertaining ideas from far shores.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Ambition): His Fields (Pride)

Minor Tie (Wonder): Foreigners (Fascination)

Δtaman Gareda (she/her)

A taciturn elder warrior and one of the few surviving veterans of the rain wars, Gareda and her people fled their home settlement of White Garden after it was overrun by a night raid of the dead. Always devoted to the ancestor cult of the Jasmine Isles, Gareda believes the Deathlord's forces signal their displeasure with the dwindling offerings made by Jasmine Islanders since the rain wars. To make matters worse, White Garden fought against Nerul's mother during the conflict, and now she finds herself and her people indebted to the same settlement they fought against previously. Gareda seeks congress with the honored ancestors to bring an

DEATHLORDS TO CHOOSE FROM

The Storyteller may decide to invent her own Deathlord or leave the one behind the invading forces undetailed, but a few suggestions are provided below, along with suggestions of how this may change their tactics during the war.

The Silver Prince rules the necrarchy of Skullstone, where the dead rule over the living and are celebrated for it. Skullstone makes widespread use of walking dead as laborers; the majority of the forces deployed during the war will be walking dead with average Drill. He will direct his agents to sway the ancestors and Agha Janak to their side to avoid further damage to commerce. Ultimately, he will seek a peaceful resolution that sees Nightbloom made a subject of Skullstone on terms favorable to him.

The Walker in Darkness commands a mercenary army of the living and the dead and offers dark bargains in exchange for his services. The majority of the forces deployed during the war will be war ghosts with veteran Drill. Should the Walker in Darkness direct the invasion, he will have been invited by Ataman Gareda to take vengeance on the winners of the rain wars. As a traitor, Gareda relays information to the invaders through ancestral prayer and will betray the player characters during the Final Confrontation scene.

The Black Heron is a peerless assassin of the Underworld and sends forth her deathknights for her amusement and to fulfill their own ambitions. She offers minimal large-scale support: The majority of the forces deployed during the war will be hungry ghosts with poor Drill. However, she dispatches ghostly assassins to cause chaos alongside the deathknights. Treat these as additional Nemissary Champions with Apparition, Immaterial, Immortal (Ghost), and Nemissary's Ride (*Exalted: Essence* p. 339) qualities.

end to the war, but she knows this will not come without sacrifice.

VIRTUES

Loyalty (Ancestors, Major Virtue). The blessings of Gareda's ancestors saved her life during the rain wars; their silence now pains her.

Discipline (Minor Virtue). Gareda is prepared to do what is necessary to bring an end to the conflict, even to work with her former enemies.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Loyalty): Ancestors (Piety)

Minor Principle (Discipline): "I will swallow my pride to save White Garden."

The Deathlord

Before the ancestors ceased to answer their descendants' prayers, they warned of a ghost-emperor's coming from the bleak waters of the Underworld. Aboard ships crewed by the dead, the Deathlord's forces have arrived through the shadowlands of Nightbloom's eastern mountains and spread the taint of death to the settlement of White Garden through the mass slaughter of its residents. Though they do not appear in the story proper, their presence looms large in the background of the invading forces, informing their behavior.

The Knight Drowned in Silence (she/her)

A Moonshadow Caste Abyssal. Once a warrior-hero during her mortal life, she was betrayed on the battlefield and tossed from the rocks into the tumultuous seas of the rainy season. There, the Deathlord came to her and offered her a bargain: To live again, she must slay the world. Drowned in Silence returns to her homeland in the Jasmine Isles as a conqueror, leading a Circle of deathknights to invade the islands by first negotiating with the ancestors. The Knight's foremost goal is vengeance on the one she believes responsible for her death, and she won't hesitate to destroy those who get in her way. However, she seeks to curtail the unrestrained violence of her Circlemates, as her heart still yearns for her mortal home.

VIRTUES

Ambition (Revenge, Major Virtue). Drowned in Silence wants to avenge herself against her killer. Only then will she allow herself to truly die.

Justice (Minor Virtue). The Knight delivers death to those she thinks most deserving: her betrayer, the

mighty, and the wealthy. She takes little joy in the slaughter of innocents.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Ambition): "My duties are mere necessity; I live for my vengeance."

Minor Tie (Justice): Family (Strained love)

The Dancer Clad in Cerements and Blood (he/him)

An Abyssal of the Dusk Caste, he is an imperious murderer who dreams of ruling over his own dominion of the living and the dead. A desperate raider from a distant island interior who exalted during his execution, he indulges in the excesses of being a prince of darkness, attended by corpses enslaved through necromancy who carry his panoply before he joins battle. He cares little for the Jasmine Isles or their power struggles, instead seeking a worthy foe to test his soulsteel dual daiklaves against. Unbeknownst to the Knight Drowned in Silence, the Deathlord has promised him the charnel seat of Nightbloom should their conquest be successful. If he believes her orders will thwart his ambitions, he is liable to betray them. A graceful and deadly fighter, his sense of restraint comes not from the chivalry of death; he merely savors the opportunity for the most dramatic contests of skill. Should he meet a warrior he respects, he will seek to win them to his side with offers of the Underworld's riches that dwarf any reward the Islanders may give.

VIRTUES

Wonder (Major Virtue). The Dancer seeks worthy opponents on the battlefield as his greatest joy; all other things come second.

Ambition (Conquer Nightbloom, Minor Virtue). The Dancer does not enjoy ruling over the dead; he'd much rather command and terrify the living.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Wonder): "I will only show my true strength to a worthy opponent when the time is right."

Minor Tie (Ambition): The Knight Drowned in Silence (Disdain)

Storm Dragon (she/her)

A Dragon-Blooded necromancer of the Air Aspect, Storm Dragon is an ancient ally of the Deathlord's who nears the end of her natural lifespan, now seeming

WHO KILLED HER?

The Knight Drowned in Silence is the mother of Ataman Nerul and a former warrior-hero of Nightbloom. Possibilities for her killer are given below:

Agha Janak may have ordered her death to ensure a more pliable ataman would lead Narra for the sake of his business partners. If Janak is her killer, the Knight seeks to destroy Janak's fields and wealth before she takes his life.

Ataman Gareda was an enemy of the Knight, but she nonetheless betrayed her during a truce on the battlefield. Turning White Garden into a shadowland was just the beginning of her vengeance. She'll turn Gareda's own ancestors against her before she meets her end.

Ataman Nerul is undoubtedly the most tragic killer, betraying his mother in a fit of pride or ambition. When confronted by the Knight and accused, he may very well admit to his crime of matricide and go willingly to his death in single combat with her. If Nerul is her killer, the Knight's proxies torment him — undead moaning of his guilt and ancestors disdaining his presence — but the Moonshadow will avoid him until the Final Confrontation.

Someone else may have killed the Knight, including another character of Storyteller invention, or no one significant. The Knight may falsely suspect her son of his betrayal, leading to a tragic confrontation at the story's end.

more corpse-like than human, with crackling lightning in her eyes. Though she lacks the Mordant Clangor's mastery of the Second Circle of necromancy, her skill for reanimating the dead to fight for her is significant, and she terrifies her enemies through spells to call the death-wracked tempests of the Underworld to Creation's shores. Storm Dragon loathes the deathknights she is forced to fight alongside. If she believes it possible to sabotage the invasion and undermine the deathknights' standing with the Deathlord without jeopardizing her own, she won't hesitate to do so.

VIRTUES

Ambition (I will outlive the Scarlet Empress herself, Major Virtue). Storm Dragon hopes to use necromancy to extend her life indefinitely, and she sees the might of the Deathlord as the best path to realize that goal.

Discipline (Minor Virtue). Storm Dragon tempers her hatred for the upstart Anathema she fights alongside with a soldier's focus on her goals.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Ambition): "I will survive this conflict and all others to achieve my goal."

Minor Tie (Ambition): Deathknights (Hatred)

The Mordant Clangor of Bells (she/her)

A deathknight of the Daybreak Caste, the Mordant Clangor exults in her status as one of Death's

Lawgivers, joyfully wielding the power of necromancy to enslave ghosts with the ringing of her soulsteel bell and hammer, the Carillon of Far Shores. Talkative even during pitched battle, she shares demoralizing secrets and intimate knowledge wrung from the ghosts she's enslaved when she does battle with their descendants. Nightbloom's shadowland ancestors fear the Mordant Clangor, clinging to the Drowned Knight's advocacy. Clangor follows the Drowned Knight for the sake of deathly etiquette; she holds no real loyalty to her comrades.

VIRTUES

Wonder (Major Virtue). Mordant Clangor takes joy in the necromantic terrors she unleashes against the living and in wringing secrets from ghosts bound by her necromancy.

Courage (Minor Virtue). As she believes she has died once before, what does the Abyssal need to fear from death?

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Courage): "Unleashing my power is my goal; I leave strategy to the others."

Minor Tie (Wonder): Nightbloom's Ancestors (Sadistic amusement)

No-Face (he/him)

A nemissary champion and ghostly servant of the Deathlord, the Mordant Clangor of Bells has stolen his ability to speak and torn his face from his ghostly

OTHER NEMISSARY CHAMPIONS

The deathknights may be supported by as many nemissary champions as the Storyteller desires. They use No-Face's characteristics but may possess different backstories that have drawn them into the Deathlord's service.

The Decorous Seneschal is a theatrical nemissary, possessing the corpses of islanders to fight in a taunting, agile manner. His style of speech is elaborate, and his demeanor toward the deathknights is obsequious.

Ashen Wind was burned to death, and every corpse she possesses begins to decay to resemble the burns that tormented her in life. She sets fire to farms and enemies in battle, for every fire she starts offers her relief from the ghostly echo of her pain.

corpus. He fights as a faceless warrior, possessing a suit of ancient Shogunate armor rendered in black metal, torn and broken over centuries of warfare in life and death. Despite his lack of features, any who face him can tell he does not fight of his own will.

VIRTUES

Loyalty (The Mordant Clangor of Bells, Major Virtue). No-Face is bound by necromantic magic to devote his service to the Abyssal.

Compassion (Minor Virtue). No-Face was a warrior-saint in life, and he finds ways to stay his blade as a quiet act of rebellion.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Loyalty): The Mordant Clangor of Bells (Compelled loyalty)

Minor Principle (Compassion): "I slow my blade just enough that some may escape without my mistress's notice."

Honored Kaginam (he/him)

A revered ancestor-saint of Nightbloom, it's said Kaginam's sails brought him and his family to Nightbloom when the island was but ruins and nature after the Great Contagion. Unlike many of his fellows,

he has not been captured by the promise-rituals of the Knight Drowned in Silence nor by the ghost-binding of the Mordant Clangor of Bells, but still he does not come to aid the living. Trade with islands embracing the Immaculate Philosophy has been restricted, and many of Nightbloom's merchants have forsworn the ancestor cult to do business. Gravely offended by their disrespect, Kaginam's pride as one of the great dead prevents him from seeking the aid of the living, but with his help, the ancestors seduced by the Moonshadow's offerings might be convinced to turn against Death's Lawgivers.

VIRTUES

Justice (Major Virtue). Kaginam sustains his existence off the deeply held belief that his wisdom guides his descendants and that they reward him with prayer and offerings in recompense.

Compassion (Minor Virtue). Kaginam is prideful, but beneath his pride is a deep love of what Nightbloom has become.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Justice): "Proper offerings will restore order between the living and the dead, nothing less."

Minor Tie (Compassion): Nightbloom (Love)

SCENE MAP

The following section includes a short description of the scenario's scenes. Bear in mind the scenes are meant to be used as guidelines, providing a general direction to follow rather than a strict, exhaustive structure where each scene must be played through

as written. By nature, the Exalts are powerful and versatile, able to approach different scenarios in ways the Storyteller may not anticipate. There is no right way to approach this material, just the way that works best for the group. The events of *A Shadow Falls* are separated



into three acts, **I: A Statement of Intent**, **II: Preparing for War**, and **III: The Siege of Nightbloom**.

- **I: A Statement of Intent - Sunset Arrival:** At the start of Act I, the characters arrive in Narra as the sun nearly sets on its harbor. They're led to the ataman's palace to answer Nerul's call for heroes. This scene introduces Nightbloom and Narra in particular, to help give a sense of what they're fighting for. Go to **Nightfall Attack**.

- **Nightfall Attack on Narra:** A confrontation in Narra's streets that introduces the characters to their enemies and the types of challenges they'll face while defending Nightbloom against the dead. The attack is led by one of the deathknights, announcing their intent to siege Narra soon. Go to **Confrontation of Words**.

- **Confrontation of Words:** The characters meet with the war council to discuss what the priorities for the conflict will be and who should lead Nightbloom's defenders. This scene offers the opportunity for characters to socially influence Narra's important figures and to volunteer one

among them to lead Nightbloom's defenders into war. Go to **II: Preparing for War**.

- **II: Preparing for War:** In Act 2, the characters must act to prepare Narra for the impending invasion and siege. They may choose between any of three scenes to gather forces, prepare the city, and warn folks about the oncoming danger. Go to **Readying Defenses**, **Knowing Thy Enemy**, or **Winning Hearts & Minds** as the players choose.

- **Readying Defenses:** The characters have time to fortify Narra against the coming siege. They can rally troops, recruit soldiers, construct and fortify defenses, and place people in command of troops as a way of contributing to Nightbloom's defenses in non-violent ways. If this is the last task, go to **The War Begins**.

- **Knowing Thy Enemy:** The invading forces are not well understood. The characters may perform an investigation venture to uncover more details about the enemy, including details about the fighting force they command, their tactics, and their disposition. If this is the last task, go to **The War Begins**.

- **Winning Hearts & Minds:** While the soldiers prepare to defend Nightbloom, the locals are terrified of the dead. The characters have a chance to rally the villagers and ensure their loyalty and cooperation during the fighting in this scene. If this is the last task, go to **The War Begins**.

- **III: The Siege of Nightbloom – The War Begins:** The deathknight leads an army of undead warriors on an attack against Nightbloom. This is handled as a warfare venture, where the characters have a chance to play out dramatic scenes to sway the outcome of the war over days and weeks. The completion of the warfare venture leads to

the climactic battle with the Deathlord's forces, go to **The Final Confrontation**.

- **The Final Confrontation:** In either the stone walls of White Garden or in the streets of Narra, the player characters engage the enemy Circle in a final confrontation while their soldiers and undead forces clash in the backdrop. The opposition in this fight is challenging and may even defeat the players, but that can lead to interesting outcomes, too, without death on the table. When the sun next rises on the Jasmine Isles, their future will have fundamentally changed.

KEY SCENES

This section describes each important scene of the scenario in detail, providing indications for the Storyteller on how to run and connect them throughout the adventure.

I: A Statement of Intent

In Act I, the characters arrive in Narra and learn that not only are the dead a threat to Nightbloom, but also that Ataman Nerul's call for heroes could not have come at a better time. A Deathlord intends to take the isles, and Nightbloom is their first target.

Sunset Arrival

In this initial scene, the characters arrive in the harbor of Narra, the largest settlement on Nightbloom, greatest of the Jasmine Isles. Narra is an old city, a mixture of ancient buildings from the long-fallen Dragon-Blooded Shogunate made from extremely durable stonework to more recent dwellings, stilted bamboo houses with tall, pointed roofs that cool the interiors even in the warm seasons. The people walking the streets stare openly at the arrival of foreigners. If any of the characters possess large artifact weapons, bear moonsilver tattoos, or display other obvious signs of their Exalted power, they quickly attract a crowd even as a young warrior finds them to try to lead them to Ataman Nerul's palace.

The people of Narra are friendly and lively despite the call for mercenaries and heroes to the city, but when asked by the characters or overheard talking, fear of war is on the minds of many residents. Many share that they lost loved ones, especially experienced warriors,

during the rain wars of the previous years: civil conflicts between the various atamans of the Jasmine Isles disputing over territory and the distribution of gifts under the economic pressure of the Realm.

Few will speak of the restless dead openly, but crowds gather at shrines to hero-ancestors on street corners, praying and making meager offerings. Characters who possess Embassy or Sagacity may be able to discern from the conversation that resource shortages have become a growing issue in the islands.

A *Shadow Falls* assumes the characters have already formed a Circle at the time of play and developed sufficient reputation to receive an invitation from Nightbloom's leading atamans to provide aid. If this is not the case, individual characters may have arrived in Narra for a variety of reasons and can either come together to travel as a group to Ataman Nerul's palace, or the scene can begin in medias res with the characters being introduced at the palace.

Ataman Nerul's palace is among the largest Shogunate-era structures still surviving in Narra, masterfully redecorated with patterned textiles and wooden furnishings put together using careful joinery. In the main hall, Ataman Nerul hosts an impressive banquet, surrounded by atamans from across the Jasmine Isles. As the characters arrive, the names given to their warrior-guide are announced, along with famed deeds known to the islanders (and falsehoods if the characters or others embellish their reputation). Quickly, they become the life of the party.

Allow the characters the opportunity to be celebrated for their Exalted might here. The people of

Narra pay no mind to the Anathema of the Immaculate Philosophy, and even unsettling champions like the Liminal Exalted still receive a lively welcome. A host of minor ataman introduce themselves as well.

Nerul speaks to the characters collectively, enjoining them to join the banquet and partake freely. He tries to socially influence the characters, rolling seven dice to instill a Minor Tie of Friendship to himself in each of them.

In between the introductions, one of the characters is approached by **Agha Janak**, who introduces himself and begins to inquire after their motivation for accepting Nerul's invitation. Janak rolls eight dice to read intentions and discern the targeted character's motive for answering the call to action.

Ataman Gareda remains a surly presence, avoided by the other atamans at the banquet. She drinks and mourns the lives lost in White Garden. If pressed, she rudely states that the Exalted have come too late to save her home and that they drink over their corpses. Her words sour the mood of those listening in.

Once the scene reaches a natural conclusion, or the opportunity comes to interrupt it, the warrior-guide who led the characters to the palace returns to alert the gathered leaders to an attack in the settlement. Go to **Nightfall Attack on Narra**.

Nightfall Attack on Narra

When the characters arrive on the streets of Narra, they find it overrun with war ghosts led by The Knight Drowned in Silence and her cronies. A granary owned by Agha Janak is burning, and people are screaming as the dead gleefully attack the few soldiers who are attempting to fight them off.

The forces here are looking to make a statement, but they are prepared to fight. They want to rile up the civilians, destroy some buildings, and deliver a message of intent. When Drowned in Silence sees the Exalts,

she lets out a deafening proclamation: *By the next full moon, Nightbloom will fall to the dead.*

Drowned in Silence and the other Abyssals are not looking to engage the characters here. The war ghosts form a deep barrier to them, and if the characters look to be advancing at any point on their position, they will fall back and leave the ghosts on their own.

The characters have three main objectives in this scene that they should be focused on. Make it clear that all of these things are happening simultaneously, and they can only focus on one at a time as a group and may need to split their attention.

- **Drive off the enemy.** A battle group of hungry ghosts led by one of their number is attacking the city. The war ghosts are implacable, and the soldiers cannot turn them away on their own.
- **Defend the vulnerable.** A panicking group of civilians is nearby. Treat them either as individual extras or a Size 1 battle group. They will be subject to attacks by the enemies; characters should seek to drive them off. Terrifying civilians and slaughtering them are part of the objectives of the Deathlord's forces.
- **Stop the destruction.** The Deathlord's forces set fire to a granary. It's clear that letting it get destroyed will be a huge blow to Agha Janak and his ability to fund Ataman Nerul's warfare efforts. Defeating the battle group that is feeding the fire will prevent it from burning completely.

After three rounds of combat, if they haven't inflicted significant harm to the civilians, caused destruction, or incapacitated any of the players, then Drowned in Silence and her Circle retreat from the fight, regardless of the character's actions.

Portray the damage caused even if they don't manage to accomplish any of their goals. Civilians are terrified, the people sustained casualties both major and

PURPOSEFUL SKIRMISHES

Nightfall Attack on Narra is a template for confrontations that can occur throughout the scenario. In each one, the essential ingredients are the enemy combatants, the danger they represent to the vulnerable, and their objective in initiating a battle. Each battle should have a kind of purpose to it, though the answer may be obscure sometimes when it comes to the Deathlords. Figuring out their objective for the fight is the first step, however, as it frames the rest of the confrontation. An objective is something that should take one of the NPCs at least one move action to reach, and they may be required to perform a simple action to complete the objective on their next turn, giving players the opportunity to stop it. Example objectives include burning fields, demolishing homes, raising corpses as zombies, performing executions, and more. Opportunities to insert the Attack on Narra will be noted in each scene sequence.

minor, the dead are frightening, and more. The relief is only temporary, and as they retreat, the Deathlord's forces make it clear this is only the first taste.

Having defended Narra for the moment, the characters return to the palace for the next scene. Go to **Confrontation of Words**.

Confrontation of Words

Once reconvened, the group needs to elect a war leader. Ataman Nerul proposes he should act as war leader, with the characters as his liaisons, but Ataman Gareda challenges this assertion. Ataman Nerul believes Narra is at the heart of the siege, and therefore he should nominally oversee the war party. The Circle did arrive at his behest, by the way. Ataman Gareda instead believes that the Shadowlands have overtaken White Garden, and the invaders are now based there. She has a vested interest in restoring her home and should be the war leader. Agha Janak is neutral on the situation, though if the characters were able to save his granary in the previous scene, he throws his support behind them.

This scene is designed to be a social encounter using social influence actions. The characters can choose to support either Ataman Nerul or Gareda or propose one of their own as the war leader. The atamans attempt to influence the players' characters towards their own goals. The scene breaks down into the following two actions:

- **The atamans convince the Circle.** Both Nerul and Gareda work to convince the characters of their own personal goals. They want the Exalts' support in the coming battle, so they need them to go along with their plan of who the war leader is. While they're rolling against character dice pools, they are attempting to court them to their side rather than compel their choice; they will honor the decision the characters make.
- **The Exalts convince the atamans.** The assembly is unsure of who to support and disagree about the right course of action. If the characters have determined what they want to do, they can convince the assembly to support them. They can choose to support either ataman or one of their own number as war leader in this cause. This may come after the atamans have had a chance to sway the Exalts to their position.

Try to keep the rolling in this scene focused and purposeful. Give opportunities for characters to read intentions to learn the Intimacies and Virtues of the characters participating, and limit the number of social

PURPOSEFUL CONVERSATIONS

Confrontation of Words is a template for social influence scenes that can occur throughout the scenario, with other NPCs in place of the atamans. It can be used when a local Narraite headman advocates for his people to remain in their village during **Readying the Defenses**, for example, or when speaking to the ancestors at the shadowland's edge during **Knowing Thy Enemy**. In every social encounter, both the players and the NPCs should have goals that they're both seeking to accomplish, and once they've clearly succeeded or failed, the scene ends. Don't use the social influence rules for unimportant social encounters or for scenes of casual conversation.

influence rolls made by either players or NPCs to 3-5 rolls before allowing the scene to elapse.

The characters have received the input of the assembly, and go to **Act II: Preparing for War**.

II: Preparing for War

The characters have a little less than a month to prepare Nightbloom for the upcoming siege. This should be played out as a series of dramatic scenes or ventures, with a scene as an interval representing a few days to a week of time. This means that they are pressed for time and must decide how to focus their efforts. The characters may choose to split their efforts over multiple scenes or redo a single scene more than once to get additional benefits from the type of preparation they choose.

Give the players the full scope of what each of these scenes allows for and what benefits they may get from them in the coming war.

The player character Circle may very well be the best equipped to lead Narra's defense, however, if no characters have appropriate abilities for one of the preparatory ventures, they can instead allow the locals to take the lead. **Agha Janak** and **Ataman Gareda** can provide seven-die actions for the initial ventures, while **Ataman Nerul** is prepared to lead the combined forces. The outcomes of dramatic scenes involving the player characters will prove critical to the success of the war, increasing Nerul's dice pools to put him in competition with the opposition. If Gareda or Janak are befriended by the player characters, they can bolster their actions with teamwork or relevant charms.

Characters looking for other allies or potential sources of information can also come across Honored Kaginam. Characters who persuade him to help despite

his unhappiness with the living to gain his aid via a teamwork bonus during [bold]Knowing the Enemy[/bold] or [bold]Hearts and Minds[/bold] scenes. However, if characters invest time and effort into persuading the locals to embrace veneration and trade with their dead relatives once more, he will also aid in direct warfare.

Once the characters have gone through three ventures to prepare Nightbloom for the siege, go to **Act III: The Siege of Nightbloom**.

Readying the Defenses

The characters can ready Narra for war. This involves fortifying buildings, crafting defensive structures, finding soldiers, training conscripts, and getting everyone to work together.

This is a venture with three obstacles, with an interval of a scene representing between days and a week of effort on the part of the characters. Narra's military is scattered: Warriors returned home to the sides of individual atamans since the last rain war and must be rallied if there is to be victory. Choose three obstacles from the options below and an appropriate advantage based on the venture's goal.

Common Ability rolls: Craft (fortification), Embassy (negotiations), War (organization), Presence (inspiration)

Obstacle Options: Training conscripts in a short timeframe (Difficulty 5), Hiring mercenaries (Difficulty 3), Seeking spirit allies (Difficulty 6), City fortification (Difficulty 4), Countryside fortification (Difficulty 7), Organizing inexperienced command (Difficulty 5), Organizing mercenaries (Difficulty 3), Settling disagreements (Difficulty 4)

Possible advantages: Increase Drill of recruited battle group by one level (4 successes, maximum +2 Drill); fortify Narra, granting two bonus successes on the first *ambush* action taken in the warfare venture (5 successes); fortify the outlying area, granting one bonus success on all *back to the sea* actions taken in the warfare venture (5 successes); obtain the service of a leader with the stats of a Champion (**Exalted: Essence** p. 330) to lead a unit of troops (4 successes); or even an Outcaste Dragon-Blooded (6 successes, only once).

Possible Consequences: Triggering a social or physical confrontation, angering local Narrites, offending the ancestors, letting information leak to the enemy.

During this sequence of dramatic venture scenes, the characters will be asked to decide if they should defend the outlying villages or concentrate their defenses on Narra itself. If Narra is fortified, it's easier to defend it



when **The War Begins**, but Narra may suffer in the long term from famine, and those who refuse to leave will be left to the mercy of the dead. If the outlying villages are fortified, they are more difficult to defend, but it will make **Winning Hearts & Minds** easier and may mean that Narra sees less destruction to its vital resources.

These dramatic scenes can be interrupted by physical or social confrontations using the **Nightfall Attack on Narra** and **Confrontation of Words** as templates. If this is done, consider granting players a free advantage or additional benefit from the venture mechanics



to provide an additional reward for resolving the issue that way.

Knowing Thy Enemy

The Exalts may travel to White Garden to investigate the Deathlord's forces, allowing them to discover their disposition and nature. Not much is known about the Abyssals leading the forces or why the Deathlord is attempting to take over Nightbloom. Learning their motivations, numbers, and how well they are fortified are invaluable to the upcoming war.

This is a venture with three obstacles, with an interval of a scene representing between hours and days' worth of effort on the part of the characters. Choose three obstacles from the options below and an appropriate advantage based on the venture's goal.

Common Ability rolls: Awareness (Investigation), Navigation (Tracking), Sagacity (Analysis), Stealth (Reconnaissance)

Obstacle Options: Approaching unnoticed (Difficulty 3), Infiltrating the dead (Difficulty 7; Difficulty 3 for Liminals, Abyssals, or others who are

convincingly unliving), What is the nature of the enemy (Difficulty 4), Determining the avenue of attack (Difficulty 5), Who leads them? (Difficulty 5)

Possible advantages: Understanding of the zombies' weaknesses, reducing the Soak of enemy war ghosts by one when deployed in battle (4 successes); understanding of the ancestors' anguish, granting a two-dice bonus to influence actions or attempts to free them from necromantic control (3 successes); learning the deathknights' abilities or natures, granting knowledge of one of their Intimacies or Virtues (3 successes); finding the route they will take for attack, granting a two-success bonus on the first *sabotage* action taken in the war (5 successes)

Possible Consequences: Getting caught in a skirmish, revealing too much to the enemy, loss of scouting forces, attracting a deathknight's attention.

During these scenes, the characters must approach the enemy forces either personally or at a remove, balancing risk with the information gained from it. If they focus on analyzing the enemy's forces, they put themselves or their spies at more immediate risk, while a more distant approach may miss important details about their enemy's nature. Scenes such as a variation on **Nightfall Attack on Narra** may interrupt character efforts but also provide the opportunity to automatically progress milestones (such as by trapping and interrogating/inspecting undead attackers or trading banter and gaining insight into deathknight leaders).

Winning Hearts & Minds

The characters must secure the cooperation of Narra's people, reassuring Narraites about their fear of the dead and preventing defections in the face of The Knight Drowned in Silence's call to turn against the city-state.

This is a venture with three obstacles, with an interval of a scene representing somewhere between hours and days of effort on the part of the characters. Choose three obstacles from the options below and an appropriate advantage based on the venture's goal.

Common Ability rolls: Embassy (protocol), Presence (reassurance), Performance (encouragement)

Obstacle Options: Instilling belief in the possibility of success (Difficulty 4), Overcoming fear of the dead (Difficulty 5), Directing stragglers to the city (Difficulty 4), Convincing bitter ancestors to aid the living (Difficulty 6)

Possible advantages: Drum up volunteers and collaborators, granting a tertiary Merit in Command,

Contacts, or Followers for the story (3 successes); gaining an introduction to influential people, gaining a two-dice bonus on all venture rolls involving that group of Narraites (3 successes); gain valuable information about enemy movements from the locals, granting a two-dice bonus on Knowing Thy Enemy actions or all *espionage* actions in the coming war (4 successes)

Possible Consequences: Anger an important local leader, drive ancestors into the arms of the enemy, become targeted by enemy assassins, inspire locals with more zeal than sense to attempt to directly assail the enemy.

Characters may choose to sway important members of Narra's communities and allow them to direct their people, or they may attempt to sway the masses directly. Characters may even reach out to free Narrite ghosts that have so far avoided the conflict. Many are unhappy with their treatment by the living but could be moved to help their descendants and mortal countrymen.

II: The Siege on Nightbloom

Before the full moon, the dead will attack Nightbloom. This action takes place all across the island, with the key locations being Narra and White Garden. The siege is an all-out war and not something the Exalts can deal with via a single dramatic scene or set of actions. Even if the Circle could make their way into the enemy camp and destroy its leaders, the thousands of war ghosts would continue their attack until the last one was destroyed. Instead, this is handled in two phases: the war itself and the final confrontation against the Abyssal Circle.

As before, the war is handled as a venture, with the climax being a dramatic scene.

The War Begins

The dead flood into Nightbloom using White Garden as their entry point. The enemy forces have held the city for months and now travel the countryside to Narra. The characters can try to overtake the army before they reach Narra, pushing them back to White Garden or defending Narra against the rising tide of dead. Either way, open warfare leads to skirmishes and fights between Nightbloom's defenders and the army of the dead.

The war is tracked as an opposed war venture. Each roll represents weeks of skirmishing and conflict, driving toward the inevitable final confrontation, which will be affected by the results of the venture. These are

represented by scenes with six obstacles to overcome. Each roll is a punctuation on a dramatic scene in which the characters can choose to take actions to assist their side of the war. Determine the tactic the Exalts choose, play out any dramatic scenes, and the results add successes towards the final war result.

The following are the various tactics and dice pools for the enemy commanders. The enemy commander for each tactic is assumed to be The Knight Drowned in Silence rolling a 14-die pool unless otherwise specified. The players can choose to use any of these tactics as many times as they want to overcome each obstacle in the war venture, except in cases where the tactic lists a limit.

These scenes assume a high-level, zoomed-out view, where we see the results of weeks of back and forth between the warring armies. If players want to devote more time during a session to resolving a scene, let them; if they enjoy spectacular success or suffer dire failure during such a scene, count that as a success for the appropriate side on the ongoing war venture. Encourage players to keep the focus of the skirmishes at a high level unless they want to get personally involved. Characters can participate and still summarize the skirmish as a dramatic scene.

- **Ambush:** The characters set an ambush against advancing troops. A successful ambush breaks up the enemy lines and opens an opportunity for a Back to the Sea tactic.

- **Back to the Sea:** The characters push the advancing army back towards White Garden and into a defensive structure they previously created. They may create a pincer attack or pin the attacking army against a sea wall. If the enemy army wins, the defenders are pushed back toward Narra.

- **Call to Duel:** If the Exalts choose to call out one of the enemy commanders, The Dancer Clad in Cerements and Blood will answer the call to a duel. He has 15 dice for the action. If they choose to do this as a dramatic scene, he will not duel to the death, instead accepting defeat at Incapacitated. This tactic can only be chosen once.

- **Demoralize Troops:** While the dead do not have a morale and cannot be demoralized as such, the Exalts can attempt to break the necromancers' concentration to weaken the enemy forces. Both The Mordant Clangor of Bells and The Storm Dragon have 14 dice for this tactic; choose one to roll for the action. If the players choose to do

this as a dramatic scene, they can fight to either take one of the necromancers out of the combat or disrupt their necromantic rituals. This tactic can be chosen twice, once for each necromancer. If Honored Kaginam's full aid has been secured, he grants a 3-success bonus for the tactics roll. In dramatic scenes involving fighting the necromancers, he will fight on the players' side, using his Ghostly Majesty pool to Build Power.

- **Espionage:** The characters may attempt to slip behind enemy lines to learn about future tactics and plans. If the enemy wins, the characters lose any advantage they might have had due to a previously successful "Ambush" or "Back to the Sea" tactic.

- **Sabotage:** While the dead troops do not need supply trains and rations, the necromancers need a steady supply of ghosts and necromantic rituals. The Exalts can attempt to disrupt rituals or win ghosts to their side of the combat to sabotage their counterparts. Both The Mordant Clangor of Bells and Storm Dragon have 14 dice for this tactic; choose which one rolls. If neither is available because of "Demoralize Troops" tactics, then Drowned in Silence rolls with 11 dice.

After the characters have completed all six obstacles, determine who wins the battle. This determines the setting for the final scene.

Go to **The Final Confrontation**.

The Final Confrontation

War has come to its brink, the Exalts finally meeting the Abyssal Circle and their Deathlord on the field of battle. If the Exalts won the war venture, this occurs in the shadowland forest, the Deathlord's forces having been driven back beyond White Garden. If the Abyssals win, the confrontation takes place in the streets of Narra while fields burn beyond the city.

How well the characters did at their preparatory ventures and the warfare itself determines how powerful the Deathlord's forces are in this final battle. Either way, the dead on the field are represented by one battlegroup for each heroic enemy character present. Increase that number by one for each consequence introduced during the warfare venture, up to a maximum of three additional battlegroups. For subsequent consequences, increase Drill by one step.

These forces are side characters and can easily end up fighting the characters' own battle groups, but they

provide a backdrop of drama for the final battle. The characters face off against the Abyssal Circle in final combat. The Knight Drowned in Silence seeks to kill the person she blames for her murder. The players' Circle stands in her way, so she seeks their destruction as well. The Deathlord wants to overtake Nightbloom, and regardless of how well the war is going for them, they will seek to deal a fatal blow to the Exalts for their part in the war.

This fight should feel like a capstone to a long war. If the characters' side were victorious in the war venture, the fight should feel weighted to their side. Maybe one or both necromancers are absent from the Abyssal Circle. If the Deathlord's forces were victorious, this should feel like an uphill battle for the Exalts. They may very well fall before the dead hordes. Defeat is not the end, but it will be a terrible blow.

Either way, the outcome of this fight determines what happens to Nightbloom.

What Comes Next

After the final battle, the characters have time to recuperate and interact with their allies.

If they were victorious in the war, the Deathlord's forces were driven back into the Underworld. While the Deathlord and the Abyssals are no longer in Nightbloom, dead stragglers still roam the countryside. In victory, the Exalts are feted as heroes and are offered a place of honor in Narra to celebrate the win. The characters may choose to help Ataman Gareda rebuild White Garden or help with relief efforts after the war for a while. Or they may choose to begin their next great adventure.

If they lost the war, then Narra's towers burn. Ataman Nerul (if he's still alive) and his forces retreat into the countryside and are scattered. The characters may attempt to help them evacuate refugees from the area-turned-shadowlands, or they may choose to flee the region in search of outside assistance.

ANTAGONISTS

Ataman Nerul, Agha Janek, and Ataman Gareda all use the Aristocrat template (**Exalted: Essence** p. 329). Nerul replaces Dueling with Combat, Agha switches Dueling with Throwing Money at It, and Gareda adds Sagacity to her Secondary pool.

Forces of irregulars (**Exalted: Essence** p. 323) with 0 to 1 Drill make up most of the forces available to those defending the isle, with smaller groups of elite Soldiers with Drill of 2+ serving as the personal guards of powerful atamans.

The Invaders

The invaders' elite forces, including those involved in early raids, are largely composed of War Ghosts (**Exalted: Essence**, p. 339) with 2 Drill. During skirmishes or raids (such as the Nightfall Attack scene), two Size 1 groups are directly commanded by significant War Ghosts.

During major conflicts, one Size 2 group for each of the invaders' heroic characters may be mustered.

Their massed army of the dead consists of walking corpses in Size 3 and greater groups, necromantically controlled by their leaders and following the rules for

mindless battle groups. Without leadership, they will attack the living at random but swiftly fall to organized military action.

In major confrontations, both kinds of battle group benefit from the Desperate Assault outnumber quality as long as they're commanded by a heroic character.

The Knight Drowned in Silence

Wronged and seeking revenge, the Knight's love of her people weighs heavily on her as she leads the Deathlord's invasion. Conflicted, grieving, and possessed by smoldering wrath all at once, she can only be turned from her path by heroic effort or main force.

Virtues: Ambition (Revenge)/Justice

Primary Pool (10): Rulership and Warfare

Secondary Pool (8): Death Rituals and Necromancy

Tertiary Pool (6)

Essence: 3

Motes: 10

Health Levels: 9

Resolve: 4

Defense: 5

Hardness: 5

Soak: 3

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic (Exalted Essence p. 317): The Knight will flee at zero Health Levels but will accept a dramatic injury to fight on in the final encounter or if she thinks her erstwhile killer is present.

Moonshadow Abyssal: The Knight possesses all the advantages and anima powers of a Moonshadow Caste Abyssal.

Excellency: Spend 1 mote. Add a four-dice bonus to a roll using her primary pool or three dice to her secondary pools.

Heart-Shattering Majesty: Commit 2 motes for the scene. The Knight may add an automatic success to all social influence, excluding read intentions actions, or two against the undead, subordinates, or characters with a Tie of fear or sadness toward the Exalt; at active anima, this applies to all characters. The Knight adds her three bonus dice and gains double 9s on any threatening influence actions. If a character has a Tie of fear or sadness toward the Exalt, add bonus dice equal to its intensity which do not count toward the limit. Mundane animals flee from the Exalt outright unless compelled to remain through training or magic. When intimidation succeeds, the Exalt gains 1 Power and may inflict two dice of damage against the target. This becomes four dice if they possess a Tie of fear or sadness to her. Soak does not apply to this damage.

Soul-Flaying Gaze: Spend 1 mote. A social influence action gains double 8s. If successful, the target of the influence must accept either five Health Levels of environmental damage or a dramatic injury reflecting the Exalt's choice of unnatural withering or violent stigmata. Trivial targets may be slain outright. The Knight may only use this once a story; this limit resets if she confronts her suspected killer and again if she kills them.

Ten Thousand Spectral Throats in Chorus: When the Knight Builds Power for an undead battle group, she gains an equal amount of Power.

Weapons: Dolorous Weight (Soulsteel Anchor) (+2 Accuracy, +2 Defense, +3 Damage, 2 Overwhelming, Melee, Flexible, Two-Handed); an enemy struck by an attack from Dolorous Weight reduces their Resolve by one for the rest of the scene.

Tactics and Advice

The Knight acts openly as an Abyssal. She spends motes freely, first on Heart-Shattering Majesty during the first actions of either a social or combat

scene, and then on her Excellency, attempting to instill fear in those directly opposing her and swaying those who are not fully committed to her side. If met with force of arms, she Builds Power for her forces, using Dolorous Weight to knockdown and knockback enemies and trying to overawe them with social actions during lulls in the battle. She saves Soul-Flaying Gaze for moments of desperation or when confronted with her killer.

The Dancer Clad in Cerements and Blood

A bloodthirsty raider before his second breath, the Dancer goes to war against the living with abandon. The cruel rewards of being a prince of death appeal to him, and success in the invasion ensures he can enjoy even greater, darker delights in the future.

Virtues: Wonder/Ambition (Conquer Nightbloom)

Primary Pool (10): Combat and Maneuver

Secondary Pool (7): Senses and Warfare

Tertiary Pool (5)

Essence: 2

Motes: 7

Health Levels: 10

Resolve: 3

Defense: 5

Hardness: 4

Soak: 4

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic (Exalted: Essence p. 317): The Dancer will flee at zero Health Levels but will accept a dramatic injury to fight on in the final encounter.

Dusk Abyssal: The Knight possesses all the advantages and anima powers of a Dusk Caste Abyssal.

Focused Excellency: Spend 1 mote. Add a five-dice bonus to a roll using his primary pool.

Looming (Away Into Darkness): If the Dancer hasn't suffered damage, been hit by an attack, or had his Hardness reduced to 1 by the end of a round, he reflexively moves a range band away from any enemies he's engaged in combat with.

Artful Maiming Onslaught: Spend 1 mote and 1 Power on Step 1. A successful decisive attack leaves a painful, scarring wound that inflicts a one-success penalty to all actions for the rest of the scene. This stacks up to three times. These count as wound penalties for the purposes of other effects. This may be used during a clash. Gain an additional anima.

Ebon Lightning Flash: Spend 1 mote on Step 1. The Dancer closes the distance to a target with less Power instantly. A withering attack causes the target to lose 1 Power, even on a miss, or his choice of 1 mote if he hits. A decisive attack adds two dice to damage on Step 5. This counts as his movement action for the round. This may be used during a clash.

Flow Like Blood: Commit 1 mote for the scene. The Dancer adds one to his Defense against attacks at close range and steals 1 Power from his attacker after successfully defending, after Overwhelming generates Power.

Weapons: Sing Woe (Paired Soulsteel Daiklaives) (+3 Accuracy, +2 Defense, +1 Damage, 2 Overwhelming, Melee, Off-Hand, Paired). Sing Woe reduces enemy Hardness against their attacks by 2.

Tactics and Advice

The Dancer fights with bravado and confidence, charging enemies with hit-and-run attacks benefitting from his Excellency to build up Power, then relying on Away Into Darkness to reposition himself for the next round's attacks. He'll make decisive attacks modified by Artful Maiming Onslaught as soon as he's able, eager to bloody his enemies to prove his superiority in battle. Against opponents who've hurt him or who have otherwise proven themselves to be dangerous, he'll use Flow Like Blood and then try to build up Power to use Artful Maiming Onslaught or Ebon Lightning Flash to counter powerful decisive attacks with a clash. Remember to take his Dusk anima abilities into consideration during combat.

Storm Dragon

An ancient and cunning necromancer, Storm Dragon may be turned against her Abyssal allies — not out of any love for the living, but out of simmering anger and building disgust at her erstwhile compatriots.

Virtues: Ambition (I will outlive the Scarlet Empress herself)/ Discipline

Primary Pool (9): Intimidation and Necromancy

Secondary Pool (8): Combat, Sagacity, and Senses

Tertiary Pool (6)

Essence: 3

Motes: 10

Health Levels: 9

Resolve: 4

Defense: 4

Hardness: 4

Soak: 2

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic (Exalted: Essence p. 317): Storm Dragon will flee at zero Health Levels but will take a dramatic injury if required to escape with her life.

Air Aspect: Storm Dragon possesses all the advantages and anima powers of a Dragon-Blooded Air Aspect.

Focused Excellency: Spend 1 mote. Add a five-dice bonus to a roll using her primary pool or an Elemental Bolt attack.

Necromancer: Storm Dragon is a First Circle Necromancer, building and using Will to cast spells (**Exalted: Essence** p. 299).

Harvester of Woe: If at the site of a great storm, bloody battle, or other potential disaster threatening or causing great misery, Storm Dragon can gain 5 Will once a session. If forced to arrange for her own disaster, she gains 3 Will instead.

Spells: (All pages **Exalted: Essence**)

Flesh-Sloughing Wave (p. 302)

Lightning Spider (p. 303)

Raise the Skeletal Horde (p. 307)

Glorious Exalted Bolt (Elemental Bolt): Commit 1 mote on Step 1 to use the Glorious Exalted Bolt attack for the scene. She may spend an additional mote on Step 7 to create an environmental hazard in the target's range band, which persists until the start of the next round. Targets hit must make a reflexive Physique roll at difficulty 3 to resist five environmental damage.

Roiling Dragon Behind the Dead: Storm Dragon may spend 1 mote on Step 2 to make an undead minion, including a battle group, reflexively use Defend Other to protect her from an oncoming attack.

Weapons: Elemental Bolt (+1 Accuracy, +3 Damage, Ranged (Medium), Artifact, Powerful)

Bone Saber (+1 Accuracy, +1 Defense, +1 Damage, Overwhelming 2, Melee, Balanced)

Tactics and Advice

Behind a prepared force of undead or flush with Will for sorcery, Storm Dragon will act with impunity. She will hurl spells and elemental bolts bolstered by her Excellency, preferring groups of enemies and battle groups as her targets while relying on the undead to protect her. If bereft of undead or other allies, she will withdraw to save her own life.

The Mordant Clangor of Bells

Joyful master of necromancy and happy enslaver of ghosts, the Mordant Clangor of Bells cares more for

the chance to exert her power than the success of the invasion. Unopposed, her horrific magical might will lay waste to the isles even if the invasion ultimately falters.

Virtues: Wonder/Courage

Primary Pool (10): Necromancy and Social Influence Against the Dead

Secondary Pool (8): Combat and Social Influence

Tertiary Pool (6)

Essence: 3

Motes: 10

Health Levels: 9

Resolve: 3

Defense: 4

Hardness: 5

Soak: 3

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic (Exalted: Essence p. 317): The Clangor will flee at zero Health Levels but will take a dramatic injury if required to escape with her life.

Daybreak Caste Abyssal: The deathknight possesses all the advantages and anima powers of a Daybreak Caste Abyssal.

Excellency: Spend 1 mote. Add a four-dice bonus to a roll using her primary pool or three dice to her secondary pools.

Necromancer: The Clangor is a Second Circle Necromancer, building and using Will to cast spells.

Thrice-Bound Souls: The Clangor can gain up to 3 Will from her enslaved ghosts once per scene.

Spells: (All pages **Exalted: Essence**)

Raise the Skeletal Horde (p. 307)

Cantata of Empty Voices (p. 304)

Shield of Shattered Bones (p. 308)

Slumber of the Wandering Shade (p. 308)

Spirit Eroding Banter: Spend 1 mote to make a special Presence-based influence action as a simple action with the target's Essence added to his Resolve. On a success, inflict a two-success penalty to the target's Defense, Resolve, and their social influence and Build Power rolls for the rest of the scene.

Weapons: Carillon of Far Shores (+1 Accuracy, +1 Defense, +3 Damage, 3 Overwhelming, Melee, Balanced, Smashing) The Carillon may generate up to 3 Will in place of Power on a successful attack.

Tactics and Advice

The Clangor will attempt to protect herself with Shield of Shattered Bones, recasting it mid-combat if the first battle group protecting her is destroyed. She alternates between attacks with the Carillon and targeting enemies with Spirit Eroding Banter, seeking to weaken them so that her allies and undead forces can tear them to bits. During skirmishes or initial attacks, she can appear through Slumber of the Wandering Shade or threaten entire villages with Cantata of Empty Voices.

No-Face

A powerful ghost bound against his will, No-Face uses the stats of a War Ghost (**Exalted: Essence** p. 339) with the following further modifications and qualities: Soak 4, **Frenzied Action** (p. 317), **Oppressive** (p. 317), and **Harrier** (p. 320). No-Face will focus on the most powerful enemy present and attempt to avoid fighting mortals or the obviously less combative. They will often be ordered to support deathknights present, giving those already powerful fighters the benefits of No-Face's Harrier quality.

Honored Kagainam

Revered, embittered, and conflicted, Honored Kagainam uses the Sovereign template (**Exalted: Essence** p. 332), with all the qualities of a Ghost (p. 338), and his primary pool replaced by Ghostly Majesty.





CHAPTER THREE

Ten Thousand Milk-Churning Strikes

These words are uttered by ancient sages and priests — and only to fellow priests. Of course, some scoundrel-sages spread this knowledge far and wide, and now even the Realm knows of this song: “In an age unnamed, when the gods thundered across the sky like mortals would walk upon puddles, there was a distant sea of infinite milk. This milk was sweet like honey, thick and viscous like cream, and intoxicating like wine. This Milk of Immortality was once the favored drink of the gods and is what caused the gods to be immortal. Unbridled and raw essence bounded across the world. The violent earthbound gods would constantly challenge the administrative sky-blessed gods to take draughts of this Immortal Milk.”

To share it among themselves perfectly, the far western sky and earth gods of Kiliran decided to take a great mountain — taller than Creation itself — and turned it into a pestle, and then they reached out to Vandr, the Serpent That Encircles the World and mount of the Lord Luna, and wound them about the mountain pestle. They stabbed the Sea of Milk with the mountain-turned-pestle and churned the Sea of Milk. From there arose wine and nectar. Drinking the wine gave the greatest of the gods immortality for as long as they are worshipped, while drinking the nectar gave the earthbound gods power, but they lived for as long as the oldest human, which is to say, 800 years. This did not ease their conflict, however. In fact, this delineation caused a great rift, and now the gods wage war with the Forbidden Gods. This war has become a staple reason for many god-vs-demon tales in the West, though the Forbidden Gods are now conflated with demons.

The Sea of Milk still exists, though ancient tides have pushed it far away and out of reach, past the Pillar of Water to the West. However, pirates, sea raiders, and seafaring cultures still sing of it, of that ancient infinite

Sea of Dew, whereupon the Demon Mountain Pestle lies, which houses a thousand-thousand kings and untold treasures. Kiliran-folk and mendicants from Kiliran say that the sea gods — distinct from the sky gods and the earthbound antigods — actively stop mortals from finding the Sea of Milk in hopes of preventing another cycle of overwhelming violence from ever happening again.

To the sounds of this siren song, the Exalts arrive at the seaport of **Kiliran**, upon the edge of the Wheel of Creation, the farthest mortal port. Here, would-be adventurers and danger-seeking sailors congregate to sail deep into the West Sea, endangering themselves with the near borders of the Wyld, just to find that Sea of Milk.

Ten Thousand Milk-Churning Strikes is an adventure for a Circle of Exalted. It is built for high seas adventure, though not exactly of the Age of Exploration kind — though that is possible — but of the Southeast Asian and Polynesian kind, using the ineffable star charts to trek across the vast expanse. This adventure is designed for the kind of exploration mixed with drama that one would find common in stories like **Journey to The West**. It is not a story of warlord conquest or delving into First Age tombs, but rather one that reckons with the uncanny reality of the sea and the consequences of the stories we tell.

This adventure will include many influential people, each with their own motive for looking for the Sea of Milk and their own means to that end. Finding the Sea of Milk is a herculean task, but more astounding will be what they do with the **Milk-Churning Pestle**. Decisions made will potentially lead to immense, world-altering events for Creation. No matter what happens in the adventure, Creation will never be the same.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

The following characters will be the most prevalent and important in the upcoming adventure. Their traits are detailed in the Antagonist section (p. 58). Each will have a brief description of their Virtues and their Intimacies.

Cathak Ragajo (she/her)

Cathak Ragajo leads a grand fleet of the Realm’s warriors, having stationed here and built power in the

port of Kiliran for the longest time. She has created relationships with the natives and the other would-be seekers of the Sea of Milk, maintaining diplomatic ties to make further possible the chance of her finding the place of legend. She leads a force 2,000 strong, with even more on the way. She will succeed in her plans. Nothing will stand in her path. Cathak Ragajo is a Dragon-Blooded of the brilliant and indomitable Fire

Aspect. Clad in a reinforced breastplate of red jade, she wields her straight sword at war. She is a glorious weapon of the immortal Empress.

Unbeknownst to all, Cathak Ragajo is, in truth, Iselsi Parad, a scion of a fallen and disgraced Dragon-Blooded house. Parad was raised as a hidden weapon, fit only for the Empress' hand. Of her many weapons, Parad was chosen, skilled enough with military might to be given this responsibility. A naval prodigy, Parad's work has branded her face with stress lines way beyond her years. Skilled as she is in the arts of diplomacy and warfare, Parad prefers to strike from the backlines, her starmetal powerbow, Nyxastra, raining death to the beat of the tiger drums.

After years learning at the Empress' feet, she has fashioned herself into two women walking in the same body, all to earn the loyalty and love of an Empress she sees as a mother. Esoteric manuals and forbidden secrets enabled her to surpass her fellow Iselsi infiltrators, transcending mere secret identity to craft a living persona, each identity drawing strength and aid from the other. Now, when enemies face Cathak Ragajo, Iselsi Parad is merely a breath away.

It is not known why the Empress sought out the Sea of Milk. Iselsi Parad and Cathak Ragajo speak of it to their followers and fellows: "Seek out the Sea of Milk when I vanish and send only your most powerful warriors. The answer shall be upon the pestle that churns that sea." Many Iselsi believe that fulfilling this will grant them back their place in the Realm as a final act of repentance.

Iselsi Parad's shoulders bear the weight of Creation, but she goes on her own feet. She will find what is out there in the Sea of Milk — for the Empress or for herself. This will be the way to Glory, after all.

VIRTUES

Loyalty (Major Virtue). Cathak Ragajo must fulfill her destiny. She must find the Sea of Milk, both to restore honor to House Iselsi and to fulfill her responsibility as a dutiful daughter.

Discipline (Minor Virtue). Cathak Ragajo might be a fake Cathak, but she has been taught to keep her principles in mind, nonetheless. Her resolve is steel, and she follows procedures.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Loyalty): House Iselsi (Loyalty)

Minor Principle (Discipline): "If money cannot solve things, then violence must."

Shree Dwaya Cinta (he/they)

Shree is an aristocrat honorific, and only truly those that know his name and countenance will refer to him as such. Otherwise, he is simply Dwaya Cinta, the Wicked Wisteria Witch, so named for his purple eyes. He is a Lunar Exalt of the Full Moon Caste.

Dwaya is a traveling witch and a once-mendicant who followed the belief of his own island and settlement: that the Supreme Soul is the underlying reality of all things. He believes that the Supreme Soul is Absolute Beauty, and therefore he long sought out all things beautiful and preached them as points wherein one could touch the Supreme Soul. More recently, however, he has felt compelled to move past this belief following a faith-shattering event at the hands of an Abyssal: a deathknight who showed him the truth of the Supreme Soul, who showed him a glimpse of true death. Shree Dwaya survived and, in so doing, became Luna's Chosen. With his hair turned into moongleam and the realization that his god is absolute nothingness, he chooses then to find true liberation: one beyond the wheel of suffering and beyond nothingness. Once, he aimed to become one with a god; now, he aims to transcend gods and find true Glory.

He no longer believes that beauty represents Points of God upon this world, but rather, Points upon the path of his Liberation. And so, he ventures to that thing said to be the most beautiful of all: the Sea of Milk, which houses the Milk-Churning Pestle and the great Serpent That Encircles Creation. He arrives with a large junk, paid for by most of his own treasury, with a warband of warriors from his home village.

VIRTUES

Ambition (Major Virtue). Shree Dwaya Cinta travels the face of Creation as a path to his own Glory, seeking out beautiful things to find true liberating enlightenment — and thereby become greater than Heaven and God.

Compassion (Minor Virtue). Shree Dwaya Cinta believes that those who have not seen the truth of the world deserve to know it, and therefore he extends ultimate compassion, trying to help those that he can.

INTIMACIES

Major Principle (Compassion): "I'd rather be slain than let those that I can help suffer."

Minor Tie (Ambition): The Lotus-Eyed of the Wilting Waves by The Shore (Awe for the deathknight that showed him oblivion)

Merchant-Enchanter Si Li (he/him)

The enterprising wizard of jade and gold, Si Li, travels to the end of the world that is Kiliran to find one thing: the Milk-Churning Pestle. To most people's surprise, he does not look for the grand Sea of Milk to monetize it nor to plunder it for treasure. Many forget that the hundred-year-old Si Li is just as much an enchanter as he is a merchant. Finding a potential place of pure mysticism, a place lost to legend and myth, has become a possibility for him. He's traveled with his treasure fleet all the way from the Realm to Kiliran, armed with several chroniclers and other fellow sorcerers.

The Merchant-Enchanter is a powerful man who grew up in the South and found enterprise selling peppers and other spices common in the South and Southwest to vendors in the north of both the Realm and Creation in general. He created and composed a veritable merchant-kingdom around his exploits, though he does not rule them so much as he administers the roads through which it travels. This route, known sometimes as the Enlightenment Path, has become an important trade circuit from North to South, sailing down and skirting along the Realm's west coast until it arrives in grand Chiaroscuro.

The Merchant-Enchanter personally selected the finest mariners, sailors, and trustworthy stormbenders in order to give him the best chance of finding the Sea of Milk. At all costs, Merchant Si Li must find the great Sea of Milk and discover the truth about gods and anti-gods. Of course, getting to commodify the Sea's legendary substance, the nectar of the gods, would be a nice bonus.

VIRTUE

Wonder (Major Virtue). Si Li's curiosity about the truth of the gods, what happened to the antigods, and seeing a veritable being of myth powers him beyond the promise of wealth.

Ambition (Minor Virtue). Si Li is filled with a certain zest for being the first to find anything, and of course, finding the Sea of Milk promises glory.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Ambition): Maharavarman VII, the King of South Janggah, the Juggernaut King (Lover)

Minor Principle (Wonder): "We do not kill innocents or children."

Harihara Karam, the Lord-Lady of Kiliran (they/them)

Harihara is the term for the rulers of Kiliran, particularly those that identify as both King and Queen. Karam is a Lord-Lady who won the ownership of Kiliran just recently after leading a slave revolt against the previous king, the Unmeritorious Giant King Ivatakawaca. They saw the incoming Realm fleet and promised tribute to them if they would help them. This was, of course, never their actual intention.

Karam is a guileful Lord who was born deeply entrenched in their community. They do not claim any blue-bloodedness — indeed, they are royalty by virtue and merit rather than lineage. They are a gentle person, soft-hearted, but for exploitative rulers they will not bow. In the interest of protecting Kiliran, they entreated the Realm and allowed them to amass many ships for a voyage to seek the Sea of Milk. However, Harihara Karam and their court harbor a vengeful contempt for the Realm and their imperialism, and thus they plan to work with the other seeming freemen to sabotage their venture. Maybe then the Realm will leave Kiliran alone.

Karam is a comely being and frequently considered the most beautiful among the isles of the Archipelago whereupon Kiliran is situated. Their indigo hair and lotus eyelashes betray God-Bloodedness, but their divine heritage is from a low-ranking god. They are always clad in silks and gold to attract the divine consciousness and nourish their soul. It is something they wear to appease their subjects so that they know they are following a ruler virtuous and chosen by them and the gods. For Karam, this responsibility is light, for their fire burns against the Realm.

VIRTUE

Justice (Major Virtue). Karam will stop at nothing to end the Realm's encroachment into their island. The Realm has done enough harm.

Courage (Minor Virtue). Karam knows nothing can be done without moving forward, even with fear in their heart.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Courage): Kiliran (Protectiveness)

Minor Principle (Justice): "The Sea of Milk is not real."



Pirate Oyo (she/they)

Oyo was born into Kiliran. For most of her life, she has been wondering about the tales of dragons and serpents, of gods and spirits, of demons and Exalted. She has always wanted to be Exalted, and then she wanted to become a pirate. To her, being a pirate was the best thing in the world! Pure freedom, sailing across the seas, without debt to any king or lord like they had in Kiliran, like the Realm is trying to do in Kiliran. That is how she lost her parents after all — struck down for not being able to pay their debts by literal loan sharks! From that point on, she could not imagine anything more important than wealth.

She grew up hearing all these tales about the Sea of Milk. She knows that if she could just get a bit of that Milk, she would be rich. Milk from the Gods! Milk from a time now lost to man. And who knows what riches she could glean from the Milk-Churning Pestle!

She has a few friends: mostly Achi the Gunmaster and Sanja the Winged One. She has her boat, a rickety sailing barge called The Horizon Breaker. She's proud of what she has, and she is burning with determination.

She will live a life free from kings or need of money. Unlike the other pirate kings, she will choose to sail with the most powerful looking of the fleets, which is Cathak Ragajo's.

VIRTUE

Courage (Major Virtue). Oyo is bolstered less so by ambition but with the valor to find her freedom.

Wonder (Minor Virtue). Oyo also wants to find new friends and places along her journey!

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Wonder): Her Crew (Adoration)

Major Principle (Courage): "Let's all get together!"

The Lotus-Eyed of the Wilting Waves by The Shore (she/her)

A traveling deathknight of the Day Caste who shall bring about oneness with nothing, the Lotus-Eyed is savvy and well learned, while having the morbid conviction of oblivious nothingness. Once

Nara, she gained her epithet of Lotus-Eyed when she was born. She was blessed with the beauty of the hibiscus, though she hated it herself, as she was cooped up and then prepared to be wed to the scion of an adjoining kingdom to create an alliance. Imagine her joy when she found out that she was blessed with spirit sight, able to see dematerialized gods and ghosts, and became a healer for her settlement instead.

That settlement was later raided by a sole deathknight, clad in charred armor and a tiger helm. She knew right then and there that death was her only destiny, the only thing left for her. During that time, a wandering witch-mendicant was passing by, and he attempted to fight off the deathknight with his own martial arts and witch magic. He failed, however, and was forced to retreat. Nara took that opportunity to stab the deathknight in the throat.

The deathknight turned to her and showed her oblivion. The lustful, alluring aspect of it. He showed her that the void beyond reality was the true escape from all suffering, a teaching of the Bishop. She was taught the Shining Way, and though it was not like a thunderbolt at first, her faith was shaped like a

diamond. Upon her rebirth, she became The Lotus-Eyed of the Wilting Waves by The Shore, finding herself washed up upon the shores of her island. She eventually found her savior, Shree Dwaya Cinta, and showed him a glimpse of the same void. She believes that she must finish the job: She must bring Shree Dwaya Cinta to the void in return for his selfless act of compassion.

VIRTUES

Compassion (Major). The Lotus-Eyed wishes to show Shree Dwaya a better way, a life liberated from suffering.

Justice (Minor). Despite her love for the thought of Blissful Oblivion, she recognizes the existence of suffering now and will always enact proper retribution against injustices.

INTIMACIES

Major Tie (Compassion): Shree Dwaya Cinta (Her savior, the one she believes she must set free)

Minor Tie (Compassion): The Charred Knight Enslaved to His Fate (The Abyssal that she killed, to whom she is grateful)

SCENE MAP

The following section includes short descriptions of this scenario's key scenes in order. As an Exalted adventure, it is integral to internalize that these scenarios are guidelines rather than a hard-locked path for the characters to take. It is etched into the character's hearts to defy fate and write their own destiny. Therefore, use these scenarios to weave a grand tapestry, one that the Exalts must live within to properly enjoy. Whenever you find yourself lost Storytelling the adventure, snap back to the most appropriate scene and spur the story ever forward.

Another important thing to note is that the seafaring scenes will have months of downtime in between them, as the travel to the Sea of Milk is indeterminably long. You can skip ahead through these, of course, but feel free to put in "slice-of-life" scenes in between the significant scenes to create more moments of characterization for your NPCs and PCs.

- **The Edge of the World:** A scene that establishes grand Kiliran, the end of the world, where the Sea

of Milk might be found. This introduces Kiliran and then each of the major players that seeks out the Sea of Milk. Go to **A Royal Meeting**.

- **A Royal Meeting:** A scene that establishes Harihara, the great Lord-Lady of Kiliran. Here the rest of the enterprising warriors meet with the Lord-Lady, talking about the specifics of launching from Kiliran, which will happen at daybreak the following morning. The characters can choose who to side with, or they can choose to strike off for the Sea of Milk themselves. The Exalts must choose where they go from here. Go to either **Fly the Scarlet Flag**, **The Mendicant-Witch**, **Entrance into Erudition**, or **Concordance**.
- **Fly The Scarlet Flag:** Cathak Ragajo inducts the characters into her navy; though she is not too thrilled at the thought of working with Anathema, she does have a certain morbid curiosity at the thought of leading these demons. She immediately sets sail but dispatches several vessels back to harry and hobble the efforts of the other fleets. Here

there will also be Oyo, who wants to find freedom in the Sea of Milk. Go to **Monsoon Shatters the Crimson**.

- **The Mendicant-Witch:** Shree Dwaya Cinta travels with other mystics upon a singular barge, though with a few accompanying junks for provisions. He is grateful to have the characters with him. They leave on the night of the full moon, gaining a full night's lead. Go to **Moon Sunders the Sea**.

- **Entrance into Erudition:** The Exalts wait for daybreak while the Merchant-Enchanter introduces his crew of kings and sages. Eventually, they leave at sundown the next day following star charts that Si Li crafted himself, which he believes is a sure way into the Sea of Milk, which he calls the Kshiragasa. Go to **The Storm God**.

- **Monsoon Shatters the Crimson:** A few months out at sea, the Scarlet Fleet is faced with a giant Wyld Leviathan that creates a monsoon. It is up to the characters to ensure they come out safely. Go to **Concordance** or **The Sea of Milk**.

- **Moon Sunders the Sea:** After a few months out at sea, a raksha ship followed by a behemoth

descends upon the witch fleet. The characters must fight for their lives. Go to **Concordance** or **The Sea of Milk**.

- **The Storm God:** A storm god — angered at King Maharavarman VII, who once blasphemed the Storm — attacks the fleet. The Exalts must find a way to appease them. Go to **Concordance** or **The Sea of Milk**.

- **Concordance:** All the fleets meet and devolve into a ship-to-ship battle. Go to **The Sea of Milk**.

- **The Sea of Milk:** After almost a year of sailing, the characters find the Sea of Milk, whereupon a large number of islands (fragments of the Pestle) can be seen, but the overwhelming presence of the giant Milk-Churning Pestle Mountain dominates the scene. The characters have arrived at their destination, but a fight awaits them. Go to **To Leave for the Trichiliocosm**.

- **To Leave for the Trichiliocosm:** Those left gain a single boon from Waishnawan, and then they are teleported back in front of Kiliran, irrevocably changed. The fate of Kiliran is in the characters' hands.

KEY SCENES

This section describes the most important scenes of this scenario. As always, you do not have to follow all these scenes exactly. Instead, think of them as inspirational jumping pads and things to follow when you do not know what will happen next and need to keep things moving along. For easier parsing, the Key Scenes are broken into three parts: **I: The Port Kingdom**, **II: May You Reach Concordance**, and **III: The Sea of Milk**.

I: The Port Kingdom To The Edge of The World

A few moons of travel upon the placid western ocean. The break in the horizon, a spear thrust in the sky. It affords relief after so many months out at sea. The break gets larger as you approach. People pock its shore, and the telltale Bamboo Palace overlooking it all tells you that this truly is Kiliran. You have arrived at the edge of the world.

The docks are littered with dockhands. The entire place is ablaze. Somehow the ports are choked by Realm fleets, accompanied by what looks like a treasure fleet from the South. In the far distance, you can see a barge made to look like a bier upon the water, made of viscera and sinew.

Entering the port is easy enough, though the choking crowdedness of the docks suffocates you. The districts of Kiliran stretch far upriver, a testament to its strength as a port city. From where you are, you can vaguely make out a district wherein bowls of noodles and fried rice are sold to the local sailors. Somewhere near that is a quarter for blacksmiths, selling armors and weapons — mostly mortal, unfortunately. Then, far upriver, as if following a serpent, one finds the Bamboo Palace itself, said to house the Harihara, or Lord-Lady of Kiliran.

Kiliran is inspired by Southeast Asian ports, though no specific one in particular. Kiliran is a relatively new port city — it once belonged to a conquering

king whose subjects overturned him in favor of the meritorious Harihara.

Each of the Exalts arrives in Kiliran pursuing tales of the Sea of Milk. They might be actively looking for it or seeking a greater destiny tied to it. Allow each player to decide individually what their character thinks of the stories of the Sea of Milk and what they might gain from finding it. The Exalts may arrive together as a Circle or individually. If they came individually, give them scenes and reasons to join up, the most common perhaps being the need for capable companions with whom to make the voyage.

During this time, allow the characters to meet the other major players. Cathak Ragajo has a huge fleet and is actively recruiting people to join her in the Realm's voyage to the Sea of Milk. She's hard to miss. Shree Dwaya Cinta has a single ship and is clearly trying to distance himself from Ragajo. He and his crew hang out near the dockside and are gently recruiting adventurers to his cause. The Merchant-Enchanter Si Li has two ships and a sturdy-looking crew. He spends his time in places where merchants gather, preparing as best he can for his pending voyage.

Once the circle has had a few days in the city, a representative from the Bamboo Palace, a tall woman with a ruddy complexion wearing blue-green silks the color of the sea, arrives and asks them to meet with the Harihara. She makes it clear that this is less an invitation and more an imperative. The Harihara's representative imparts little information but does tell the Circle that they are looking to hire them.

The Exalts might need some prodding to go visit with the Harihara. If they seek out information about them, these are the things they learn:

- The Harihara is well-loved for being the kind of ruler who takes special care of their people.
- The Realm has been in Kiliran for months, amassing more and more soldiers. No one knows what they are truly after. Maybe the Harihara knows.
- Anyone attempting to use Kiliran as a staging port for trips to the Sea of Milk must gain permission from the Harihara. If the Circle wishes to go with anyone other than the Realm, they must meet with them.

If the characters decide to go to the Harihara's Bamboo Palace at the invitation time, go to **A Royal Meeting**.

A Royal Meeting

The Bamboo Palace is a place of splendor. Walking along its stone path as it winds up the sheer cliffside, each node guarded by stone dogs, visitors find that the Palace itself only seems to grow. Arriving upon its courtyard, you are greeted with katmon trees, delicately trimmed and maintained, alongside a complex of four houses interconnected by roofed paths. The largest of the houses — a long-house of three floors — bustles with royal attendants and other folk. Entering there leads one to the antechamber to the throne room.

The Lord-Lady is a comely warlord, a king-queen of androgyne beauty. Lotus-eyed and with stark indigo hair, they are hard to ignore. They are clad in similarly azure silks and clothing, a sash of cerulean that floats about them, and a sunburst crown adorned with sapphires as if a halo.

When the characters arrive, they find Cathak Ragajo, Shree Dwaya Cinta, and the Merchant-Enchanter Si Li, each waiting their turn to meet with the Harihara. The Exalts are bustled past them into the throne room immediately.

Harihara Karam has invited them to their palace to request they assist with removing the Realm's presence from Kiliran. They worry that once the Realm gets their way, they will turn Kiliran into a Realm colony. Therefore, they must stop that before it happens. They explain that each of the three people waiting outside plans on going on an expedition to the Sea of Milk and will request their permission to use Kiliran as a port of call. They plan to grant this permission, as they view stories of the Sea of Milk as a lofty sailor's myth like so many others. They hope that the rival groups might attack the Realm ships and thin their numbers. They ask the circle to aid in destroying the Realm fleet and or at least ensuring that it does not return to Kiliran. If they do this, the Harihara will forever be in their debt.

After this offer, the Harihara allows the other three into the room to make their cases for allowing them to use Kiliran as a port of call for their expeditions. This is an opportunity for the players to decide to join one of the expeditions or take their own. Present the pros and cons of traveling alone vs. with one of the expeditions. Provide the following information freely:

- The voyage to the Sea of Milk is expected to take at least a year.
- Cathak Ragajo has been planning for this voyage for months and is scheduled to leave at dawn the following day.

- The other expedition leaders are hungry to beat Cathak Ragajo to the Sea of Milk and will be hot on her heels.
- Harihara Karam is offering to fund the characters on their own voyage, which will grant them access to any provision they might need, along with their own war junk.

Once they have had time to talk with the expedition leaders and among themselves, they must decide what to do from there.

- If they choose to follow Cathak Ragajo, go on to **Fly the Scarlet Flag**.
- If they ally with Shree Dwaya Cinta, go on to **The Mendicant-Witch**.
- If they ally with Merchant-Enchanter Si Li, go on to **Entrance into Erudition**.

If they choose to make their own way, they have the option of taking the Harihara up on their offer or striking out on their own.

If they choose to go their own way, they must find their own provisions, ship, and crew. If they already have a ship and crew, then they will still need a year's provisions. They can find these things within Kiliran, though each element requires a **Secondary Resource Merit** or a successful **Embassy roll against difficulty 5**. If they manage to gain these things (either through their own resources or through the Harihara), they can choose to leave before the others do.

If they've taken the Harihara up on their offer, they may choose to attempt to sabotage the Realm ships. Sabotaging the Realm ships is a multifaceted challenge that requires at least three rolls. Examples: Embassy to bribe or manipulate Realm soldiers, Craft to actively sabotage the ships or to create explosives, Presence to cause Realm soldiers to defect (no doubt they have had long months of travel from the Blessed Isle), Physique to break apart ships, Stealth to plant explosives or discreetly sabotage provisions and ship parts.

Otherwise, they will have to contend with half the Realm fleet, which has been left to slow their progress. If they choose to stay and fight them, they lose time but break up part of the fleet. This will prevent them from catching up to the Realm fleet unless they have some kind of special ability to speed travel.

If they decide on a clever way past the group, they make up time but leave parts of the Realm fleet on

Kiliran's shores. This allows them to catch up to the Realm fleet.

Once they set sail, they will have a few months of voyage time. Feel free to insert other personal scenes here for roleplaying's sake or fill it with stranger encounters at sea. Remember that you are sailing from the End of the World here, so near to the Western Pillar and the Wyld.

Select one of the other scenarios to encounter. Alternatively, roll a single d10.

- On a 1-3, this leads to **Monsoon Shatters the Crimson**.
- On a 4-6, this leads to **Moon Sunders the Sea**.
- On a 7-9, this leads to **The Storm God**.
- On a 10, this leads immediately to **Concordance**.

Fly The Scarlet Flag

This is the option for following Cathak Ragajo. Cathak Ragajo is a severe woman, clearly ambitious, but is willing to work with the Anathema, though the Exalts **must earn her trust** before she allows them aboard her ship. She must gain a Minor Intimacy to each PC or a Major Intimacy to at least one of them, along with a successful Persuade action.

Cathak Ragajo's fleet is a full Realm fleet. Make sure the characters know this and the implications of sailing with the Realm itself. Traveling with Cathak Ragajo is sure to have the greatest security, even though Ragajo herself merits proper suspicion. Anyone that can suss her out can and will know her identity, but revealing that information earns her ire and spite.

Any preparations must be made before launching, and Cathak Ragajo is strict with her deadlines. When the fleet does launch, she orders a rearguard behind to harry and stop the other competitor fleets. Additionally, Oyo the Sailor travels with Cathak Ragajo, seeking treasure and the protection of Cathak's large fleet.

Once they set sail, they will have a few months of voyage time. Feel free to insert other personal scenes here or fill it with stranger encounters at sea. Remember that you are sailing from the End of the World here, so near to the Western Pillar and the Wyld.

Go to **Monsoon Shatters the Crimson in Part II**.

The Mendicant-Witch

This is the option for following Shree Dwaya Cinta, the Mendicant-Witch. Shree also happens to be a Full-Moon

Lunar who uses his gifts to inflict violence and lay bare the beauty of the world. Shree Dwaya is upfront with the reason for his travel to the Sea of Milk: to find beauty and perhaps God, or perhaps a way to surpass God and find Liberation. He takes his time talking about his beliefs but is very hands-on when it comes to prepping. He has a small fleet, mostly his friends and eel- and gullfolk, but he treats them as fellow travelers instead of subjects or crewmen.

He is prone to bouts of fierce wrath, which manifests as warrior soliloquies and eulogies to enemies he must kill. This is important: As the Mendicant-Witch's junk leaves port, a few Realm soldiers assail them. They can be fought off with the players' help, but Shree Dwaya is filled with anger, which manifests as a magenta moon.

The Realm fleet has been left to slow their progress. If they choose to stay and fight them, they lose time but break up part of the fleet. This will prevent them from catching up to the Realm fleet in **Concordance** unless they have some kind of special ability to speed travel.

If they decide on a clever way past the group, they make up time but leave parts of the Realm fleet on Kiliran's shores. This allows them to catch up to the Realm fleet in Concordance.

Once they set sail, they will have a few months of voyage time. Feel free to insert other personal scenes here or fill it with stranger encounters at sea. Remember that you are sailing from the End of the World here, so near to the Western Pillar and the Wyld.

Go to **Moon Sunders the Sea in Part II.**

Entrance Into Eradition

The Merchant-Enchanter Si Li has a proper treasure fleet. He sails with his beloved, the King of South Jangga, Maharavarman VII, who is as handsome of a man as Si Li. His own giant junk is a great ship filled with all sorts of provisions and crew who enjoy working for one of the richest men in Creation. Si Li, however, is properly obsessed with the Sea of Milk, which he says is the Kshiragasa of his nation's ancient myths.

Si Li has crafted star charts according to the calculations of ancient sages. Instead of daybreak, Si Li's treasure fleet leaves at sundown, which means the characters get to enjoy an extended moment of downtime and preparation. They follow Si Li's Star Chart toward the great Kshiragasa, but they are also blocked off by a Realm fleet, which Si Li asks the characters to fight off, as they are not predisposed to fighting. Additionally, the great Lotus-Eyed, Day Caste Abyssal, travels with Si Li to try and chase after Shree Dwaya.

The Realm fleet has been left to slow their progress. If they choose to stay and fight them, they lose time but break up part of the fleet. This will prevent them from catching up to the Realm fleet in **Concordance** unless they have some kind of special ability to speed travel.

If they decide on a clever way past the group, they make up time but leave parts of the Realm fleet on Kiliran's shores. This allows them to catch up to the Realm fleet in Concordance.

Once they set sail, they will have a few months of voyage time. Feel free to insert any other personal scenes here for roleplaying sake or fill it with stranger encounters at sea. Remember that you are sailing from the End of the World here, so near to the Western Pillar and the Wyld.

Go to **The Storm God in Part II.**

II: May You Reach Concordance

Monsoon Shatters the Crimson

A few months out at sea. A curse, a twist of fate, perhaps? A monsoon bars the path, wrapping the Realm fleet in a horrible thunderstorm. Tendrils appear, erupting from lightning. Whirlpools burn brightly, swallowing the junks and turtle ships of the Scarlet Dynasty.

Cathak Ragajo is barking out orders just as the sea darkens underneath her.

A Wyld Leviathan leaps out from underneath the boat that the characters are upon. The Leviathan is a giant dragon in the shape of the common naga: eyes bulging and teeth like giant swords belonging to the First Age. It has a thousand hands and can grab onto barges and ships. It will arise and leap and fight, and when it roars, it is with the scream of a thousand victims.

Make a point to show that Cathak Ragajo is torn between fear and failure, which has almost paralyzed her. The characters can take on the Wyld Leviathan here, or they can go to Cathak Ragajo and show her that they are willing to fight for her even in a dire situation like this. This rallies her, perhaps granting a Minor Intimacy to the characters (or improving an already existing Intimacy).

Fighting the Wyld Leviathan is straightforward; it will crumble to artifact weapons or magical elements. However, it is swift, and moving quickly from ship to ship (or even upon the water) is crucial to chasing the Wyld Leviathan down and making sure it does not destroy the rest of the fleet.

When the fight begins, the Leviathan wrecks a single ship. There are 25 Ships in Ragajo's fleet. Any time the characters or their ships fail to hit with an attack, the Leviathan destroys one of the ships. If they succeed in defeating the Leviathan, go to **The Sea of Milk in Part III**.

If all ships are destroyed, then the Leviathan has succeeded, and the characters are reduced to a single ship. They may flee or finish the fight, but Cathak Ragajo's spirit is broken. The characters may convince her to continue their search, or possibly one of the other fleets finds them. Either way, go to **Concordance**, but keep in mind that the Realm fleet is broken.

Moon Sunder's The Sea

As your ship nears a dark spot at sea, you are met with the gloating warhorns and the tell-tale drum beat of a thousand bedtime stories. Off in the distance, a roving raksha warship speeds toward you.

Even as the raksha warship closes in, a behemoth erupts from behind the traveling barge. Shree Dwaya Cinta assumes his war form and leaps against the behemoth, snarling a command for the characters to take care of the raksha.

If the characters defeat the raksha within **4 rounds**, Shree Dwaya Cinta will gain a Minor Intimacy of Respect toward the characters as they defeat the warship before he defeats the behemoth. However, past that, Shree Dwaya Cinta's trust in the characters dwindles, seeing them less as equals but as people to care for like unguarded children. Shree Dwaya Cinta gains a Minor Intimacy of Enmity against them.

Go to **Concordance**.

The Storm God

A storm violently erupts from the sky as if directed by an angry god. The storm is too powerful for the ship to progress: the waves rise a mile high, crashing upon the wood of the ships. The thunder shakes Creation itself.

Maharavarman knows the name of the storm god: Joss Pitṛ. He knows this because he once actively rejected the god in the Southern Deserts for not granting them rain. Maharavarman is scared about this, and unless adequately persuaded, will not tell this particular truth. He knows that either he dies (by sacrificing himself to Joss Pitṛ), or they all die.

If the circle finds this out, Si Li is not predisposed to sacrificing his love, while the Lotus-Eyed is more than happy to offer him up, believing that he has a virtuous path into oblivion. The characters must choose.



A character skilled enough in the ways of spirits, or perhaps good enough with their tongue, might be able to appease the Joss Pitṛ by finding out that the storm god has a Major Intimacy of Hatred against Maharavarman. If they can get Maharavarman to make an offering and then make a successful Persuade action against Joss Pitṛ, they might be able to appease him. Otherwise, they must fight a storm god.

If they sacrifice Maharavarman, they continue on their way. Go to **Concordance**.



If they fight and defeat the Joss Pit, they are spat out by the storm before the Sea of Milk, arriving way before the other fleets do, go to **The Sea of Milk in Part III.**

Concordance

After a few more months of sailing, all the fleets meet with each other. The circumstances of this scene will be wildly varied depending on whom the Circle is traveling with and where they are in their journey. This scene is primarily to set the stakes for the upcoming

events when the characters reach their destination. Take your time with this scene: Depending on the actions of the characters, they might want to engage in a fight with the other fleets, or they might want to move to a different fleet.

As the characters enter the scene, describe the rest of the fleets arriving as well, each one having lost a hefty chunk of their original cargo and flotillas. However, the important people are still there.

If the characters **were able to catch up to the Realm fleet** when they set sail, they catch up to them here.

If they were **sailing with the Realm fleet** and lost to the Leviathan, the Realm fleet is broken and shattered.

If the characters **could not catch up with the Realm fleet** when they set sail, Cathak Ragajo's fleet is not present in this scene.

The fleets are uneasy when they meet up, and it quickly devolves into fighting. If the Realm fleet is present in its full form, they engage first, hoping to blow their competition out of the water. If not, then the Lotus-Eyed convinces Si Li to attack Shree Dwaya Cinta's ships.

No matter what ships the characters are on, this devolves into an all-out naval battle. Use the naval combat rules to deal with the situation. Even if the Circle is with its own fleet, the fighting ships will target them to prevent them from leaving the scene.

Each round, the characters have a chance to try to end the fighting. They can convince their own expedition leader to stop attacking and flee the scene with a successful Influence action against difficulty 5. The characters may attempt to flee after two successful Escape actions.

Every third round of naval combat, complications arise during the fight.

First: Fleets scatter apart due to the offensive, isolating ships.

Second: A large thunder crack peals as the weather turns, probably by one of the sorcerers aboard the ships.

Third: An attacking raksha warship arrives, complicating matters even more.

WHAT IS WAISHNAWAN?

Your table decides who the Waishnawan is. It could be an aspect of the Wyld; a leftover from before the Dawn War; an impression of ancient beings far beyond Primordials; the ruling principle at this edge of Creation; a facet of the Unconquered Sun; a Primordial; an aspect of a Primordial; a thinking extension of Lethe, or maybe something even stranger. You decide which is most appealing to your group.

Fourth: As the scene progresses, make sure to describe the chaos and discord, the waters being roiled. The following happens at the end of the 12th round of combat.

- If they are with the Realm: Pirate Oyo sabotages the remaining Realm ship, causing it to sink.
- If they are with Shree Dwaya: The Lotus-Eyed finds herself upon the ship and attacks Shree Dwaya. If not reached in time, the Lotus-Eyed will be able to inflict a horrible mortal wound on the Lunar.
- If they are with Merchant Si Li: The raksha revive the corpse of Maharavarman (even if they threw him out into the sea) into a twisted, mangled version of himself, one that cannot love. Si Li must deal with this, or the characters must.
- If they are under the orders of the Harihara: There is an opening in the Realm fleet. A perfect opportunity, and they may team up with Pirate Oyo.

No matter what happens, go to **The Sea of Milk**.

III: Sea of Milk

The Sea of Milk

Like a wanderer across the deserts of the South or a warrior returning home, you find the point where the sea turns white. The sea here is cleaner than ivory, impossible to reflect over. It is paler than the sun itself. You move through it like a water lily moves through the swamp. And there, upon the great beyond, overwhelming in its might and beauty: the Milk-Churning Pestle, dominating both Creation and Wyld, and there the black-red-white serpent Vandr winds about it like a promise.

If an Exalt drinks from the Sea of Milk, their anima flares up to Bonfire (7 anima), their Essence rises by one until the end of the scene, and they may immediately pick the benefit for a minor milestone. If they do so again, however, they must succeed on a difficulty 5 Physique or Integrity Action or suffer one Health Level of aggravated damage.

The characters inevitably find the heart of the mountain — a large cave dominating the majority of the mountain kingdom's backdrop. Entering it, the characters find an azure-skinned, sixteen-armed god sitting upon a superfluid throne, like mercury. It does not move or speak, its face like a mask, but it does introduce itself to the characters as **Waishnawan, the Paramatman**, directly speaking into their minds. Souls come from

them, and at the end of all things, when Creation inevitably crumbles, souls return to them. They are the great Supreme Soul that grants the soul bliss and rest.

Depending on how they arrive, the characters have a fight on their hands to be able to speak with the Waishnawan.

If they did not catch up to the Realm fleet, Cathak Ragajo is here already. She reveals herself as Iselsi Parad and is not willing to allow the characters to get to the Supreme Soul without a fight. She will turn the power of the Realm against them.

If they traveled with Merchant-Enchanter Si Li and fought the storm god, they arrive first, but Cathak Ragajo is hot on their heels. She is not about to let someone else squander her chance to find out what happened to the Empress and attacks.

If they caught up to the Realm fleet in Concordance, the Circle arrives first but are pursued by an enemy force. This depends on who they are sailing with. If it's Cathak Ragajo, Sea Pirate Oya sabotages the ship, slowing them down enough for the other fleets to arrive. Shree Dwaya Cinta is so intent on his goal that he attacks. If they are with anyone else, Cathak Ragajo has beaten down their rivals and arrives to kill them as above. Shree Dwaya will have to contend with the Lotus-Eyed if they did not already confront her in the Concordance scene.

If they sailed with the Realm and defeated the Leviathan, they arrive first. When they arrive, Pirate Oya immediately commandeers a ship and attempts to sink the fleet, causing confusion within the ranks. The characters may team up with Oya here or may fight against her. Either way, it gives time for the other fleets to arrive and causes an all-out battle.

Who is last standing after the fighting determines what happens next.

If Iselsi Parad wins the day, she asks the Waishnawan about the Scarlet Empress. The answer is always different. Pick an answer or roll a d10 and divide the result by two.

1: "She came here to die. Do not wait for her return."

2: "She has found her enlightenment and has awakened. She is in everything; find her properly. Return to your Realm with new doctrine."

3: "She travels past the Wyld to become one with existence herself. Return to your Realm with new doctrine."

4: "She has found a better land, a pure land, greater than Creation. There are Three Billion Worlds, return to your Realm with new doctrine."

5: "She travels and is now subsumed into me. She has returned within you."

Drinking from the Sea of Milk, Iselsi Parad and Cathak Ragajo will walk away from the Waishnawan separate women. Cathak Ragajo will attempt to carry the Waishnawan's words back to the Blessed Isle to revolutionize the Realm, while Iselsi Parad will carry it as a secret revelation for her house and worthy co-conspirators. Both are doomed by their new wisdom unless, perhaps, aided by powerful allies in the future.

If Shree Dwaya Cinta overcomes the Lotus-Eyed, he offers her up to Waishnawan, who sets her free from the Deathlord's fetters.

If Si Li wins his fight, the Waishnawan gives him a piece of true knowledge, which Si Li eagerly accepts, though he understands that he must study it properly.

If Pirate Oyo wins, she asks for peace, and the Super Soul grants it. Her crew becomes an immortal roving pirate crew who needs no treasure and sails because they can. To them, this is true liberation. If the characters are part of this, they can work with the pirate crew because while the concept of the crew becomes immortal, the actual members of the crew are not.

No matter who else wins, the characters may ask the Waishnawan for a single boon. the Waishnawan may provide nearly any truth or revelation a character seeks. It may also provide aid in an ongoing project or supernatural venture, the epiphanies and insights it grants immediately completing all remaining obstacles for a character. However, Waishnawan asks for something in return: One of the characters' offspring must become Waishnawan's herald, his eventual avatar.

After speaking with the Waishnawan, go to **To**
Leave for the Trichiliocosm.

To Leave for the Trichiliocosm

This scene is a denouement. After the boon is granted, the Sea of Milk vanishes from sight, and the characters appear in front of Kiliran, awakening as if from a dream. The Sea of Milk is gone again, maybe forevermore this time.

At this point, the Circle can tie up any loose ends that came up during the scenario. If they had agreed to help the Harihara (and didn't already kill her), Iselsi Parad is also back at the port, half-drowned. What they do with her is up to the characters. Karam grants the

characters high nobility in Kiliran if they hold up their end of the bargain and even promises that one of them can become the next Harihara or King of Kiliran.

None of the other expeditions return. The characters may want to try to find out what happened to them if they were not instrumental in their demises.

There is an emissary of Nightbloom in Kiliran. What do they want? What might they want? An investigation might be in your best interests...

Additionally, with newfound power, the characters can perhaps work on setting up Kiliran as a base of operations or perhaps even a nucleus for a new kingdom. One that might oppose the Realm.

ANTAGONISTS

As always, Storytellers should feel free to make mechanical or narrative changes to better fit particularly martially inclined or otherwise focused groups. Similarly, Storytellers should add Intimacies as appropriate for their version of the adventure and their players' interests.

Voyagers

Potential allies and enemies alike, the seekers of the Sea of Milk are united only in their determination and the potential threat they hold to each other.

Cathak Ragajo / Iselsi Parad

Raised at the hand of the Scarlet Empress as a chosen weapon of imperial will, Cathak Ragajo received the finest instruction of House Cathak and access to the deepest secrets of the Imperial Palace. Beyond the Dynasty's sight, Iselsi Parad stalked Creation's edge at the Empress's instruction, collecting forbidden lore and esoteric powers to add to the imperial panoply. Occult secrets gleaned from the entrails of forbidden gods, howling Wyld divinities, and stranger things permeate her Essence, allowing her to transcend the limitations of a single individual. She claims to Cathak warriors and Iselsi spymasters that she carries out the Empress' final will. Whether she acts in accordance with the Empress' plans for her bifurcated servant or sets out on a quest for a glorious death after her patron's disappearance is unknown and unknowable, even to the woman herself. The pursuit may destroy her and lay waste to others in search of the Sea of Milk. Perhaps if the Sea is found, it will result in something unforeseen by Empress and the woman both.

Virtues: Loyalty (The Empress/House Iselsi)/ Discipline

Primary Pool (10): Command, Deceit, and Violence

Secondary Pool (8): Senses and Endurance

Tertiary Pool (6)

Essence: 5

Motes: 15

Health Levels: 10

Resolve: 4

Defense: 4 (Cathak Ragajo) / 6 (Iselsi Parad)

Hardness: 7

Soak: 6 (Cathak Ragajo) / 4 (Iselsi Parad)

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic: This character will flee at 0 Health Levels but will accept a dramatic injury to fight on at the Sea of Milk (See I Am Not Me).

Fire Aspect: This character possesses all the advantages and anima powers of a Dragon-Blooded Fire Aspect.

Iselsi's Blood: When presenting as Iselsi Parad, she enters Water Aura for the scene unless spending it to power a Charm.

Excellency: Spend 1 mote. Add a four-dice bonus to a roll using her primary pool or three dice to her secondary pools.

Elemental Burst: Spend 1 mote on Step 1 and make a decisive attack in an area of effect. The type of damage this deals is based on the Exalt's anima.

I Am Not Me: At the beginning of any scene, this character appears as either Cathak Ragajo or Iselsi Parad. Once per story, if she would suffer a dramatic injury, incapacitation, or death, she may discard that identity for the scene, heal back to full health and motes, and continue as her other identity.

Looming (The Other Side of My Soul): If this character hasn't suffered damage, been hit by an attack, or had her Hardness reduced to 1 by the end of a round, she may reflexively take a single action as her unmanifested self.

Red Hand (Cathak Ragajo): Spend 3 motes on Step 1 of a melee attack, gaining five dice on Step 1.

Ignore all penalties affecting the attack and double extra successes after applying Defense but before applying bonus successes. If the target has Soak 6 or higher, halve it; otherwise, reduce it by two against this attack.

Tree of Storms (Iselsi Parad): Spend 1 Mote on Step 5 of a successful withering attack or on Step 8 as a counterattack. Elemental waters surge forth from her anima, causing a difficulty 3, 5 damage environmental hazard out to close range against her enemies until Iselsi Parad's next action.

Weapons: Straight Sword (+1 Accuracy, +1 Defense, +1 Damage, 2 Overwhelming, Melee, Balanced)

Nyxastra (+2 Accuracy, +2 Damage, 3 Overwhelming, Ranged (Long), Artifact, Balanced, Piercing). Iselsi Parad may make Piercing withering attacks; on a success, she deals five dice of environmental damage against the target after her attack resolves.

Elemental Burst (+1 Accuracy, +3 Damage, Ranged (Medium), Powerful)

Tactics and Advice

Cathak Ragajo fights head-on. She leads her forces from the front, striking groups of foes with Elemental Bursts as soon as she is able, and she targets the most obvious threats with Red Hand. Actions with The Other Side of My Soul will target characters she hasn't attacked or successfully hit in a round first, seeking to wound and weaken enemies with Nyxastra's piercing attacks.

Iselsi Parad fights elusively, constantly pulling back to gain distance and vantage. She relies on her forces to build up Power and distract her enemies, using Tree of Storms to make directly engaging her dangerous until she can launch high Power attacks with Nyxastra. She doubles down on preferred targets in range with The Other Side of My Soul, saving enough Power to hit an already wounded target with Red Hand if possible.

Her Fleet

Whether Cathak or Iselsi, her forces are reliable and tested in battle across Creation's strangest edges. Her ships are of different designs, smaller than the great ships of the Realm's main ocean fleets but fully oceanworthy and heavily armed. They fight as medium ships with a mix of light and medium weaponry with the Powerful tag for their ranged attacks, captained by Champions with their primary pools replaced by Naval Warfare.

In hand-to-hand fighting, each ship's marines fight as Size 3, Drill 2 battlegroups based on the Soldier template, led by their captains.

The elite forces she leads directly are Champions with Drill 3 and the Opportunistic Threat quality. If Iselsi Parad is present, they will flurry Defend Other actions to protect her alongside their primary actions.

If Cathak Ragajo is the main threat in the Concordance scene, or if the players attack the Realm fleet directly, it possesses four Size 5 battlegroups in addition to the Size 3 group of elite forces she commands directly.

Shree Dwaya Cinta, the Wicked Wisteria Witch

Seeing final nothingness, Luna, and the sublime beauty of the inchoate as mere emanations of a universal truth, Dwaya Cinta pursues enlightenment in the name of a heresy that has no name. Passionate and brave beyond belief, Dwaya Cinta is willing to risk everything to touch the infinite nothing they believe is beyond the edge of the world and the Sea of Milk. His spirit shape is the many-toothed wolf-eel, and his hybrid form a glorious and terrible thing of crushing maws and gnashing teeth.

Numbers after a slash indicate statistics after Dwaya Cinta has transformed into his war form, which takes an action.

Virtues: Ambition (Seek out beautiful things and find true enlightenment)/ Compassion

Primary Pool (10/12): Esoteric Mysticism and Terrifying Violence

Secondary Pool (8): Diplomacy and Seaman-ship

Tertiary Pool (6)

Essence: 4

Motes: 12

Health Levels: 12

Resolve: 4

Defense: 5/4

Hardness: 6

Soak: 5/6

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic: Dwaya Cinta will flee at zero Health Levels but will accept a dramatic injury to fight on at the Sea of Milk.

Full Moon Lunar: This character possesses all the advantages and anima powers of a Full Moon caste Lunar.

Excellency: Spend 1 mote. Add a four-dice bonus to a roll using his primary pool or three dice to his secondary pools.



Ecstatic Lunar Frenzy: Dwaya suffers wound penalties as static penalties to his defense and gains their value in dice pool bonuses. On Step 5 of a decisive attack targeting him, he may spend 2 motes. All rolled damage dice become Power in his pool, and any damage levels suffered on Step 7 become bonus damage dice on his next decisive attack.

Thousand Snapping Eel Maws: Spend 2 motes on Step 1 to immediately flurry two actions, suffering only a -1 penalty. Dwaya gains Looming: Decisive Attack until the end of the round but may lose it to

reflexively clash an attack before the end of the turn with a three-die bonus.

Weapons: Warform Claws (+2 Accuracy, +2 Defense, +2 Damage, 3 Overwhelming, Melee, Natural, Balanced)

Wolf Eel Maws (+1 Accuracy, +2 Defense, +3 Damage, Melee, Natural, Chopping)

Tactics and Advice

Dwaya fights with abandon, transforming into his many-headed eel warform and attempting to overwhelm enemies with attacks from Thousand





Snapping Eel Maws, saving Power to use for clashes or his Looming attacks. He trusts his crew to fight on their own, rushing targets they engage but cannot put down quickly.

His Forces

Dwaya commands a single heavy ship armed with light weapons, but his crew fights as a Size 3 group of Elite Beastfolk Soldiers (**Exalted: Essence** p. 333) with

the Hammer and Anvil and Vanguard qualities.

Merchant-Enchanter Si Li

The Merchant-Enchanter is a font of wisdom and resources. For those who support his attempt to obtain ultimate mystical knowledge at the Sea of Milk, Si Li's aid may more than make up for his mostly-human combat abilities. His aid provides a four-dice bonus to any economic venture or magical working he assists with, and he is a capable First Circle sorcerer. With preparation, he can cast Cirrus Skiff, Flames of Unyielding Purity, and The Violent Opening of Closed Portals, though his Wine-And-Silver initiation is inappropriate to use during combat. If pressed, he uses the stats of a Savant with a primary pool of 10 dice in combat or other dangerous situations.

His Fleet

Si Li's fleet is made up of medium ships armed with medium weapons, whose crews fight as Drill 1, Size 3 Infantry Irregulars. Si Li's lover, King of South Jangga, Maharavarman VII, uses the stats of a Champion but with the Sovereign template's special abilities, and his massive treasure junk is a heavy ship armed with heavy weapons. In combat, all ships and crews attempt to protect Si Li, Maharavarman VII, and the ships themselves in that order.

Pirate Oyo

Embracing the freedom of piracy before all other desires and concerns, Pirate Oyo is a terror upon the waves and in the drinking hall. Easy with friendship and forgiveness for those who don't try to impede her path, she is ruthlessly efficient when it comes to cutting away or eliminating anyone or anything that might tie her and her crew down. Oyo uses the stats of a Champion, with Piracy, Showing Off, and Violence replacing her primary pool.

Her Ship

The Horizon Breaker is a light ship with light weapons. Its crew is a Drill 1, Size 3 unit of Champions. Every round, both ship and crew can pick one weapon tag to add to their attacks.

The Lotus-Eyed of the Wilting Waves by The Shore

An enlightened seeker of transcendence through nothingness, The Lotus-Eyed of the Wilting Waves by the Shore is a truer believer in the ultimate goal of the

Shining Way than any, including perhaps its founder. Seeking to bring others to the final release of absolute death, she is gentle and compassionate in all things, especially the ending of others' lives. She does not care for the Sea of Milk, except so far as it is Shree Dwaya Cinta's goal and a distraction on the road to enlightenment and peace for so many others.

Virtues: Compassion/Justice

Primary Pool (10): Gentle Lethality and Hunting Grace

Secondary Pool (8): Endurance and Quiet Persuasion

Tertiary Pool (6)

Essence: 3

Motes: 10

Health Levels: 9

Resolve: 4

Defense: 5

Hardness: 5

Soak: 4

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Heroic: The Lotus-Eyed will flee at zero Health Levels but will accept a dramatic injury to fight on at the Sea of Milk.

Day Abyssal: The Lotus-Eyed possesses all the advantages and anima powers of a Day Caste Abyssal.

Excellency: Spend 1 mote. Add a four-dice bonus to a roll using her primary pool or three dice to her secondary pools.

Elusive Shadow: The Lotus-Eyed may flurry outmaneuver Build Power actions.

Love Like Death: The Lotus-Eyed may make an unrolled miscellaneous action to fully consider a character, creating for herself either a Compassion Intimacy of "I must save you from suffering" or a Justice intimacy of "You cannot be allowed to burden the world" towards them. If she already has such an Intimacy, she may instead increase it to Major.

Petal-Scented Darkness: Commit 2 motes for the scene. The Lotus-Eye's Defense increases by 2, and successfully defending against attacks steals 2 Power from the attacker. While active, she may spend 1 mote on Step 2 to inflict a three-die penalty to the attacker on Step 3.

Noon Sunset: Spend 1 mote to make an outmaneuver Build Power action with Hunting Grace. On a success, the Lotus-Eyed also gains Concealment and the Oppressive quality until she moves a range band or is successfully struck by an attack.

Act of Love: Spend 3 motes on Step 1 when making a decisive attack. The attack gains +5 dice to attack and damage, reduces the target's Soak by 2 or by half if it's 6 or higher, and inflicts an appropriate dramatic injury if it inflicts five or more levels of damage.

Weapons: Tearful Parting, Soulsteel Flying Shears (+2 Accuracy, +2 Defense, +2 Damage, 2 Overwhelming, Throwing (Medium), Two-Handed); The Lotus Eyed gains the value of the highest Intimacy she holds towards the target as damage dice on a successful decisive attack.

Tactics and Advice

The Lotus-Eyed begins combat by flurrying Petal-Scented Darkness with Love Like Death, picking out a particularly worthy or heinous foe unless she possesses Major Intimacies to all present. Using Noon Sunset and defending to Build Power, she strikes when capable of making a dangerous decisive attack with Act of Love. After a successful attack, or when otherwise requiring more Power, she will flurry Love Like Death to intensify her Intimacies with either outmaneuver actions or withering attacks, Building Power and slowly regaining motes.

Disasters Upon the Way

The following are monsters and creatures that the Circle might encounter during their voyage to the Sea of Milk.

The Wyld Leviathan

An enormous creature infused with the energies of the Wyld, cultivating its impossible power since the First Age. A thousand hands and sword-like fangs seek to drag ships to the deep, while its draconic form can leap clear from the water like a playful dolphin.

Virtues: Courage/Ambition (Sink A Thousand Ships)

Primary Pool (12): Devastation and Swimming

Secondary Pool (10): Endurance and Senses

Tertiary Pool (6)

Essence: 7

Health Levels: 20

Resolve: 5

Defense: 4

Hardness: 10

Soak: 6

ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

Legendary Size: The leviathan is gigantic. Extras cannot hurt it, and it cannot suffer more than one

damage per turn from any attack unless supplemented by magic or from another creature of Legendary size. Mundane weapons lose all tags when used against it. Withering attacks by smaller individuals suffer a three-success penalty. Knockback, knockdown, and pull gambits increase their cost by three.

Furious Dragon's Ire: This character may take additional turns equal to the characters in the opposing Circle, but he may not act twice in a row. When he starts an additional turn, reduce the duration of any multiple-round effects on this character by one round.

Armada Eater: A successful attack against a ship instantly destroys ships not captained by the Exalted or other heroic characters and inflicts seven extra levels of damage that do not apply against the cap against those that are.

Looming (Shipwreck): If this character hasn't suffered damage, been hit by an attack, or had its Hardness reduced to 1 by the end of a round, it gains 10 Power and immediately makes a decisive attack against a ship.

Living Disaster: At the beginning of the round, this character gains 10 Power. They may always strike dematerialized targets.

Fundamental Hunger: This character spends Health Levels in place of motes and may spend them in place of Power.

Trans-Sacral Body: Spend one Health Level on Step 6 to avoid non-damaging effects of an attack.

Weapons: Hungry Jaws (+1 Accuracy, +1 Defense, +4 Damage, 3 Overwhelming, Melee, Natural, Chopping)

Unspeakable Force (+0 Accuracy, +0 Defense, +5 Damage, Melee, Natural, Piercing) This attack may only target ships, battlegroups, or other Legend-sized characters.

Tactics and Advice

The Leviathan attacks ships with wild abandon, targeting the smallest and weakest first. If injured, it turns its attention to whatever individual or vessel injured it.

Raksha Corsairs

Flamboyant and pitiless reavers sailing from the chaotic spume of the Wyld, raksha corsairs use the stats for Raksha Nobles (**Exalted: Essence** p. 337). Their impossibly beautiful ships are carved from coral and gossamer and count as light ships that can change the class and tags of their armaments every action. Their crews of hungry anemone-men, glass-skinned sirens, and stranger denizens of Wyld-touched ocean fight as Drill 1, Size 3 battle groups of common raksha. Defeating the corsairs sends their ships and crews swiftly into flight, unwilling to risk the wrath of creatures capable of defeating their masters.

Joss Pitr, Storm God

A jealous and powerful storm god of the South, Joss Pitr demands retribution or recompense for every insult or wrong done to him, no matter how small. In combat, Joss Pitr uses the stats for an Essence 5 martial god (**Exalted: Essence** p. 334) with the following adjustments:

- Add the qualities: Furious Dragon's Ire, Trans-Sacral Body, Elemental Vortex, Elemental Strike, Looming (Shipwreck) (above), and Wave of Carnage

On the first round, he will call up a Size 4, Drill 2 battle group of flickering Cloud-And-Thunder spirits with the Desperate Assault quality to aid him (**Essence** 2 Elementals, **Exalted: Essence**, p. 337).



DEEDS YET UNDONE

EXALTED:ESSENCE ADVENTURES

Creation is a world as wide as the sky, filled with adventure and mystery enough to overwhelm spirit and human alike. It's good, then, that the Exalted, champions imbued with Creation's greatest powers, stride forth to meet these challenges. But how will the world be changed in their wake?

Providing both narrative and mechanical support, this book arms Storytellers with perilous dangers, terrifying enemies, and strange vistas to suit any group. **Deeds Yet Undone** offers three adventures for your Exalted Essence gaming group, whether they're newly Exalted heroes (and first-time players) or they stand amongst the mightiest of the Exalted who have walked Creation's breadth.

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- An invasion of the undead springs forth from festering injustice in A Shadow Falls!
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What great feats and mighty deeds will Exalted do, when faced with such worthy challenges?

