



EX3

ABYSSALS

SWORN TO THE GRAVE



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Chazz: To my daughter Carla, who was born as we began writing this book.



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The windows of the Sorrowstone Tower were thrown wide to let in the late afternoon light. Today, a blood-red sun filled the sky, its edges pulsing and wavering. Below, people moved sluggishly along Stygia's streets, weighed down by the sun's dull light and stifling heat. Throughout the day, shouts and the clang of weapons filled the air as tempers flared. But there was beauty in it, too. A sun was a rare sight in Stygia, and crimson limned the hall in which The One Who Walks Behind You met with his peers, deepening the shadows and softening harsh edges.

Walks Behind had expensive tastes. His guests lounged upon smooth-lacquered furniture and sumptuous velvet cushions, drinking iced wine from crystal goblets. The art on display was a testament to his wealth: a dancer sculpted in demon brass, his expression full of exquisite yearning; a delicate archway carved from driftwood hauled up from the bottom of the Sea of Shadows; a painting by the ghost of the revered artist Xin Skycaller, capturing the signing of the Stygian Pact.

Each of his guests had paused before that last at some point, studying the depiction of the Deathlord signatories. The Kingeater and the Voice regarded their patrons approvingly; the Mariner examined their master's peers with calm detachment, and the Gallows Bride? She let a single shadow pass across her face and then slew whatever strange feelings were growing inside her heart. The Deathlords had seen something in each of them, lifted them up from their former lives and led them to power and purpose. No one in this room was a weak link, and while they were here at their lieges' behests, they'd worked together in the past and found the company pleasant.

The Kingeater leaned against a marble column, idly swirling the ice in her goblet and listening to its pleasant chime against the crystal. Those who didn't know her might think her bored, but Walks Behind had seen her shift from nonchalant to high alert in a heartbeat. She'd often regaled them with stories of enemies who'd thought they had the drop on her, only to find the fine point of her rapier at their throats before they'd fully drawn their blades. Did she know what kind of figure she cut, tall and rakish in her flared leather coat, the setting sun giving her full lips a ruby tinge?

Then the Kingeater caught the Gallows Bride's eyes and gave her a wink and a smile full of promise. Walks Behind realized she knew exactly how handsome and intriguing she looked.

• • • •

The sound of the orchestra tuning was a sweet discord to the Kingeater's ears. She'd been looking forward to this opera for ages, and here she was, accompanying the Silver Prince to its opening, seated in his private box in Onyx's Sunsmoke Theater. The Deathlord's opal mask gleamed in the lights. He waited for the Dusk Caste to take her first sip of wine before talking business.

"There's work for you in Stygia," he said. "My informants tell me the Mask of Winters is making inquiries that encroach upon my interests."

The wine tasted of summer evenings and battlefields. She savored it as she read the report he passed to her. "Ships? You think he's setting his sights on Cormorant?"

"Not yet," he said, "but if he builds a fleet, it's only a matter of time. If he wants to take to the water, let him teach that rotting behemoth to swim."

The rivalry between the two was old and complex; the Kingeater had long ago stopped trying to understand it. "Should I leave now?" she asked.

"No," said the Silver Prince. "Stay and enjoy the performance."

• • • •

The Bride smirked and shook her head. "Be careful what you wish for," she said as she captured an obsidian Gateway piece with a figure of polished bone. "Word on the street is that I'm trouble."

"That's what I'm hoping," said the Kingeater.

The Bride's opponent, a stunning man in cobalt robes that matched his eyes, heaved a sigh and tipped over a raiton on the topmost board, conceding the game. "I suppose it was too much to think her flirting might distract

you.” He said it without bitterness — the Voice That Speaks in Silence enjoyed both the challenge and the company.

• • • •

Banners fluttered over the Quarter Magnificent, and ocarinas, drums, and bells filled the air, celebrating the completion of the new temple. The Voice that Speaks in Silence walked alongside the Black Heron, whose patronage had made its construction possible. She’d tucked her hand in the crook of his arm and graced cultists and festival-goers with her smile. The words she murmured to him were at odds with her pleased expression.

“The Mask of Winters seeks the Blue Mansion’s favor. Rumor says he’s buying council votes faster than Fathom Hermit Shell can cast them. He’s putting a plan in motion, and I need you to help stymie it.”

Voice nodded. The Mask posed little threat to the Black Heron, but she was playing an extremely long game — one that led, eventually, to Great Forks. Thwart him now, gain more of the First and Forsaken Lion’s goodwill, and little by little rebuild what she’d lost. The Voice was well-versed in patience and persistence. Today, the cult he served had a new temple in the Quarter Magnificent. Someday, his service to the Black Heron would help them spread throughout Creation, too.

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The Bride laughed heartily and gently patted the Voice That Speaks in Silence’s hand. “In another life, I was a champion at this game. I saw that trick coming ten moves before you ever thought of it.”

Across from them, the Mariner of the Final Shore moved toward the window. They folded their hands behind their back and stood, shoulders straight and head high, looking out at the city and the sea beyond. Walks Behind could almost imagine them at the prow of their ship, daring the sea to do its worst. “There’s a storm coming,” they said softly. “We’ll want to close the windows soon.”

• • • •

The Mariner of the Final Shore watched the dream come upon them like the tide creeping along the sand. The promontory on which they’d been standing faded as the Ebon Spires of Pyrron grew closer. They strode through the dream-realm to find the Walker in Darkness awaiting them in his hall. Through the windows, they could see the mercenary army of the Company of Martial Sinners laying siege to a Scavenger Lands city.

“The Mask of Winters fancies himself an admiral,” said the Walker, turning his lambent orange gaze away from the battlefield and onto the Mariner. “He’s courting shipwrights and sailors, though I don’t know if they’re bound for Thorns or if he thinks to join the River Styx to the Yanaze and sail for Nexus. Either way, it must not come to pass.”

Then the dream faded, and the Mariner was alone once more, watching raitons dive for carrion in the waters below.

• • • •

Out over the ocean, purple-gray clouds gathered, building swiftly into thunderheads. Any number of dangers might lurk within, from fat raindrops and bright lightning to a deluge of tears that threatened to drown those caught beneath in despair. Storms in the Underworld were never so simple as their counterparts in Creation.

Walks Behind signaled to his attendants, who hurried to draw the windows closed. They pulled the curtains and lit the lamps. Then, at a nod from their employer, they withdrew, leaving the Abyssals alone.

“To business, then?” asked Walks Behind. He settled at the head of a mahogany table, one that had once belonged to the ghost of a Guild factor from Nexus. It was an acquisition he was particularly proud of, a reminder of what he’d overcome. Many pieces throughout the tower had once been the grave goods of Nexus’ wealthiest citizens, collected as payment for debts when their ghosts ran afoul of Walks Behind’s underlings. Most such pieces he sold off or redistributed to the impoverished, but there were names he remembered from his days on that city’s streets, and he kept an ear to the ground for their arrival in Stygia.

• • • •

From a balcony in Sunborn's Last Stand, the First and Forsaken Lion watched a squad of the Legion Sanguinary as they drilled in the courtyard below. Walks Behind stood at his liege's side, waiting for the Deathlord to speak. At last the drill ended and the Lion turned, chains clanking, to the Iron Hill district, where the Mask of Winter's new Stygian garrison stabbed into the air. Walks Behind couldn't see their face beneath that heavy helm — had never seen it at all — but could feel the Lion's enmity all the same.

"You've heard of his plans?" the Lion asked.

"He's hardly being subtle," said Walks Behind. "He wants you all to know he's up to something."

"Good. Then he won't be surprised when it falls apart in his hands."

"I've already called the meeting."

• • • •

The others refreshed their drinks and joined him. The Gallows Bride was the last to sit, bringing with her a tray of pastries sticky with weeping honey harvested from griefbee hives. She nibbled at one and sighed as the emotions the honey imparted swept over her. "So he's looking to build a fleet," she said. Rarely did the Gallows Bride speak the Mask of Winters' name aloud, but they all knew who she meant. His recent machinations in Stygia had caused concern among their lieges and set this meeting in motion.

• • • •

The Gallows Bride pulled the hood further over her face. For the moment, at least, she was the hunter rather than the hunted, but the Somber Herald — sworn to the Mask of Winters — was no fool, and if he spotted her, she'd be the quarry once more. He sat at a table at one of Thunder Hill's wineshops, joined by Aikeret of the Damned Sails. You couldn't miss the Signatory — that crimson greatcoat stood out like a beacon. The meeting was intentionally public; Aikeret voted with the Silver Prince on council matters, and here she was meeting with his rival's emissary. The Mask wanted them to be seen.

By the time the Herald glanced her way, the Gallows Bride was already on the move, headed for the Sorrowstone Tower. She owed nothing to the Mask of Winters, not anymore, and her allies would be eager to learn what she'd overheard.

• • • •

"Couldn't he just stick to Thorns?" asked the Kingeater, though she didn't really mean it. She'd said it for the scowl it would elicit on the Mariner's face and wasn't disappointed.

"Whatever he's after," said the Voice That Speaks in Silence, "it will have repercussions for us all."

"I'd like to see his shipyards," said the Gallows Bride. "I have some old friends who owe me favors and can help in that regard. Though I can't promise they won't try to sell me out instead." She turned her slow grin on the Kingeater. "I don't suppose you'd like to come with me when I meet with them, just in case?"

"Oh, I'd follow you into danger anytime," said the Kingeater.

"We'll need to know what inroads he's made among the Signatories," said Walks Behind. "The Voice and I will make the rounds." The Voice nodded, as Walks Behind knew he would. He was a welcome guest at Stygian galas, lending an air of credibility that Walks Behind — with his network of thieves and smugglers — sometimes lacked.

The Mariner consulted a small notebook whose leather cover was water-stained and soft with use. "It's hard to have a fleet when monsters destroy your ships. Leave the terrors of the depths to me."

From outside came a rumble, and the tower shook with the thunder's boom. The storm was upon them.





Introduction

There is only one liberty, to come to terms with death; thereafter anything is possible.

— *Albert Camus*

Never before has Creation known the perils of the Abyssal Exalted. They have emerged from the gloom of the Underworld as champions of death, sworn to the service of the Deathlords and the Neverborn. Each was offered the gift of the Bleak Exaltation at the moment of their demise, and each chose to willingly become an agent of the apocalypse. Their motivations are as manifold as any others — they may seek destruction or domination, malice or justice, ancient secrets hidden and forbidden or sheer iron-willed survival.

In service to their lieges, these deathknights will grind the Underworld to heel and scour life from the face of Creation. Or... they might break from those oaths and set themselves up as death's own Lawgivers, ruling empires of the dead as sages, arbiters, and reapers. All that can be known for sure is that with the Abyssal Exalted loosed upon the world, it will never be the same again.

Changes for Third Edition

Abyssals: Sworn to the Grave updates and reimagines the Abyssal Exalted and the Underworld they inhabit. No longer a dark mirror to Creation, the Underworld is now a dark, enigmatic ocean. Each island within it — some small, some vast as continents — is an afterlife which serves as paradise, punishment, or purgatory for its inhabitants. These afterlives are shaped by the mysterious Old Laws, drawing ghosts to islands that resonate with either the nature of their death or their cultural rites.

New and returning locales fill this reimagined Underworld: In Dari of the Mists, ghosts toil away to repay impossible debts; in Kesundang, dead warriors climb a mountainous sword for the right to sit in glory at its hilt. Stygia, greatest of the Underworld's cities, returns under the rulership of a fragile coalition of conquerors known as the Stygian Pact. Rumors and glimpses of other Underworldly locations paint the

picture of a vast world of ghostly adventure and intrigue — a perfect stage for tales of passion, horror, and the chivalry of death.

A new take on Abyssal Charms now allows the deathknights to invoke magic inspired by their Deathlord lieges. These themes open up new avenues for Abyssals, whether drawing on the icy nihilism of the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears; channeling the febrile, monstrous genius of the Eye and Seven Despairs; or slaying foes with the lethal pinions of the Black Heron herself.

This Book at a Glance

Chapter One: The Abyssal Exalted introduces the Abyssals, those dark champions Chosen at the moment of their deaths.

Chapter Two: The Deathlords details the nine unique and mighty ghosts who serve as patrons and lieges to the Abyssals — their deathly accomplishments, dark intentions, and plots of conquest and carnage.

Chapter Three: The Underworld explores the grim land of the dead and the ghosts who inhabit it, providing strange vistas both harrowing and hallowed.

Chapter Four: Character Creation provides rules for creating Abyssal player characters.

Chapter Five: Traits details the Abyssal Castes and provides rules for the Great Curse and the chivalry of death.

Chapter Six: Charms reveals the apocalyptic magic of the Abyssal Exalted, by which they may slaughter armies, bind the dead, and spread death's dark gifts upon Creation.

Chapter Seven: Martial Arts and Necromancy presents new martial arts styles employed by the Abyssal

Exalted and unleashes the secrets of necromancy — a system of spellcraft based on the principles of the Underworld.

Chapter Eight: Artifacts details soulsteel wonders fit for the champions of death.

Chapter Nine: The Roll of Deathly Personages offers an array of characters who might serve as allies and antagonists, including powerful ghosts, undead behemoths, and Abyssal Exalted.

Lexicon

Abyssal Exalted: The Chosen of the Neverborn, whose deathly powers are dark mirrors to the magic of the Solar Exalted.

afterlife, primeval: A location in *the Underworld* that naturally resonates with a certain kind of death, such as murder victims, the drowned, or those struck by lightning.

afterlife, ritual: A location in *the Underworld* that resonates with the prayer and rites of a particular culture from Creation.

behemoth: A term for any unique, powerful being that doesn't otherwise fit a particular category; *the Underworld* is full of undead behemoths of terrible power and enigmatic nature.

chivalry of death: A code of conduct emanating from the nature of *the Neverborn*, rewarding their servants for inflicting torment, slaying worthy foes, and spreading death's embrace until Creation and *the Underworld* are one.

deathknight: A term for an Abyssal who serves a *Deathlord* liege. Those who break from the Deathlords are known as deathknights-errant.

Deathlords, the: *Ghosts* of the Exalted who swore to serve *the Neverborn* in exchange for power. They are charged with the annihilation of Creation and entrusted with the *Abyssal Exalted* as their vassals.

Dual Monarchs, the: Ancient and powerful ghosts who ruled over Stygia before the conquest, now largely relegated to ceremonial duties.

ghost: A dead being's lingering soul that retains warped echoes of their personality, will, and purpose. Usually refers to the remnant of the higher soul; lower souls are instead known as *hungry ghosts*.

grave goods: Significant objects and wealth buried or burned alongside a body during its funeral that appear alongside their ghost and often become particularly beautiful or valuable in *the Underworld*.

hungry ghost: A remnant of a being's lower soul which retains traces of their personality and passions but which is possessed of animalistic intelligence and instincts.

Labyrinth, the: A subterranean nightmare-realm that exists below *the Underworld*, inhabited by specters and other dead horrors.

Lethe: An enigmatic force that predates *the Underworld*, washing away the memories of a soul's past life before it moves on to reincarnation.

Monstrance of Celestial Portion: Mystical vessels constructed by the Deathlords, allowing them to wield power stolen from the lost Solar Exaltations to identify and Exalt their Abyssal champions.

necromancy: A system of spellcraft that is equal to sorcery, but focused on the Essence of death and *the Underworld*.

nephwrack: A *specter* who serves as a high priest to *the Neverborn*, losing almost all their former identity in exchange for power and dark purpose.

Neverborn, the: those ancients who were slain during the Divine Revolution and now suffer agonizing nightmares in their massive tomb-bodies.

shadowland: A death-touched place where Creation and *the Underworld* overlap, allowing ghosts and mortals to interact; its boundaries lead to Creation by day and the Underworld by night.

specter: A *ghost* twisted by the influences of *the Labyrinth* or *the Neverborn*, almost always becoming hostile or alien in the process.

spirit art: The common magics possessed by some *ghosts*, including possession, curses, blessings, and other powers; sometimes referred to as arcanoi by scholars.

sobriquet: The title an Abyssal uses in place of their original name, usually given to them by their *Deathlord* shortly after Exaltation.

soul: The spiritual presence of a being; mortal souls are usually divided into the higher soul (which contains a

being's reason and memory) and the lower soul (containing instinct and passion).

soulsteel: One of the five magical materials, a black steel alloy forged from fragmented souls.

Stygia: The grandest city of the Underworld and one of the few created by the dead themselves; it was conquered by massed armies of an alliance known as the Stygian Pact.

Underworld, the: The land of the dead; a realm of existence where the souls of the living go after death, sometimes to pass into *Lethe*, and other times to linger as *ghosts*.

Whispers: The agonized voices of *the Neverborn* as they rage within their tombs; these whispers can corrupt those who listen but also provide horrific enlightenment.

Playing Safely

Abyssals are the Chosen of the Neverborn. They traded their names away to cosmic corpse-monsters and agreed to work towards the end of all life. Their Charms arm them to be the world's greatest killers. Their Deathlord patrons are creatures of madness and vendetta, hoping to cultivate useful cruelty in their new acolytes. Carnage and bloodshed are their constant companions. Accordingly, stories of the Abyssal Exalted are inevitably stories about violence and death in a world that is deeply flawed and profoundly unfair.

Players (including Storytellers) are strongly encouraged to have an honest, thoughtful discussion about their comfort with a variety of difficult topics that might come up in an Abyssals chronicle — topics like murder, abuse, nihilism, and despair. Everyone in the game has a shared responsibility to their fellow players to make sure people feel safe and respected.

There are many safety tools that can be used to help make sure that everyone can engage with the game as fully as possible. One such tool is called **Lines and Veils**.

Lines are hard limits that the group will never cross — things that simply aren't discussed or even alluded to. Lines aren't just things that are overlooked; they're things that don't happen in a meaningful way in the fiction.

Veils are softer limits used to indicate content that can exist to the world and be referenced, but which shouldn't be "seen" on screen or given too much focus. If "harm to animals" is veiled, it might be okay to acknowledge that something has happened to a favorite pet, but never in lurid detail. Because veils are more ambiguous, players should be careful when approaching them, using a light touch. When in doubt, ask the group about your intended approach first.

Lines and veils are a great way to start a conversation about the tone and content of your chronicle, but they're not set in stone. It's impossible to plan for every possible situation, so everyone should feel empowered to add or clarify lines and veils throughout the game as needed. You don't need to explain or justify a line or veil — sometimes we can't even explain to ourselves why something is too upsetting to play with.

There are many other great safety tools which can help guide your group in figuring out what they want from their shared vision for a game. No matter which tools you use, remember that they're always just the start of an ongoing conversation about how the chronicle will evolve. Playing from a place of mutual respect and responsibility is the key to creating a great game where *everyone* can contribute and enjoy.

Suggested Resources

The following media may offer inspiration for players and Storyteller interested in sagas of blood-stained ambition and necromantic power.

Classics

***The Saga of Hervor and Heidrek*, source unknown:** A legendary Icelandic saga, the section "Hervararkviða" depicts sheildmaiden Hervor's martial exploits and struggles. Her confrontation with the ghost of her father to claim his cursed sword is a perfect example of how Abyssals might retrieve potent artifacts from the dead.

Fiction

***The Locked Tomb* series by Tamsyn Muir:** Necromancy and the undead abound in this gothic space fantasy. In particular, *Harrow the Ninth*, the second book in the series, demonstrates what interactions between a Deathlord and his deathknights might look like.

Manga

***Berserk* by Kentaro Miura:** The story of a bloody-handed warrior with an enormous sword and a grim fate as he struggles for revenge against a former friend. This manga codified the intricate Gothic aesthetics that inspired the Underworld, and Guts' quest pits him against a Deathlord-like god of evil. Content warnings for depictions of graphic and sexual violence.

Television

***Castlevania*, by Warren Ellis:** While the video game series is an excellent inspiration for Abyssals throughout its many entries, the *Castlevania* animated series adapts and condenses many of its most relevant themes. Dracula and the later Council of Sisters are strong examples of the intrigue Deathlords and established Abyssals might be entangled in, while Alucard's journey is a model for deathknights-errant who break from their masters to forge a new destiny.

***Revolutionary Girl Utena* by Be-Papas:** While an unusually vibrant inspiration, *Utena* is rich with the baroque chivalry of the Abyssals, and the strange motivations of its characters model the passion plays of the dead. Its Black Rose arc is particularly grim, with an antagonist who evokes the destructive philosophies of the Bishop and Lover. Content warnings for abuse, gaslighting, and sexual assault.

Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*, directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri:** The heroic dhampir D and his vampiric foes are a foundational inspiration for Abyssal's aesthetics across all three editions of ***Exalted, notably including their Great Curse.

Video Games

***The Dark Souls* franchise by From Software:** These games are filled with nightmarish, beautifully decaying purgatories inhabited by lonely souls haunted by purpose, passion, and melancholy. Its bleak vistas perfectly evoke shadowlands and the Underworld.

The storm threatened apocalypse, dividing the sky with pikes of bright fire. It was the end of all upon the sea. But at the Siren's Call, there were no worries, no yellow whispers. Ships would scuttle or float on; they would all perish or survive to morning. What could they do? What did it matter? The air was heavy, the atmosphere manic, the tavern overstuffed with grotesques and goons.

The Kingeater grinned at her partners, her dice-hand smooth in charcoal leather, her overturned tricorn hat heavy with silver bits.

"You wanna cheat so much, *you* buy the next round." Aft the Mast bared rows of razor teeth, a sharkfolk's signature smile.

"I *never* cheat," the Kingeater swore, Essence prickling her fingertips. She pocketed the silver and swept the tricorn over her head — the better to hide her welling caste mark.

"I don't want another round," the ghost of Fair Armando protested. "It tastes like piss, and I can't feel it no more anyway—"

The typhoon crested, shaking the graffitied walls, shattering a window of rotted glass. A tavern's-worth of monstrous freebooters paused dicing and drinking, moving as one to throw a table against the breach.

"Get us a different round," Fair Armando suggested. "The song."

"Oh, aye!" Aft the Mast bellowed. "That Old Song!"

"I couldn't," the Kingeater played at modesty, but she was already atop the table, her long black frock coat slipping from her shoulders and the lyrics surfacing in her mind.

One by one the revelers fell silent: spirits, beastfolk, and folks yet queerer all listening on in awe. Their stares and the storm ignited a spreading sting in her heart, like a waking limb gone to pins and needles. Death itself wailed out of reach and yet she stood, she *sang*. That Old Song flowed from her, lyrics in a haunting language she didn't understand.

A stranger with dark eyes shining sprang to his heels.

She remembered all keen and sudden like a painting. They played That Old Song at her wedding, and she wore the summer sky for him — him, all handsome-fine in a cloud of feathers, giving her the moon to wear on her finger.

The stranger was singing That Old Song, his beautiful black eyes soft and fond.

Essence itched under her skin. A spectral dread seized her throat and left her sputtering, shocked. The Kingeater, her sword-hand furious in charcoal leather, drew Lucrèce and ran him through.

The Siren's Call exploded with the gleeful rage of thirty-some scoundrels. Aft the Mast threw himself snarling after the stranger's crew. Fair Armando pulled his spectral knife and vanished.

Laughing amidst the abrupt chaos and violence, the stranger grabbed the fellsting's blade and withdrew it from his bare chest. The Kingeater wrenched Lucrèce free and struck him in the jaw, her fist a blinding blue.

"Who are you?" she demanded, aflame with waking agony. "How do you know that song?"

He rubbed his jaw, the bold tattoos roving his arms a lively, dazzling silver. "I wanted to ask you the same things." The stranger's voice was a hearth fire she abandoned when she left home. It was a light at the top of a tower, and her soul wailed out of reach.

She threw her fist again. He caught it in his palm, his grip cracking her knuckles, radiant silver Essence bleeding into her void-blue anima. Those lovely dark eyes hardened with fresh suspicion. "...But *what* are you?"

She shuddered as if struck. The Kingeater twisted away from his grasp and crashed through the brawl, through the doors, into the cataclysmal storm. She fled the stranger like a ghost before gravehounds, anguished without knowing why, aghast at what else he might ask her.





Chapter One

The Abyssal Exalted

The Abyssal Exalted ride forth from the sunless lands on pale horses. They bear black blades forged from the damned and lair in the barrows of fallen kings. Sacraments and cerecloth are their finery; funereal incense, their perfume. As deathknights, they pledge fealty to unholy lieges, serving as their greatest and most terrible champions. As Death's Lawgivers, they bring a new order to the Underworld, toppling ancient dynasties and conquering great empires of the dead.

Death's Chosen are creatures of dark passion and the romance of the grave. Graced with bleak majesty, they are warrior-poets, necromancer-kings, and philosophers of death. They follow a strange chivalry, staying their hands at unexpected moments for reasons of their own. Thus do they serve the will of the Neverborn, the slain ancients entombed in the Underworld's depths.

The Abyssals are newly come to the world, and Creation and the Underworld alike tremble at their arrival. Armies of the dead shamle forth from the shadowlands; dark gospels poison the kingdoms of the living. The Deathlords hope for the fulfillment of their ambitions. The Neverborn long for the world's end. But the Abyssals' dark future is theirs alone to decide.

History

It has been but five years since the first Abyssals rose, but the forces behind their creation were set into motion long ago.

Death of the Neverborn

When the gods and their Chosen made war against the ancients, the enemies of the gods knew death for the first time. The Neverborn fell through reality into the Underworld's uttermost depths, slain titans imprisoned within the tombs that are their corpses. They are not dead, for death was never meant for its own makers, but they are eternally dying. It is pain beyond

imagining, an endless nightmare from which there is no reprieve. The Neverborn do not scheme, or speak, or even think. In what brief intervals of lucidity they might have, all they can do is long for existence's end.

Rise of the Deathlords

The Deathlords rose out of the ashes of the First Age's collapse, vengeful ghosts of the Usurpation. One by one, they sought out the Neverborn and invoked ancient rites to pact with the dead titans. They are paramount forces among the dead, immortal ghost-emperors ruling from dark citadels. Stygia, capital and twilight jewel of the Underworld, has been conquered and carved up by many among the Deathlords and other great powers among the dead. The Great Contagion that brought the world to its knees was the greatest of their triumphs, toppling the Shogunate and reaching perilously close to the extinction of all life.

In the centuries since, the Deathlords continued to amass power in the Underworld but grew increasingly bolder in their forays into Creation. Countless shadowlands opened in the Contagion's wake, and those who might oppose the Deathlords had been cast into disarray. They kept their true nature concealed, for the Realm soon grew into a formidable foe while the likes of the Silver Pact and the Fivescore Fellowship replenished their strength.

Creation of the Abyssal Exalted

The Deathlords discovered that the power of the Solar Exalted had been sealed away in their early days — though perhaps some among them already knew, having had a hand in the Usurpation. Some sought to find the Jade Prison and harness its power to their own ends, but their early efforts proved futile. It was a scheme largely abandoned, especially as the Deathlords found other sources of fell power to bend to their will.

In time, though, one among the Deathlords finally discovered the Jade Prison, hidden among the stars in the constellation of the Mask. None of them could claim it alone, and so they came together in an alliance sworn upon the Styx's waters. Their labors were many, drawing upon the collected knowledge of the Deathlords, their myriad masteries and attainments brought into temporary alliance. Some pacted with the Yozis, those ancient ones who survived the Divine Revolution, for the secrets they knew of Exaltation. Others used that knowledge to devise the Monstrances of Celestial Portion, vessels of such wretched power that they could wrest the imprisoned Exaltations from the Unconquered Sun's will.

Key to the Deathlord's schemes was the Calendar of Setesh, which governs the Underworld's ambiguous seasons, stars, and days. Stygia's old rulers, the Dual Monarchs, guarded it fiercely, but a unified front among the Deathlords who'd taken part in the city's conquest forced the Dual Monarchs to yield. Standing at the Calendar's heart as Calibration began in Creation, the greatest necromancers among the Deathlords worked a ritual to bring together the stars of the two worlds. As Creation and the Underworld united under the same sky for five nights of horror, the constellation of the Mask shone above Stygia. The constellation trembled as death's Essence spread through it, and the Jade Prison fell into the Underworld like a falling star.

The Deathlords claimed the Jade Prison but could not take all that was sealed within. They succeeded in binding the Solar Exaltations within the Monstrances of Celestial Portion, but some escaped their grasp. Others were owed to their allies among the Yozis, an oath even the Deathlords dared not break — for in exchange, the Yozis had taught them magics to corrupt the stolen Exaltations. The first of Abyssal champions rose from death five years ago, changing the course of history for the living and the dead alike.

Knight of Tumul

Already, the Deathlords' plans have grown bolder as their Abyssal champions have grown into their power. The Mask of Winters' conquest of Thorns remains the most audacious move made by them, revealing the Deathlords' presence and nature, but he's not alone in the expanding scope of his ambitions — agents of the Heron take ever-greater bounties, assassinating dignitaries and heroes across the world, while the Bishop's Shining Way swells its flock with the sermons of its deathknight-clerics. The Abyssals ride forth as conquerors leading armies of the damned, prophets

spreading bleak doctrine, and necromancers leaving blight and corruption in their wake.

The Abyssals have scarcely had time to realize the fullness of their own power and ambitions. Creation's order crumbles, while the Underworld's balance of power has been cast into flux. Out of the corpse of the dying present, there are many futures Death's Chosen might carve.

The Bleak Exaltation

A swordswoman lies broken on the battlefield, the last of her lifeblood slowly draining out into the mud. A physician wastes away on their sickbed, finally succumbing to the plague that's ravaged his patients. A thief is marched toward the gallows as hungry raitons circle overhead. It is from the likes of these that the Abyssal Exalted are chosen. The Bleak Exaltation comes at death's doorway, a frozen moment before the final heartbeat. The Deathlord speaks to their chosen candidate, manifesting as a spectral apparition or whispering in their mind.

On the seventh day of his exile, the desert took him. Delirious from sunstroke and dehydration, he collapsed into the sand, weakly waiting to die. And then a wind blew over him — cold, painfully cold, piercing through skin and fat and bone to chill the very marrow. Blood trickled down from the dark places between stars, staining the sands red. He wailed, for if he was not dead, then he must surely be mad. And in the wind's whispering, he heard the price of his survival.

The Deathlords offer potential Abyssals a simple choice. Those willing to accept their death are free to reject the Exaltation, free to rot in the grave while their enemies prosper. But for those unwilling to die, the Deathlords offer glorious resurrection, power beyond mortal ken, and immortality — for a price. The Abyssal must swear themselves to death, vowing to deliver all life to its final end and forsaking their place among the living. If she is willing to pay that cost, then she draws her Last Breath, and the power of Death's Chosen is hers.

"Even the birds?" She immediately felt foolish. Why hadn't she asked about her family? Why waste her last breath? Not that it would have changed the answer. Even the birds must die, and they would die by her hand. But the birds didn't matter. Her family didn't matter. She was dying. She was drowning. How could she not accept?

It is only with the power of the Monstrances of Celestial Portion that the Deathlords can choose Abyssals, wresting that decision away from the Unconquered Sun. Even then, they cannot flout the Incarna's designs entirely. They must choose their Abyssals from the ranks of those whom the Sun might have found worthy of Exaltation — fallen heroes and those whose potential for greatness was never realized in life.

Rarely had the Deathlord seen such tenacity among the living. Even as the Immaculate began their grisly spectacle, the priest refused to recant the beliefs of their ancestor cult. And with every minute bought by their defiance, their disciples came closer and closer to safety. This one would surely be a worthy deathknight.

Abyssal Nature

When an Abyssal draws her Last Breath, her mortal life ends. Her flesh still lives, but her soul is dead. The thread of her fate is severed, and her name is cast aside. Death's Essence flows through her, marking her forevermore.

Should they stray from the Underworld's dark sanctuary, Abyssals are rejected by Creation itself, finding no home among the living. Stepping out of the shadowlands, they feel a slight discomfort that builds to an awful, vertiginous anguish the farther they go and the longer they remain in the living world. Its sunlight is too bright, its air is too thin, and its beauty seems faded in their eyes compared to the majesty of death.

The Abyssals are not doomed to serve the Neverborn's apocalyptic desires, but those who fail to uphold their dark oaths face consequences for dereliction. The Great Curse that fell upon the Solars has taken root in the Abyssal's vow to end all life. When their transgressions rouse the curse, it calls doom down upon them and the world around them. Renegade Abyssals who defy the Neverborn's will are eerie figures, haunted by ill omens and dark miracles.

Forsaken Names

When an Abyssal accepts her Deathlord's bargain and renounces her place among the living, she sacrifices the name she had in life. The dark miracle of her Exaltation flenses it from her as she is reborn, and she will never bear another name again. In its place, she claims a sobriquet or title suited to her role as a champion of the Deathlords and Chosen of the Neverborn: The Hollow Carnifex of the Unclean Legion, the Falling Tears Poet, the Keeper of the Raven Promise.

MONSTRANCES OF CELESTIAL PORTION

Monstrances of Celestial Portion are the unholy vessels of Abyssal Exaltation. They often take the form of an ostensory where the sun is caged in black iron or soulsteel, though designs vary between the Deathlords — the Lion's are devoid of embellishment, while the Dowager's are crude-seeming trophies of rune-etched bone and hide fashioned from the spoils of her hunts.

A monstrance is more than just a cage for Exaltation. The Deathlords wield them to choose their Abyssals and to work the necromancies with which they seek out candidates for the Last Breath. An Abyssal's monstrance affords her Deathlord no inherent control over her, though it can be used as a permanent link for spells like Silent Words of Dreams and Nightmares (Exalted, p. 475). It's unknown what a monstrance's destruction might entail.

Abyssals who cling to their lost names court doom, for they risk stirring their accursed Essence if they so much as answer when called by their former name. That name belonged to one who was alive, and it is not meet for Death's Chosen to bear such affectations of mortality.

The Trappings of Death

When the Abyssals leave the Underworld, they armor themselves in reminders of death's presence. They dress in mourning garb or the vestments of the dead: funerary linens, cerecloth, silken winding sheets, black veils, death masks, and more. They adorn themselves in jewelry and ornaments carved from bone or decorated with motifs of death or darkness. They perfume themselves with embalming ointments and unguents or with the scent of nightshade or other poisonous flowers. While dressed in these trappings of death, the Abyssal is inured from the worst of Creation's ravages — the light burns less brightly, and each breath is refreshed by the grave's icy respite.

Abyssals lairing in Creation often seek out crypts, mausoleums, and untended graves, places of death that afford them a similar shelter. The scent of withered roses and funereal candles hangs heavy in their halls, accentuating the perfume of decay.

Essence Fever

The power of death flows through an Abyssal, calling out to be used. This Essence fever urges deathknights



towards great and awful deeds, almost intoxicating to those who've yet to master their Essence. Its pull is strongest when an Abyssal is gripped by dark passions or tempted by her worst impulses.

Many Abyssals soon learn to control their Essence fever, either under their Deathlord's instruction or by self-discipline and force of will. Its motivation can be channeled toward an Abyssal's own ends, but she must still confront the worst parts of herself as she does so.

Past Lives

Abyssals experience memories of their past incarnations in many ways: strange dreams, intense déjà vu, feverish visions. Some fall into flashbacks, reliving ancient history. Others' memories play out in the world as baleful omens of their Great Curse. This most often occurs when an Abyssal encounters someone or something she knew in one of her past lives.

For most Abyssals, the moments they remember most strongly from their past lives as Solar Exalted are their deaths, and this ancient enmity weighs heavily upon their souls and deeds. Other memories are dimmer. The First Age is hazy and nondescript; the Divine

Revolution is all but lost, remembered only in nameless passions and nightmarish visions.

The Usurpation is still a fresh wound for some among Death's Chosen. Driven by memories of lost glory, they seek to reclaim their stolen thrones and avenge themselves against their betrayers. Others nurse their predecessor's ancient grudges against the past lives of other Exalted — sometimes their own closest companions.

Like the Solars, the Abyssals are heir to more than just memories. The barrow-treasures of their past lives are theirs by right. Debts, obligations, and feuds incurred by her predecessors may be held against her by the ghost of ancient Exalted and other timeless spirits. Some find themselves drawn to the Lunar Exalted, for the sacred union of the Chosen of Sun and Moon endures undiminished by the Abyssals' corruption.

Longevity

The Abyssal Exalted have been promised immortality by the Deathlords. Having been created only five years ago, they can't know for sure whether this is true, but those who've investigated their bleak masters' claims find little reason to doubt them.

Sworn to the Deathlords

Death's Chosen were not made to be minions, servants, or slaves. The Deathlords prize their deathknights above almost all else, believing that the Abyssals will prove themselves the greatest of their champions in time. Their place is at their lord's right hand. Thus, while relationships between Deathlords and deathknights can vary wildly, most are akin to that of a master and apprentice.

The Deathlords struggle to forge bonds of loyalty with their Abyssals, but they must. Warped by millennia of death and the power of the Neverborn, the ancient ghost-kings are estranged from much of their humanity, and they care little for the customs or civilities of the living. They must remind themselves that their deathknights are still callow with mortality, unfamiliar with the sunless lands of the dead. It is a testament to the Abyssals' value that even the most inhuman among the Deathlords may suborn their instincts and treat with their deathknights as people.

Some Abyssals are fanatically devoted to their Deathlords, seeing them as true gods of death come to make the world pure and good. Others feel no loyalty at all, tolerating their demands for the sake of ambition, greed, or the like. Most fall somewhere in between; it's easy to feel gratitude when you've been saved from death, and most Deathlords ply their champions with opulent gifts and priceless treasures.

The Road to Perdition

After an Abyssal's Exaltation, she must appear before her liege. This is easily accomplished when a Deathlord finds a candidate within his own dominion, with the new deathknight swiftly led back to her master's citadel by an honor guard of the dead. Some Deathlords might even intervene directly, stepping forward out of a darkness filled with unblinking eyes or rising up from the earth in a pillar of pyreflame.

But such good fortune is rare. Most Abyssals are found far from their lieges, for none can predict where those worthy of the Bleak Exaltation might arise. Such far-flung deathknights typically receive guidance from their masters, eerie omens, and portents that lead to where their liege wills. Few Deathlords are willing to leave new Abyssals to their own devices for long, lest they come to regret their bargain or be tempted away by other powers of the Underworld and dispatch spectral heralds, ghostly trackers, or even other Abyssals.

Upon arriving, the new Abyssal is given a welcome worthy of Death's Chosen. Some Deathlords greet them with opulent fetes and effusive adulation, showing the new deathknight the rewards of faithful service. Others make somber, dignified affairs of these homecomings, impressing upon the young Abyssal the importance she holds to her master's goals.

Initiation Rites

A deathknight's service begins with her tutelage. Each Deathlord has their own approach to training new Abyssals, but all Death's Chosen must study the skills with which they are to serve their liege, the civilities of the Underworld, and the code of death's chivalry. Each Abyssal's course of study is tailored to them and to the future their Deathlord envisions for them. A Dusk Caste who was little more than hired muscle in life might have the makings of a general in her master's eyes, studying warfare at his side on the battlefield, while a Daybreak surgeon may be granted the time, resources, and ghostly tutors to perfect her research as she unlocks the secrets of necromancy.

Once an Abyssal's training has progressed to her liege's satisfaction, the Deathlord will often command her to undertake a journey across the Underworld, either alone or alongside a Circle of fellow deathknights. For most Abyssals, this is their first exposure to ghostly society, and there is much they must learn the ways of the dead to serve their masters' will. Such grand tours also provide their first opportunity to begin making allies and connections of their own within the Underworld.

A Deathknight's Labors

At first, a fledgling Abyssal's duties are meant more to provide her with experience than to serve her Deathlord's goals. As she wins her master's trust, she's rewarded with new privileges and new responsibilities. Her Deathlord might entrust her with leading his forces to conquer a necropolis-kingdom, or appoint her to govern a troublesome tributary in the Underworld or in Creation that requires her expertise.

Each Deathlord has a unique perspective on how best to employ their deathknights. Depending on her strengths and her Deathlord's needs, an Abyssal might serve as a general, spymaster, artificer, bodyguard, ambassador, or assassin. A Moonshadow Caste's passion for poetry might go unappreciated by some Deathlords, while others might see her potential as an evangelist or propagandist. But no Abyssal is chosen lightly — each has a part to play in their Deathlord's plans.

Some deathknights spend much of their time working at their Deathlord's side, while others visit their master in person only between expeditions that take them to far corners of Creation or the Underworld. Often, an Abyssal's duties require her to work alongside her fellow deathknights in pairs, trios, or occasional Circles.

The Chivalry of Death

The will of the Neverborn was not communicated to the Deathlords when they swore themselves to the service of the dead ancients. Even at their most lucid, the fallen world-makers could not voice their wants and commands. Instead, the Deathlords have spent centuries learning their masters' desires as best they can — scouring the Underworld's hidden corners for secrets lost when history began, wielding necromancy and puissant artifacts to unearth the past, stealing insight from ancient specters, or communing with the Whispers that emanate from the Neverborn's corpse-tombs. The chivalry of death is a code that embodies the Neverborn's desires, as understood by the Deathlords.

Abyssals are taught the chivalry of death by their patron Deathlords, though their lessons vary starkly. The Lover espouses it as the philosophical foundation of all she does, while the First and Forsaken Lion grimly regards it as a line that must be toed to keep his masters content. The Silver Prince gives it little weight, preferring his own grand visions of cultural supremacy, while the Dowager can scarcely distinguish her own will from that of the Neverborn. Even deathknights-errant come to understand death's chivalry, gleaning insight from intuition and premonitions.

The Abyssals are not the Deathlords and need not fear the Neverborn's punishment should they renounce the chivalry of death. Yet an Abyssal's very Exaltation is stained with the dead ancients' Essence, and upholding death's chivalry brings them into harmony with their divine nature.

The foremost tenets of death's chivalry are these:

- **Better long torment than a quick death.** It is not enough simply to kill the living — they must be made to despair, to abandon their hopes and ideals, to become complicit in horrors themselves before they are slain. Deaths born out of the culmination of such degradations please the Neverborn far more than a hundred lesser slaughters.

- **The mighty must fall before the weak.** Death visited upon the vulnerable and defenseless is a

paltry offering to the Neverborn. Better to break the champions of the living — those who are looked to for hope, protection, and guidance — before turning to those under their guardianship.

- **Let life be drowned in death.** If the worlds of the living and the dead are as one, the Neverborn might imagine themselves free of their eternal death. When shadowlands open the boundaries between Creation and the Underworld, when necromancy taints the Essence of the world, when the living walk alongside the dead — these things offer the slain ancients a transient solace.

Deathknights-Errant

Despite the Deathlords' best efforts, not all Abyssals are content to serve their masters. Some come to regret their dark oaths and renounce the Neverborn entirely, while others chafe under the rule of the Deathlord who claimed them. These renegades are known as deathknights-errant, tragic heroes who wander Creation and the Underworld alike.

Most deathknights-errant who succeed in escaping their master flee in the days soon after their Exaltation, before their Deathlords' agents have tracked them down. Once an Abyssal has been found and brought to her master's place of power, escape becomes far more difficult — though never impossible. Such would-be renegades must choose their moment carefully and often turn to other allies or patrons to facilitate their defection.

Many deathknights-errant return to their mortal lives at first but rarely stay long. To do so invites the dark doom of their Great Curse, promising tragedy to come. Some pursue personal ambitions forbidden to them by their Deathlords. Others embrace their role as Death's Lawgivers, seeking rank among the dead as prophets, conquerors, or revolutionaries. Some deathknights-errant even turn against the Deathlords and their Neverborn masters, swearing defiance to the end.

Not all deathknights-errant are traitors. One might forsake a Deathlord but remain faithful to the Neverborn, serving the fallen ancients as they see fit. In time, these Abyssals might find a new master, pledging themselves to another Deathlord whose goals and methods align with their own.

Even Abyssals who reject the Neverborn's gruesome will remain bound by it. Many deathknights-errant still observe death's chivalry lest the cost of their transgressions consumes them utterly. They must seek

STORYTELLING FOR DEATHKNIGHTS-ERRANT

In games with renegade Abyssals as player characters, their players, the Storyteller, and the rest of the playgroup should talk before the game begins to determine how much emphasis to put on their former Deathlord and his forces as antagonists. The level of emphasis should match the playgroup's interest in dealing with the Deathlord. If the player characters are a Circle of deathknights-errant who defected together, conflict with their former master is likely an inevitable part of the story. If the playgroup would rather focus on other antagonists, a deathknight-errant's former master doesn't need to have any presence on screen.

middle ground between what their conscience allows and what the Neverborn demand, visiting doom on tyrants, slave traders, crime syndicates, and their ilk. Such is the justice of the Death's Chosen.

The Deathlords are formidable in tracking down their wayward champions, but mighty as they are, their forces are finite, and there is only so much they can justify for a single deathknight. A renegade Abyssal might find herself pursued by packs of specters, necromantic horrors, strange Underworld bounty hunters, or loyalist deathknights but not the entirety of a Deathlord's legions of the damned. With caution, cunning, and vigilance, a deathknight-errant might keep her freedom — at least until the next time her former master's hounds come baying for her.

Death's Lawgivers

The Solars of old were Creation's Lawgivers, and the Abyssal Exalted are heirs to that legacy. As Death's Lawgivers, the Abyssals claim the right to cast down the old orders of the Underworld and raise up new ones, delivering the dead out of bondage and tyranny. When the people are ignorant of the Old Laws, the Abyssal Exalted bring knowledge. When they intervene in the affairs of the dead, they are not living interlopers, but dread and holy personages of the sunless realm.

As Death's Lawgivers, the Abyssals can also be champions of the dead among the living. Some lead ancestor cults from the shadowlands or defend the faithful as holy guardians. Others are speakers for the dead, eulogizing the unmourned and ensuring their names are remembered. Still others still might preserve the knowledge and traditions of long-extinct cultures, rebuke the living when they fail to honor their ancestors, or keep watch over ancient ruins.

Abyssals who embrace their role as Death's Lawgiver need not compromise their loyalties. Most Deathlords see value in having ambitious deathknights, especially

when those deathknight's goals win them allies and favor among the dead.

Damnation and Redemption

Every Abyssal has pledged themselves to the extinction of all life. Having spoken words they can never revoke, they're left to wrestle with what that means to them. Even those who serve their Deathlord faithfully may be uneasy with what they've done. Nature and circumstance predispose them toward brooding over this, though some prefer to drown their qualms in hedonistic revelry and raucous debauches.

Some Abyssals see their vow as an unforgivable sin, the ultimate betrayal of their beliefs and convictions. These deathknights struggle with the guilt and shame of betraying their world, their souls stained beyond redemption by a moment's lapse. Others see it as a desperate act of survival, refusing to condemn themselves for a choice made under the utmost duress. But doubt is insidious, and even the most stalwart of these Abyssals sometimes question if they're really as blameless as they say they are.

Other deathknights have no regrets. Some view it pragmatically: the cost of survival was high, but it was a price they're glad to have paid. Guilt may gnaw at them, but each eventually finds their own way of dealing with it. The most ardent extremists speak eagerly of ending all things, yearning to fulfill their vow. For some, especially young Abyssals, this speaks to naïveté, a childish view of the apocalypse held by those who have no idea what it actually means. For others, it's a thoroughly considered position. Some are devout believers in their Deathlords' apocalyptic theologies and consider extinction the highest act of compassion. For others still, it's nothing more than hatred, rage, and cruelty.

SOLAR CORRUPTION?

If an Abyssal can become a Solar, is the reverse also possible? Just like redemption, this possibility is left up to the Storyteller. Even if the truth remains unknown in your game, some Deathlords believe it may be the case, and take especial interest in Solars who seem like they could be tempted to their damnation.

Some Abyssals come to their Deathlord with their questions and doubts, for the necromancer-kings swore vows of their own to become what they are. Only the most zealous of Deathlords truly wish to end all things, giving the deathknights more common ground than they might expect. Ultimately, though, no Deathlord wishes to lose an Abyssal to such qualms. If pressed, they'll say whatever they need to in order to assuage their deathknight's conscience.

Abyssals who can't find satisfying answers to these may eventually come to question their loyalty to their Deathlord. Some abandon their liege, riding out as deathknights-errant. Those who seek redemption find it as best they know how — opposing their Deathlord and his forces, risking the Great Curse's doom to help the living, bringing beauty and hope into the world. But not every deathknight with a noble heart has abandoned her liege's service. Even among the Deathlords' most loyal champions, there are some who wish it was otherwise.

A Sunlit Path

Some Abyssals ultimately find peace with what they've done and what they are as Death's Lawgivers, champions of the dead, the doom of the wicked. To others,

their accursed existence is a constant reminder of their unforgivable sin. Some dream of the day when life's Essence fills their veins, and their oaths to the Neverborn are shattered.

Such hopes may yet be fulfilled. The Abyssals were created by corrupting Solar Exaltation, and a dim spark of the Sun's flame burns within their poisoned hearts. None know what such a journey might look like, but there is a possibility. If one could find the way, they could be cleansed of the Neverborn's corruption, transformed into one of the Solar Exalted and freed from their damning vow.

The details of what this transformation entails are left to individual Storytellers and playgroups to devise. It shouldn't be an easy journey or a short one. Such redemption should come as the culmination of an ongoing story, potentially an entire chronicle. Storytellers should emphasize the Abyssal's personal growth over external assistance. Even if the Unconquered Sun himself denies her, redemption is not beyond the Abyssal's reach. The quest along the sunlit path might involve self-sacrifice, opposing the Neverborn's forces, building positive relationships with the living, and clinging to hope even when all is darkest.

Prince Yhata — Revered Protector of the Jackdaw Throne, keeper of the eight sacred scrolls, wielder of the pearl-handled dagger named Truth, and ruler of the Kingdom of Sable — sat in his great hall with the Walker in Darkness as his guest. The prince's retainers were gone, his guards dismissed. He sat alone with the Deathlord on a plain wooden chair where the petitioners normally gathered. The Jackdaw Throne, its feathers carved into the black marble so perfectly they seemed freshly molted, loomed empty on the dais.

Yhata was a man in his middle age, the victor of a hundred battles. He'd led his people through times of riches and famine and defended Sable with honor when the kingdom's riches drew neighboring powers' greedy eyes. But beneath his princely demeanor ran a grief as deep as the Sea of Shadows.

The Walker didn't need his informants' reports to know it was there. Yhata wore it in the tightness around his eyes and the set of his shoulders, as heavy as any crown — the childhood loss of his older sister Ralaya in a raid, Sable's true prince. What heights might the kingdom have reached with her guidance? Under her rule, they might have rivaled Rake or swept across the Hundred Kingdoms and built an empire great enough to give Vaneha pause.

But Yhata was cautious where she'd been bold and had spent his life in the shadow of what might have been. Perhaps, if she'd been alive when the Company of Martial Sinners made camp outside of Sable's walls, she'd have mustered a resistance, no matter how doomed. She might have sent the Walker's messenger, with his message stating *I can give you what you need*, back to the Ebon Spires missing his head. Prince Ralaya might have let her people die rather than cede Sable to the Deathlord and his mercenaries, but Yhata was not Ralaya. He'd received the messenger as an honored guest and invited the Walker in Darkness to dine with him.

"Even now," said the Walker, "Vaneha prepares for conquest. Their generals will set their sights on your kingdom, and your people will die. If they don't crush you, Thorns will finish what they started."

"And you're not here to do the same?"

"What need do I have of that if we're allies? You're weary of war. Of the loneliness that comes with a throne. I'm asking very little of you, and in return, I can give you that which you want the most."

The dagger Truth — forged by the goddess Ninegala herself a thousand years before — lay unsheathed on the table between them, resting atop a large bejeweled case. It was said that its blade would cut false words from the air if they passed over it. It remained inert.

"I want nothing more than for my people to be safe," said Yhata. Now the blade chimed softly, and a fine ash fell to the table. The prince gasped and tried again. "What I want, no one can give me."

"Even now, she makes her way here," said the Walker. "Your sister, returned from the land of the dead to rule beside you." He ran a pale blue finger over the case. "Surely that's worth sharing the wisdom in your sacred scrolls?"

For a moment, the prince seemed like he might balk. What was written on them was for Sable's rulers alone. His predecessors had guarded their secrets proudly. Ralaya had made him swear to do the same, preventing anyone from attaining the dangerous knowledge within. But then Yhata unclasped the case with shaking fingers and, one by one, unfurled the scrolls.

The Walker smiled as he read them; he hadn't expected negotiations to go this easily. Ralaya was no longer the woman Yhata had known; she was a warrior-ghost, a black-masked Sainted Sinner, loyal to the Walker through and through. But the eager prince had made his bargain, and the time for questions and clarifications was past.





Chapter Two

The Deathlords

The Deathlords are the Underworld's reigning terrors. Vengeful ghosts of the Usurpation, these necromancer-tyrants sold their souls to the Neverborn, the ever-writhing corpses of the world's makers. They remember little of who they were in life. Their names are gone, consigned unto the void, and centuries of undeath have warped them into things no longer human. Like all ghosts, they are creatures of obsession almost entirely consumed by their greatest passions — their ambitions are monstrous, their passions grotesque, and their hatred illimitable.

Secret History

In life, each Deathlord was among the Exalted who fell in the bloody cataclysm that ended the First Age, including both the betrayed Lawgivers and their foes. Each, in time, found their way to stand before the tombs of the Neverborn and desecrated the Old Laws to make a pact with the dead gods. Thus rose the Deathlords, sworn to the world's end.

The Deathlords did not ride out of the Labyrinth like a storm to fell Creation all at once. Their rise was slow, unnoticed by the living and most among the dead. As the world of the living recovered from the Usurpation, the Deathlords set about amassing power. The First and Forsaken Lion recruited the greatest warriors among the dead to their Legion Sanguinary. The Mask of Winters sowed spies among the Underworld's kingdoms, laying the foundations of his intelligence network. The Dowager of the Irreverent Vulgate discovered unimagined necromantic horrors writ on towering bone steles. As centuries passed, they carved out their Underworld domains, establishing their place among the great powers of the dead.

Then came the Great Contagion, plunging Creation and the Underworld alike into upheaval. Few know that it was one of the Deathlords, the Dowager, who loosed the apocalyptic plague upon the living. In the chaos that followed, many of her peers made their bids for power. The Stygian Pact, an uneasy coalition

of Deathlords and other great Underworld conquerors, marched on Stygia, sacred necropolis of the Dual Monarchs, citing the influx of the Contagion dead as a pretext to establish military order. Mighty as Stygia's defenders were, the Dual Monarchs were ultimately forced to surrender to the thirteen conquerors. Meanwhile, in the periphery of the Underworld and the shadowlands beyond, those Deathlords not involved in Stygia's conquest reaped the benefits of upheaval and the flood of new ghosts to cement their powerful positions.

Lords of Death's Dominion

The Deathlords' oaths bind them to the Neverborn's apocalyptic purpose. In exchange, the ghost-kings know power unrivaled among the dead. They serve their dread masters in many ways, each with their own strengths. The First and Forsaken Lion is unmatched as a general, while the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears poisons nations with her words. All are seasoned necromancers, though only a few have mastered the final secrets of the Void Circle.

The fallen titans' pact promised not just power, but immortality. Even the magic that felled the world's makers cannot truly destroy a Deathlord. The Neverborn will stir in their slumber, and in their nightmares, the fallen Deathlord will be remade. Wisdom holds that this has happened only once thus far, when the Dowager of the Irreverent Vulgate in Unrent Veils returned from annihilation. Her resurrection and its lasting effect on her corpus and spirit have made the other Deathlords wary — they may return from utmost destruction, but not as they might wish themselves to be. To the Neverborn, this is irrelevant.

Some among the Deathlords still fear the possibility of complete annihilation. Cryptic legends and strange portents hint at a singular flaw in each Deathlord's immortality, vulnerabilities in the cracked Old Laws that not even the Neverborn could circumvent. Each bane would have the power to unmake its Deathlord utterly;

fear that hers had been discovered was key to the Black Heron's defeat by the founders of Great Forks. The Deathlords follow up on rumors and prophecies, but few have unearthed anything more than the haunting sense that these weaknesses are out there, waiting.

The Deathlords' Schemes

Spectacles such as the Contagion have been the exception rather than the rule, for the Deathlords do not dream of a single grand, apocalyptic triumph. Most of their plans are smaller in scale, though still far from modest. The Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible has spread his grim doctrine of death across the Northwest. The Walker in Darkness sows turmoil and instability among the Scavenger Lands, poisoning its petty princelings against each other. Such schemes may not fell empires in a single stroke, but the Deathlords plan many steps ahead and have all eternity to fulfill their labors.

Only rarely do the Deathlords work together. After more than a millennium, their petty grievances, betrayals, and rivalries have poisoned the well for almost all of them. While they might enter into politically motivated alliances, there is no trust among Deathlords.

While the Deathlords are masterful schemers, they aren't without flaws. Few are familiar with Creation's current political realities, heavily dependent on their spies among the living to stay abreast. The First and Forsaken Lion, for instance, is largely unfamiliar with the military doctrine of the Second Age's armies and might be caught off guard by a brilliant general among the living.

Not all Deathlords are equally devoted to their masters' will. While none shy from slaughtering the living or raising up great empires of the damned, the Neverborn wish to see the end of all life, the death of Creation, and the dissolution of the Underworld. Few Deathlords are willing to go so far, for they have ambitions of their own beyond mere destruction.

The Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible

The core of the Bishop's doctrine is thus:

I. Existence is the first sin. It has damned you to your pain, your wants, the frailties of your flesh and spirit. It is the endless wheel of your life, death, and rebirth.

II. Nonexistence is absolution, but not all are worthy of it. The weak in spirit succumb to Lethe, borne back into the sunlit lands. The impure, who cling to their existence, condemn themselves to purgatorial darkness.

III. The makers of the universe committed the first sin, but some among them seek atonement. The enlightened Neverborn willingly bear the agony of existence to guide all souls into nonexistence.

IV. The merciful Neverborn sent forth their servant, the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible, to teach the gospel of oblivion to the living and the dead, the Shining Way to transcendence.

V. Those who walk the Shining Way shall know neither Lethe nor the sunless realm, for the Bishop shall devour their souls. When at last his labors have ended and he returns to oblivion, all shall come with him and know peace.

These are the opening verses of the Tome of Endless Night, the sacred text of the Shining Way. It is a shifting, changing doctrine, for in the centuries since he first authored it, the Bishop has rewritten much of it. It has spread far throughout the Northwest's shadowlands, for it is not a single cult, but an abundance of faiths with myriad syncretisms, folk beliefs, and heresies. Its adherents have a flourishing culture of letters, penning all manner of exegeses, critiques, and apologia of the Tome of Endless Night, as well as hymns, psalms, epistles, allegories, and apocryphal texts on the nature of death.

The Bishop is both the Shining Way's devouring savior and its grand hierophant. Aspirants seek him in his Hidden Tabernacle, performing austerities and acts of devotion in hopes that he will devour their souls, and he grants this sacrament generously. His ghostly corpus is bloated with thousands of souls, making him mighty even among his fellow Deathlords. He thinks himself better than he is: his compassion and temperance are real, but not so great as he likes to think. He devoutly follows the doctrine he has penned — and revised — but refuses to recognize when he errs or falters. Even the greatest of his atrocities is still virtuous in his eyes, for his every act is holy.

The Bishop most often assumes the form of a blind, elderly ascetic clad in humble gray robes. His smile is warm, and his manner is kind, radiating compassion for all things. When he receives envoys from his fellow Deathlords or other ghostly princes, he dons regalia worthy of the Shining Way's savior: his jeweled miter of soulsteel, vestments of black and violet silk, and black jade crozier of

spiritual authority. When enraged, his pleasant guises fall away to reveal his aspect as a monstrous, rotting corpse-beast. His face twists into a tortured visage, fanged and many-eyed, while his arms grow swollen, bursting open to reveal even more grasping limbs.

The Bishop is a master of oratory, literature, and philosophy and is among the greatest necromancers of the Deathlords, having mastered the Void Circle. His discipline and self-restraint are legendary, though their true magnitude is revealed only when he abandons them. He's also the greatest martial artist among the Deathlords; in his meditations upon nonexistence, he has created the Albicant Sepulcher of Extinction style, a Sidereal Martial Art that is the embodiment of the Shining Way's theology. Such an attainment is thought impossible by any save the Sidereal Exalted; Heaven will tremble when it learns what the Bishop has achieved.

Agenda

The Bishop is fanatical in his devotion to the Neverborn. While all Deathlords have sworn to the world's destruction, the Bishop is among the few actually committed to this goal. Once he's consumed the souls of all the living and the dead, he reasons, he will have power enough to complete the work of ending the world: shattering the continents and boiling the seas, quenching the lights of the firmament, and releasing the Neverborn from their long penance. Then and only then shall he permit himself oblivion, extinguishing the souls of all things.

But what the Bishop does not realize, what he refuses to realize, is that he fears oblivion. His piety and devotion to the Neverborn are sincere, but they are not perfect. Perhaps this flaw in his conviction subconsciously guided his hand when he wrote his doctrine, providing himself a veritable eternity before he needs confront the world's end. There are still millennia left before the great devouring will be complete, by the Bishop's reckoning; why concern himself now with what comes after? But if one of his deathknights were to learn of this weakness, they might find themselves forced to choose between their faith and their liege.

Deathknights

The Bishop desires his Abyssal's piety and faith, counseling them in theological matters and inviting them into his personal library, home to countless translations and revisions of the Tome of Endless Night and copies of nearly every text the Bishop's doctrine has ever inspired. He would have them be his saints of the Shining Way, hastening Creation's end just as loyally as their liege.

The Bishop's wrath is inflamed when his deathknights refuse to heed his wisdom or blaspheme against it, yet he holds it in check. He knows the futility of indoctrinating the Exalted by force; his wayward deathknights must find the way to the truth in their own time. Young Abyssals still given to sympathy for the living are given tasks and quests throughout the lands where the Shining Way is followed, showing them the faith as it is to those who practice it.

The Hidden Tabernacle

The vast shadowland known as the Silent Meadow of Dust lies in the far Northwest, a place of cold steppes where nothing grows. A golden mastaba rises from the blighted earth, ringed by countless pillars of misshapen stone. Here and there, the corpse of a mortal postulant can be seen; only by dying on this holy ground can they hope to enter the Hidden Tabernacle, the holy seat of the Bishop.

But this is only the footstep of the Tabernacle. The vast tomb-manse extends deep into the earth, filled with cavernous cathedrals lit with eerie green flame, great libraries where ghostly acolytes study and debate, and meditation gardens of Underworld flora.

The Hidden Tabernacle is the poisoned heart of the Shining Way, a viper's den of spectral cardinals, archdeacons, and theologians endlessly vying for political power and favor in the Deathlord's eyes. Rulers of the Silent Meadow's shadowland kingdoms align themselves with vying factions within the Tabernacle, using theological disputes as a pretext to attack their neighbors or launching bloody crusades to prove their zeal.

The ranks of the Hidden Tabernacle's ecclesiastical hierarchy are dominated by the dead, but at times, the Bishop chooses champions from among the ranks of pious mortals as his pyreflame apostles. The Bishop baptizes their souls in the Underworld's sickly green flame, consecrating them as holy martyrs of the Shining Way. A pyreflame apostle might loose death's flame to scourge even the gods or draw on its power to stand against a Dragon-Blooded warrior, but their power consumes them, burning away their passions, their flesh, and, in time, their soul.

Following the Shining Way

In a village on the Northwestern steppes, a farmer curses the chill that nips at her as she goes out before sunrise to tend her yak, damning the cold to Lethe. It's the new moon, when the village makes its offerings to

the ancestral dead; she's entrusted her oldest daughter with bringing the basket of butter and cheese to the communal firepit. She feels a fleeting worry — it's the first time she's given her daughter this responsibility — but pushes it from her mind, absentmindedly running her fingers along the scrimshaw rosary wrapped around her wrist for its familiar comfort. Her daughter will do perfectly, and they'll pray together to the Bishop that all their ancestors might find the way to his salvation.

The Shining Way was created by an immortal ghosting sworn to end the world, but it's defined by those who follow it. They are, by and large, not murderers, necromancers, or whisper-wracked specters but ordinary folk, dead or alive. Beyond the Silent Meadow, the bleak eschatology and bloody infighting of the Bishop's spectral priesthood gives way to a great diversity of traditions, often incorporating or incorporated into existing spiritual practices. In Kal-Ebethi mystery plays, he is a sacred guardian of the ancestral dead. Chrymosan seafarers speak of him in hushed voices, identifying him with the devouring depths of the Underworld seas they ply. Abhari heretics exiled in the Ivory Schism worship him as their proscribed sect's prophet reborn, come to wreak holy vengeance against Fajad's orthodoxy.

Apart from the Shining Way's core doctrine, beliefs vary widely from tradition to tradition, which has, at times, led to conflict and warfare. The oldest teach that pilgrimage to the Hidden Tabernacle is the only path to salvation, but many younger traditions believe that the Bishop passes judgment on all who die, no matter where they fall. While most believe they must free themselves of all worldly desire to be found worthy, beginning with the smallest desires and ending with life itself, others believe the Deathlord seeks out different virtues in his faithful, like the compassion, temperance, and righteous wrath attributed to him in legends and folktales.

The Bishop doesn't suppress heterodoxy so long as traditions don't stray from his core doctrine. Even those who don't practice the final pilgrimage to the Hidden Tabernacle — and thus offer no souls for the Bishop to devour — are left undisturbed, a mercy perhaps motivated by the Deathlord's desire to postpone the apocalypse or the fact that he does not see the Tome of Endless Night as perfect or finished. Folk religions, syncretisms, and even heresy are how the Shining Way's adherents contribute to this eternal work of refining and perfecting the faith's dogma, and the Deathlord takes interest in their efforts. He might

send deathknights to new or distant communities that follow the Way so they can study the local tradition and gather its texts and teachings for the Bishop's edification and to seek out and correct deviations from vital doctrine.

The creation of the Abyssals has sparked interest among many adherents of the Shining Way. Some see them as his prophets and champions, sent forth to guide and defend the faithful and usher in a Shining Age. Others view them as judges, vengeful furies, or sanctioned destroyers, figures of unholy dread come to enact the Bishop's wrath against the unrighteous. At the Bishop's behest, they might be any of these. In most communities, the Bishop's Abyssals can expect to be greeted as an honored guest, given the finest lodgings, comforts, and repast their hosts can provide. Their words are heeded as holy pronouncements — though not unthinkingly, for even the Bishop and his greatest prophets are not infallible.

Allies and Enemies

The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears and the Bishop have long been rivals. Their feud arose from a contentious philosophical debate, but the specifics no longer matter; their impassioned enmity has become an end unto itself. They endlessly plot to thwart each other's schemes, using their deathknights and other agents as infiltrators, saboteurs, and occasionally assassins.

The Wanasaan, a family of Dragon-Blooded sorcerer-exorcists, are among the greatest enemies of the undead in the Northwest and have proven themselves enemies of the Bishop many times over. They have little knowledge of the Deathlord, and many believe him little more than a myth of the Shining Way. Glad of this obscurity, the Bishop has long avoided acting openly against the Wanasaan, though his agents scheme to undermine the exorcist family.

Notable Followers

Born into a small village in the Silent Meadow, **the Celebrant of Blood** grew up immersed in the Shining Way. She was scarcely past adolescence when she made her final pilgrimage to the Hidden Tabernacle, seeking release from the depths of depression. Impressed by her zeal, the Bishop promised that she'd one day know oblivion's succor, but that she would first know greatness as a saint to death. The Daybreak Caste is among her liege's most faithful deathknights, as skilled an evangelist as she is a necromancer. Yet she's still

parochial in her understanding of the Shining Way, often shocked by differences in beliefs and practices across the many lands where the faith holds sway — even to the point of holding impromptu inquisitions to root out what she deems intolerable heresies.

In life, **the Harbinger of the Ghost-Cold Wind** was a Haslan shaman, an interpreter of dreams and intermediary to his clan's ancestral ghosts. As an Abyssal, he still serves his people's dead, defending them from agents of other Deathlords and speaking their will to the living across the Haslanti League. The Harbinger laid down his life protecting the tomb of his clan's heroic ancestor from desecration and gladly accepted the Bishop's offer to take his revenge. But while he's pledged obedience to his Deathlord, the Moonshadow Caste refuses to recant his people's traditions and espouse the Shining Way. Much as this frustrates the Bishop, he permits the Harbinger his folly. The deathknight has become well-loved by the Haslanti League's dead and may one day prove useful to the Deathlord's goals.

Severed Limb's Discretion rules Ikh Bayan, one of the Silent Meadow's many petty princedoms, a ruthless ghost-prince whose professed devotion to the Shining Way is purely political. Decades ago, they lost much of their kingdom's territories to neighboring rivals in a protracted war sparked by a schism in the Hidden Tabernacle's ecclesiastical hierarchy. Obsessed with reclaiming these holdings, the specter now conspires with agents of the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears, seeking to frame those rival princes for treasonous complicity with the Bishop's most hated rival among the Deathlords.

Once an Immaculate monk, the heretic **Pyre's Shadow** is now the longest-lived of the Bishop's pyreflare apostles, emulating Hesiesh's example of restraint. Pyre's Shadow preaches that, just as the Elemental Dragon of Fire incarnated among the living as Hesiesh, so too did he incarnate among the dead as the Bishop. At the Deathlord's bidding, the apostle spies on the Realm's Northwestern satrapies, easily passing himself off as just another monk. When a satrapy's Dragon-Blooded raise Wyld Hunts against the Bishop's agents, Pyre's Shadow must abandon his restraint, burning away his soul to stand against them.

The Black Heron

Elegant, sad-eyed, and graceful, the Black Heron holds court in Stygia under another title: the Princess Magnificent with Lips of Coral and Robes of Black Feathers. Such a title better suits the cultured, jovial

queen-in-exile who is the patron of the necropolis's liveliest festivals, salons, and public entertainment. Ghostly courtiers seek her favor, while lovesick phantoms pine for her. Of all the Signatories of the Stygian Pact, hers is the greatest foothold in the city's heart.

But the Princess Magnificent is a lie, one carefully constructed long before her death. The Black Heron is the truth, once one of the First Age's greatest spies and assassins. Sad eyes mask her killing intent. Flowing sleeves and dainty petticoats conceal an arsenal of blades and poisons. The riotous festivals of color and music she sponsors celebrate the deaths of her victims. Though there are many great warriors among the Deathlords, there are none who smile so wide or laugh so joyously as the Heron in slaughter.

In her guise as the Princess Magnificent, the Deathlord takes on a frail-limbed form of unearthly beauty, donning exquisite black-pinioned robes and a soulsteel coronet. When she casts aside this masquerade, the Heron returns to the semblance she had in life, still bearing every scar and imperfection, and clads herself in a soulsteel helm in the shape of a heron's head and an armored mantle of black feathers.

Some of the Heron's victims are selected for assassination with the utmost care — political rivals, agents of rival powers, innocents who unwittingly pose an obstacle for her plans. Others catch the Heron's attention for trivial reasons — an interesting name, a slight resemblance to a former victim, failing to laugh at one of her jests. She obsesses over such victims, secretly observing them until she knows every detail of the life she's about to end.

The Heron brings a colorful parasol, hung with thirteen tiny bells, wherever she goes. Few realize that it's among her greatest weapons, the Symphony of Discord: a razor parasol fashioned from the skin and bones of a Solar who escaped the Jade Prison, but not the Heron. She also wields the Rapine Blades, seven flying knives of soulsteel and white bone, each forged from a legendary hungry ghost and still possessed by its malevolent intelligence.

As an assassin, the Heron's skill in both stealth and battle is legendary. And though the graceful Princess Magnificent may be a lie, the Heron's prowess as a courtier isn't. She's versed in the languages, etiquette, and culture of countless civilizations — living, dead, and undead. She has little talent for necromancy, having mastered only the Ivory Circle. She's long made up for this weakness by trading favors but now has her own Abyssal necromancers to turn to.

Agenda

Vengeance weighs heavily on the Heron's mind. Once, she reigned from the House of Bitter Reflections, a palace of obsidian mirrors in the shadowland known as the Field of Endless Raitons. It was there that the patron gods of Great Forks bested her, dealing her a devastating defeat. Though the gods' power paled in comparison to the Heron's, they had discovered the secret weakness by which she might be slain forever — or at least convinced her that they had. The Deathlord retreated, leaving her dominion ripe for the taking by neighboring Underworld powers.

The Heron has spent the centuries since rebuilding, but she's yet to reclaim the heights of her power. In truth, her defeat weighs heavier on her than she admits. She refrained from claiming another shadowland dominion, fearful that another champion of the living might uncover her secret weakness and has avoided the Scavenger Lands altogether. But with the Abyssal Exalted, things have changed. Flanked by an honor guard of deathknights, the Heron might one day stride into the palace-sanctum of Great Forks' gods to claim her revenge.

The Heron's retreat has not changed her overarching goal: to spread such terror among the living that they will willingly subjugate themselves to her in death. While she might enjoy mass murder, she takes far greater pleasure in her victims' absolute surrender to their fear. She murders heroes and leaders of the living, unleashes spectral assassins to plunge cities into mass panic, and deploys small bands of ghostly riders on terror raids through shadowlands. She espouses little reverence for the Neverborn, but death's chivalry is seemingly second nature to her, as if her every whim aligned with the Neverborn's will.

Deathknights

All Deathlords prize their Chosen, but the Heron more than most, for they're her greatest hope of reclaiming her lost power and prominence. She goes to almost excessive lengths to secure their loyalty, studying their needs and desires with the same nigh-obsessive scrutiny she gives her victims. Her deathknights are fêted and celebrated with parades and festivals as often as they care to be; all the splendors and vices of Stygia are theirs if they so choose. Most Deathlords could survive a single defection or betrayal, much as it might cost them, but such a loss would take more than the Heron can afford.

Sowing fear remains the Heron's foremost goal as ever. She gives her deathknights great license in their choice of methods. She also dispatches them to secure assets, allies, and territory necessary for rebuilding her power, to stymie the efforts of her political rivals, and to win favor from ghostly cities and kingdoms through grand festivals or courtly intrigue. The Deathlord's cautious in deploying her deathknights, preferring to do so only when she's confident in the quality of her ghostly spies' on-the-ground intelligence. She can't always afford this luxury but shows more restraint than her peers.

For all the Heron can offer her deathknights within her Stygian dominion, she can't imprison them there. Loathe as she is to do so, letting her Chosen pursue their own goals and attend to personal affairs is necessary to maintain their loyalty — though such deathknights might be trailed by the Heron's spectral servants to protect and retrieve them should they find themselves outmatched.

The Heron offers her Abyssals tutelage in stealth, subterfuge, and courtly graces. For those whose skills or ambitions lie elsewhere, she retains ghostly teachers and experts from Stygia and beyond. She teaches them little of the Neverborn or death's chivalry, though her deathknights need only follow her example to serve the dead titans' will.

The Quarter Magnificent

After the Dual Monarchs' surrender to the Signatories of the Stygian Pact, the Heron claimed one of the necropolis' sixteen districts for herself, having assassinated and replaced its regent during the city's siege. The Quarter Magnificent makes up far less than a full fourth of the city, but its name reflects its outsized role in Stygia's public life. Even when it's not consumed by raucous carnivals and celebrations, the Quarter distinguishes itself from its neighbors by the vibrant colors that permeate its art, architecture, and fashion and the street musicians that play on every corner. This profusion spills out into surrounding districts come festival time, to the disdain of some and the delight of others.

The Heron resides in the palazzo-manse known as the House of Black and White, a sobriquet that's long since become a misnomer. Here, the Deathlord presides over her spectral court of killers. Her deathknights are opulently accommodated here: bathhouse pools heated by eerie pyreflame and staffed by ghostly attendants, lush gardens of poisonous flowers, and libraries in which the ghosts of poets and authors are bound into tomes that they might write forevermore.

Since the Heron took control of the Quarter, theaters, teahouses, ateliers, galleries, and bawdyhouses have relocated en masse to it, catering to the ghosts drawn in by the district's enticing revelry. The Deathlord makes a show of visiting each such establishment and encourages her deathknights to do the same, solidifying her political support from the district's petty merchantry and any friends in high places they may have. An Abyssal might take in a salacious matinee at the Ever-Sunken Amphitheater, restock his wardrobe with fine funereal garb from across Creation as he wanders the stalls of the Moth Market, and drink himself into a stupor at the Dead Dog Pagoda, all in the course of a day's service to the Heron.

Allies and Enemies

In the aftermath of the Heron's defeat at Great Forks, **the First and Forsaken Lion** has become her greatest ally among the Signatories, willing to provide her with materiel, political support, and access to their shadowland holdings for promises of future repayment. The Heron loathes her debt to them, though their apparent confidence in her success has won the Deathlord some measure of her favor. The Heron has occasionally sent her deathknights to assist the Lion's, satisfying her obligations to them one by one, though it pains her dearly to take such risks. She's far happier to arrange the Lion's military parades and triumphal processions in Stygia, though the Deathlord gives them little credit for such assistance.

The Heron has courted **the Walker in Darkness** as an ally, hoping to use his Company of Martial Sinners as a cat's paw against Great Forks, but she's made little progress. The Walker admires her seemingly instinctive service to the Neverborn, but not enough to tip the scales for the Heron's meager offers. But as she and her deathknights amass further riches and political cache, she may be able to win him over.

The patron gods of Great Forks — **Spinner of Glorious Tales**, **Weaver of Dreams of Victory**, and **Shield of a Different Day** — have incurred the Heron's eternal enmity. She's yet to send her deathknights against Great Forks directly; even their Exalted might would be tested by the city's countless spirits and its Exigent champions. When she makes her move against Great Forks, her victory must be decisive and assured. It's lucky that her enemies are immortal, affording the Heron ample time to rebuild her forces and train her deathknights.

The Heron is still remembered in the Scavenger Lands. Ancestor cults revere her for bringing joy and revelry

to the dead, unaware of her true nature, while societies of assassins secretly venerate her as their patron. Some hired killers of Nexus' **Invisible Lodge** believe that she is their syndicate's unknown leader and devote each life they end to her. The Heron's entirely unaware of this, having not yet rebuilt her Scavenger Lands spy networks.

Notable Followers

The Heron has entrusted much of the Quarter Magnificent's governance to **the Son of Crows**, once nothing more than a traveling actor. Most important among his official duties is arranging the carnivals, parades, and galas that the Quarter's famous for, a role that satisfies his desire for public adoration and acclaim. At times, he's called away from Stygia on diplomatic matters, whether attending another Deathlord's court as an envoy or negotiating terms of surrender for cities terrorized by the Heron. These duties leave ample room for leisure, taking in Stygia's fashion, poetry, and theater.

All Clad in Tatters Came the Mountebank Knight is the Heron's spy in the houses of the other Deathlords. Almost unnervingly serene, the Day Caste takes seriously their duty to the one who saved them from death's door, insinuating themselves among the retinue of her rivals for as long as she requires. They pass themselves off as an Abyssal in a different Deathlord's service, a ghostly prince, or an ambassador from a kingdom of the living, winning the trust of the Deathlord's advisors, agents, and deathknights. But such is their composure that even the Heron couldn't see their fatal flaw — the Mountebank is ruled by their heart in matters of romance, a liability that could see them turned as a double agent.

Sinews Spun Upon the Loom serves as the Princess Magnificent's bodyguard and the Black Heron's hunting hound. His perfumed veils and jeweled finery conceal the countless soulsteel daggers sheathed within his own ghostly flesh. The Heron esteems him as highly as her own deathknights, trusting none save him to select her victims for her. Sinews' loyalty is beyond reproach, but he's at times frustrated by his lady's delight in purposeless violence. If he thinks a victim might distract the Heron from some crucial matter, the nephwrack may kill the unfortunate himself rather than report back.

Lady Shapeblighter is a master moliator, a ghost skilled in reshaping and transforming the phantasmal forms of others. She sets herself apart from the

Quarter's competition with her work's incredible detail and precision and with the less-than-legal services she offers to fugitives seeking to throw off a tail, charlatans scheming to "borrow" another's identity, or debtors starting a new life. The Heron's court has long made use of the Lady's services, and she regards the Deathlord with an aunt-like fondness. While her gifts are of no use to deathknights, she's a font of information on goings-on in the Quarter, Stygia's criminal underworld, and the personal intrigues of the Heron's courtiers. Such information isn't cheap, though young Abyssals may receive a few pointers on the house. After that, they might have to sabotage a rival's business, lend her their influence in district politics, or retrieve ancient treatises on moliation.

The Dowager of the Irreverent Valgate in Unrent Veils

Each of the Deathlords has vowed to end all things. Only one has come within reach. The Dowager engineered the Great Contagion, nearly wiping out all life on Creation. While she may not have succeeded fully, she's dealt the world of the living a blow from which it may never recover.

The Dowager wears three aspects. As witch, she's a ghoulish beldam clad in rotting pelts and black silk veils. She wears a crown of azure-blue jade, while her skin is painted with red and ochre. As huntress, she's a woman of great stature, sharp-fanged and yellow-eyed. As her most monstrous aspect, she's a bestial giant of rotting flesh, with feline features and great serpents in place of fingers. No matter what shape she wears, she always bears a ram's horns and cloven hooves.

The Dowager has mastered necromancy's Void Circle and knows much of disease, herbalism, geomancy, and prophecy. She's deadly in the hunt, wielding the soulsteel longbow Root of Scorn and tracking even the most elusive prey through her shadowland's mire. Her voice withers souls, capable of slaying mortals with a mere whisper. But her greatest power may be her mastery of the Well of Udr, a vessel of unimaginable power older than the gods.

Soon after becoming a Deathlord, the Dowager discovered a prehuman temple-manse submerged beneath the Noss Fens, a vast Northeastern shadowland. She desecrated its sacred geomancy and rechristened it as the Mound of Forsaken Seeds and studied the secrets

left by its forgotten makers. Chief among them is the Well of Udr, a cauldron of rough-worked stone etched with mysterious runes, towering high enough that the Dowager must don her monstrous aspect to gaze into its depths. Within it lies an endless, unknown void, opened eons past by the long-dead race. The Dowager still doesn't understand it fully, but she learned much from her study of its mysteries and the moldering tomes left behind by its creators.

Bringer of the End

Thinking to test her mastery of the Well's power, the Dowager infiltrated Stygia to hunt its Dual Monarchs long before the Stygian Pact's conquest of the necropolis. But the Deathlord underestimated her quarry. The ancient ghost-kings invoked a terrible, soul-destroying power, turning the great Calendar of Setesh into a weapon against her. She was not seen for seven years, during which the Underworld's seasons turned fetid and pestilent.

Then, the Dowager emerged, remade within the nightmares of the Neverborn. No Deathlord had yet faced annihilation, and her peers gladdened by this proof of their promised immortality — but soon, they discovered the awful truth. Not all of the Dowager had returned: gone were her political ambitions, her heated rivalries with fellow Deathlords, her mocking humor. All that remains of the Dowager today is a servant of the Neverborn, a monstrous god of death unfettered by any trace of humanity.

The Dowager soon returned to the Well of Udr, spending most of her days scrying its depths in a nigh-solipsistic fugue. At times, when the visions it reveals placate her, she shapes worlds no larger than a dust mote within the Well, half-real microcosms whose infinitesimal denizens live and die for her pleasure. At other times, she glimpses things that disturb her, things that are displeasing to the Neverborn or remind her of Creation. Enraged, she crushes the universes she's made in the palm of her hand, channeling the dying screams of countless worlds to draw grotesque nightmares and world-blighting curses forth from the Well.

At first, the Dowager's peers thought she had been lost to their cause, reduced to a wretched husk of a once-great Deathlord. In time, they would learn their folly. One night, as Calibration fell upon Creation, the Dowager glimpsed something that revived the long-forgotten memory of her own first death. In an instant of awful clarity, she remembered everything

— her life, Creation, her bloody end in the Usurpation. It was then that she saw the Great Contagion festering within the Well's uttermost depths and summoned forth Creation's long-due reckoning.

In a single stroke, the Dowager claimed more lives than all her fellow Deathlords combined. Creation was left on the precipice of destruction, wounded and vulnerable, as the princes of chaos marched on its borders. The Underworld was cast into upheaval by the flood of ghosts slain by the Contagion, overwhelming the Calendar of Setesh and unleashing a Grand Tempest that wracked the sunless lands.

The Great Contagion may not have wiped out all life, but not even the most impudent of Deathlords would dare call it a favor. All save the most fanatical of their ranks look on the Dowager with redoubled dread, disquieted by just how close she came to success.

Agenda

Alone among the Deathlords, the Dowager truly wishes to see the world destroyed. Any conflicting agendas or ulterior motives were flensed from her when the Neverborn remade her. She's solitary in her scheming, having come to despise collaboration with her fellow Deathlords. She scorns their Stygian politicking especially, dismissing it as a diversion from their true goal.

The Great Contagion is come and gone, and the Dowager does not seek to recreate her past successes. Perhaps she might find another doom to equal it within the Well's depths, but the search might take centuries if not millennia. Instead, she unleashes a ceaseless tide of nightmarish beasts, shambling horrors, and pestilential curses against the world. Such efforts may seem modest, but she is patient and persistent enough to kill Creation by inches.

A part of the Dowager fears her own end, but her devotion remains unwavering. She believes she's found an escape, for in studying the Well, she's learned much that's unknown to the other Deathlords. She's learned of worlds beyond this one and knows that the Well leads *somewhere*. When Creation lies in ash, and the Neverborn at last know oblivion, the Dowager may yet survive to find her freedom.

Deathknights

The Dowager is an inconstant liege. She spends much of the time in a fugue-like reverie, speaking to her Chosen only in inscrutable prophecies and gnomic

pronouncements. While such utterances are never meaningless, even the wisest of her Abyssals often struggle to decipher them. When the Dowager stirs from her fugue, she has much to say to her deathknights. She speaks at length of the Neverborn, their desires, and their torments, describing the horror of their existence as if she had experienced it herself. She is often unnervingly calm, for she knows the Neverborn's triumph is inevitable. But should her Abyssals ride alongside her when she hunts, they bear witness to a pitiless thing of hatred and hunger, disdaining speech for bestial snarls.

Even when the Dowager's Abyssals can understand her cryptic demands, she knows the least of Creation by far among her peers. At times, she forgets that the world of the living is anything more than a speck of her own making and assumes that it follows the laws of her nightmarish whims. It is as a matter of necessity, then, that her deathknights take considerable initiative in interpreting her orders and proactively serving her will — far more than other Deathlords' Abyssals. So long as the final outcome serves the Neverborn's will, the Dowager is rarely displeased, though it may well go unnoticed entirely.

At times, the Dowager's deathknights must stand against the horrors that their mistress has unleashed. When her beasts of pain and fear prey on her own cultists, when her curses go awry, when her unleashed nightmares draw the ire of Underworld enemies, it falls to her Chosen to hunt them down and set things right. At least, that's what her deathknights have decided. Lacking a liege's guidance, the Dowager's Abyssals largely turn to each other to decide how best to serve her.

The Dowager eagerly shares her vast knowledge with her deathknights, even in the grips of delirium. Those who solve her riddling words and meditate on her paradoxical pronouncements learn much of necromancy, geomancy, and other fields of knowledge that the Deathlord has mastered. Those seeking instruction in archery or tracking receive it firsthand, joining the Dowager in her hunt.

The Dowager speaks often of death's chivalry, teaching that they are ironclad laws of existence, unbending and unbreakable. Service to the Neverborn is not a choice for those who've sworn themselves to damnation. She's yet to share her final plan for the Well of Udr with any of her deathknights, but should one of them stray from the Neverborn's cause, she might reveal it in a bid to win them back to the flock.

Hunting Grounds

No one is safe in the Noss Fens. Mortal travelers passing through it are rarely seen again, and even gods fear to tread. The eerie bog is shaded by willows, manchineels, and tremendous banyans, their limbs overgrown with black moss. A stagnant, putrid scent fills the air, for every plant that grows here is undead, finding no sustenance in the shadowland's corrupted waters. The fens have little wildlife, though it's not uncommon to find an animal's corpse floating stone-still in the mire — at least, until it becomes a meal for one of the shadowland's denizens, living or dead.

By night, the dead emerge to hunt the living. They number in the tens of thousands, grotesque abominations shaped from the flesh of both human and beast. Some of the horrors unleashed by the Dowager lair in the swampland as well, preying upon the living and the dead alike. When the stars are right, the Deathlord joins in the hunt, slaking her bloodlust and offering sacrifices unto the Neverborn.

The Dowager's citadel, the Mound of Forsaken Seeds, lies at the Noss Fens' heart. Much of the strangely angled ziggurat lies submerged beneath endless layers of peat and rot — from the outside, it seems nothing more than a large burial mound. It was once a holy place, but the Dowager has corrupted its sacred geomancy into a monument to her and the Neverborn's glory. Here and there, remnants of its makers can still be found: age-worn idols of forgotten gods, mosaics depicting long-forgotten histories, the ruined tombs of prehuman kings.

The Mound is filled with winding corridors and spiraling passageways leading to decay-ridden chambers adorned with trophies of the Dowager's hunts and tapestries of woven soulsteel. Anyone foolish enough to trespass is unlikely to escape with their lives, even if they avoid the temple's mistress, for the Mound is stalked by ravenous corpse-beasts, nightmares beyond number, and things that lurked here long before the Dowager came. Some chambers and hallways are filled with smoke, dust, and unbearable heat, twisted elemental corruptions of the Mound's puissant geomancy.

The Well of Udr lies at the Mound's center. The Dowager has made its chamber her throne room, covered by vast shrouds of spiderwebs and soul-shattering necromantic wards. Even her deathknights must struggle not to recoil in its presence, assailed with disorienting vertigo and a sense of cold unease. It is here that she is most often found, seeking new horrors within the Well's darkness.

The Corpse-Flower Coven

At times, those traveling too near the Noss Fens in Creation begin to hear sibilant murmuring, too quiet to be understood, and dream of a well that will be their death. In time, this corruption metastasizes into something akin to the Neverborn's mind-warping whispers — but the voice that speaks is the Dowager's. Called to the Noss Fens, these pilgrims are greeted by the Dowager's cult, the Corpse-Flower Coven, garlanded with vibrant, lifeless flowers and welcomed as family.

The coven's mortal members dwell communally in stilt-raised villages at the shadowland's edge, built to weather flooding and keep beyond reach of the dead. The coven's members strengthen body, mind, and soul through bleak austerities, hoping that they may endure the Dowager's soul-destroying just long enough to understand some profound truth before they die. The ghosts of those who pass this test join the Dowager's priesthood. Their foremost duty is as scribes, recording her pronouncements, interpreting them, and bringing them to the living coven.

Sometimes, a child of the coven is taken to the Mound. Raised from infancy until they come of age by the ghost-priests, these sacred children hear the Dowager's wisdom directly, somehow unscathed by her baleful voice. They are taught the coven's laws and traditions, returning to their villages as spiritual leaders.

The Dowager is barely cognizant of the coven's existence and takes no part in leading it. If her priests have misunderstood the meaning of her words, it falls beyond her notice. Her deathknights are seen as holy figures, standing in the Dowager's presence unscathed, where even her ghost-priests must shy back from her dreaded voice. The Dowager's Chosen are feted by the coven, which offers its feverish support in whatever capacity the Abyssals require. Though motley by comparison to the Walker's mercenaries or the Prince's thanatocrats, the Corpse-Flower Coven has a surprisingly broad range of skills and the eagerness to put themselves at the whims of the Dowager's Chosen as advisors, occultists, and retainers. However, some in the coven's ghostly priesthood see the Abyssals as a threat to their power, scheming against the deathknights.

Allies and Enemies

None among the Deathlords count the Dowager as an ally. Once, she was close with **The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears** and **The Walker of Darkness**, brought together both by geography and shared zeal

for their cause, but neither can find anything of the Deathlord they once knew in the thing the Dowager has become.

The Dual Monarchs have not forgotten the Dowager, but know nothing of her involvement in the Great Contagion, nor even that she's a Deathlord. Stygia's rulers are too preoccupied dealing with their city's conquerors to oppose the Dowager's faraway scheming, but they might warn other Underworld powers who know little of the Deathlord if she were to threaten Stygia.

Notable Followers

Born into the Corpse-Flower Coven, **the Shoat of the Mire** longed to be chosen as a sacred child but was passed over by the ghost-priests time and again. In her thirteenth year, disconsolate with despair, she fled from her village into the Noss Fens and soon met a grisly end. The Shoat knows not why the Dowager saw fit to save her, but she's sworn to repay the life-debt she owes her liege. Unlike some of the Dowager's deathknights, the young Dusk Caste has embraced her role as the sacred child she never was, an eager intermediary between the Dowager and the coven. But her acerbic tongue and teenaged temperament are liabilities here, and she's made many enemies among the ghost-priests.

Kindly and somber, **the Menhir Raised in Doleful Silence** seems out of place among the Dowager's deathknights, an avuncular figure who makes a methodical science of brewing tea. He seems far too genial to be a mass murderer, a poisoner responsible for more than a dozen deaths. He doesn't supply any details, context, or justification when he reveals this, leaving his fellow Abyssals to wonder at his past. He takes a great interest in both the toxic and medicinal properties of the Noss Fens' unliving flora, performing strange alchemical experiments whose purpose remains secret.

Foremost among the Corpse-Flower Coven's ghostly priesthood, the fanatical specter-saint **Autumn's Mourn** is a monstrous creature of holy wrath. He has stood closer to the Dowager than any shade before him and learned a forbidden path, piercing his corpus with needles made of soulsteel forged from fragments of himself. The price of his newfound power has reduced his identity to tatters, but he's no longer capable of regret. He knows no empathy for the living coven and regards the Abyssals warily, fearing they'll usurp his position as the Dowager's divine guardian and most trusted scribe.

Centuries ago, gripped with fell rage, the Dowager unleashed **Nha Kef-Tah** from the Well of Udr, a primeval nightmare of death by water. A hydra-like serpent of endlessly branching coils carved with blasphemous sigils, the behemoth proved beyond even the Deathlord's power to bind. It fled out of the Noss Fens and into the Sea of Shadows, where it's become a terror to seafarers. While the Dowager scarcely remembers the Nha Kef-Tah, her coven venerates it as a divine beast of the end. In time, the Dowager's deathknights may connect the coven's tales with reports of hazards at sea.

The Eye and Seven Despairs

Most visitors to Cold House see only glimpses of its withered Deathlord slumping from chamber to hall, lipless mouth lost in recitation of lore or articulation of theory, tattered mantle and jittery assistants trailing behind. When the Deathlord deigns to barter directly with the clients who come in search of abhorrent weapons, they seem as if languishing in the physical pain of tedium.

The Eye and Seven Despairs at work is a truly different creature, for the Deathlord is revitalized by the flames of curiosity and innovation. When truly obsessed, the Eye gains a vivid, appalling facsimile of life, with eyes like copper gas lamps, curling hair the color of yellow bile, and flesh like blood smeared on brass. Their gestures and expressions become grandiose, their words seething with alien genius. Their unkempt, decaying raiment appears crisp and new: a floor-length coat of black hide treated with wax, a pince-nez of bottle-green lenses, and a frightening array of soulsteel instruments strapped to quick-release holsters.

A student of the unnatural world, the Eye gives great attention to their surroundings, finding inspiration in the tiniest of details: the movement of a butterfly's wing reveals a new way of connecting grafted undead tissue; starlight falling through their window inspires an artifact's design; the taste of a particular wine plants the seed of necromancies unimagined. These are moments of desperate frenzy, for the Eye experiences boredom as agony. They frequently abandon whatever they might be occupied with to pursue unexpected inspirations and escape the nightmare of ennui.

The Eye and Seven Despairs devotes themselves to research and innovation, whether stitching countless variations on the same undead abomination or forging entire suites of ruinous weapons with minute but crucial differences. They sell the perfected models of armaments, spells, and constructs for eye-watering



sums, caring little for who procures them or how the weapons are used — finished projects are only worth the silver a bidder is willing to pay. Conversely, they delight in selling their experimental prototypes for a pittance, demanding detailed accounts of the prototype's performance.

Ultimately, treasure is only the means to an end. Staff manage their coffers with cold, brutal efficiency, earmarking funds for more soulsteel and jade, more rations for Cold House expeditions, more Creation-side vendors, more contractors, more facilities, more ghostpower. There is little more important to the Eye than the work they personally undertake, which will become their crowning achievement: the empirical observation, cataloging, and weaponization of the Neverborn themselves.

Agenda

The Eye seeks not to serve the Neverborn but to understand them — and to *use* them. The Deathlord has imagined countless possibilities, whether harvesting eldritch organs for world-killing weapons, forging tomb-bodies into a legion of soulsteel colossi, or

redefining the Old Laws from atop undying shoulders. The multiplicity of their plans and their manic flitting from project to project has made the Eye a talented improviser out of necessity; they are not committed to any single scheme, but to the scope and contours of their ambition: The Neverborn and Creation both gorgeously broken to their will.

For all their ennui, the Eye is patient, so long as they have plans and countermeasures to contrive. Accordingly, they have spent centuries investing in contingencies should their experiments with the Neverborn finally go too far — especially in the face of the Lion's imprisonment in their soulsteel armor and the Dowager's warped return from her destruction. In secret warrens throughout the South, the Deathlord caches weapons and reagents against some future need. Most of all, they seek to buttress their immortality. The hidden library of Oquze contains decades of journals detailing their every thought, grand and trivial alike, and in the basalt vault known as the Gravemind, they sometimes take counsel from a half-realized simulacrum of themselves, meant to preserve a perfect (but currently woefully incomplete) copy of their identity against corrosion.

Deathknights

The Eye offers Exaltation only to those who offer considerable value to their research or — far more often — pique their unpredictable and insatiable curiosity. The end result is that the Deathlord is often narcissistically fond of their deathknights, delighting in their foibles and triumphs. Though they do not see their Abyssals as peers — *never* would they see them as peers — the Eye collaborates and associates in the way a distinguished academic would with favored pupils. The Eye places few, if any, restrictions on their access to the Deathlord's research and innovations, including prototype artifacts and experimental necromantic spells.

In return, the Deathlord inflicts their ever-shifting moods upon their deathknights, expecting absolute indulgence. It is not uncommon for an Abyssal to awaken in their chambers with the Deathlord looming over them, waiting to explain their newest mission. Other times, the Eye demands exhaustive postmortems of projects and missions, prodding their vassals to consider every possibility of how a quest might have gone otherwise for good and ill alike.

Attempts to rescue the Eye from their darker moods are rewarded if successful, but this is rare — the Deathlord's strongest rebukes have always come to those deathknights and servants who try and fail to spur them to action during a melancholic fugue, saddling them with onerous and dangerous work out of spite. Ambitious deathknights may find themselves given considerable latitude to serve in their Deathlord's stead during these episodes, knowing that any boundaries they overstep may be forgiven if they can produce either tangible results or provocative theories.

Cold House

Hidden in a chill alpine valley in the Summer Mountains stands the Glade of Weeping Bones. Skeletal trees grow from the shadowland's sickly soil, dripping blood from pale crimson flowers. At the center is Cold House, a megalithic manse hewn from blue-black stone before the dawn of history. Vast as it appears, it is even larger within, filled with endlessly shifting corridors, rooms of inscrutable purpose, and staircases that ascend and descend miles beyond reason.

Though common thought holds that the Eye is in control of Cold House, the Eye tests this constantly, seething when they encounter the vestiges of the House's many previous masters and their edicts still in force. The reclaimed wings of Cold House play at a bleak

habitability, with cavernous parlors, frigid halls, and comfortless bedchambers. Venture deeper, and malevolence creeps to the fore. Explorers have discovered caverns decorated in fine ebony and snake-shed, mile-long crawlspaces inhabited by corpse-spiders with legs of wilted flowers and libraries of blank books that bleed when opened. These deep places are of greatest interest to the Eye and Seven Despairs, who orders regular expeditions to procure interesting prodigies and finally locate the manse's hearthstone chamber, whether Cold House permits it or not.

Beyond the grounds of Cold House, the Eye and Seven Despairs rules over a small empire of trading posts and caravanserais that skirt their valley and its surrounding climes. Brokers from feuding nations and emissaries from warrior-clans travel hundreds of miles to secure weapons, their wagons heavy with silver, jade, exotic resources, or corpses of academic interest. Particularly influential or intriguing buyers are offered Cold House's fraught hospitality; all others must make do with the network of brokers — living and dead alike — who trade in the Eye's unique wares.

The Eye's investments in the Underworld seem at first to mirror those of Creation, selling weapons and strange inventions to those with interesting ambitions or generous purses. Beyond this, the Eye and Seven Despairs extracts unique goods from a number of afterlives they have loosely colonized. They are — largely unknowingly — a tormenter figure in a dozen faiths across Creation based on stories that ghosts relay to their ancestor cults about a mad-eyed savant with an arm of glass and bronze who terrorizes ambitious shades with vivisection, dismemberment, and spiritual dissolution.

Allies and Enemies

The Eye categorizes all other beings as either useful or irrelevant — and as such, they have few true allies and even fewer peers. They especially criticize **the Walker in Darkness** for his conservatism and poor imagination and disparage **the Black Heron** as a creature of tedious melodrama. With the more martial Deathlords, including **the First and Forsaken Lion**, it's strictly business. The Eye and Seven Despairs supplies formulas and blueprints and loans powerful prototypes for distribution among their respective armies. In exchange, the Eye receives data, eager research assistants, and unwilling test subjects.

Their partnership with **the Mask of Winters** is more complicated. The Eye's initial obsession with him

and his necromantic siege-fortress, Juggernaut, compelled them to overcommit to supporting the Mask's campaign in Thorns, contributing bespoke necro-creations and expert personnel, including one of the Eye's favored deathknights — the Seven-Degreed Physician of Black Maladies. So impressed was the Mask that he requested permission to take the Daybreak under full-time patronage. The Eye has yet to make a formal reply, seething at the possibility that their pupil might prefer another master and knowing that either answer loses them something — a Deathlord ally or a deathknight apprentice.

Though **the Dowager of the Irreverent Vulgate in Unrent Veils** is a figure of terror and pity among the Deathlords, the Eye is fascinated with her return and transformation. They pay handsomely for any first-hand accounts of her degraded faculties and new idiosyncrasies. They believe the Dowager's fugue state could provide valuable insight into the Neverborn's cognition.

Once, the shahan-ya Ūl the Burning Eye sought to study and collaborate with the Eye. Fascinated by the idea of mentoring a Lunar Exalt, the Eye agreed to share their innovations and findings. However, Ūl took more than his agreed-upon share from the Eyes' codices and treasures from Cold House, vanishing into the southwest. Centuries later, the Eye is still fiercely aggrieved, extending their enmity to all Luna's Chosen. The Eye's deathknights are neither compelled nor ordered to share this prejudice but cannot invite a Lunar to Cold House without incurring their patron's explosive displeasure.

Notable Followers

One of the Eye's most cherished deathknights is **the Seven-Degreed Physician of Black Maladies**, a necrotech prodigy and emissary to the Mask of Winters. The child of erudite Dynasts, discountenanced and disinherited when his Exaltation never sparked, he was shuffled off to cousins in the far-off Empire of Prasad and promptly forgotten. Rather than allow the peculiarities of Prasadi culture to impede his self-guided "study" of anatomy, he dealt brisk business with Corporal grave robbers and murderers to satisfy his demand for bodies. The Corporals were caught and executed, the anatomist executed by a vigilante mob — and the Eye earned the fealty of a kindred spirit. The Physician relishes his work with the Deathlord now that he is freed of petty concerns like "ethics" and "reverence of life," but his recent collaboration with the Mask of Winters and attendant deathknights has

him wondering if he was too hasty in accepting the first offer presented to him.

The River Which Finds the Riven Door was denied her due in life; when she was called to Rubylak to prove her mastery of hunting, lore, and warfare, her family's rivals arranged for particularly cruel and perilous trials. The Eye came to her as she bled out at the bottom of a pit trap, recognizing her for her many cunning expeditions into the ruins that dot the Silver River. As a Day Caste, she hides her face behind an ebony otter-mask and leads a corps of bound ghosts, undead constructs, and ghost-blooded scavengers, delving into First Age ruins and Labyrinth kingdoms at her Deathlord's behest. She shares his fascination with Cold House, keeping copious journals of her investigations that only infrequently gall the Eye when she discovers some secret that had been denied to him. Her latest discovery is a semi-stable passage to a Linowan ruin only days from Rubylak; she has not yet shared this fact with her Deathlord despite its import, wrestling with how to best balance this opportunity for revenge with her vestiges of love for those who were once her people.

The merchant-prince **Jilas Winds-of-Hyacinth** is one of the Eye's mortal favorites, falling from their grace only during the rare visits where she hasn't brought a gift to match her previous tribute — most recently, a pale-haired oracle who wanders the grounds of Cold House, uttering uncontrollable prophecies and prayers to a star-touched father he knows not. She has grown wealthy even beyond the Guild's standards as one of the Eye's foremost brokers, obfuscating her oversized cut of weapons sales from the Eye and Guild alike. Nearing seventy, she seeks the Eye's leave to retire, but the Deathlord refuses to treat with any of her apprentices. Jilas knows that if she leaves without the Eye's protection, the Guild's audit will uncover decades of deception, and so she remains year after year, tasked with finding ever-escalating gifts. For a credible promise of protection, she could arrange a grand reception with the Eye... or discreet passage into the depths of Cold House secreted away in this year's shipment of curiosities.

Seneschal is a ghost ancient almost beyond reckoning. He is the steward of Cold House — its caretaker, prisoner, conduit, pawn. In his tenure, he has served many masters who attempted to tame Cold House, advising them on its perilous moods and overseeing the hundreds of ghosts who serve within its cursed halls. His mind is wracked with the house's ceaseless murmurings, and so he routinely unburdens himself by breaking off

decades of memory, forming them into semi-independent echoes who scurry the house's halls to manage his many affairs. He is long overdue for this rite but clings to his identity even as his grip on reality deteriorates. Some say that the Eye has forbidden him to do so for fear of losing some scrap of lore that Seneschal has acquired of late, while others speculate that Seneschal is enthralled to the Eye as a true believer, pupil, or even admirer and does not wish to risk losing those feelings. Whatever the reason, Cold House's grasp on Seneschal grows by the day; in this mania, he unleashes ever-greater dangers from the manse's depths, surveys the Eye's deathknights for insight into their lord, and brokers bargains of his own for exotic talismans and elixirs to fortify himself against his growing corruption.

The First and Forsaken Lion

They loom over the battlefield, armored head-to-toe in soul-forged steel and terror. With a single stroke of their black blade, heroes are hewn into corpses and ghosts. Ten thousand war-ghosts march behind them, soldiers in the greatest army the Underworld has ever known. This is the First and Forsaken Lion. Every inch of their limbs and torso is covered by chain-draped plates of spiked armor, notched and scorched in countless battles. A heavy black helm forever hides their face; all that can be made out beneath it is a featureless darkness. The armor is pierced through by hundreds of soulsteel spikes that dig deep into the Lion's phantom corpus, imprisoning them in a cage of cursed metal. No other Deathlord can match their conquests. No other Deathlord can match the depths of their despair.

The Lion is short and cruel in their speech, and they expect silent obedience when they give an order. They're easily roused to wrath, incensed by mere slips of the tongue or ill-phrased requests, let alone insults or defiance. They hold their grudges dearly, having little more than hatred to occupy their ghostly existence. Sometimes, their retribution is immediate, imprisoning the offender in their citadel's depths or cutting him down on the spot. With others, they bide their time, turning the full of their cunning and calculation toward a suitably grisly retribution. It is only by dint of visible effort that they restrain themselves from such cruel treatment of their deathknights.

In their early days, the Lion was a charismatic, head-strong warleader. They exulted in battle, made sport of dueling their generals, and scorned even the mention of defeat. As decades passed, they came to believe themselves beyond even the Neverborn. Each time one of their fellow Deathlords failed in their mission and went unpunished,

the Lion's confidence grew until they were certain that their fallen masters were powerless to enforce the oath they'd sworn. Drunk on this invincibility, the Lion withdrew their forces from Creation's shadowlands and turned their efforts to the conquest of the Underworld. No longer would their steel be wasted on the living when it could serve the Lion's ambition instead.

For a time, it seemed the Lion's folly would go unpunished. No warning preceded their punishment — it was as if the Neverborn had roused halfway from their nightmares just long enough to witness a moment's disloyalty. Ten thousand talons of darkness dragged the Lion into the slain ancients' dreams of torment and retribution. The Lion was bound within their cursed armor like the dead titans in their tombs, their body unraveled and remade by the Neverborn's nightmarish whim. No Deathlord since has doubted the consequences of defiance.

Gone is the Lion's joy for battle, their camaraderie, their dauntless optimism. Hatred, anger, and paranoia fill the void left behind. Their service to the Neverborn has been renewed, but any loyalty the Deathlord may have once felt for their masters is long dead. The Lion heeds their masters' will only for fear of punishment and only as much as they must.

The Lion is a paramount swordsman and general, as well as an erudite scholar of the Underworld's secret lore. They wield the soul-eating blade Varan's Ruin, which howls with terrible hunger when drawn. The skulls of Stygia's Seven Divine Counselors, ghostly seers and sages, hang from chains on their waist. All but one have surrendered their wisdom to the Deathlord. At times, the Lion takes the field in their warstrider, the Insidious Ebon Xoanon, a gruesome patchwork of soulsteel, flesh, and bone. Their prized flagship, the Eschaton-class aerial battle cruiser *Final Maelstrom*, was left drydocked for years after its battle against the thousand-souled Beast of Lamentations, but its repairs near completion.

Agenda

Centuries have passed, but the Lion's aim remains unchanged: conquest. They dream of seeing every corner of the Underworld broken and brought to heel by the Legion Sanguinary, of a sunless empire that answers to a single master. In their early days as a Deathlord, the Lion's wars were driven by boundless ambition and bellicose fervor, glad of war and slaughter. Now, all that remains is grim resolution in seeing them through to their end. When the final battle is won, when there is no more Underworld to conquer, perhaps their dead heart will know something akin to pride once more.

VARAN'S RUIN

An Exalted hero of the First Age, Varan fell in the Usurpation, but clung to existence as a ghost. Undaunted by death, he wandered the Underworld's wastes, protecting the living from the horrors that poured through the countless shadowlands opened in the Usurpation. He was sought out by spectral disciples of the Neverborn and tempted with promises of dark power but refused their offer with the edge of his blade.

In time, Varan met the First and Forsaken Lion, who was not pleased at the sight of the hero. After their battle's end, the Lion hollowed out his soul and reforged the hero's blade with soulsteel smelted from Varan's own ghost. When the daiklave is drawn, what remains of Varan howls with monstrous hunger and ancient pain.

The Lion's martial ambitions have never extended into the world of the living. They share the Neverborn's contempt for Creation — a meaningless, transient world. It is bitter irony, then, that the Neverborn have bid them slaughter the living. The Lion is scrupulous in this service but has no enthusiasm for it except as a source of fuel and materials for the Legion. When they deploy their forces through the shadowlands to march on Creation, they care more for the number of ghosts conscripted from the victims than the despair and agony with which they died. As a result, the Lion is an obscure figure to those in Creation.

Since their punishment at the Neverborn's hands, the Lion has turned increasingly to the study of the Underworld's secrets, entrusting more and more of their military operations to generals and now deathknights. Perhaps their search is for a weapon, some ancient artifact, or apocalyptic rite to tip the Underworld's balance of power. Perhaps they seek freedom from their curse, though few believe their poisoned heart could harbor such hopes. Or perhaps they would be freed from the Neverborn, searching for a way to either end their eternal suffering or to finally destroy them.

The Legion Sanguinary

The Underworld knows no fighting force greater than the Legion Sanguinary. So says the Lion, and none have yet proved them wrong. The Legion's ranks are filled by war-ghosts bound in soulsteel armor, spectral cavalry

FIGHTING THE LEGION

Most of the Legion's companies are Size 5 battle groups of war ghosts (Exalted, p. 504), with elite Drill and Might 2. At times, it may be dramatically appropriate to divide a single company into multiple Size 5 battle groups. They're typically led by an Abyssal, mortwright or nephwrack (Exalted, pp. 505–506). These traits are only the minimum — Storytellers should feel free to use different kinds of undead, add unique powers, or otherwise customize individual companies.

mounted on skeletal steeds, corpse-riding nemissary commandos, ghostly siege engineers, and grotesque necromantic war-engines. Once a fanatical force united by the Lion's charismatic leadership and dreams of conquest, the Legion has changed greatly since their punishment by the Neverborn. Today, it is fear, not loyalty, that drives the Legion Sanguinary to war.

The Legion comprises twelve armies, each divided into twelve companies. Each army is led by one of the Lion's generals, who commands the lieutenants overseeing the army's companies. The commanding generals are given great discretion in how they carry out their orders, though they ultimately report to the Lion's second-in-command, the General Diablerie of the Legion Sanguinary.

The Legion controls more of the Underworld than any ruler, though a number of territories were lost in the years following the Lion's punishment. It occupies more than a hundred afterlives, including much of the southern Underworld, as well as the Lion's holdings in the grand necropolis of Stygia and its surrounding isles. The Lion doesn't govern these holdings directly. Rather than forging an empire, the Deathlord divides up conquered lands, assigning a trusted general to govern each territory carved out of them. Collectively, these holdings are known as the Endless Marches of the Legion Sanguinary, the ever-expanding edge of the Lion's aggression.

The Legion's current orders emphasize maintaining its hold over the Endless Marches rather than seizing new territories, though the Lion still launches the occasional foray. The Lion is careful not to let their territory expand beyond what their forces can hold — but every raid into the shadowland swells the Legion's ranks. When the time is right, the twelve armies will return to conquest.

The Thousand

The Lion scorns the shadowland lairs of other Deathlords, repulsed at the notion of dwelling so close to the living world. They sought out the Spears of Victory, a mountain range in the Underworld's southern reaches that offers an afterlife to the shades of soldiers denied the burial rites. By their command, the mountains were carved and hollowed into a vast fortress-city called the Thousand. Ghosts called to its afterlife are now conscripted into the Legion Sanguinary, pressed into another chance at martial glory.

The mountainous citadel is a maze of treasure halls, puzzle-rooms, libraries, forges, arsenals, and trophy rooms. Much of it is occupied by a cavernous barracks capable of holding six full armies of the Legion Sanguinary. The cavern's uttermost depths predate both the Thousand and the afterlife before it. They're roamed by strange beasts unremembered even by the dead. Those venturing into them occasionally return bearing strange treasures of unknown purpose, created by whatever dwelt in the depths long before humanity.

Deathknights

The Lion is a cruel master to most, but can't afford to show their deathknights such treatment. They feel little empathy for their Abyssals, brook no disrespect from them, and make stark examples of failure, but they're neither unreasonable nor malicious. That's the most their Abyssals can hope for — there is no kindness in the Lion, nothing left of the charismatic warlord who was beloved by their soldiers.

The Lion hopes that their Abyssals will one day be their most trusted generals and seeks to shape their deathknights into champions worthy of such respect. They freely teach their students all they know of warfare, swordplay, Underworld lore, politics, and necromancy's first and second circles. Success is rewarded, whether with triumphal processions, plundered riches, governorships in the Endless Marches, artifacts from the Lion's own arsenal, or access to the forbidden texts kept in their personal library. Failure is punished but with an eye toward ensuring the deathknight learns what needs to be learned from their defeat.

Many of the Lion's deathknights are given positions of authority in the Legion Sanguinary, leading companies or entire armies, while the penultimate rank of General Diablerie has become a shifting position, held by whichever deathknight the Lion has the most confidence in. Others hold elite positions for their specialist

roles. This has bred resentment among the Deathlord's old guard of ghost-officers, though their malice largely falls upon the deathknights who've replaced them rather than the Lion.

When the Lion instructs their deathknights in death's chivalry, they speak not of glorious service to the Neverborn but of grim necessity. The Deathlord expects their Abyssals to be just as scrupulous as they are in honoring death's chivalry, though they dislike those who show too much zeal for the Neverborn.

While the Lion rages against their masters, they are no ally to traitorous Abyssals who would defy the Neverborn's will or deathknights-errant seeking redemption. Perhaps they could be won over, but after centuries of constant agony and all-consuming hatred, they refuse to let anyone achieve the freedom that they've been denied.

Allies and Enemies

The Lion is confident that **The Black Heron** will one day return to power and has backed her efforts to rebuild her power in hopes of currying favor — or at least obligation — with the greatest killer among the Deathlords. It's an uneasy alliance, but the Heron has grudgingly worked alongside the Lion, whether coordinating efforts between their Abyssals or interfering in Stygian politics.

Among other Deathlords, the Lion has been condemned as a traitor by those most devoted to the Neverborn — **The Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible**, **The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears**, and **The Walker in Darkness**. While none dare risk open conflict, they take any opportunity to sabotage the Lion's efforts. At times, the Legion's expansion has brought the Lion into conflict with **The Silver Prince** in the Underworld's bleak seas, though it's been decades since their forces last clashed.

The Lion is hated by many of their conquered foes — or at least, by those spared in grudging shows of death's chivalry. Stygia's **Dual Monarchs** are foremost among these, despising the Deathlord for their leading role in the Stygian Pact that conquered the grand necropolis. With her kingdom razed down to ashes, **Prince Laki of Nothing** now stirs up rebellion across the Endless Marches. **Kariaz Horizon-Called**, once one of Stygia's foremost defenders, has retreated into the Labyrinth's depths in search of blasphemous power with which to take his revenge.

Notable Followers

Haughty and scornful, **He Who Walks on Laughter** is drunk on power and Essence fever, having Exalted less than a year ago. He studied warfare and leadership from a young age as a member of Champoor's Sanjhar caste and won the Deathlord's favor with his rapid understanding of First Age strategic concepts like air superiority. The Dusk Caste uses his favored position to agitate for increasing aggression but finds no purchase with the Lion. He now conspires with some among the Legion's generals who share his bellicose ambitions.

A master of espionage, infiltration, and military intelligence, **the Meticulous Owl** was already a trusted servant of the Lion before he Exalted, recruited from the ranks of a shadowland ancestor cult. He is never without his black jade death-mask, for an ill-fated pilgrimage into the Labyrinth left his body warped and withered. Some among the Lion's deathknights whisper that the eerily loyal Day Caste spies on them as well as the Deathlord's foes, reporting any signs of disloyalty directly to the Deathlord.

The ghost of an ancient Dragon-Blooded warlord, **Ashes of the Lotus** is the Lion's most trusted general, having fought alongside them in life. Before the creation of the Abyssal Exalted, she was the Legion's General Diablerie, but she's been relegated to a lesser generalship to make way for a procession of the Lion's less-experienced favorites. Her bitter resentment over this has yet to overcome her loyalty to her one-time friend, but she delights in their deathknights' failure. She's too cautious to directly sabotage their efforts but offers tacit approval and deniable support to the efforts of other disgruntled officers.

Feast of the Centipede's Daughter is the Lion's acting general in Stygia, maintaining strict military order in the Legion Sanguinary's barracks in the Iron Hills district. The Medoan ghost-warlord is perhaps more paranoid even than her master, seeing intrigue and infiltrators around every corner. She's concerned by the Lion's tentative alliance with the Black Heron, fearing whatever ulterior motives the Deathlord might harbor. She increasingly spends her time investigating the Heron and her servants — an obsession that, to Feast's horror, has begun to spill over into romantic infatuation.

The Mask of Winters

Haughty and flamboyant, the Mask of Winters cuts a dramatic figure. His outfits vary as widely as his moods

— whether skull-adorned soulsteel plate armor, ominous crimson robes sewn with arcane sigils, or richly embroidered doublet and jodhpurs. Whatever his attire, he always stands tall and proud, forever wearing ornate masks to conceal the ruin of his face.

Though younger than his fellow Deathlords, the Mask is as brilliant and devious as any. Where he cannot quite match his peers in their fields of specialty — whether the Lion's generalship, the Dowager's necromancy, or the Prince's administrative acumen — he's unrivaled among them for daring and ambition.

Eager to make his mark, the Mask is driven to prove himself the equal or better of his peers. He aims to build an Underworld empire larger than any other, with a capital as grand and cosmopolitan as Stygia, all backed by necromancy never before seen by the living or the dead. To achieve this, he throws himself into each new project or plan with furious intensity so as to avoid the languid deliberation to which the dead so often find themselves subject. Until recently he was a little-known personage, seen largely as an occult advisor to the Perfect Circle that directs the Eastern Underworld's mighty Acheron League. In that aspect, he has been known as a wanderer and pact-maker, discovering and binding countless spirits and behemoths. Then, within a few years, he claimed the League's seat in Stygia as a Signatory and dispatched the monstrous Juggernaut to Thorns, becoming a sensation in the Underworld and Creation alike.

The Mask maintains an utterly pragmatic approach to the chivalry of death, pursuing it just enough to avoid the wrath of the Neverborn. He sees human lives and the fates of empires as mere playthings, like pieces on a game board. This cold, calculating analysis can feel more terrifying than mere malice.

He only considers a handful of beings — the other Deathlords, the Dual Monarchs, and the like — to be meaningful players on his game's board. He can grow frustrated and temperamental when some lesser figure interferes with his plans, looking for a guiding hand behind them, but is pleased when they finally prove themselves to be a fellow player worthy of understanding and defeating.

The Mask prefers to follow local conventions and uphold his promises, not because he believes in such things but because doing so makes him seem more reasonable and less threatening. Moreover, it allows him to accomplish betrayals that might be impossible for those with a reputation for treachery or caprice.

Despite the façade of logic, his plans are often driven by his ego. This is especially clear since the rise of his deathknights, affording him the opportunity to take the kind of risks that have culminated in the invasion of Thorns.

In war, he prefers legitimate *casus belli* to maintain alliances and diffuse opposition. Likewise, he enjoys pitting his neighbors against one another even when not entirely necessary. This distracts others from the threat that he himself poses, allows him to appear magnanimous when interceding on an ally's behalf for his own advantage, and simply strikes him as more elegant than brute force. The bounty of acclaim he reaps in return is no small draught, either.

Agenda

The Mask currently balances consolidating his beachhead in Thorns against destabilizing the Empire of Aki, breaking its power so that the Acheron League can spread more easily among its protectorates. Even as he musters troops, offers intelligence and supplies to rebellious Akeitan provinces, and turns the empire's Council of Royals against one another, the bulk of his attention is by necessity upon Thorns as he stabilizes his position in Creation and capitalizes upon the chaos created by his audacious success.

In the short term, he aims to reclaim Thorns' old provinces and annex key neighbors. This serves many purposes: reinforcing a valuable Abyssal's loyalty, easing the Neverborn's slumber through slaughter, amassing undead troops for the Acheron League's conquests, and — by inflaming the Scavenger Lands' people against Deathlords — harassing his rival, the Walker in Darkness. His agents strengthen alliances with Thornish provincial lords and pliable neighboring polities, find or fabricate further *casus belli* on targets for annexation, and foment other conflicts in the River Province to distract Lookshy and the Council of Rivers. He promises support to rebellious Realm satrapies, slowly drawing them under Thorns' hegemony. He aims to forge a united Thornish kingdom that supplies undead troops for the League long-term, proving to his colleagues among the Deathlords that his invasion was a triumph they could never match.

The Mask pursues many lower-priority schemes in the background. He desires leverage over rival Signatories in Stygia, gathers lost relics and forgotten magics in the Underworld and Creation, spies on rivals and allies alike, and engages in petty one-upmanship with the Silver Prince and other worthies purely for

entertainment. Such plots serve as excellent proving grounds for untested deathknights.

The Acheron League

The Acheron League stretches throughout the Underworld's eastern isles, from the marsh-ringed city of Verberance to distant Light-upon-the-Fingers, where villages are perched atop pillars of bone. The League presents itself to the Underworld as a confederation to which the Mask of Winters is merely the seniormost member. In truth, it is far less egalitarian; its members willingly becoming his vassals in exchange for preferential treatment, resources, and protection, which often see them elevated to regional capitals. The Mask's forces conquer and annex his vassals' enemies; those who yield suffer significant tax burdens but retain local rule under the Mask's suzerainty, while those who refuse to surrender or who persistently rebel are razed, their populations scattered and shipped to the far corners of the League.

Though much of his attention is invested in Creation in the aftermath of the invasion of Thorns, the Mask of Winters takes pains to ensure the stability of the League. In his absence, it is largely ruled by the Perfect Circle, a trusted council of puissant specters who have distinguished themselves with long and loyal service. He approves of ambition in his lesser lieutenants, satraps, and governors, eager to see them compete against one another — and just as ready to intervene when one oversteps their bounds or lets competition metastasize into something that could endanger the League's stability, as he did when he exiled a general known as Prayer Unto Nothing to the hinterlands as a disgraced magistrate for allowing her troops to sabotage the forces of a rival vassal.

BLACK DIAMOND

The city of Black Diamond is the heart of the Acheron League, a sprawling metropolis dominating the continent of Tholos in the eastern Underworld. Silver-roofed guard towers rise from beetle-black basalt city walls and along the many grand bridges crossing the river. Untamed sprawl spreads outside the walls; inside stands a triumphal procession of civic buildings, their monolithic marble and silver facades interrupted only by carefully manicured parks and elaborate monuments to the Perfect Circle and the Mask himself.

Over a million skillful ghosts gather here. Some came at sword's point from the Mask's conquests; he lured others with opportunities to fulfill their passions. Today Black Diamond throngs with masterful

artisans, ambitious merchants, and insightful scholars. Meanwhile, tribute, trade, and plunder all flow to the city's coffers, funding its extravagance. As a result, Black Diamond is a cultural touchstone to rival almost any other in the Underworld.

The Perfect Circle holds a central role in Black Diamond's culture. Ghosts in a duke's service wear emblems indicating their affiliation; others utter propitiatory prayers to avoid the Circle's attentions. It's customary at formal meals to set a place "for the duke" should one appear — though most among the dukes claim this prerogative no more than once every few years, it remains a firm custom for fear of their approbation or in hopes that they might grant some minor favor. The Mask of Winters once held a distant role as the city's founder, but cults to him have risen since he claimed the Signatory's seat.

Masks are a notable sight in the city, even by the standards of the Underworld. Sumptuary laws prescribe thirteen ranks through which a ghost may ascend, earning the right to don masks of ever-more elaborate designs and luxurious materials. At the lowest end, a tenant-farmer might don a crude construct of rough-carved wood, while the grandees of the higher ranks go about in sumptuous visards and gaudy masks of porcelain, abalone, and ivory.

Artificers, geomancers, and necromancers labor to create enchanted weapons, automata, siege weapons, ships, and the like to enhance the League's military might. These experts pool their knowledge within the smoldering ziggurat of **the Hall of Attainment**, an academy of necromancy and occult arts famed across the Underworld. Like the Mask himself, the academy is a place of ambition and striving, born out of its origins as a home-in-exile for those sages expelled from Stygia during the failed collegia rebellion. The Mask funds his scholars lavishly, attempting to woo masters away from their ancient towers to mixed effect, forcing prideful ghosts long-set in their ways to work alongside juniors ravenous for progress and acclaim.

The Perfect Circle resides in the many-spined circular structure called **the Ring** — or, by some, the Beartrap. The dukes rarely gather in full amid its bleak, shadowy halls; their lieutenants represent them while they move about the League managing political affairs, resolving unnatural disasters, putting down bandits and rebels, and the like. Ghosts fear being called to the Ring; few petition or lobby the monstrous dukes, who aren't swayed by wealth or connections. Sixteen wordless sentinels stand guard over the Ring's gates, each with a fabled soulsteel weapon fit for an executioner.

The Mask's manse-palace, **the Spire of Endless Midnight**, rises like a thorn from the middle of the River Acheron at the city's exact center. Behind its impregnable obsidian walls and occult wards, he gathers his most precious treasures, labors on his most secret necromantic experiments, and shackles his most secure prisoners. Though his current campaign keeps him in Thorns, he still returns on occasion to oversee the mechanisms of empire, and he will reestablish himself here should Juggernaut fall.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY LEAGUE LOCALES

Endless revels abound in **the City of Black Wine**, afterlife of the Sisphe people of the Cormorant Cities (**Across the Eight Directions**, p. 104). Its namesake vintage — heavy, fragrant, and honey-sweet — graces the tables of Underworld emperors, though none know what strange fruit its vintner-priests use in its manufacture. Such is the city's notoriety that it's become an afterlife for other peoples across the Scavenger Lands; impoverished Nexus streetfolk and the nomadic Gyrae people alike speak of it in their funerary rites — the former call it a heaven of endless gustatory delights, while the latter deem it a decadent, depraved hell. Its streets, bazaars, wineshops, and gambling dens throng with ghostly merchants, rogues, charlatans, and hedonists of every description. The Mask recruits many of his most effective factors and spies here.

At the River Acheron's mouth, the bitter crags of **Metapyla** await those few Lookshyans who linger in the Underworld despite their Immaculate faith. Centuries ago, Seventh Legion ghosts cleansed the region of the specters that thronged in the Grand Tempest's wake, then claimed rulership over the helot dead. Centuries later, the Acheron League's Perfect Circle aided a ghost-helot rebellion, storming the Legion's citadel and seizing the dead gentes' grave goods. Today, a ghost-helot council rules in Metapyla. They fulfill their role in the empire by supplying elite soldiers and war machines to further the Mask's ambitions. Rebels rally around a heretical Immaculate cult, led by ghosts of Seventh Legion chaplains and other devotees of the Faith, who mark the Perfect Circle and the Mask as Anathema.

The timeless **Fen of Grasping Hands** lies southeast of Black Diamond, along the languorous, plague-ridden River of Lamentations near to where it joins the Acheron. Enormous hands, blue and cold, lurk beneath the surface; they surge out to clutch wandering ghosts and drag them to drown forever in the shallows. Many cultures deem it a hell that swallows the wicked after death — Nexus folklore says it claims skinflint

employers and swindling merchants, Great Forks' slaves whisper that it seizes slavers' ghosts, and the Marukani horselords condemn horsethieves to its embrace.

The city **Release** stands atop a basalt plateau that the Mask raised up amid the Fen over a century ago. His governor, the Myrrh Braid, was in life a calculating merchant prince, expelled from the Guild for her crimes. With an eldritch ivory scepter lent by the Mask, the Braid has liberated tens of thousands of ghosts from the Fen's grasping hands. These now reside in Release, serving the League as laborers, soldiers, artisans, and brokers out of gratitude for their freedom... and in fear of being condemned to the Fen once more.

Deathknights

The Mask values drive and ambition in his deathknights and encourages them to better their skills and to pursue private projects — so long as that doesn't interfere with his own goals. Whenever possible, he prefers to Exalt those whose ambitions or interests align with tasks he wishes to set them to; he deems this elegant and makes it less likely that they'll seek independence or enter service with his rivals. Likewise, he's not above wooing another Deathlord's vassal, but only if the Abyssal truly seems like a better fit in his own employ.

Soon after a deathknight's Exaltation, the Mask takes some action that significantly furthers that Abyssal's long-term goals, with the intent of both inspiring loyalty and incurring a debt. This is coldly calculated but often effective nonetheless. For example, with the Prince Resplendent in the Ruin of Ages, who'd been a penurious scavenger lord in life, he arranged the humiliation and bankruptcy of a longtime rival, transferring her assets to the Prince — including records and cipher keys to a certain First Age ruin whose contents the Mask desired.

The Mask doesn't concern himself with his deathknights' ideology or their private agendas so long as they serve him loyally and pursue his goals successfully. He generously rewards exemplary service and decisive successes but supports his own interests in doing so. Generals and warriors receive estates and military forces at the empire's borders; spymasters and socialites earn titles and intelligence assets in Stygia, Black Diamond, Thorns, or other key cities; occultists learn spells and pact with esoteric entities whose powers mesh with some upcoming task. He carefully selects artifacts to match their recipients' personalities and styles, occasionally crafting them himself, but in

exchange, he expects to hear dramatic tales of victories achieved through their use.

Allies and Enemies

Of all his peers, the Mask most enjoys tweaking the nose of **the Silver Prince**. Both are creatures of vanity and drama; their shared hunger to be seen as superior to their peers puts them at odds. The Mask makes a game of this, delivering petty affronts calculated to raise the Prince's ire, yet too small for the Prince to retaliate against without seeming pettier still.

The Mask nurses a more passionate rivalry with **the Walker in Darkness**. The Walker is also among the youngest Deathlords, and the Mask refuses to let such a peer outshine him. Meanwhile, the Walker's dedication to the Neverborn and the chivalry of death causes friction between them. In addition, the Walker's shared presence in the eastern Underworld and in Creation's Scavenger Lands makes him a convenient target for the Mask to focus his frustrations upon.

The Mask corresponds with both **the Dowager of the Irreverent Vulgate in Unrent Veils** and **the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears** to exchange arcane knowledge but otherwise keeps them at arm's length to avoid the former's zealotry and the latter's schemes. He maintains more convivial terms with **Eye and Seven Despairs** to get first crack at purchasing the lethal products of their workshop; he currently owes them a favor for helping him discover the behemoth that became Juggernaut.

Once among the Acheron League's greatest rival-states, **the Empire of Aki** has never been more vulnerable to the Mask, to his delight. This coalition of polities was once bound together by the ghost-hero Aki in ages past; since her disappearance centuries ago, it has stagnated, now ruled by a Council of Regents in her name. Wracked by rebellion and riven by political strife, the empire struggles to muster a defense against the Acheron League's border raids and its annexation of the steadily dwindling buffer states between the two great Underworld powers. The Mask of Winters will take special delight in what he sees as inevitable conquest and has already planned appropriately gruesome punishments for each of the imperial regents to repay past losses and knit his injured pride.

Notable Followers

The Rightful Heir by Red Iron Rebuked — also called the Red Iron Rebuke — rules Thorns on the

Mask's behalf. When the Mask came to him during his imprisonment, starved and feverish within his cell, he accepted the Mask's bargain: freedom and his city's throne in exchange for fealty. Today, this gaunt Moonshadow Caste stands as the nominal sovereign ruler of Thorns. Once an introverted poet and huntsman with little personal ambition, he wishes to do right by his people but remains embittered. He still seeks out his brother's surviving allies among the rebel Thornish provinces to make them pay for their role in usurping him.

Though tall, strong, and hale, **the Seven Seasons Widow** shows the marks of many decades in her gray hair and seamed face. Over her long life, she'd been a far-traveling mercenary, then the war-leader of a now-defunct confederation of city-states west of Nechara, then finally a prince's chief military advisor. The Mask found her as she lay dying of old age and offered life and strength; today, this Dusk Caste warrior-general oversees the Mask's war efforts in Creation, finding grim satisfaction in decisive victories, wild revels among her troops, and collecting battle trophies. She chafes as nominal vassal to the Heir, who determines when she may go to war and still holds a grudge over her brutal tactics during the conquest of Thorns. She also struggles to obtain reinforcements and supplies from the Mask's longtime ghost-generals, who feel slighted by her sudden ascent.

Many years ago, **Safram Amaya** — a minor aristocrat and a scholar of natural philosophy — held high rank in Thorns as an advisor to the Autocrat Mazandan Sepehr. They tutored the Autocrat's children and became close friends with the one who would become the Heir. Later, to protest the Heir's blinding and imprisonment, Amaya renounced their rank and went into voluntary exile. Upon conquering Thorns, the Heir called them back and made them a noble of the highest rank. Amaya remains uncomfortable with the dead and worries about the morality of involvement with Anathema, even as a friend. Nonetheless, they remain unswervingly loyal to the Heir, serving as his envoy to neighboring provinces and polities and advising him on political and economic matters. They try to steer him toward upholding the common people's needs, bringing petitions from desperate citizens to his attention — despite the animosity this earns from venal court officials.

A score of puissant nephwracks and similar spectral entities comprise **the Perfect Circle**, the Mask's regents in the Acheron League. They include the Mask's enigmatic spymaster and shadow-weaver, **the Duke**

of the Blindfold; the horrid blazing war-beast called **the Duke Who Embraced the Pyre**; **the Duke of the Hoarfrost Spear**, a cruel strategist and battle-champion; an alluring, ruthless administrator and master of the requiem arts, **the Duke with No Heart**; **the Duke with Seven Jaws**, a devious and ferocious shapeshifter-admiral; and a brilliant and vindictive exchequer and soulfire-wielder, **the Duke of the White Jade Hoard**. Many of these have found themselves working uncomfortably alongside Abyssal newcomers or even supplanted entirely. Though obedient to the Mask via bargains and bindings, their pride and jealousy may provoke friction and strife with his deathknights.

The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears

Amid the icy wastes of the North reigns a dreaded witch-queen, cruel and uncaring as the winter's cold. This is the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears. She is the death of love. She is the moment when one wakes from a dream of a long-dead lover and remembers that they will never see them again.

The Lover is beautiful — tall and wiry of frame, skin soft as a funereal silk, cheeks flushed with stolen vitality — for the living must learn that beauty is no balm to life's futility. To those who've lost their lovers to the grave, she appears in the guise of their beloved, a perfect creation save for the taste of ash upon her lips. She often affects indolence, but when this façade falls, the warm flush of life vanishes from her features, and an eerie chill surrounds her, the killing cold of cruelty.

All love is hollow and illusory in the eyes of the Lover, whether the hot-blooded passion of romantics, the doting affections of a parent for their child, or the steel-forged friendships of warrior bands. Death sunders all such bonds; to cling to them is foolish and brings only suffering. She seeks to enlighten the living, demonstrating the hypocrisy of love in all its forms so they may choose the bliss of despair.

The Lover seeks out the wise, the mighty, and the so-called righteous, testing the bonds between them and those closest to their heart. While she may arrange these tests with baleful spells and harrowing visions, she prefers the stark knife of truth, vivisectioning them with keenly honed questions and observations. Those who fail her tests are cursed with baleful necromancies, forged into soulsteel mementos of their failure, or killed and reanimated as one of the Loveless, alluring but murderous undead who wander her domain. The

few who pass rarely emerge unbroken, for the Lover is unflinching in ensuring that victims understand that all love must wither and die. Her bleak truths creep into their hearts like a secret frost, a fissure that deepens season by season and heartbreak by heartbreak.

The Lover does not pretend at compassion. Her trials are meant to snuff out the hope of the living and to vindicate her contempt for love in the face of death. Her only mercy is reserved for the heartsick, the lonely, and the lost. She welcomes them into her dominion, forbidding her undead servants from harming them, for such pilgrims have already learned the lessons she would teach.

Though the Lover is feared by the living who dwell near her shadowland dominion, in times of need, supplicants make the perilous trek to her Fortress of Crimson Ice. Others seek her out as well: necromancers in search of tutelage, ascetics drawn by her bleak philosophy, and fools who believe they could win her heart. Few return alive, but the Lover has been known to show magnanimity to those who overcome her trials, granting boons or taking them as champions, disciples, or paramours.

The Lover is among the most powerful necromancers of the Deathlords, marrying her mastery of the Void

Circle with a vast talent for Celestial Circle sorcery. Beyond her magics, her prowess in intrigue, art, seduction, and artifice is legendary. She wears an ornate orichalcum cuirass beneath cascading sable and cerulean robes that fall to her ankles. Siren in Avern, a rapier of nigh-translucent soulsteel, hangs from her waist, hungry for the hearts of her foes. The Mirror of Darkness and Lightning floats beside her, an ovate disc of polished silver wood six feet in height. A demon is bound within the mirror's depths, ever-seeking to overpower the will of those who gaze within and seize them in his eleven arms of jet-black lightning.

Agenda

The Lover considers herself a devout servant of the Neverborn, bringing Creation a step closer to its end with each victim broken by her ordeals. Little by little, her torments erode the foundations of society, for she chooses her victims from those whose downfall would spread her truth like an insidious cancer. She is a perfectionist, unwilling to compromise her craft, and ignores criticism of this from her fellow Deathlords, deeming them rash and intemperate. With all eternity to end the world, why should she settle for anything less than perfection?



As a master necromancer, the Lover has raised up armies of corpses from beneath the snow and summoned primeval horrors of the Underworld to capture and occupy shadowlands across the North. She has no dreams of conquest beyond these boundaries; rulership holds no appeal, and she would rather the living submit to despair than the point of a sword. Instead, the shadowlands serve to spread her message across the North, issuing forth spectral envoys, shambling horrors, and her newly anointed deathknights. She sometimes travels Creation or the Underworld in search of mystical lore or worthy candidates for her teaching, wandering in the form of a bone-chilling wind full of whispers.

The Fortress of Crimson Ice and the Lover's Dominion

The Vale of Dust and Shadows, a small shadowland, lies in the Wasting Tundra of the far North. Within it, the Lover reigns from the Fortress of Crimson Ice. From afar, the crystalline manse seems shrouded by an ethereal miasma. These are the ghosts of those who failed the Lover's test, cursed to an eternity in the freezing wastes.

In shadowlands captured by the Lover's forces, steles of red ice and marmoreal sculptures of the Deathlord are raised as monuments to her victory, for her armies know that she will soon arrive to survey the new conquest and spread her teachings. Deposed rulers are either bent to the Lover's will as unquestioning thralls or executed and replaced with trusted spectral champions or deathknights.

The Lover's domain is haunted by the Loveless, wretched remnants of those who've failed her tests. They do not seem dead at first glance, merely pale-skinned and blue-lipped, though the utter cold of their flesh belies this, for their bodies are things of shade and spirit. Doomed to an eternity of isolation, they seek the warmth of the living, enticing hunters, travelers, and nomads with their alluring beauty and siphoning away their prey's vitality. Those who go too long without such sustenance succumb to monstrous rapacity, killing and feasting upon the still-warm flesh of the living.

Deathknights

The Lover prizes her deathknights as her greatest disciples, having overcome the ultimate test of Abyssal Exaltation. In exchange for their service, they receive

mentorship in necromancy, artifice, and understanding the desires of the living and the dead. Those skilled in persuasion, philosophy, or art learn to test and subvert the living, while those whose strengths lie elsewhere hone their skills to exemplify the Lover's bleak truths through action. They might be rewarded with control of a shadowland, be made margraves of the Lover's dominion, or be given command of one of her necromantic armies.

The Lover asks little of her deathknights but expects much. At times, she bids them return to the Fortress of Crimson Ice to recount their deeds, taking eminent satisfaction at every prince driven to despair, every monastery tempted into nihilistic heresy, every Sworn Kinship divided by honeyed words or a daiklave's edge. Those Abyssals she finds lacking must accompany her when next she finds a victim to test and perhaps even take over the torment themselves. The Lover can't leave everything to her deathknights' discretion, though, for there is much to be done in her conquest of the Northern shadowlands and her dealings with rival Deathlords, requiring military and diplomatic missions. As her deathknights mature, she delegates ever-greater authority over her domain to them, rededicating herself to her vocation as a teacher of grim truths.

The Lover's tutelage marries death's chivalry to her philosophy, teaching that breaking the will of the living is more pleasing to the Neverborn than mere slaughter. She encourages restraint and patience over passionate zeal, promising her Chosen that there's time enough for all they long to accomplish. She offers a similar view to those contemplating their vows to destroy the world, urging them to focus on more pressing matters and take a long-term view to the apocalypse. Still, she expects her Chosen to faithfully serve the Neverborn. She does not punish the wayward openly, but those who commit egregious violations receive duties and missions meant to reveal the folly of their ways.

The Tear Eaters

The Lover is the divine patron of the Tear Eater clans, the result of a promise made long ago to Vadul Tenth-Descendant, a Tear Eater who overcame her tests and became her disciple. The nomadic clans range along the Wasting Tundra, raiding and trading with settlements.

Tear Eater religion and society centers around the Great Dead, revered ancestors whose ghosts have been thaumaturgically bound to their own mummified

corpses. Most exist in a quasi-lucid state, kept in sacred shrine-tents where they speak in riddles and prophecies that are interpreted by a clan's shaman. The eldest break free of this fugue and hold honored positions within their clan as advisors, storytellers, warleaders, and emissaries to the Lover. Children take their names from their Great Dead ancestor, with a suffix denoting their generation.

Most Tear Eater clans are led by a chieftain — sometimes selected by the Great Dead, sometimes chosen for glory in battle, and sometimes elected, depending on the clan. Of equal prominence are a clan's shamans, responsible for creating and tending to the Great Dead. Their auguries are given great importance by the Tear Eaters, whether interpreting prophecies of the Great Dead or predicting the future through scapulomancy, reading the patterns in fire-cracked shoulder blades. They also serve as intermediaries between their clan and the spirits of the shadowlands and the wilderness. Shamans are forbidden from touching the living, burning dead flesh, and marrying.

The Tear Eaters consider the Lover a powerful ally and guardian of the Great Dead, offering unto her the same prayers and sacrifices given to their ancestors. Her gifts to the clans are many: sharing the locations of First Age ruins ripe for plunder, offering up shadowlands conquered by her forces, and providing sustenance in times of famine.

Under the Lover's tutelage, the Great Dead learned to raise corpses as zombies to labor and hunt on behalf of the clans, giving living Tear Eaters greater freedom to practice artisanship, debate, and matters of public importance or theological significance, or simply enjoy leisure activities. Many are raised from the corpses of those who die of disease or old age or who've gravely dishonored themselves. These are known as the Nameless Dead, for none may speak of who they were in life. Other Nameless Dead are raised from war captives and enemies killed in battle, a practice that has earned the Tear Eaters a fearsome reputation.

The Lover's teachings have spread among the Tear Eaters, but many balk at a philosophy that stands in stark opposition to the traditions of the Great Dead. Some argue that they must abandon their ancestors, both to fully win the Deathlord's favor and to free the living Tear Eaters from the ancient, outmoded ways of their ancestors. The Lover refuses to intervene in this; to do so, she believes, would break the spirit of her promise to Vadul.

Allies and Enemies

The Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible is an ancient rival of the Lover; so long has the grudge persisted that neither remembers clearly why it began. She indulges in it with almost unseemly passion, directing her Abyssals and other agents to undermine the Bishop's plans, subvert his Shining Way, and compromise his most trusted servants and champions.

While **the Walker in Darkness**' ranging through the Scavenger Lands keeps him far from the Fortress of Crimson Ice, his travels through the Underworld have occasionally brought him to the Lover's court, and the two have long considered each other allies. Both are equally devoted to the Neverborn, and the Walker's temptations complement the Lover's ordeals, the velvet to her soulsteel. They've even made temporary diplomatic exchanges of their deathknights, fostering close relationships between their Abyssals.

The Lover's conquests of Northern shadowlands have made her many enemies. Undead princes-in-exile, like the grim warrior-queen **Petal Jaguar**, plot their vengeance against the Deathlord, while ghostly rebels, like the faceless **Prisoners of Keth**, conspire to undermine or overthrow her appointed rulers. The Lunar necromancer **Smiling Rat** has also posed an obstacle to her advance, though he's yet to discover her involvement.

Notable Followers

The Curate of the Desecrated Sacrament delights in the hypocrisy of the righteous. Presenting himself to princes, magnates, and priests as an ambassador of the Lover, he wins his way into their confidences — and, at times, their arms — so that he might expose their infidelities and improprieties. In contrast to his stern Deathlord, the Curate makes sport of such schemes, almost playful in the audacity with which he tempts fate. His vainglory hasn't gone unnoticed: the Mask of Winters has set in motion schemes to snare the Curate in his own game, compromising him as a double agent against the Lover. Once a Tear Eater shaman, **the Shadow of the Ash Arrow** is now the Lover's envoy to the Great Dead. Her blessing has made the Moonshadow a holy figure, acclaimed as one of the Great Dead. While the Lover avoids intervening in Tear Eater religion, the Shadow believes they can reconcile it with her teachings, portraying the Great Dead as divine emissaries of the Lover who willingly forgo freedom from desire

to guide their descendants. Converting the clans and their Great Dead to this new theology would be no mean feat, but it pales in comparison to persuading the Lover. For now, the Shadow plunders ruins in search of ancient scriptures and takes counsel with ghostly mystics and savants, drawing on teachings from many faiths to compose an irrefutable argument.

Blue Sigil is a petty aristocrat of the port city of Grieve, her jovial manner concealing her mocking cruelty. Like all who've drunk of the city's fabled White Elixir, she's become an undead revenant, unable to bear the sun's touch. She's sent envoys to the Fortress of Crimson Ice to beseech the Lover's favor, seeking the Deathlord's tutelage in necromancy to gain dominion over all Grieve's revenants — including its queen, Shield Glory. Her entreaties succeeded in catching the Deathlord's attention; now, the Lover tests Blue Sigil to see if the princeling is worthy of becoming her student, and perhaps one day her puppet-queen.

The Sorrow-Siren no longer remembers why he was cursed to become one of the Loveless; his mortal life is lost to him. He preyed on the lost and the lonely, offering the warmth of his campfire and the rattle of dice, but the Great Contagion slew the mortals he fed upon, dooming him to starvation and maddening isolation. In the depths of this agony, he heard the whispers of the dead titans; now, he is never alone. The Lover favors him, pleased to see him finally attain enlightenment. No longer does he hunger; instead, he evangelizes the Neverborn to both the living and the Loveless, teaching them to hear the whispers.

The Silver Prince

Also called the Bodhisattva Anointed by Dark Waters, the Silver Prince is the sagacious ghost-emperor of the Skullstone Archipelago. For centuries, he's ruled from his capital of Onyx on the isle of Darkmist, building a society according to his visionary ideals of perfection. He believes that his perfect culture reshaping Creation is an inevitability — however long it takes is of no consequence to him.

The Silver Prince hides his withered form behind opulent outfits, usually robes of cloth-of-silver and inky silk, and the opal death-mask that is the sign of his rule. His black hair, thin and wiry, rolls over his soulsteel-scale cape. He's a legendary administrator, orator, sailor, and philosopher, as well as a potent necromancer. He always carries one of his countless dread polearms but can summon others from his panoply with his mastery of Thousand Blades style, each equally storied in might.

The Prince's exploits prior to founding Skullstone are many, mythologized in epics and gospels. He brokered peace between the Clade of Innocents's plunderers and the Charnel Choir's howling masses; he slew the chthonic leviathan Ophidian Husk on an island raised from the Sea of Shadows; and he voyaged to the Far Shore in his legendary warship, Perfection's Reach, and returned to tell the tale — though what he saw there, he never speaks of.

In person, the Deathlord is urbane, gracious, and witty but incredibly vain, treating insults to his aesthetics, rule, or people as insults to himself. He's an irrepressible showoff with an air for the dramatic, calculating every remark, appearance, and action for maximum impact. He strolls nightly through Onyx's airy boulevards, patronizing necrotheaters and visiting important allies. He's never without his honor guard — a necromancer and seven ferocious ghost-heroes of Skullstone, rewarded for decades of exemplary service to their emperor in life. Though his public persona is carefully constructed, tales of his dark moods and the grievous penalties he's imposed for imagined sleights still endure. Where these are known, his people compose reams of apologia; their Silver Prince is free of cruelty and caprice, so these actions must have some loftier philosophy behind them, too subtle for lesser minds.

Agenda

Though he professes his loyalty to the Neverborn, the Deathlord has only ever served his own ambition of seeing all Creation remade to his grand design. Breaking the barriers between the living and the dead as he forged his ideal society served the slain ancients' will, as does the spread of Skullstone's culture, but it's for pride's sake that he does this, not piety.

The Prince expands his empire slowly, ensnaring Western polities in trade agreements and treaties that leave them economically dependent on Skullstone and receptive to the Sable Order. He sends sages and merchants as spies to aid in this process, as well as his lictors. Later, he reveals loopholes, clauses, and debts that force them into becoming protectorates. Governments become puppets, and native practices erode under migration from Skullstone and schools that teach Sable Order values and turn people against their traditions.

Unaligned Exalted have historically proven difficult for the Prince to manage, so he regards them warily.



Outcastes are treated respectfully but not deferentially, for they, too, number among the living. Their movements are monitored constantly by the Deathlord's agents; on occasion, he'll extend invitations to visit him. Rarely, he offers patronage to those who demonstrate great loyalty. Necromancers receive harsher treatment, pressed into service to the state if discovered. They're compensated lavishly but kept under scrutiny — and hired covertly — for what they can do to thanatocrats.

While a hundred matters concern him, he is a cunning delegator, apt at choosing the perfect vassal for every task. The majority of his personal attention now turns to undercutting the Western Trade Alliance with exclusivity deals, expanding the Black Fleet, making overtures of alliance to House V'neef or Peleps, and securing a stronger foothold in Stygia. Throughout these projects, he works to cultivate his deathknights, testing and rewarding each of them in turn as he integrates them into the perfect machine that is Skullstone.

The Sable Order

The perfect civilization must be perfect in all things: perfectly moral, perfectly educated, perfectly organized, perfectly ruled. The state ideology of Skullstone,

called the Sable Order, provides the basis for these things. It stresses that the basis for this perfection is harmony between living and dead, in which all know their station and perform their duties. Thanatocrats, those sainted ghosts deemed worthy by Black Judges, guide the living; the living execute their will and live by the Sable Order, and are in turn attended by zombies. The Silver Prince presides over it all as paragon, shepherd, and emperor, ensuring the harmony of Skullstone.

The Sable Order stresses many virtues: pride in one's ancestors, reverence for the dead and the Silver Prince, thinking logically and clearly, bold passions, filial piety, self-sacrifice, and hospitality. These permeate Skullstone culture at all levels. Murals depict black tides and sails, the moment of death before Black Judges, and the Prince descending Mount Vashti with all the world cupped in his hands, imparting the Sable Order to waiting Skullfolk. Folklore and plays feature romances tragically split or sweetly preserved by the Black Judges, disrespect of dead elders leading to karmic misfortune, and the civilizing of the ignorant.

While the Silver Prince is its originator and arbiter, Sable Order values and philosophy have been refined

over the centuries by countless hands. Seven texts comprise the traditional core of the philosophy, collectively referred to as the Seven Sagacious Sources. The Silver Prince wrote the first three and annotated the last four; they're taught as basic reading to all Skullfolk. Countless novels, histories, and philosophical or alchemical treatises also comprise a loose, influential canon.

More broadly, Sable Order thought stresses that Skullstone is the final form of civilization itself, its ultimate moral and intellectual evolution. All citizens are equal in Skullstone because all are equally able to lead virtuous lives and ascend in death. The Silver Prince, highest exemplar of the Order, revises it as he steers the ship of Skullstone into the darkness of eternity; in the fullness of time, all cultures will fall before Skullstone's perfection, as certain as death.

Deathknights

The Silver Prince loves his deathknights the way a horse racer loves his prized stallions: their success is his own, each victory swelling his pride and reputation. As his Chosen, they're esteemed as thanatocrats, enjoying immense celebrity in Skullstone. Skullfolk consider it a privilege to meet their lord's deathknights and their duty to accommodate them, though they don't do so mindlessly. Abyssals are gifted lavish estates in Onyx or Stygia, attended by zombie servants and invited to galas and necrotheaters; their fashion sparks trends, their affairs are torrid gossip.

The Prince offers tutelage in administration, captaincy, courtly graces, and ethics, always imparting Sable Order philosophy through his lessons. Those seeking instruction in other matters can learn from expert tutors, the finest Skullstone has to offer. He makes little mention of death's chivalry, trusting that his deathknights will intuit what they need to know of it from the Sable Order's teachings — even where his own philosophy diverges from the will of the Neverborn. He's confident that, in time, his deathknights will become true believers in the Sable Order; he enjoys debating the topic with them, relishing how they make him refine his arguments. Whether he would be so magnanimous in defeat remains unknown.

Though careful to let them pursue their own interests, the Deathlord expects service on behalf of Skullstone. Abyssals quell unrest in protectorates, negotiate trade deals and treaties, slay mighty foes, and explore the Underworld for lost islands and treasures. He regularly loans out his ship Perfection's Reach to favored

deathknights, whose name is known in every port of the Underworld. Among their standing orders is to open and expand shadowlands whenever practical, to lengthen Skullstone's grasp mile by inevitable mile.

Thanatocrats fear and resent Abyssals, wary of what they, like necromancers, can do to the dead. But they also see opportunity in courting them. Deathknights are plied with gifts and offers of favor-trading by elites seeking to curry favor with the Prince or make a powerful ally.

The Crown of Eternity

Above the city of Onyx on the slopes of Mount Vashti looms the Silver Prince's seat of power, the Crown of Eternity. The palace-manse is the ultimate triumph of Sable Order aesthetics. Three cavernous wings, carved from basalt and black marble with façades of silver filigree, form a vast horseshoe that cradles the palace grounds: the Hall of Blackest Nights where the advisory Elder and Younger Councils meet, sprawling rock gardens, and various architectural and statuary marvels. The Crown's interior is opulent beyond compare, artfully arranged displays of wealth and fine arts adorning every chamber and hall.

The Prince rules from the eastern wing, his throne room taking up over half the space, with the rest devoted to archives and the treasury. Zombie couriers and ghostly bureaucrats scurry back and forth from here and the Hall, carrying communiques and royal edicts. The northern wing is a decadent honeycomb of parlors, spas, and art galleries; here, deathknights and honored guests dwell in splendor in the only wing that's ever heated. The southern wing is reserved for the Prince himself, consisting of his personal treasure-house, library, and the manse's heart. He uses it as a focus to spread the Skullstone shadowland at an infinitesimal pace, absorbing outlying shadowlands into his domain.

This wing also contains the field-sized hall housing the Circumscription: an enormous, three-dimensional map of Creation, charting its nations in a bewitching pattern of paper, ink and twine. The Circumscription is incomplete and sorely out of date in parts; the Prince is always eager for new maps or stories of far-off places to update it. He considers policy and decisions here, gleaning magical insight in its tangle, and even more so in places submerged in shadowlands.

The Crown of Eternity was built at the dawn of history by a wraith-king whose name is lost, deliberately erased by the Prince. This king numbered among the

first Exalted ghosts to return to Creation, ruling for many long years. He vanished before the First Age's end, leaving the palace empty until the Prince claimed it; the subject of his reign and ultimate fate fascinates the Deathlord endlessly. Some whisper one day, he shall return from the Far Shores, a thought which the Prince finds preposterous even as he quietly prepares for it.

Adherents of Note

The Knight of Ghosts and Shadows is among Skullstone's foremost ambassadors, a Northern warrior-poet and necromancer who serves as the Prince's envoy. Their gentle melancholy aura, intricately tragic plays, and androgynous fashion have won them admirers in Onyx and abroad in the West and Underworld. The Cerenye family courts them by sponsoring performances of their work, seeing the Moonshadow Caste as a way to bend the Prince's ear; thus far, the Knight is happy to oblige them, demonstrating blatant favoritism that vexes other High Families. They were Chosen by the Lover but defected to the Silver Prince for greater luxury in Onyx. In their incessant favor trading and networking, the Knight sells the least of the Lover's secrets to interested parties; should the luxuries slow or their new liege ask too much, they might start selling the Prince's secrets too.

As admiral of the Black Fleet, **the Drowner of Saints** has put down spirit-court rebellions, slain behemoths on the Sea of Shadows, and smashed pirate ships to splinters with his signature grand goremaul, the Weight of Oblivion. He's reserved, taciturn, and grim, a seasoned commander and sailor; his smiles are rare, revealing shark teeth that bespeak his God-Blooded heritage. But inside, the Dusk Caste burns with hatred against the Azurite Empire (**Across The Eight Directions**, p. 285) for a life of bondage mining iron in the Finreefs. He dreams of provoking war with Azure, more for revenge than justice – his broad back bears a lattice of lash scars. His loyalty to the Silver Prince, born out of gratitude, has thus far kept his planned vengeance simmering, but as war threatens to break out, the Drowner may finally have the opportunity he's longed for.

When pirate **Moray Darktide** Exalted as a Dawn Caste Solar, the Silver Prince expected a challenge to his authority. To his shock, the orphan from Port Jyna sailed to Onyx to declare his loyalty to Skullstone and unwavering belief in the righteousness of the Sable Order. Since then, Captain Darktide and his Shades have become legends as Black Fleet privateers, clashing with

Sea Lords, stopping piracy, and passing out the spoils of ocean exploration to the downtrodden. Moray is the very ideal of a Skullfolk captain: dark, handsome, quick with his orichalcum daiklave, and quicker to smile. Quietly, he's cynical about human nature stemming from a rough childhood, but this only fuels his zeal. For all that the Prince is fond of Moray, the Deathlord is wary, too; Moray's heart is with Skullstone itself, not him. Currently, Moray's ire is reserved for the corruption of the High Families and colonial viceroys, but the Silver Prince has him watched at all times, wary of the day that changes.

Grim Admonition is chief among the Prince's lictors, the Ghost-Blooded secret police in service to the Ministry of Harmonious Division. She wears the pewter half-mask that is a lictor's badge of office, its brow marked with a symbol sacred to the Prince. A skilled infiltrator in her own right, she has spent her thirty years as chief personally apprenticing dozens of lictors who have now risen to prominence among the order. The Prince allows this because Grim Admonition never weights the dice for her apprentices – if they succeed, it is because she has a peerless cunning for cultivating talent and discretion. Her inquisitions into the affairs of thanatocrats have left her with many puissant enemies in Skullstone, and she now surveys her fellow lictors for her successor – and also turns her gaze upon the Prince's deathknights for dark horse candidates.

Allies and Enemies

The Silver Prince cares little for his oath to the Neverborn, only pretending at piety. He enjoys games of intrigue against the **Black Heron** in Stygia, appreciating her refinement and occasionally working with her. He considers **the Bishop, Lover, and Walker** insufferable boors and **the Dowager** a pitiable monster.

The Prince has a measure of respect for **the Lion** and **the Eye**, admiring the former's will and the latter's devotion to craft. And he utterly despises **the Mask**, viewing him as a pretentious upstart copying the Prince without half his grace. Their rivalry manifests in wars of petty slights and one-upmanship in Stygian high society.

The Bloody Poppies are a loose web of Skullstone merchants, Black Fleet officers, and viceroys who seek to overthrow the Elder and Younger Councils and force the Prince to acquiesce to unrestrained profit and conquest. Members include **Gnashing Wolf**, the one-eyed priest-crimelord of Remonstrance, **Shefnan**

Amhala, a volatile arts-patron, and spice magnate **Vitya Sijapuros**, who resents that she doesn't lead her family.

The Bloody Poppies seek a figurehead for their coup in **Ishkel Menjaro**. Granddaughter of Anzajji Menjaro, First Seat of the Elder Council, Ishkel was a Black Fleet admiral for centuries before leveraging her connections to become viceroy of Murrine, a once-wealthy archipelago where she has cultivated her own private army. Though beholden to no one, she remains a true believer in the Sable Order and isn't averse to spreading it via swordpoint if she thinks it in her best interest.

The Walker in Darkness

The Walker in Darkness is a warrior-priest of the Neverborn and a mercenary general, selling the services of his dreaded Company of Martial Sinners across the Scavenger Lands — and occasionally further afield when particularly delicious opportunities arise. A creeping shadowland follows ever at his heels, as does his familiar and constant companion, the six-headed barghest Duke Lu. He often appears as a tall, comely man with severe orange eyes, long ashen hair, and faintly blue-tinged skin. He wears priestly robes of crimson and black, donning a soulsteel cuirass over them before battle.

The Walker seeks out audiences with mortal princes across the Scavenger Lands, plying them with tempting bargains, a silver tongue, and his alluring form. All the while, the Company stands ready just beyond the city's walls, a massed force of corpse-soldiers, murderous wraiths, and necromantic abominations. Some among the living bargain for the Company's services, while others yield to the Walker's other temptations: cures to fatal ailments, treasures and prodigies of the Underworld, and everlasting youth. The Deathlord never fails to uphold his promises, but he's endlessly devious, snaring victims in pacts whose finer details elude their understanding.

Though much of the Walker's danger lies in his words, he's also a legendary general, leading the Company from the frontlines and a Void Circle necromancer. He wields Arm of Shades Below, a grand grimcleaver that rots the flesh of those wounded by it, and the soulsteel bow Hope Refuted, a gift from the Lover. His devotion to the Neverborn has led him to seek out knowledge of their unholy rites and other mysteries of the Labyrinth, secrets that other Deathlords would go to great lengths to acquire.

Agenda

The Walker sees the triumph of the Neverborn whenever ambition, pride, or fear of death drive the living to accept his damning pacts. He laughs when the so-called righteous abandon their ideals and call it necessity, when kingdoms decay and collapse as princelings war over the scraps of power he's offered them. The living can't help but succumb to venality, hypocrisy, and self-degradation. What value, then, can life have? Such are the teachings of his obscure faith.

The Walker sees death's chivalry as a religious creed, offering up his worship through obedient service to his masters. Yet he has no real desire to see Creation destroyed. The realm of the living offers him foes to battle, princes to beguile, and fools to snare in his soul-binding pacts; how could he give up his greatest pleasures? He knows himself a hypocrite and makes strange, painful penance to the Neverborn to expiate his guilt.

The Walker took no part in the conquest of Stygia but insinuated himself among the conquering Signatories of the Stygian Pact soon after their triumph. He greets their envoys and ambassadors in his embassy-manse, the Pyramid of Venomous Malachite, and has come to exercise more power over the Signatories than many realize.

Stygia holds little else of interest to the Walker, save for the intriguing mysteries of the Dual Monarchy, but he prizes his foothold nonetheless. It offers him leverage in diplomatic dealings with other Underworld powers and leaves him well-positioned to undermine the Mask of Winters and the First and Forsaken Lion, fellow Deathlords whose impiety has incurred the Walker's disfavor.

The Company of Martial Sinners

The Company of Martial Sinners is a holy army of the Neverborn, a mercenary warband of the dead sworn to the Walker's service. Some are undead monstrosities created by the Deathlord's necromancy; others are Labyrinthine horrors, unworldly beasts, and elder nightmares bound to his service by pact and spell. Then there are mercenary ghosts, Ghost-Blooded champions, necromancers, mortal soldiers of fortune, and the occasional outcaste or Exigent. Anyone who proves their prowess in battle and swears loyalty to the Deathlord may join the Company.

The Company's members take masks and titles that reflect their reason for serving the Walker. The silver-masked Avaricious Sinners' motives are purely mercenary. The green-masked Gluttonous Sinners fight to sate their monstrous hungers. The crimson-masked Wrathful Sinners exult in violence and martial glory. The golden-masked Vainglorious Sinners serve only their own pride and ambition. Above all others are the black-masked Sainted Sinners, sworn to obey the Neverborn above all else.

The Company takes to the field for anyone who pays the Walker's price, whether defending kingdoms from hostile neighbors, invading and occupying territories as a prelude to annexation, or besieging city-states as a final means of diplomacy. The Martial Sinners are terrifying to behold in battle, though their devotion to death's chivalry lends a strange restraint to their actions. The Walker's shadowland engulfs the battlefield, loosing war-ghosts and stranding the living after sunset. Many who've hired the Company have come to regret their choice as they survey the aftermath of battle.

Deathknights

The Walker impresses upon his Chosen the importance of their knightly role, emphasizing death's chivalry in every aspect of his Abyssals' tutelage. He likewise exhorts them to uphold their vow of world-murder, rankling at his own hypocrisy. Yet he also seeks to subtly give them reasons to cling to Creation as he does — love, revenge, hedonism, curiosity, or whatever other motivations seem suited to an Abyssal's personality.

The Walker does not pact with his deathknights; beguiling and ensnaring his own Chosen would offend the Neverborn, by his view. He's a generous patron, offering them necromantic tutelage, their pick of the Company's plunder, secret knowledge of the Labyrinth, and positions of authority within the Company of Martial Sinners or as his envoys to the Scavenger Lands or Stygia.

The Walker's deathknights hold the highest rank in the Company of Martial Sinners, serving as the Deathlord's champions and honor guard. No matter an Abyssal's talents, her prowess has a place in the Company, whether dueling outcastes and Exigents, infiltrating enemy ranks, forging artifacts and terrible siege weapons, raising undead hordes, or negotiating terms of surrender. But the Walker's interests are far-ranging; he might send a Circle to sabotage a diplomatic summit in Stygia, seek out a First Age necromancer's

crypt-manse lost beneath the Burning Sands, or palaver with faerie princes of the Wyld.

The Ebon Spires of Pyrron

The Walker in Darkness claims no dominion in Creation or the Underworld. His seat of power lies in the eerie dream-realm of the Ebon Spires of Pyrron. This shadowland follows in his wake as his dominion's outermost edge; no matter how far the Walker roams, the Spires are always with him. When his travels bring him to cities or kingdoms, those within dream of basalt walls and crystal spires rising beyond them. Those mortally wounded in battle see feverish visions of the domain's toppled columns, crumbling towers, and shattered monuments.

Here, the Walker has raised his citadel atop what was once a holy place of the Underworld, now desecrated by his foul necromancies and forbidden blood rites. He takes his leisure among the Ebon Spires, sipping the finest of the Scavenger Lands' wines or admiring a rose plucked from a prince's garden as he surveys the ruins of paradise.

The Walker may invite guests into his dreaming dominion, but there are other ways into the Ebon Spires. Those who see them in dreams, hallucinations, or other visions may seek them out, seeming to fade and eventually vanish as they reappear within the dream-realm. Few are the mortals who've made this voyage and survived, though the Walker's been known to favor the persistent and the cunning with dark blessings or a position within his Company. The way is easier for the dead, who may simply pass into it through the Walker's shadowland.

Allies and Enemies

The Walker judges harshly those Deathlords he deems insufficiently devoted to the Neverborn. He considers **the First and Forsaken Lion** a traitor and **the Eye and Seven Despairs** a heretic and has grave reservations about **the Silver Prince's** sincerity. His most personal enmity is against **the Mask of Winters**, whose pragmatic approach to death's chivalry offends the Walker as a hollow mockery of devotion. As both Deathlords have concentrated their dominions in the Scavenger Lands, they've had many interactions over the centuries, giving this ideological disagreement time to blossom into spiteful hatred.

The Walker's closest ally is the pious **Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears**, and his deathknights have, at times,

worked closely alongside hers. While he rarely interacts with **the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible**, given the distance between them, he has a great respect for the theologian-Deathlord, but any meaningful alliance would be complicated by the Lover's rivalry with him. He admires **the Black Heron's** murderous service to the Neverborn, but not enough to ally with the politically diminished Deathlord. **The Dowager of the Irreverent Vulgate** is by far the dead titans' most faithful servant, yet the Walker pities her more than he admires her. He remembers who she was before the Neverborn recreated her and mourns her as already gone.

Some in **the Mortician's Order**, the ruling body of Sijan, court the Walker as a patron. They are tempted by his offers of forbidden death-lore and necromantic power. Others seek the Company's both living and dead, fearful that the Time of Tumult may see the holy ground of the City of the Dead despoiled by war. The young Solar **Jiunan Nightwarden**, expelled from the Mortician's Order after he balked at an abhorrent tribute offered to the Walker, has sworn to defend the shadowland from the Deathlord and his forces; the Walker, in turn, has sent messages warning of the Solar Anathema to Immaculates across the Scavenger Lands.

Notable Followers

A cosseted aristocrat, **the Intinctor of the Worm's Chalice's** inexperience and foolhardy arrogance proved his end in his first real battle — but since his Exaltation, the Walker has honed him into a living weapon, tutoring him in arts better suited to his strengths. Now, the Dusk Caste is among the Company's paramount war-necromancers, boastfully narrating his triumphs to his undead scribe Phalange. Esteemed as he is among the Company, his vainglory may yet prove his undoing. While the Walker is cautious in choosing his battles, carefully weighing diplomatic implications, the ferocious Intinctor is easily provoked into ill-considered battle.

War made an orphan of **the Saint Unburdened by Pernicious Flesh** and a blighted shadowland of their home. Their upbringing by the shades of family members long dead taught them the value of ancestor cults to both ghosts and their descendants; now, the Midnight Caste is patron and defender to such cults throughout the Scavenger Lands. This arrangement suits the Walker for now; he values the alliances the Saint has forged and the intermingling of the living and the dead. But in the end, the ancestor cults are but a tool for the Deathlord; should he sacrifice or betray

them, it may turn the Saint against him.

Duke Lu is the Walker's familiar, a six-headed barghest that stands taller than the Deathlord and is counted as one of the great beasts of the Underworld. For millennia, he has devoured the corpses of gods, monsters, and the Exalted, seeking some elusive mystery found only in rotting flesh. Such feasting has battered his spirit and Essence; as the Deathlords are to other ghosts, so is Duke Lu to the Underworld's canine shades. The Walker won the barghest-king's friendship, defending him against a Wyld Hunt sent to end the beast's rampaging through the Scavenger Lands; the centuries have tempered this into unbreakable loyalty. In battle, Duke Lu's favored place is by the Walker's side, but he also leads the Gluttonous Sinners, who offer up the choicest morsels of the battlefield to their commander.

Avaricious Sinner Czoki and **Sainted Sinner Jakun** are emissaries for the Company, wandering the Scavenger Lands and the nearby Underworld to recruit new members, spread propaganda of the Company's triumphs, and negotiate contracts or terms of surrender that don't merit a personal appearance from the Walker. Czoki, a ribald Ghost-Blooded swordsman, handles matters of coin and speaks to the self-interest and base desires of his audience. Jakun, a hungry ghost enlightened by centuries of meditation, spreads the Walker's creed and makes appeals to morality, ideology, and politics. The two are lovers more often than not and know each other's every quirk and foible; they occasionally make a game of exchanging masks and passing themselves off as the other.

Other Deathlords

Nine Deathlords are known throughout the Underworld, but this may not be a complete telling of their names and natures. Storytellers and players are explicitly invited to add to their number, inventing new Deathlords of their own design to serve as Abyssal patrons, allies of desperation, or world-ending antagonists.

Integrating a new Deathlord begins with either creating space for them in the current tableau of the Underworld or explaining why they've been absent from its politics at large.

Making a Deathlord an established part of the setting often requires moving pieces around the board to create space for them. Where are they operating out of in the Underworld and in Creation? Which Deathlords and other powerbrokers are in that same region? What

DEATHLORDS AND ABYSSAL CHARMS

Each Deathlord exerts a terrible gravity upon the Essence of the Underworld, embodying and defining major archetypes for their deathknights to emulate (and, in time, surpass). Abyssal Charms sometimes draw on these themes, such as Resistance reflecting the torture-armor that constrains the First and Forsaken Lion, or Sail's reputation-spreading Charms which are rooted in the influence of the Silver Prince.

Inventing a wholly new Deathlord opens additional thematic space for Abyssal Charms. Some Abilities currently include influence from only a single Deathlord, making them particularly fruitful areas to explore: Archery, Brawl, Investigation, Larceny, Melee, Ride, Resistance, Sail, and Thrown.

Storytellers and players wishing to design new Abyssal Charms can also innovate new Deathlords, with or without fleshing them out entirely. A player developing a Charm to slowly consume a foe's power might suggest a vague rumor about a Deathlord in the form of a parasitic fungal-wraith, which they can develop further as an inspiration for additional Charms or as a character in the chronicle itself.

are their relations like? What have they accomplished over the centuries — from projects as grand as the Bishop's cultivation of the Shining Way to small victories such as the Heron's consolidation of major Stygian crime syndicates?

In contrast, there are many reasons why a Deathlord might only just be stepping into the spotlight. They might have their redoubt in a particularly distant or isolated location, operate through a puppet-state, or else disguise themselves as a lesser power to deflect unwanted attention. When they reveal themselves and take to the stage, the question becomes: Who knew beforehand? How have they prepared? And what opportunity finally provoked them?

OPPORTUNITIES

While the details of any additional or alternative Deathlords are left firmly for each play group to decide for themselves, there are some ripe opportunities that are worth mentioning:

- The Dreaming Sea, in all its eldritch mystery, might be a fruitful place for a Deathlord's domain in Creation. The region is home to all manner of ancient powers and ruined empires that could serve as a smokescreen for the Deathlord's unholy power or provide ample opportunities to consolidate resources.
- The Blessed Isle was once the greatest capital of the First Age, and perhaps there is a Deathlord who will not abandon it despite the challenges such a domain provokes. They would contend with the region's lack of shadowlands and the might of its Immaculate exorcists, forcing them to act with either infinite subtlety and restraint or else to robe themselves in false piety, subverting the Shogunate and Realm with heretical cults or offering ambitious Dragon-Blooded ghosts the opportunity to cling to existence in exchange for their service.
- A reclusive Deathlord might be trapped within their domain, either by the senseless thrashing of the Neverborn or the efforts of heroic mortals, ghosts, or Exalted. An imprisoned Deathlord might have spent centuries recuperating within a cursed sepulcher, spreading their influence within the nightmares of surrounding polities, or weaving a terrible geomantic corruption that will see them released from their cage with catastrophic effects for the Underworld and Creation alike. The terrible being beneath Capstone is one candidate for such a story, with the help of their cultists in nearby Darkheart.
- Existing ghostly potentates may be "promoted" to Deathlord status for a particular chronicle. This provides more material to work with in conceptualizing their themes, ambitions, and goals, which can be scaled up to afford them greater influence on the Underworld and Creation. The Signatories of the Stygian Pact (p. 88) are prime candidates for this, as are other ghostly power-brokers like the Sovereign of Chains (p. 391).
- While the Deathlords are the ghosts of the Usurpation — among Creation's deadliest events — others may have pactured centuries after. A powerful Dragon-Blooded or Sidereal ghost slain as part of the Great Contagion might have sold their soul to the Neverborn for power even as they plot revenge against the Dowager, or a

mighty Lunar hewn down as part of the Fair Folk invasion might now have set their sights on spreading the calcifying touch of death across the Wyld, leading their deathknights in a crusade that risks setting off a new invasion.

- The Exalted weren't the only beings touched by the Usurpation. Many of Creation's non-human civilizations fell en masse during the protracted war that followed the initial strike, and others, like the ghosts of certain powerful Niobrarians,

were conscripted into the Usurpation as participants even in death. Perhaps the rare ghost of a Dragon King emperor, grieving the ill-spent lives of their fallen people, now sits atop a throne of bone and crystal, plotting revenge on humanity and its Exalted paragons. One of the Niobrarians — perhaps even the towering wraith of a fallen Spoken — might also have taken a Deathlord's mantle, dredging the corpses of their kin from where the sea has long preserved them before breathing the gift of unlife into them.

Waves lapped gently at the sands as the Mariner of the Final Shore pulled their skiff ashore. They'd sensed this place from afar and directed the crew of their ship, the *Stonefish*, to sail toward it, but the Mariner had known as soon as they saw the mists shrouding the island that they needed to explore it alone. It was a tug they felt sometimes, like a strong current pulling them toward a forgotten sea. Thus far, it hadn't pulled them under.

Above, the sky was full of cold blue stars. The Mariner had known Creation's fixed constellations since they were a child and had wondered at the inconsistent firmament of the Underworld when they sailed through misty shadowlands. Later, they'd learned other methods of navigation from ghost sailors when they took work on ships, but the Mariner sometimes still looked for those stars they'd named the Shining Lady, the Cat's Eye, or the Beacon.

The Mariner trudged through fine black sand toward the tree line, following the tracks of some great beast that had dragged its belly and tail along the beach to bask awhile before returning to the sea. As they passed through clusters of spindly trees, they startled a flock of azure-winged birds that were feasting on the carcass of a deer. The birds took to the skies, croaking the names of the Mariner's dead loved ones.

As they walked, the Mariner kept expecting to encounter the island's ghosts. Who dwelled here, among the streams filled with sweet water and the forest flush with game? The animals here were both those native to Creation and creatures of the Underworld. Wild boar rooted through the underbrush while a pack of barghests roamed close by. Raitons snatched mice in their razor-sharp beaks. The Abyssal wondered if this was a place like their home, drifting from one world to another. Perhaps its living inhabitants had grown weary of the uncertainty and set sail for firmer shores.

The Underworld had certainly asserted itself here. Black vines snaked along the ground and twined around the trees, choking them like garrotes. Bright purple flowers dripped from them, releasing the heady scent of blood and rot. Some had eyes that watched the Mariner as they passed. Others had needle-sharp teeth, and strained towards them, eager for a taste of flesh. When the wind sighed through the forest, its voice was near-human, and it carried the sounds of a funeral dirge the Mariner half remembered.

They followed the stream to a place where the forest ended, and a sheer rocky cliff gave them a view of a ruin below. It stretched out for miles, the remains of a sprawling city. Its walls had long since fallen, the rubble marking the city's boundaries now overgrown with those brilliant purple blooms. Carrion birds nested in the towers that still stood, and along the wide boulevard where once there must have been grand festivals, a pack of phantom horses roamed.

It was then the Mariner realized that they'd been wrong about the presence of ghosts. The island was the ghost. Now that they knew it, they felt it surrounding them, felt its ancient death and the weight of its former vitality. That sense of being pulled on a current came back. In another life, they'd been present for its demise. Had they done this? Had they been the one to wrench it from the world, or had they been its protector and failed in their duty as a Lawgiver? The star they thought of as the Beacon — a star they hadn't seen since childhood — shone bright over a building with its marble dome still mostly intact. Perhaps they'd find answers within.

Heart aching with another lifetime's loss, the Mariner sought a way down.





Chapter Three:

The Underworld

The Underworld should not be.

Before the first ancient was slain in the Divine Usurpation, there were only the cleansing waters of the River Lethe and the formless Sea of Shadows. The fallen ancients who became the Neverborn birthed the Underworld in their agonies, shattering the orderly mechanisms that had, until that time, ensured that souls passed from one life to the next in a gentle and uninterrupted cycle. The first isles and continents rose from their corpses, vast landscapes built from a foundation of grief.

Since that time, the Underworld has accreted itself, islands rising and shifting according to the enigmatic Old Laws of death and the tectonic forces of living memory and ritual. Ghosts strand themselves upon its bleak shores to seize hold of a semblance of life. Some luxuriate in palatial splendor, sated by the reverence of grateful descendants; others dwell in wretched after-lives of toil or torment.

This is the Underworld: Gravestone kingdoms and their undead tyrants, vistas of heartbreaking beauty and heart-seizing terror, passions which blaze hot enough to burn even in death... and yet doomed to diminish in the fullness of time. Here are told the stories of the dead — ghostly potentates, corpse-behemoths, and the Abyssal champions who topple thrones or forge undying empires.

Denizens of the Underworld

The Underworld is a dead land, but not an empty one. It is home to dead beings of manifold variety, potency, and age, from the weary ghost of yesterday's slaughter to nameless millennial shades, dead before history's oldest tome was writ.

Ghosts

To understand the Underworld, one must understand the ghosts who inhabit it. It is a truth known across

Creation that death is not always the end. Most mortals may go their entire lives without seeing a single shade, but not a one doubts that ghosts walk the world at night, in the shadows, or in the lands of the dead.

NATURE

A ghost is not the person it seems to be; it is a remnant, a reflection, a relic. Most mortal souls pass from life into reincarnation without leaving a ghost, but some tarry, resisting the pull of Lethe. It may be that their death was sudden, violent, *wrong*; other times, they may be tethered to undeath by the call of duty, a quest for personal enlightenment, or a lover's fierce desire to express their literally undying feelings one last time. While some deaths may predispose a soul to cling to existence and identity, there are no guarantees — sometimes a soul unjustly murdered passes easily to its repose, and other times a contented farmer's shade lingers to enact a centuries-long pantomime of their laboring life.

The term *ghost* usually refers specifically to the shade left from the tattered remnants of a being's higher soul, which is the seat of their memory and identity. Remnants of the lower soul are instead *hungry ghosts*; rather than being drawn to the Underworld, they usually lodge in their own corpse, emerging at night to feed their mindless appetites for carnage.

A ghost is not made of flesh and blood but of *corpus*: spiritual matter made tangible in the Underworld. In Creation, ghostly corpus is intangible and often vulnerable to the sun. Those who travel the lands of the living do so at night and, even then, require magic to interact with the physical world, either to solidify their corpus or to possess a corpse or host.

Newly formed ghosts typically resemble their living selves, though many have exaggerated deathmarks that accentuate the manner of their passing. A drowned man may drip forever with brine and trail clutching seaweed, a mother slain by fever might radiate heat like a bonfire, and a hanged murderer might find the noose around their neck as much a part of their spiritual body as any other appendage.

GHOSTS AND SUNLIGHT

Sunlight is suffocating for most ghosts, inflicting a -2 penalty to all actions. Some, like hungry ghosts (Exalted, p. 503), are more vulnerable, scoured away over a course of seconds, minutes, or hours.

These changes tend to grow more notable as a ghost waxes in age and power. Whether they elongate into willowy giants, twist their faces in the snarling rictus of a jaguar-devil, or replace their skin with strips of talismanic paper, the dead take many forms to emphasize what they hold fast to from life — and what they have already surrendered to oblivion. Others don masks to replace faces eroded by time or to signal that they have moved beyond their mortal life and have claimed a new identity in death.

Ghosts do not have the same physical needs as the living, but they have powerful memories of those needs. A ghost who goes without food will not starve, but her corpus may wither as hunger becomes her all-consuming thought; the same is true of water, and of sleep, and of connection, and of all the other mortal necessities. When the ghost-farmers of long-vanished Ptar harvest grain alongside the Styx to make bread and beer for Stygian worthies, it is not because starvation will unmake them, but because the lucky ghosts who consume these will derive pleasure from texture and taste, and alleviate the memory of hunger.

PASSIONS

None endure death's cold touch unchanged. It is a simple truth that when one dies, things are left behind — memories, feelings, and ambitions fade and ebb. What endures in a ghost are often only the most powerful aspects of their identity, now magnified by the loss of lesser drives: A ghost who clings to the thread of revenge might retain her wrath but lose much of her joy, while one fettered to existence by a bodyguard's vow of eternal service might forget other oaths, or the pride of fatherhood, or his skill at poetry. Few ghosts are wholly without nuance, for death is likely to leave bits and pieces that the ghost must fit together into a new identity, but they are always changed.

Many ghosts lose themselves in emulation of the patterns they once lived by: masons raise buildings of unearthly stone, vintners bottle wines tinged with beautiful regret, artisans and performers hone their

craft, and bureaucrats file truly ceaseless paperwork in the offices of Underworldly brokers. Others lose themselves to whichever passions dominate their patchwork identity — a humble farmer slain by a callous warlord might become a vengeful assassin, defining himself through a single moment of pain, blood, and regret.

Regardless of what anchors a ghost to their unlifed, these passions give them shape and purpose. Most will seek any opportunity to indulge themselves, transforming Underworld societies into operatic passion plays. A courtier's ghost *needs* to gossip and intrigue, and a warrior's *needs* to test themselves against superior opponents. These urges are stronger even than the echoes of their physical needs; given a choice between sating passion or hunger, most ghosts will gladly choose passion.

VENERATION

Cultures throughout Creation know to honor the dead. Rites protect against the rise of hungry ghosts, speed ancestors to peaceful reincarnation, or fortify ghosts with phantom wealth and power. Sacrifices symbolic of worldly goods — paper treasures, clay coins, and costume armor — often manifest in the Underworld as valuable gifts, made luxurious by the sweet reverence of the living.

These offerings manifest subtly and irregularly, thought to be dictated by the interplay of the Old Laws and the Calendar of Setesh. Most ghosts can expect sacrifices to appear somewhere between a day and a week after they are rendered; those with homes often find offerings simply appearing in their cupboards and storehouses, while those without often wake from slumber with new tokens arrayed around them or secreted on their person.

A meager offering of half-vinegar wine at a family shrine may sometimes be richer than even the finest vintages of Kesundang when the sacrifice is imbued with difficulty, sincerity, and meaning. Some of that quality extends to the work of ghostly artisans; prayer flows through their hands into the swords they forge and the bread they bake, granting surpassing and even supernatural quality.

The greatest of the gifts of the living are *grave goods*, which are interred alongside the dead in their original funeral. These grave goods appear with the ghost at the moment of their awakening and are bound to them by the Old Laws; they cannot be stolen except by powerful magic, though they may be traded, gifted, or taken



by force under threat of destruction. Humble offerings given with care and ritual can sometimes become wondrous panoplies, from ever-burning candles to teapots that steep their brew in the taste of daydreams. It is not unknown for artifacts and similar treasures to emerge from particularly generous, well-mourned, or powerful tombs, and many an undead hero or ruler's ascent to greater glory after death has been aided by grave good wonders they could have never wielded in life.

Ancestor-cults are common throughout Creation. The gods are often distant and strange in their motivations, but powerful ancestral ghosts are viscerally human, even when distorted by death. These cults may arise when a beloved matriarch becomes powerful in death through prayer or when such a ghost rises to power themselves and offers their patronage to descendants. In the best cases, these cults offer meaning to ghosts and protection to their worshippers; in the worst, they become extortion rackets or dysfunctional families where the long-dead exact the standards of another age upon great-grandchildren without allowance for context or change.

MAGIC

Ghosts are creatures of deathly Essence, and their strange magics are spoken of throughout Creation.

Savants sometimes speak of these powers as the *spirit arts*, a catch-all term for mystical abilities both natural and learned. They may lay blessings and curses, change their forms, glimpse dire prophecies, or spew forth pyreflame, to name only a handful of miracles. These spirit arts often arise from a ghost's personality, nature, and the manner of their death, growing more potent and esoteric as they refine their Essence.

Some paths to ghostly power echo those of the living: training, meditation, and secret lore may all deepen a ghost's spiritual potency. Others grow strong on prayer and sacrifice, or steal power from ghosts bound into their service, or conduct blasphemous rites to the Neverborn. Still others defy explanation, singular prodigies who rise from the grave with inexplicable powers.

Ghosts of the Exalted and other powerful beings often retain vestiges of their former gifts. These are not their lost Charms, but dark reflections of them: A Solar may glow with the wan light of a paler sun, while his Lunar mate's ghost flits between a dozen haunted shapes. They are far from the only ghosts of great and terrible power, however, and those who lived and died as mortals sometimes begrudge the ghosts of the Chosen,

GRAVE GOODS AND TOMB ROBBING

Plundering a grave is perilous, even for a pious descendant. Taking a grave good from its resting place endangers its echo in the Underworld, and ghosts can often sense those who disturb their resting places. Many cultures which inter powerful weapons and tools also develop rites to mitigate these situations.

In the icy climes of Lastlight, warriors offer their blood and swear oaths in an ancestor's name so a barrow-blade may be brought forth to serve the next generation. The women of Ajatmir contact their grandmothers in psychedelic trances, begging for the use of enshrined jade armor for a particular quest. These borrowers sometimes become the true owners of an artifact when an ancestor passes into Lethe; other times, those who wish to borrow a direlance of particular renown must convince several generations of former wielders as to their suitability, offering recompense and veneration to each.

keeping them from dominating Underworldly politics through diplomacy, intrigue, and war.

Powerful ghosts sometimes craft miracles from soulsteel — a magical material that alloys rare Underworld ores with anguished souls. Veins of this cursed metal sometimes form in afterlives where natural forces compress and temper the screaming souls of the damned, but the vast majority is deliberately made in mausoleum-foundries. Ghosts forged into soulsteel exist in perpetual agony, though this may take many forms; many forge-saints attest that heartbreak, wrath, and tragedy all impart a unique resonance. Many ghosts shy from soulsteel, which is seen as the mark of those Underworld powerbrokers without scruples or mercy; others seize upon these wonders, reasoning that true torment is to leave those souls in agony without use or meaning.

AN IMPERFECT IMMORTALITY

Forever is a very long time, and even the dead may die. If destroyed, weak ghosts are often utterly unmade, their tatters falling into nonexistence or passing into reincarnation. Those with powerful passions or ardent worshippers may reform as spirits sometimes do, rebuilding their corpus over a period of days, years, or centuries. These ghosts often return having lost something of themselves, whether a single memory or their

lifelong love for a cherished spouse.

When a ghost's passions gutter out like flames starved of fuel or the ties that bind them to existence fray and break, they risk spiritual collapse. As a ghost loses the things that anchor them, the call of Lethe grows louder and louder, and sooner or later, all ghosts succumb. Their corpus evanesces as they rejoin the cycle of reincarnation. Others, stricken with ennui, give themselves to the Labyrinth and, in its darkest precincts, vanish into nonexistence.

There is a slow turnover in the Underworld as ghosts fade away. Many afterlives boast shrines and temples whose purpose is long forgotten but which the remaining dead still care for by rote. Underworldly empires may outlast their founding dynasties, their usurpers, and the usurpers of their usurpers. The Underworld is not a record of Creation's past but a place where things of Creation's past go to wither, to change, to become something else until only a shadow of what was remains.

Other Denizens

While mortal ghosts predominate throughout the Underworld, they are not its only inhabitants.

PHANTOM BEASTS

Few animals leave a true ghost, or even a hungry ghost — such shades come primarily from familiars whose souls are entwined with their human masters, forming an anchor in death. The wild fauna of the Underworld are not ghosts as such, but rather, they are reflections, the Underworld's Essence giving shape to the memories of its ghostly inhabitants.

Savants have a hundred names for these creatures, but most can be translated as *phantom beasts*. They are part of the environment of the Underworld, enacting simple instincts: A vast boar with blood-matted fur seeks to kill those who enter its stomping grounds, stately vesper-wolves bay paeans to the worthy dead, and pyre-maggots seek out blazing hearts where they may fester and flourish.

Ghosts hunt and domesticate these phantom beasts in mimicry of living animals. These creatures' innate connection to the geomancy of the Underworld means that few flourish beyond their natural environment, but enterprising shepherds and husbands have rituals and spirit arts by which they may tame horses of consolidated grief or memory-devouring buzzards for sale to ambitious collectors.

SPECTERS

Specters were ghosts. To scholars, they still *are*, but the dead do not claim them. They fear them, shun them, flee from them when they can and propitiate them when they must, for specters are those who have been twisted by the Neverborn. Some fall into this fate through a spiritual malaise that opens them to the dark whispers that emanate from the depths of the Underworld; others seek out the Neverborn, sacrificing ever-greater parts of themselves in exchange for power.

And power they receive, for specters glut themselves on the gory font of the Neverborn. Their Essence quickens, their spirit arts deepen, and they realize shattered insights into necromancy and other secret lore. Some sip at this power carefully to try and retain a semblance of their reasoning and motivations. Others drink greedily, losing themselves in ecstasy and horror. The latter become the nephwracks, high-priests of the Neverborn. Specters are dangerous beings, distorted by power, but the nephwracks are utterly lost, warped to serve the dead architects of reality.

It is a small mercy to the Underworld at large that specters often content themselves as petty kings, and nephwracks rarely find cause to leave the Labyrinth. On the dark days when they do ride forth, all but the greatest ghostly heroes sense the coming of something more terrible than death itself.

BEHEMOTHS

As in Creation, the behemoths of the Underworld are manifold and impossibly varied. It is a catch-all category that vexes scholars who aspire to a more discrete taxonomy. Many are the congealed organ-souls of the Neverborn given nightmarish form bereft of purpose. Others are shadows of cultures, cities, and even concepts whose spiritual residue forms something like a ghost — sentient wars that reenact themselves by possessing the dead or cruel plays that seize unwilling souls for their performers and audience alike. Still others simply *are*: The leviathan Umaza has never lived, and yet she is undeniably born of death's dark allure; the walking-temple of The Peregrination is the impossible dream of ghostly pilgrims given form.

PREHUMAN GHOSTS

Humans are not the only mortal creatures to tarry in the Underworld, though they are the vast majority. Shades from many servitor-species created by the ancients may be found in enclaves or upon the cosmopolitan

streets of Stygia. They are looming, ghostly gigantes of Epoch; the aquatic inhabitants of the fallen Niobrarian League; or the seven-eyed ascetics of Xo.

Among these prehuman ghosts are rare shades of the Dragon Kings. Though bound to a unique system of reincarnation, their souls sometimes linger in the Underworld, especially with their living population whittled to a fraction of what it once was. They command several Underworld strongholds, from the Nineteen-Gates Road to the city of Durance, where crystal spires slowly crack under the weight of ghost vines heavy with ashen flowers.

THE NEVERBORN

The Neverborn define the Underworld. Their tormented, fitful slumber gave it shape and structure; their agonies fill its ambiguous skies with storms of lightning and sorrow. In the deepest part of the Labyrinth, they languish in their own tomb-bodies, praying for a relief that can never come, for death was never meant to contain or dissolve beings of such vast scope and spiritual puissance. They are neither alive nor dead nor undead; all that they are is *suffering*.

THE EXALTED

The Abyssals are the Underworld's truest Chosen, but they are not the only Exalted entangled with the lands of the dead. Throughout the First Age, Exalted heroes have plumbed the Underworld in search of secrets. The fabled Black Nadir Concordat penetrated places of power steeped in the darkness of the Neverborn and the mystery-sanctums of the Old Laws in their search for power. Those Chosen with a gift for necromancy often dwelled within the Underworld to immerse themselves in its strange lessons or to raise up kingdoms of blood and bone.

Several shahan-yas maintains Lunar redoubts in the Underworld, and the Bureau of Destiny's Divisions of Secrets and Endings both record useful routes for Sidereal agents to travel. The half-living Exigent known as the Barrow Prince owns townhouses in Stygia, Dari, and other cities of the dead, trading tales from Creation for the wisdom of the dead.

The Liminal Exalted do not call the Underworld home, but they are frequent visitors, driven by the distant urging of their Dark Mother to enforce the boundaries between life and death. Those who spend significant time there often do so to keep tabs on dangerous ghosts, keeping them in check lest they invade the realm of the living.

The Land of the Dead

The Underworld drowns in endless dark water. Black oceans stretch beyond the furthest horizons, lapping at the shores of crumbling kingdoms. Rivers of rushing shadow curl around palaces of bone and fields of endlessly toiling dead. Travelers seek passage across the vast lakes and bottomless sounds, reckoning their journeys according to the Underworld's strange rules of distance, direction, and correspondence.

In this realm, ghosts cling to a semblance of life amidst a land of memory and ritual. Some dwell in afterlives of wistful contentment or abject sorrow; others build upon the Underworld's dark soil, forging civilizations and city-states. The souls of the dead are forever striving to carve eternity into a more pleasing shape, whether seizing power over the roving bandits of a salt-blasted mesa or raising cities of basalt and obsidian.

In the First Age, the shades of those who died in the Divine Revolution and the glories of the following era made their first great societies: The steady-handed dynasties of the Five Scarab-Kings, the funeral fleets of the Million Hands Trade Network, and the first council of the Eemi who dwelled beneath the waters. The city-state of Stygia was built upon the mouth of the River Styx, and its Dual Monarch rulers brought a semblance of stable time to the lands of the dead with the Calendar of Setesh.

Greatest of these polities all was the Rotting Lotus Empire, whose necromancer-queens bound one another in powerful oaths of alliance and fealty. In time, it dared to oppose the living empires of the Chosen, ruling client-states in Creation from shadowland citadels. Bitter, brutal war with the Exalted decimated the empire and its allies. After this, ancestor cults like the Sleeping Dragons forbade their ghost-blooded scions from positions of power, and the Grandmother Councils of the Asphodel Isles possessed their warrior-descendants to lead them in battle only on the rarest occasions.

The Usurpation filled the Underworld with the restless dead of both sides of the conflict. The rise of the Immaculate Philosophy in its wake saw a contraction in the populations of many afterlives; no other faith had ever been so widely successful in encouraging souls to pass directly into Lethe. Where the Immaculates held power, ancestor cults waned, and worship slowed to a trickle. The ghosts of the Shogunate often appeared in the Underworld bereft of grave goods, turning warrior-princes into paupers.

The Great Contagion filled the Underworld with an unfathomable torrent of the plague-dead. Apocalyptic storms, ladders of foul lightning, and bilious floods destroyed countless afterlives before the Labyrinth belched forth murderous specters in greater numbers than had ever been seen. Ancient civilizations like the Principality of the Ring and the Agate Millennium crumbled, and those that endured did so on the twin bedrocks of good fortune and ghostly heroism.

In the centuries since, those places spared the worst of the Contagion's upheaval have entered a period of rebuilding, conquest, and consolidation. The Empire of Aki and Acheron League dominate a wide swath of the eastern Sea of Shadows, taking colony after colony until their territories now have only a scant few buffer states between them — a perilous situation kept from erupting into war only by delicate political maneuvering. The Eternal Emerald Shogunate rose first as a refuge for the disposed plague-dead of the Contagion and then as a power in its own right, dominating the very city-states that had turned away its ghostly citizens when they wept at the gates for comfort.

The slow influence of the Deathlords has also grown over this period, whether in the Silver Prince's hegemony over powers like the Lacrimal Hexarchs or the Bishop's Shining Way rising to prominence in Stygia. Now, the Mask's conquest has set the Underworld aflame with rumors of the Deathlords and the true scope of their ambitions — rumors made all the more dire by the appearance of their Abyssal vassals.

The eldest of these deathknights have had five years to make names for themselves as warrior-heroes, necromantic savants, and ruthless powerbrokers. Few in the Underworld understand their true nature or appreciate the scope of their potential; in the age to come, their deeds shall echo through the lands of the dead and the tombs of the Neverborn alike.

Nature

The Underworld is not a reflection of Creation, but an echo. Although it is dominated by dark waters, it still has isles, mountains, deserts — and the continental vastness that is the Stygian archipelago. It is difficult to speak of distance where the Underworld is concerned, for it is an ambiguous place, subject to erosion and delusion and mystery. The best of its maps concern

TIMELINE OF THE UNDERWORLD

The Beginning of Time	The waters of Lethe wash clean the souls of the dead, preparing them for reincarnation.
The Divine Revolution	The corpses of the slain ancients become the Neverborn, forming the foundation of the Underworld.
Early First Age	The earliest ghostly civilizations and polities arise in the Underworld; Stygia is founded by its Mansions.
Early First Age	The Rotting Lotus Empire is formed in a network of oaths between twelve ghostly queens.
Middle First Age	The Black Nadir Concordat begins its expeditions into the Underworld and the Labyrinth.
Middle First Age	The Dual Monarchs construct the Calendar of Setesh.
Late First Age	The Rotting Lotus Empire is destroyed by the might of the living Exalted in the War of Extirpation.
Fall of the Shogunate	The Grand Tempest wracks the Underworld with storms of the plague-dead slain by the Great Contagion.
Aftermath of the Contagion	Stygia is conquered by the armies of the Stygian Pact.
RY 109	The Sovereign of Chains rises to prominence in Dari of the Mists, overshadowing his rivals with binding oaths and burdensome debts.
RY 282	The thearchs of Great Forks force the Black Heron to abandon her fastness in the Field of Endless Raitons.
RY 489	The ghost-hero Aki disappears; in her absence, the Council of Royals rises to govern the Empire of Aki, beginning a campaign of expansion against the Acheron League.
RY 615	The Lacrimal Hexarchs declare fealty to the Silver Prince, securing his Underworld holdings from their last internal rival.
RY 763	The first of the Abyssal Exalted emerge as vassals to the Deathlords.
RY 764	The Mask of Winters seizes Thorns, revealing the scope of the Deathlords' power to the Underworld.
RY 768	The present day.

themselves more with correlation, illustrating how certain afterlives relate to one another.

Nonetheless, the shadowlands anchor the two worlds together, and ritual afterlives bind to the peoples who revere them, so the Underworld's Northern seas glimmer with never-melting ice, and Southern sea-winds bring little rain to afterlives of ceaseless heat. The swampy East is thick with bone-mangroves and fungal reefs, while ghostly isles become all the rarer and smaller in the West, giving way to afterlives beneath the glossy black waters of death.

Even then, strange and alien climes exist within these trends, for cultures dream of paradises and punishments

different from their lives upon Creation. The rituals of the cold-dwelling people of Fortitude have given birth to the Moment of Flame and Darkness (p. 99), a striking inferno ringed by a frost-choked sea, and in the farthest and most fecund reaches of the Eastern Underworld, one can find barren hellscapes drowned in sand.

Travel throughout the Underworld combines practical difficulties with mystical ones. Bereft of stable stars or predictable trade winds, sailors develop other means of charting their course, whether following phantom leviathans, piloting their ships in oracular trances, or reconciling the movements of the Calendar of Setesh with local geomancy. Whether travelers go by land or by sea, they know to be cautious of

the Underworld's environs, and wary of the raiders and behemoths who waylay merchants, pilgrims, and heroes.

Those who brave these challenges have much to gain. Some do so in search of resources and treasure, like the blood-apples of Egir, which render corpus youthful and luminous. Others attempt to escape some wretched afterlife but often find that the same Old Laws that sent them there conspire to draw them back. In death, as in life, politics like Stygia and Dari of the Mist rise to prominence from their mastery of trade routes and ability to exert their power over neighbors.

There is neither day nor night as Creation recognizes it. Dead stars pit the face of a quiet sky one moment, while something crumbling and massive casts a shadow across the surface of the Underworld another. The dead have no true sun or moon with which to keep their count. What order exists in the Underworld's sky is due to the Calendar of Setesh, a marvel created by the Dual Monarchy. Thanks to that nigh immortal working, the dead can trust that a period of light will follow a period of dark, even as the rest of the sky follows older, stranger law.

The Underworld's weather follows its own dictates: masses of motionless, bloated clouds refusing to give forth rain while sapphire winds buffet another province, leaving drifts of softly glowing dust. Sometimes, pallid smears of leprous color offer diffuse, unwholesome light. Other times, auroras of rich, deep color spill strange hues onto the lands and shades beneath them. Rarely, there is no evidence of sky at all — instead, there is an expanse without trace of hue or depth.

Creation's elements have their dark mirrors in the fundament of the Underworld, seen through its dark lens: The winds may howl with the screams of anguished specters and fire burns in an array of unnatural colors, each marking a certain appetite. The most dangerous of these is pyreflake, a sickly gray-green fire that needs no fuel and consumes flesh, corpus, and soul alike.

Afterlives

Throughout the Underworld, there are thousands of enclaves where ghosts are drawn together by the Old Laws or the binding power of cultural rites. When mortals speak of an *afterlife*, these are the places they mean, and savants reckon them as either *primeval afterlives* or *ritual afterlives*, according to their origin and nature.

Primeval afterlives are formed by the Underworld's natural processes. They call to those ghosts who share

THE OLD LAWS

Before there was an Underworld, there were the Old Laws. They subtly govern its shape, function, and Essence. No savant has ever mapped them to anyone's satisfaction, but their effects are well known: it is the Old Laws which sort the dead to their afterlives; the Old Laws which govern the natural magics of the Underworld; the Old Laws which call the dead to their final repose in Lethe.

But the Old Laws are as broken as the Underworld itself, damaged by the fall of the Neverborn. It is the interplay between these forces that empowers the chivalry of death (p. 29). Where the influence of the Neverborn is strongest, the Old Laws recede, their mysterious order giving way to suffering and chaos.

It is a curiosity to those few Abyssals who have studied the Old Laws that their Essence can resonate with these unfathomably ancient truths. They are not alone in this; many strange Underworld prodigies seem to embody fragments of the Old Laws, from Emma Sarripad of Kesundang to the enigmatic being known only as the Dark Mother, whose whispered murmuring can sometimes be heard echoing from rich, black loam.

in that place's nature as a lighthouse beckons its fisherfolk back to shore. People who die particularly charged deaths find their ghosts forming here among kindred souls who met a similar end — whether by illness, starvation, poverty, or violence. The Mansions of Stygia are among the most widely known of these primeval afterlives, but countless examples can be found throughout the Underworld.

Ritual afterlives are shaped by living cultures through burial rites, funerary practice, and veneration. The attention of the living, imbued with the collective weight of generations, slowly changes the Underworld, stirring invisible currents that carve afterlives from cold stone, raise new islands, and draw wayward souls to their long-dreamt ancestral home. In these places, paper houses burnt on holy pyres become mansions, and cairns of painted stone become prismatic glory-halls. Stories from the dead make their way back to living descendants, forming a virtuous cycle that strengthens their afterlife — but sometimes also mortars it with new fears and anxieties. Even the worst and most wretched of these afterlives may have a certain appeal: Better to

eat ashes with one's forebearers in a familiar hell than to venture into the formless dark of a foreign world.

The afterlives exert a strange gravity upon newly dead ghosts. Even the greatest savants of the First Age could not explain why a ghost buried in extravagant ritual might find herself form in a primeval afterlife far from the lands of her foremothers or why a fisherman's shade might find himself in one particular resting place for the drowned dead rather than any of the others.

The Labyrinth

Beneath, between, and throughout the Underworld winds the Labyrinth. It is mutable even by the Underworld's standards, changing and reshaping itself according to chaotic whim and inscrutable pattern. It has its own mind and its own malice, infected by the troubled dreams of the Neverborn whose tomb-bodies reside in its uttermost depths.

Time stretches and compresses within, leading many a strategist to dream of stealing a march on their opposition, perhaps with an army that arrives moments after being sent. Space is equally uncertain, and cartographers stand to gain a satrap's ransom if their maps remain accurate long enough.

More than anything else, the Labyrinth is known for the terrible sound of the Whispers, which beguile those who hear them with the promises and ravens of the Neverborn. Even a husk hidden away in the most isolated sepulcher will have moments when their thoughts are intruded upon by the Whispers.

Ghosts who lose themselves to the Whispers are labeled specters by those who look upon them with fear, derision, or pity. Worst and greatest among them are the nephwracks, specters anointed to the Neverborn as their high-priests; these abhorrences seek out omens buried within the noise, each believing themselves the sole prophet of the Neverborn. They gather congregations with their wild-eyed charisma and necromantic might, erecting grand edifices and undertaking unthinkable ambitious projects with the zeal of those who have cast off the last shreds of morality and self-doubt.

Still, the rewards of navigating the Labyrinth outweigh the risks — or are tantalizing enough to appear to. The dead hunger for sensation and catharsis, and as the passages shift and mutate, new wonders and terrors that promise to fill the void within them are revealed. Jade-Eye Kirin was called into the dark by the voice of her youngest son, and she allowed herself to ignore the other voices that joined the chorus. Khalm of the

NAVIGATING THE LABYRINTH

The bold and the desperate sometimes travel the Labyrinth as a shortcut to their destination. Storytellers may choose to handle this narratively or require one or more rolls. These are typically difficulty 3 (Wits + [Survival or Occult]), subject to modifiers based on the intended destination:

DISTANCE & MODIFIERS	DIFFICULTY
A distant location in the same general direction	+2
A distant location in a neighboring direction	+3
Anywhere in the Underworld	+5
A well-known location	–1
An obscure location	+1
A hidden location	+2
Travel with a small entourage	+1
Travel with a group of hundreds	+3
Travel with thousands of followers	+5

It is impossible to predict how much time a Labyrinth journey may save. All things being equal, it's usually at least twice as fast, with extra successes speeding the process even further.

Failed rolls generally result in the travelers becoming entangled in the Labyrinth's dangers — roving specters, strange behemoths, and other malevolent hazards cause either damage or delay.

Forsaken Skies infiltrated a specter's treasure hoard but was surrounded by automatons of moss-crust coral when she seized a tome bound in human leather. Ten Thousand Devil Eater spent a year seeking the fountain of amethyst flames that would harden his skin into unbreakable armor and returned to the living world to enact glorious revenge upon the tyrant who oppressed his people. His family refused to look him in the eye afterward, but he neither knew why nor cared.

In the depths of the Labyrinth, specters and nephwracks sometimes carve out cult-kingdoms, ruling over their subjects according to ancient schemes, chaotic whims, and the Whispers of the Neverborn. These lands are peopled by slaves, captives, and true believers on the

path to specter-hood themselves. From their dark thrones, specter-princes enact incomprehensible necromantic rites to bolster their own power, pursue personal theories, or satiate their appetites for suffering.

Each of these Labyrinth kingdoms is uniquely strange. Sonderance of Vicissitudes, her eyes gleaming with inverted reflections of all she gazed upon, commands her subjects to reenact the final dream they experienced in mortal life; her troupes range far and wide in search of the actors she requires. Specters in the thrall of Thundering Dissolution join their minds with his in the Symphony of Omnipresence, a psychic whirlpool that shears away the borders between their consciousnesses. Perched upon a

rare part of the Labyrinth that opens unto a shadowland, the nephwrack Penance Scythe has spent centuries infiltrating local mortal communities, directing worship to himself — and snaring souls for his kingdom, drawn there by his perversion of the Old Laws.

Strangest of all are the deep and incomprehensible horrors that stalk the lowest precincts of the Labyrinth. When encountering a many-limbed figure that drinks the color from its surroundings, a blood-hued mist that begs for forgiveness even as it rips its victims apart, or a collection of children moving in perfect unison as grave soil pours unceasingly from their mouths, one can only speculate whether they have found a god's nightmare given form or a being that was once like themselves.

Cities of the Dead

Many and varied are the cities and empires of the Underworld. They often begin as afterlives, but grow and change through the deliberate efforts of their ghostly inhabitants until they can scarcely be recognized for what they once were. Cities like Stygia sprawl for mile upon dark mile as a testament to the efforts of ghostly potentates, architects, and laborers; not content to simply exist within their shadowed realm, they transform it into something new.

Stygia, the Midnight Jewel

At the Underworld's heart stands the immortal metropolis of Stygia. It's founded upon the Old Laws, its hierarchies bound up in timeless rituals. But the city is also endlessly rebuilt and renewed, home to a constant influx of ghosts seeking power, wealth, art, knowledge, pleasure, spirituality, or refuge. Even conquered by the occupying armies of the Thirteen Signatories of the Stygian Pact, it remains the richest, most cultured, and most populous of all Underworld cities.

Blessed by the power of the Dual Monarchs, the city glows with prayer from millions of ghosts. But this holy city has a rotten heart. The Signatories scheme endlessly for greater power; meanwhile, specters worm their way through the populace, trickling up the Veinous Stair that spirals from the city's center into the Labyrinth.

Most residents, however, are neither influential wraith-magnates nor dread specter-kings. They are ordinary ghosts who, like the living, struggle to get by. They are the sculptor apprenticed to a centuries-old

grandmaster, honing her craft so that her carvings might appeal to the city's jaded dead; the Tengese widow and the Whitewall orphan, taking one another as mother and son to satisfy an aching need for kinship; the beggar curled shivering in a back alley, forever starving yet unable to die a second death.

History

When those ancients who became the Neverborn perished, they crashed through the center of the Underworld. Coming to rest in the bowels of the Labyrinth, they withdrew into themselves, their endlessly tormented corpses forming their own tombs.

Ghosts of those who died sudden, unexpected deaths have been drawn to this place since the Underworld's earliest days. They raised petty citadels on islands at the River Styx's mouth and feuded for control of the region while banding together to fight off mortwights and nightmare-beasts that rose from the pit. Such ghosts — now gathered into patrician enclaves called *Mansions* — remain proud of this ancient heritage.

Centuries later, Stygia proper was founded by ghosts seeking to build a place of their own. Gathered by demagogues and prophets from across the Underworld, they found both common ground and ritual significance. The wisest and most learned among them — later dubbed the Seven Divine Counselors — plumbed the Old Laws to codify the rites and ceremonies by which Stygia became a place of power.

As their magnum opus, the capstone of the great work that was Stygia, they either discovered or created the Dual Monarchs — the Monarchs do not speak of their origins, and those few contemporaries who still exist report wildly contradictory accounts with genuine conviction. Four beings in two bodies, the Monarchs embodied the power and mystery of the Old Laws. Spreading their mantle across the immortal city, the Monarchs performed numerous miracles, from invoking a tempest to drown the Fallen Spear Imperium's invading armada to constructing the Calendar of Setesh.

Stygia's priesthoods — the far-wandering *gondoliers* and the sanctuary-guarding *custodes* — spread outward as evangelists of the Dual Monarchs. Soon, ghosts throughout the Underworld were praying to the Monarchs, empowering them further and strengthening the Old Laws. Though Stygia still knew its share of conflicts, such as the revolt of the great artistic collegia against the Dual Monarchy, it was nonetheless a time of unparalleled peace.

This peace unraveled as the Usurpation and the Shogunate's wars flooded the Underworld. Then came the Grand Tempest, as the Contagion's death toll shook the pillars of the Underworld and cracked the Calendar of Setesh. Vast typhoons of shadow and dark lightning swept across the lands of the dead, their winds laden with ravening specters. The Veinous Stair vomited forth horrors at the heart of Stygia itself, ravaging the immortal city.

Outsiders saw opportunity in Stygia's struggle for survival. These warlords, courtiers, and necromancers turned their eye toward the Underworld's capital and assembled their forces for conquest. Converging on the mouth of the Styx, they chose to cooperate, signing the Stygian Pact to divide the city between them.

In the centuries since, Stygian life has been defined by endless intrigues. Each Signatory seeks greater control; the Deathlords among them aim to spread the influence of the chivalry of death and suppress the Dual Monarchs' philosophy; the Mansions feud with artisans' guilds, district leaders, and merchant princes for scraps of power and influence. The common dead often find themselves caught up in aristocratic scheming, revolutionary fervor, day-to-day gifting, or simple familial strife.

Today, the immortal city buzzes with tension. New ghosts flood in ever faster amid the rising death toll of the Time of Tumult, and the coming Realm civil war threatens a new tempest. The Deathlords, following the Mask of Winters's lead, are on the move. Now the newly appearing Abyssal Exalted tread Stygia's streets, spreading awe and terror in their wake.

THE CALENDAR OF SETESH

An enormous construct of concentric, silver-seamed stone wheels and gleaming jeweled orreries, incised with glyphs in Old Realm and other primeval tongues, the Calendar of Setesh stands atop the Seat of Harmony's tallest tower, at the highest point in Stygia. The Calendar doesn't merely control the Underworld's passage of time and the movement of its sun and stars; it creates these celestial lights, calling them into existence moment by moment.

The Underworld doesn't have fate or destiny in the same sense as Creation. Nonetheless, careful study of its stars — and of the Calendar itself — can yield prophetic insight regarding the lands of the dead.

Geography

Stygia sprawls across dozens of rocky islands on the River Styx delta, ringed by great cliffs as dark and gleaming as the waters. The islands themselves have all but vanished beneath millennia of construction; structures pile upon one another, with piers and bridges and towers forming a three-dimensional maze around a web of canals. Seven great hills rise among the islets. The Mansions once claimed them as their seats of power. Even today they remain prized real estate, though the Signatories now squabble for control of their heights.

The Sixteen Districts

Stygia has been divided into 16 districts since time immemorial, their nature bound by the Old Laws. Originally identical in size and shape, the districts have shifted radically over the ages as their regents schemed for ascendancy over their neighbors.

Each district's boundaries are reinforced on the first day of each year with a ceremonial procession. The regent must touch each of the district's ancient boundary-stones, and shifting those stones as part of the rite allows one district to expand at another's expense. Whoever completes the procession is the regent; regents surround themselves with bodyguards to prevent coups during that vulnerable time.

Once, each regent took a share of the district's Essence and conveyed the rest to the Dual Monarchs. Since the conquest, most regents also pay tribute to one or more Signatories.

Monarch's Way holds the prayer-lit palace of the Dual Monarchs, bureaucratic offices, temples, manors, and strange silent gardens. **Night Winds**, the city's other political center, caters to the needs of the Cimmerian Council and the Signatories.

Iron Hill resounds with hammering from foundries and smithies and the clash of arms from martial schools and military barracks. **Thunder Hill's** elegant shops and deathly temples cater to the Mansions' proud ghosts.

Merchanters and Stygian Navy vessels dock at **Seawall**, its streets teeming with drunken ghost-sailors on eternal shore leave. Elegant stone facades glisten along **Onyx Point's** main avenues, gentrified by the Silver Prince. Blood streams from temples of ancient sanguinary cults in **Water Runs Red**.

Garrison fortresses in **Sunborn's Last Stand** echo with the Legion Sanguinary's footsteps. In **The Quarter Magnificent**, musicians and artists sustain an endless festival atmosphere. Merchants, scholars, and aesthetes alike flock to **Golden Tears** for the thrill of haggling and to obtain rare goods.

V'igea draws ghosts to Stygia as a cultural afterlife. Passionately cosmopolitan ghosts meet and mingle

in its teahouses; back streets hide conservative dead, immersing themselves in their peoples' old ways. Those who enter the alien forest of **Indigo Grove** face strange spirits and prophetic visions.

Ghosts visit **Bittersweet Remembrance** to mourn — or to bask in mourners' aura of sorrow. Pleasure-seekers frequent **Bone Lanterns** to partake in theater, cuisine, liquor, drugs, gambling, sex, and other ghostly pastimes.

Whispering Streets, still damaged from the Grand Tempest, is home to indigents, misfits, criminals, and largely harmless specters. In the bleak temples of **Where Shadows Walk**, nephwrack-priests preach an end to all things.

THE SEWERS

Shadow-water from bathhouses, kitchens, laundries, and the like flows into a maze of tunnels beneath the immortal city. Vagrant ghosts form hushed communities here, protecting themselves as best they can from slavers, press gangs, phantom beasts, mortwights crawling in where the sewers meet the Labyrinth, and weirder things from beneath the Underworld's waters.

Stygian gossipmongers speak of **Suspire**, the monstrous pauper-lord of the sewers, who centuries ago



led an army of downtrodden ghosts in a failed rebellion against the Signatories. Some call him a specter; others say he's allied with the gondoliers. Another figure is only named in whispers — the Last Counselor, allegedly the sole survivor of the Seven Divine Counselors. Rumor says she's an oracle, a priest of the Dual Monarchs with unrivaled knowledge and wisdom.

THE VEINOUS STAIR

The hole at Stygia's center is the Veinous Stair, where the Neverborn once plunged into the Labyrinth. A single rivulet of the Styx cascades into the pit, carrying offerings and the occasional execution victim; from below rise mortwights' groans and nephwracks' hymns. Luxurious Signatorial palazzos encircle the cyclopean pit, and the Noctuary Spire, a jagged obsidian tower where the Cimmerian Council (p. 88) meets, leans crookedly outward over the abyss.

A single, eponymous stairway runs down along the pit's edge, countless side corridors leading to played-out soulsteel-ore mines and ancient chambers of dubious purpose. Farther down, throbbing passages wend into the Labyrinth; here, the specters come and go, drawn by the whispers of oblivion. Stygia's rift-divers probe these vaults at great risk to find lost treasures, battle specters, and seek intelligence on nephwrack activities that might threaten the immortal city. Deeper still lie the tomb-bodies of the Neverborn, where Deathlords and Abyssals commune with their dark masters.

If the Stair has a bottom, no one has ever found it.

Society

Stygia is a *mélange* of strangers and cliques. Where most Underworld cities revolve around a single afterlife, Stygia contains many, all butting up uncomfortably against one another. They're joined by a steady flow of immigrants who come to pursue political ambitions, engage in trade, study in its libraries or ateliers, make pilgrimages to its holy sites, escape tyrannical or torturous afterlives, or simply enjoy the decadent lifestyle available in the Underworld's most cosmopolitan city.

Found family predominates among relationships here. This typically manifests as coterie and social networks bound together by friendship and other commonalities — whether profession, religion, or culture of origin, or even shared desire for bitter rivalry. Sometimes these found families take more literal form in surrogate relationships. For example, a mother's ghost may bond with a younger woman's in place of her real daughter, who might, in turn, be reminded of her own mother, a favorite teacher, or a beloved queen.

THE HOUSE OF WEEDS

This unassuming two-story structure in the Bone Lanterns district, tucked between a pawnshop and a cabaret, serves as a wineshop and boarding house. A narrow corridor opens on a common room where a few local ghosts eat curried rice, drink wine, and converse. Most have been regulars for over a century, retelling the same anecdotes ten thousand times over; each runs a tab, unpaid for over a century.

The acerbic proprietor, Lady Sea-Wrack — her blue features concealed behind a driftwood mask, her green robes smelling of salt — is a respected figure in the local community. Once the matriarch to a fishing village that was slaughtered in a long-forgotten war, she's long since come to see her staff, boarders, and neighbors as a vexing yet secretly beloved extended clan of nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Among Lady Sea-Wrack's regulars, the rebellious swordmaster Perfect Crescent privately views the Lady as her liege in place of the one she failed in life. The House's bouncer, Pillar-Toppling Devil Prince, sees her as the father figure he never had. And to the charismatic, luckless vagrant Dark-Eyed Omada, she's the gruff monk whose secret generosity kept him fed in the leanest of his living years.

This often generates sprawling surrogate families with an irregular network of bonds.

In addition to supporting such relationships, established organizations also provide social structures approximating what ghosts knew in life, as well as opportunities to pursue many of their passions. These range from the Mansions and collegia to businesses, criminal organizations, secret societies, and social clubs.

CULTURE

Much of Stygia's architecture is a jumble of styles from across Creation's history, overlaid with a variety of Gothic modes developed and refined by dead architects, thick with steeples and flying buttresses and the phi emblem of the Dual Monarchs' creed. Some structures were constructed from dusky Underworld stone and lumber; others simply appeared, fragments of ghost-cities accreting through the rituals that draw in ghostly Essence through worship.

The arts stand high in Stygia's esteem, as the dead hunger for experiences that fuel their passions much as the living crave food and drink. Ghosts frequent theaters and galleries much as mortals visit restaurants and taverns and graze on street buskers' performances as mortals would attend hawkers' food carts. The most skilled and ardent performers can command almost any price, though they favor audience members with equally refined tastes; often, an impoverished sophisticate may attend an elite artist's performances more easily than a boorish ghost-magnate.

Stygian art prioritizes evoking strong passions over aesthetics. Current styles are often rough or grotesque. Works may aim to evoke multiple emotions, such as a dance both sensual and terrifying, or a painting of a tragic feast that elicits both hunger and sadness. A certain desperation often creeps into performances from artist and audience alike as the dead seek to fill the aching void within them.

In Stygia's salons and galleries, attendees may forget the passage of time altogether; parties last for days or weeks. In the Blue Room of Queen Nefere's manor, a ghostly musician plays the erhu with immeasurable slowness, each note taking hours, the recital having continued for years. In the Gallery of Graven Stone on Thunder Hill, it's said that a visitor arrived a thousand years ago to admire a statue of a long-forgotten cup-bearer; she stands there admiring still.

By edict of the Dual Monarchs, grain ships from across the Stygian Archipelago empty their holds into urban granaries. A chain of mills and bakeries transforms this into aromatic, earthy black bread. This, supplemented with wheels of pale, fragrant white cheese and amphoras of poppy-seed oil, provides a dole for the immortal city's hungry residents. It falls to district regents to distribute the dole, a process that's grown more corrupt since the conquest. The hungry poor queue for days or weeks for a bite while ever more of the supply is resold for profit to wealthy gluttons.

Longtime residents of Stygia make extensive use of a lexicon of cultural symbols. Some they attribute to specific legends or scriptures, while others' origins are lost to history. Weeds signify persistence and thriving in the Underworld; a dandelion represents passage into Lethe. Fish symbolize ghosts, while a fishhook means either love or money, depending on who you ask. And blood — or, indeed, anything crimson — holds many meanings depending on context, including power, food, artistic fervor, endings, new beginnings, and Creation itself.

Out of tradition, many longtime Stygians conceal their identity, believing this reduces vulnerability to both deathly magic and more mundane threats to one's cult or loved ones in Creation. The city's gate guards encourage visitors to offer a pseudonym rather than their living names and provide featureless terra-cotta masks to all who desire one. Mask-sellers do brisk business within the city; master artisans specializing in bespoke masks achieve great wealth and renown.

Businesses aim to engage as many of their customers' passions as possible. Restaurants, art galleries, and bazaars feature music, theater, sweet incense, or fragrant flowers. Some encourage conviviality, seating diners together at long tables or packing galleries with viewers. Others offer soundproofed rooms where hosts curate experiences for affluent clients. A few places specialize in stoking negative emotions, luring perverse customers with discordant choirs, noisome odors, or the like. Several wineshops on Seawall offer bone-dry hardtack and skunked beer; the Kudzu Bell's boarding house specializes in stale bread, mildewed cheese, and vegetables boiled into a sulfurous mass.

In this densely populated city, privacy comes at a premium, causing difficulties for those who crave solitude. Some hostels offer padded, coffin-sized sleeping cells. Others float their clients in tanks of dark water, sealed to block out all the senses.

ECONOMICS

While the dead don't need nourishment or shelter, they desire it. Street vendors, wineshops, and restaurants offer a bewildering array of beverages and viands to tempt travelers regardless of their means. Landowners who no longer receive offerings from the living rent rooms to pilgrims and apprentices. Artisans produce ornaments, furnishings, armaments, and more; their finest works are renowned and sought-after throughout the Underworld.

The immortal city's currency, the Stygian obol, comes in no single size or shape. Each is a grave good coin whose original metal has been replaced by lead alloy while somehow remaining the same coin — an occult process resistant to mundane counterfeiting. Anyone holding a Stygian obol can feel a trace of the lingering passions of the person it was buried with. Some ghosts hoard coins whose psychic residue resonates with their own feelings; money changers sort obols by emotion for arbitrage.

Those too impoverished to afford shelter or who've suffered physical and cognitive deterioration from

death, trauma, and the grinding weight of time find themselves marginalized. To make the wealthy and powerful more comfortable, they're forced out of sight — whether out of the city, into alleyways and slums, or into the endless sewers and catacombs that underlie the immortal city.

MAUSOLEUMS

Prayer flows from across the Underworld to Stygia's numerous mausoleums, where ghosts bathe in the warming glow of remembrance. They embody beauty as well as geomancy, with gleaming marble facades, elegant fluted pillars, frieze-lined galleries, and intricate fan vaulting. A mausoleum's geomancy channels millions of whispered prayers into an intricate, sonorous song-mist that swirls through its halls and chambers; each mausoleum has its own melody. Remembrance condenses at the mausoleum's center into a shining, thrumming pool of liquid reverence.

Breathing the prayer-mist fills ghosts with tranquility and vitality; bathing in the reverence-pool doubly so. For millennia, these amenities — not to mention dining halls, reading rooms, and more — were open to all ghosts regardless of wealth or status. But since the conquest, most have fallen under the aegis of various Signatories and district regents, who charge admittance fees and turn away low-status visitors so as not to disturb wealthy patrons. Only in Monarch's Way do mausoleums remain open to all.

SLAVERY

Enslaved ghosts are sadly common in Stygia, typically doing menial or household labor. While some are bound by magical oaths or necromantic spells, most suffer slavery as mortals might, under threat of exile, imprisonment, torture, or execution. Officially, they have various legal rights, such as protection from harm, ownership of personal property and wealth, freedom of movement within the city, and seeking redress from the Dual Monarchs. In practice, many owners — especially the wealthy or influential — skirt these restrictions.

Traditionally, the Dual Monarchs proclaimed a jubilee every 64 years, a festive occasion when all debts were forgiven and all slaves freed. However, the Treaty of Stygia forbids the Monarchs from issuing such proclamations. This has allowed many slaveholders to amass compounding wealth, further consolidating power in the hands of the privileged few.

Stygian law allows for sanctuary in shrines of the Transcendent Course (p. 86). It also stipulates that

custodes and gondoliers cannot be enslaved. As such, it's become a tradition for escaped slaves to join the priesthood. Underworld historians suggest that abolitionist agitation by traveling gondoliers was one of the factors that united the Signatories in opposition to Stygia.

MULTICULTURALISM

Over the millennia, ancestral ghosts and evangelists of the Transcendent Course have spread word of Stygia to many of Creation's peoples. To most, this is just a curiosity. But for some, it's become a new cultural afterlife. Typically, it's imagined as a rich, peaceful heaven, especially for those whose extant cultural afterlife suffered invasion or other tragedy, although to a few cultures, it's a decadent, predatory hell. Much like immigrant groups in Creation, these afterlives' ghosts often form discrete neighborhoods of those who adhere to their culture's ways and want little to do with the rest of Stygia.

These neighborhoods vary widely. Pale, cloistered **Sanctuary** teems with insular Whitewall ghosts; most still fear the unquiet dead despite having joined their ranks. Flautists and drummers maintain an endless dancing revel in the clamorous cellars of **Disheris**; the Gatesister cult of demon-haunted Scathe prays for deliverance in death from Scathe's Resplendent Masters and from the Legion Sanguinary. And gaudy, perfumed **Tilsemay Tower** holds the last remaining ghosts of the Aghari and Sevi peoples, conquered and scattered by the folk of Harborhead centuries ago.

Even the rare ghosts arising among the Blessed Isle's Immaculate populace gravitate to Stygia. There they can find fellowship and safety; many ghosts from Threshold peoples hold eternal grudges. Central to their community is the **House of Daana'd's Eye**, where ghost-monks aim to help dead Immaculate followers release their passions and find Lethe.

Foreigners, too, find their place in the immortal city. Merchants, pilgrims, scholars, and more come here seeking fulfillment. Meanwhile, the Signatories maintain garrisons, entourages, and cultural enclaves within their Stygian holdings. Some ghosts native to a local afterlife simply don't fit in with their peers. Together, these form the most cosmopolitan and dynamic neighborhoods, with the influx of new ghosts with different cultural viewpoints warding off the staleness of immortal existence. Well-known neighborhoods include the bustling laborers' tenements of **Little Shoe**, with their ritual cycle of riots and crackdowns; the neverending drunken cabarets of **Soul's Lost**; and the susurrus of prayer and religious debate rising from the temples, libraries, and museums of **the Street of Dust**.

COLLEGIA

In ancient times, ghostly artists, scholars, and occultists formed collectives to pass on arts no longer practiced in Creation lest they be forgotten. These organizations, known as *collegia*, gained great social and political clout over the centuries.

In the late First Age, the *collegia* sought to usurp the Dual Monarchy. Such was their knowledge of the Old Laws that they almost succeeded, thwarted only by the prescience of the Seven Divine Counselors. Most of the rebels were sentenced to perpetual exile. Given the importance of the arts to Stygia, many beloved performers and learned masters received commuted sentences, albeit under surveillance. The *collegia* were strictly regulated thereafter to limit their authority and influence. Those who fled founded the Hall of Attainment in Black Diamond (p. 53), consolidating their knowledge under the aegis of the Mask of Winters and his Acheron League.

In recognition for the Hall's support of the conquest of Stygia through artifice, necromancy, and secret lore, it was granted stewardship of the city's *collegia* and a seat on the Cimmerian Council. The *collegia* have resurged since then, though not to the high-water mark they once knew. Elders retain enormous status as repositories of lost arts whose fruits other elder ghosts crave and cannot obtain elsewhere. Their passing into Lethe is seen as a terrible tragedy, and apprenticeship under them one of Stygia's greatest honors.

Stygia contains dozens of chartered *collegia*. Each maintains a meeting-hall, assigns rankings based on skill, and elects its leadership, though specifics vary. Regular gatherings address such topics as recent promotions, display of noteworthy works, and economic minutiae; business is usually followed by a banquet. Members gather at the meeting-hall, even outside of meetings to socialize, practice their arts, and observe others doing the same.

Ancient ghosts dominate the upper echelons of most *collegia*. Having lived in wildly different cultures and times, they often argue viciously against one another's artistic styles and techniques, only to close ranks against newly dead upstarts filled with unfamiliar ideas and the ardent passions of the recently alive.

Several *collegia* stand out among their peers. For instance, the acclaimed Thespian Collegium welcomes audiences to its meeting-hall's grand theaters and to streetside performances; its smiling masks conceal a wasp's nest of jealous romances and petty intrigues. The genteel Sculptors' Collegium reshapes ghosts' bodies,

THE RESPLENDENT MANSION

In the Underworld's first days, the Resplendent Mansion stood foremost among its peers, comprising a host of Exalted and other heroic ghosts who'd died in battle against the world's makers. But new members slowed to a trickle, then stopped entirely before the First Age's end. Today, their ancient seat atop Shining Hill stands all but empty, inhabited by a few reclusive timeworn ghosts and a host of guardian spirits and automata.

its services equally desired by stylish ghost-aristocrats, crafty assassins, and furtive refugees. And the wealthy Smithcraft Collegium maintains strong ties with several Signatories, each outbidding the others for soulsteel armaments forged by the Collegium's grandmasters.

THE MANSIONS

The Mansions predate the immortal city's founding; each was once a primeval afterlife upon an island-hill, which called to souls who suffered sudden, unexpected deaths. Their elders dominated Stygia's governance for much of its history, feuding with one another over power and ancient vendettas and mastering obscure spirit arts. For centuries, the Mansions have presented a united front after losing most of their temporal authority to the conquering Signatories, but old quarrels between them persist behind the scenes.

The **Blue Mansion** comprises victims of unexpected drowning. Consisting in large part of sailors, fisherfolk, and merchants, it once directed Stygia's maritime commerce and navy. Its elders resent losing control of the docks to the Silver Prince and despise the Signatory Aikeret and her pirates.

The **Falling-Star Mansion** comprises victims of sudden, unexpected falls. With numerous masons, architects, loggers, and the like, it holds great influence over Stygia's construction industry. It also includes scouts, explorers, and scavengers who've accumulated broad knowledge of Creation's far corners and obscure histories.

The **Pale Mansion** comprises victims of apoplexy. Often wealthy or sedentary in life, its membership is perhaps the most well-educated Mansion and the richest in offerings and grave goods. Many see themselves as the heart of Stygian culture and high society. The Heron has courted the Pale Mansion for centuries; its leadership falls firmly within her camp.

The **Red Mansion** comprises victims of sudden, unexpected violence. Its membership skews toward hunters, soldiers, and criminals on the one hand and assassinated nobles, bureaucrats, and clergy on the other. The most militant Mansion, the Red maintains longtime ties with Ukhala's empire and the Cruor's priesthood.

The **Storm-Struck Mansion**, few in number, comprises victims of lightning strikes. Many of Creation's cultures deem those struck by lightning to be holy; the Storm-Struck proudly formed a priestly caste in the Underworld's early days, and their elders still resent being supplanted by the gondoliers and custodes — though they like the Shining Way even less.

Lastly, the **Thousand-Hued Mansion** — also dubbed the Patchwork Mansion — comprises those who die suddenly and unexpectedly of disparate causes outside any other Mansion's remit. Its leaders admit outsiders for sufficient remuneration; for this reason, the other Mansions disdain it as unworthy of their number.

Collectively, the Mansions hold a seat on Stygia's ruling council. Some claim that this is a reward for complicity with the invaders during the conquest. No evidence supports this, yet the rumors persist.

The Transcendent Course

This is the creed of the Dual Monarchs, Stygia's faith for millennia before the conquest:

The Underworld's heavens and hells are false. Achieving Lethe is the ideal state for the dead, but the Underworld is a port-of-call where ghosts can come to terms with the passions and goals holding them to their past lives and disentangle them. As such, it should be a place of calm, shelter, and safety. The Dual Monarchs provide this peace and security in the holy city of Stygia.

The Transcendent Course is a dualistic creed, seeing all things through a lens of opposites: life and death, flesh and spirit, stillness and flow, holding on and letting go. Gondoliers teach that each of these things has its place. Clinging to ghostly existence is not evil, but it has a cost, and the time always comes to let go and pass into Lethe.

The Monarchs' haven-priests — or *custodes* — watch over sanctuaries across the Underworld where the faithful can find refuge. Meanwhile, the Monarchs' ferry-priests, or *gondoliers*, offer both metaphorical and literal guidance, conveying the dead to Underworld

locales meant to help them overcome their bonds to life.

The cult has lost power since the conquest of Stygia. In much of the Underworld — particularly regions affiliated with the Deathlords — authorities persecute the priesthood, destroying custodes' sanctuaries and driving gondoliers from their shores. Cult priests officially retain their prerogatives in Stygia, but must watch their backs lest they be caught alone and beset by hostile Signatories' agents.

Hermes are among the cult's foremost signs — statues depicting sculpted heads atop plain, squared pillars. Traditionally, white jade double herms indicate sanctuaries, while black jade double herms mark jetties where one can await a gondolier. In the modern day, they're replaced by furtive carvings or drawings, as conquerors and rulers tear down statues for raw materials and to suppress the creed in their domains.

THE DUAL MONARCHS

Taking their nature from the Old Laws and their strength from millions of ghostly worshipers, the Dual Monarchs define Stygia with their presence and the Underworld with their works. Creatures of duality, the White Monarch and the Black Monarch each have two distinct aspects. Though their goals run parallel, they aren't perfectly aligned; a Monarch's aspects have been known to oppose each other's votes in council.

Each Monarch wears an ancient jade mask of the appropriate color, carved with strong yet androgynous features; they never unmask in public. They switch between aspects seamlessly, voice and body language changing to match.

Usine, male aspect of the White Monarch, labors unceasingly in his workshop. Across the centuries, he's sculpted and enlivened the thousands of white jade effigies that comprise the immortal city's Jade Legion. Clad in glorious panoply forged by his own hand, he once strode across the Sea of Sorrow's archipelagoes, smiting monsters and filling onlookers' hearts with the courage to persist against adversity, but since the conquest, he's rarely left the Monarchs' citadel.

Eset, female aspect of the White Monarch, wields power over the Underworld through her voice, with songs that calm the tempests that rise from the Labyrinth and scatter the mortwights that ride those bleak winds. Through spoken oaths with the nephwrack-princes, her magic binds them to their word, sealing the bargains that limit their threat to



Stygia. She remains cloistered at other times, leaving her the most mysterious of the Monarchs.

Setesh, male aspect of the Black Monarch, supervises the rites and ceremonies that lend stability to Stygia and the Underworld. He strides the streets with codex and measuring-cord to direct the construction of geomantic works, funereal incense-smoke rising sweetly from his robes. He also oversees the grand Calendar that creates time in the Underworld, keeping it calibrated and unearthing prophecies through its workings.

Nebthys, female aspect of the Black Monarch, knows the living world in a way that others in the Underworld cannot. She hears the last whispers of the dying; she hears the entreaties of mortal funerists asking her to guide the souls of the dead to their afterlives. Her knowledge of mortal, ghostly, and sorcerous secrets alike is vast and deep; she hoards this information like a miser, sharing tidbits only at key moments.

OTHER RELIGIONS

Stygia accommodates almost every faith found in the Underworld. Shrines abound to chthonic divinities, including psychopomps, ghostly messiahs, undead

OTHER DEATHLORDS

Some Deathlords maintain holdings and interests in Stygia despite not being Signatories. For instance, the Bishop funds the sky-scraping Cathedral of the Unwinding Pyre to spread the Shining Way. Meanwhile, the Eye has dispatched the skeletal Steel-Feather Scribe — once a priest of fallen Vanileth — to liaise with ghostly artisans and seek out prototypes of arcane engineering.

god-kings, and renowned culture heroes. Most mark sites where their patrons purportedly first appeared in the Underworld, resided, preached, worked miracles, found enlightenment, or entered Lethe. Many store holy relics carefully guarded against ghostly thieves. A few even depict Yu-Shan's deities or the Immaculate Dragons.

On street corners, ghostly ascetics practice meditation and prayer to perform spiritual and mystical wonders. The Cathedral of the Unwinding Pyre — a grand temple of **the Shining Way** — towers over them, its basalt spires shining with a thousand crimson lamps.

In the Fane of Nepenthe, the so-called Water-bearers of Lethe baptize congregants with a balm to ease sorrowful memories. Under the jasmine-laden arches of the Wend, pilgrims stop at reliquary-shrines set with dreamstones of sermons and lessons from long-ago.

The Incarnadine Path was Stygia's native religion before the Dual Monarchs. It reveres the River of Blood as the literal and metaphorical lifeblood of Creation and Underworld alike. Ghosts of the Mansions find a sense of superiority in their ancient ties to the faith, while the collegia uphold it in opposition to the Transcendent Course. Its stronghold is the rust-red steeple of the Cruor, where Incarnadine blood-priests sacrifice animals brought at great difficulty from the living world to anoint the faithful in gore. Since Stygia's founding, the Cruor's priests have been a law unto themselves, offering sanctuary to fugitives; the Signatories show little respect for these traditions, but citywide rioting the last time the Legion Sanguinary violated Cruor sanctuary makes them cautious.

Even the Neverborn receive worship here, in nephwrack-raised temples amid the district called **Where Shadows Walk**. Few ordinary ghosts dare visit them; fewer still do so openly. Stygia's populace retains a healthy fear of specters, viewing those who truck with the Labyrinth's denizens with grave suspicion and recoiling from the despair that engulfs them.

Governance

As conquerors, the Signatories dominate matters of policy and law. As a practical matter, they allow other voices. City governance falls to the Cimmerian Council, composed of 21 representatives: one from each Signatory, one from each of the four Dual Monarchs, and one each from the Mansions, the collegia, the district regents, and the Cruor. In practice, votes are often swayed by one Signatory or another via clientage, bribes, or threats.

Where law and order were once a matter for the Mansions, over the millennia, they've fallen at various times to the Dual Monarchs, the district regents, and the Monarchs' legates. Today, while the Mansions, collegia, and Signatories prefer to resolve their followers' issues internally, the regents adjudge other conflicts in their domains. In theory, the Monarchs retain supreme judicial authority, but the Pact forbids the Monarchs from directly challenging a Signatory; thus, any criminal sheltered by a Signatory is above prosecution. All manner of rogues now take shelter

beneath a Signatory's aegis, their freedom contingent upon service to their new master.

Major crimes include slaying or imprisoning citizens, betraying city secrets to nephwracks, stealing or destroying grave goods, despoiling valued artworks or interrupting important performances and harming a citizen's descendants or shrines in Creation. Common punishments include confiscation of grave goods, periods of servitude, imprisonment, and exile. The significance of certain punishments varies with the defendant's age; the younger the ghost, the more income they'll likely have from their descendants' offerings, and the more they'll be harmed by any given length of imprisonment keeping them from their ancestor cults.

The Stygian Pact

The pact formed by Stygia's conquerors remains in effect today. Thirteen foreign powers share control over the city. Despite some turnover, most are the same ones who subjugated it centuries ago.

Each Signatory is a specific individual, officially holding title in the name of some foreign polity; this is largely a polite fiction for the Deathlords, who are powers unto themselves. When a Signatory abdicates or perishes, their polity chooses a successor. Should the polity itself also dissolve, the remaining Signatories vote on a replacement. Few Signatories reside in Stygia; the rest send envoys to convey their will while they pursue other duties elsewhere. Deathlord Signatories sometimes designate a deathknight for this task.

THE SIGNATORIES

The Black Heron spends more time in Stygia than any other Deathlord, involving herself deeply in politics and high society. She maintains a residence in the Monarch's Way district, at the heart of the burgeoning neighborhood dubbed the Quarter Magnificent.

The First and Forsaken Lion commands more military might in Stygia than any other Signatory. They maintain a sizable garrison in the Iron Hills district, where their captains recruit officers from gathered mercenaries, and their quartermasters procure the finest blades.

The Mask of Winters maintains a walled compound in Golden Tears district. It holds a fully garrisoned fortress, a palatial estate for hosting high-society galas, and a hall of records whose census-takers relentlessly review Stygia's populace and transactions — and serves as a nexus for his spies and secret police.

The Silver Prince owns a broad swath of the district now named Onyx Point. He uses this to advertise Skullstone's way of life, sponsoring poets, composers, opera houses for necrotheater, and similar cultural amenities. His lictors police the district for troublemakers and dissidents.

Once hounded by the Stygian Navy, legendary corsair-queen **Aikeret of the Damned Sails** usurped its admiralty after leading the Signatories' fleets against the immortal city. She cuts a dramatic figure even among Damned Sails peers; obsidian medals and nacreous chains jangle upon her crimson greatcoat, and beneath her hat's broad brim, blue flames burn in empty sockets. Having worked her way up from nothing in death as in life, she relishes luxury and craves challenge; she regularly hunts pirates who rejected her sovereignty or seizes cargo-laden ships unwilling to pay Stygia's tolls. She supports the Prince, her ships privateering in his name throughout the Sea of Shadows.

The Emerald Shogun has always been Signatory for the Eternal Emerald Shogunate, though it's unclear if the same ghost has always worn the Shogun's green jade mask. When the Great Contagion struck, millions of ghosts flooded the Howling Marshes where disease-slain dead often appear, among them the shades of over a thousand Exalted from the Dragon-Blooded Shogunate's gentes. The Emerald Shogun quickly rose to power wielding the Lancet, an enigmatic ghost-slaying weapon said to manifest the Contagion itself. The Shogun rarely visits Stygia, whether for fear of dangers there or of being usurped by his turbulent court in his absence; he sends courtiers, diplomats, and generals in his place, tasked with gaining ascendancy over the Stygian Archipelago.

Fathom Hermit Shell is the Signatory for the Eemi, an enigmatic league of aquatic necromancer-lords residing in the Sea of Shadows' depths. Shell wears a towering suit of elaborately patterned bronze armor without visible openings, its mossy, verdigrised surface perpetually dripping salt water. Their booming voice echoes from afar, as though deep underwater. Some speculate that the suit is a remotely directed puppet; others say it's larger on the inside, with the true Fathom Hermit Shell a vast creature swimming within a boundless sea. Shell speaks rarely, briefly, and cryptically. They evince little interest in Stygian affairs and casually sell their vote in council for occult lore, arcane relics, and favors that they have to date almost never used.

Fer-Ai-Zo-Yun of Dis, Signatory for the Epoch — a coalition of prehuman ghosts of the Dreaming Sea — scarcely

ever visits Stygia, as few chambers accommodate his 50-foot frame. His current representative, Dream-That-Walks, resembles a pungent, tiger-sized chimera of bear, horseshoe crab, and starfish. While most prehuman ghosts have little truck with Stygia due to despising and resenting humanity, Dream-That-Walks shows great interest in the immortal city's customs, odors, and bells. They also convey their Signatory's demands, which revolve largely around obtaining obscure trade goods and ghostly slaves, and accessing the Calendar of Setesh for inscrutable divinatory purposes.

The Quicksilver Burin stands as Signatory for the Hall of Attainment, an association of practitioners of artifice, geomancy, necromancy, and the spirit arts. The Hall was founded by Stygian exiles from the collegia rebellion, given shelter and prestige in the city of Black Diamond under the auspices of the Mask of Winters. A renowned lapidary and moliator, the Burin appears as a tall, angular figure of living cinnabar, their manner stilted and precise, their touch etching surfaces with scrollwork like spreading frost. They vote on the council to bolster the collegia and the Mask, offering lavish gifts of artifice and lore in exchange for support; in all other matters, they sell their vote for favors.

Sapphire Chain serves as Signatory at the pleasure of the Council of Royals of the sprawling Empire of Aki. Appearing as tall and fresh as the prime of her youth, this richly dressed courtier attends all meetings personally and is intimately familiar with every power player in the immortal city. Though she presents a genial, attentive public demeanor, her ruthlessness is legend; the Royals hold her ghost-clan as well-treated hostages, and she knows they'll suffer for her failures. Fearing the growing threat of the Mask's neighboring Acheron League, the Empire of Aki now backs his rival the Walker in Darkness, who supports the empire in exchange for accepting his bleak faith as its official religion.

Ukhala Enlightened-in-Blood has stood as Signatory for the Fallen Spear Imperium since the conquest of Stygia. A millennium ago, she rose to mastery of the primal afterlives of violent death as their empress-saint, wielding a terrible strength said to draw upon the River of Blood itself; she rules much of the Stygian archipelago, and her battle-thirst is never wholly slaked. Disturbing crimson glyphs crawl across her skin like insects; when she speaks, walls drip with half-clotted gore. She sees the Shogun, the Lion, and now the Mask as rivals, opposing them in council on principle. She seldom attends in person, sending her more polished and analytical staff officers as representatives.

The White Thyrsus, as the youngest ghost-priest of the Hundredroot, represents his order as Signatory. The ghost-priests venerate and feed a vast, malevolent spectral forest that subsumes ghosts who sleep beneath its boughs, absorbing their power and knowledge. Their order rejects the Transcendent Course and seeks to undermine the Dual Monarchs, desiring that the Hundredroot eventually absorb the entire Underworld; they likewise oppose the Shining Way and death's chivalry. Though the Hundredroot has no real allies in Stygia, the Thyrsus — a renowned adjudicator and poet, now preternaturally comely and charismatic in death — has many friends, always couching a vote against one Signatory's interests as support of another's.

Sesim Ruseka (p. 393), once a necromancer-prince of the fallen Rotting Lotus Empire, stands as the latest Signatory for the avian hosts of the Thousand Tempests. He sees and hears through spectral birds; his flocks nest everywhere amid Stygia's rooftops, gathering the city's secrets. Having gained his seat with the Black Heron's support, he serves her interests but courts other Signatories to win their favor and so disentangle himself from his patron. Ruseka aims to one day reclaim his empire; until then, he'd see the immortal city prosper.

FACT INTRIGUES

Pact intrigues run the gamut from petty personal grievances to grandiose political schemes. Signatories have all manner of tools to undermine or gain leverage over their rivals, ranging from subtler efforts such as bribery, blackmail, extortion, and trumped-up charges to more direct means like theft, sabotage, kidnapping, and assassination.

The Abyssals' arrival gives the Deathlords the upper hand. Goals that ghostly agents had failed to achieve over the centuries may yet be achieved by death-knights. Meanwhile, other ghosts seek to embroil Abyssals in their schemes with exorbitant gifts or by invoking personal connections or shared ideals.

Noteworthy Individuals

Born a slave, **Lady Persimmon** rose from consort to queen mother before her untimely death in a power struggle. Confident, charismatic, and analytical, she's attained high standing in the Red Mansion — overseeing numerous prestigious artistic gatherings and often representing the Mansion before the Cimmerian Council. She courts district regents, Mansion elders, and collegia grandmasters; amasses wealth and

influence to tempt suitors; and undermines rivals via blackmail, fabricated evidence, and whisper campaigns. Recalling her humble birth, Lady Persimmon offers charity to impoverished ghosts and supports ending slavery in Stygia. Her outspoken abolitionism has earned enemies; she fears assassination and keeps skilled Red Mansion bodyguards close.

Long ago, rage and despair drove **Anouph of the Leopard Skin** to specterhood. Rescued by the legendary gondolier Reshka of the Gates, he joined the priesthood to spare other ghosts from the same torments. While he knows Stygia's rivers intimately, he travels more by land, having lost many boats escaping Signatorial agents — particularly those of Ukhala Enlightened-in-Blood, whose lieutenant he once was and who took his departure as a betrayal. He's more willing than most gondoliers to work with specters and other dark entities — including Abyssals — but acts cautiously, lest he compromise his principles.

Stygian aesthetes pay well to attend viewings of **the Lazuli Blue's** paintings and even more to watch one being painted. Heavy, short, and dark, his face covered by a wrinkled, long-nosed porcelain mask, he speaks gently with his subjects as he works and so touches their souls to portray their dreams on canvas. Of late the Silver Prince has become his patron, though the Prince allows none to attend his sittings and spirits the portraits away to a private collection. His peers whisper, troubled by the dark mood sinking its hooks into his dead heart. Many of Stygia's elite desire access to the Blue; they'd owe a favor to any who'd disentangle him from his patron. The Prince fears that a rival's agents might discern some secret weakness by interrogating the Blue about the dreams he's painted and will see him destroyed should he seem ready to speak.

Neighbors

The city of **Namtar** was once a shanty-town in Stygia's outskirts, hastily built to cordon off anyone the Stygians deemed “undesirable” during a period of consolidation. Failed powerbrokers like the Strawman Kings, Apomene of the Razor Veil, and the Thousandfold Legion of Khisad were exiled there to shame them, but they found its dispossessed inhabitants uncommonly strong-willed, forging them into a city in their own right. Namtar's rebellion was slow and subtle, refusing to recognize Stygia's laws and taxes one by one as it grew just strong enough to press each issue. Over time, the strange geography of the Underworld shifted to reflect this distance; today, the blackwood palisades of Namtar overlook a vast salt flat that separates it from

its mother city. Year by year, Namtar strengthens its hold over the afterlives and trade routes to Stygia's south, making open warfare ever more appealing to those in Stygia who remember the abject misery it was originally intended to be.

Contemplation is a refuge for Immaculates who find themselves drawn to Stygia's mansions by sudden death. These ghosts erected their own temple-complex on the hills beyond Stygia's eastern gates where they might better examine their moral failings and make themselves worthy of their next life. Generations of Dragon-Blooded shades serve Contemplation as its guardian council, leading their fellowship in proselytizing against the false faiths of the dead. The conquest of Stygia and now the rise of cults like the Bishop's Shining Way have softened Contemplation's judgment of the Transcendent Course, which at least recognizes ghostly existence as imperfect and temporary; recent decades have seen them offer quiet support to gondoliers and custodes after a rare visit from emissaries of the Dual Monarchs.

The isle of **Egir** is sacred, for only here can one find the orchards of the blood-apples, impossibly red and sweet as regret. Egir's moon-eyed caretakers died in the throes of ecstasy, and their memories nourish the orchards until each is left empty and smiling. The Dual Monarchs made it a sanctuary during their reign, but now the Signatories jockey for control. The Fallen Spear Imperium occupies it at present, but the Eemi have begun to test their blockades, cursing ships with especially subtle necromancies. The priests of the Transcendent Way and Stygian dignitaries alike seek a diplomatic resolution to the growing tension between these Signatories, lest Egir and Stygia alike suffer in the crossfire.

Dari of the Mists

Where the Rivers Foundation and Revelation mix, they bathe the land in strange vapors as they spread into a watery expanse. Here in the Southern Underworld, one may find a city obscured by fog and vapor, lamps of many-colored glass lit at all hours so its indentured masses need never stop the commerce of their masters. This is Dari of the Mists, home to debt beyond death and wealth beyond measures.

From the waters of the rivers and the bay beyond, Dari's inhabitants dredge up those who died due to unpaid or unpayable debt. Peasants dead of exhaustion servicing loans are pulled wet and gasping onto trawling barges alongside princes of the Guild who attempted

to escape the crushing debt of failed venture through suicide. What began as a primeval afterlife for the debt-encumbered has become a polity in its own right, one which has crept into the faiths and superstitions of usurious societies throughout Creation. To Dari, pauper and princeling are the same: another drowned debtor rescued from the water, bound into servitude to their rescuers until paid clear by their deeds and toil.

The companies cast for indentures in different ways, but always to the same purpose. The Four Quarters Company's nimble craft fish the newly dead from the waters with poles of blessed wood and ropes woven from widow-hair, leaving loops magically bound around their catch's waists until she can buy or work herself free. The Blue Sarong Society sends divers in, gently helping the drowned onto the decks of gilded diplomatic craft, where he will be dried and dressed in fine garments that bind him to the Society's purposes. Most prosperous and fearful of all, the many-oared galleys of the Timeless Order of Manacle and Coin trawl for ghosts with clinging nets, shackling them while they're still soaking. Such is the welcome Dari of the Mist offers the newly dead.

The City

Round huts and blocky houses on spindly legs line the edges of both rivers, safely above even the worst high tides. The resolutely independent and intentionally unemployable flock to these Tall Houses as if distance from the city could keep them from being enmeshed in its commerce and intrigues. Largely, it cannot; many provide for their afterlives with contract work for the companies, and small boats going to-and-fro are common.

The docks are visible as great looming shapes even through the thickest of Dari's mists. Built over century upon century of growth, their lowest levels sink into the silt, while the tallest piers see rigs swaying at building height, awaiting ocean-crossing ships from Skullstone or other powerful ports such as the Jugurthintine Teeth or the Quiet Harbors. Day or night, only the most fearsome weather can halt work, and many indentures count their hours to freedom, seeing to the transport of goods or upkeep of the facilities here.

Clusters of houses in foreign styles interspersed with impressive mansions border the docks and crowd the waterfront. Potentates and merchants can purchase Sijan funerary finery while in the shadow of the tastefully ominous Fallen Sky Embassy or pay enormous sums for agents of the Eye and Seven Despairs to offer weapons of soul-shriveling horror. Ancient war

texts of the Dawntime Keepers can be perused while imbibing draughts suffused with memories of peaceful youths and torrid affairs decanted in lands further east.

Old Dari is at once less and more impressive. Its sprawling square buildings and tiered homes are made of grey and white streaked stone, much of it from living cities that once gave Dari much of its identity. With those long fallen, its inhabitants repair the occasional damage or construct the rare expansion out of black Underworld rock and ghostly mortar. Many here were once indebted but, unlike those of the Tall Houses, prefer a life of relative comfort in the city once their slates are cleaned. Skilled artisans, silver-tongued courtiers, and wise sages all offer their services, often aided by indebted assistants whose contracts they've purchased or leased.

Throughout the Working Lanes, the companies keep their workforces close. Crowded barracks, stacked flophouses, and tangled alleys are kept out of sight by tastefully manicured plants and art. Some indentured find their time strictly regimented by their contract holders and are seen dashing to their next assignment. Over time, most adapt to the strictness of their contracts and bosses and turn to stealing as much time as they dare in conversation and rare leisure amongst the covered walkways and tunnels that connect the buildings. Gambling games such as Ivory Tiles and common dice are common amongst the tunnels, as are shared meals — when food is available. Interrupting time clawed back from the companies is widely regarded as unconscionably rude, and ghosts that flout the convention find themselves dangerously unpopular.

Others, either due to the structure of their contracts or the preference of their debtholders, find themselves with time to themselves. Some attempt to find companionship or purpose in Old Dari, but quickly discover that many freed ghosts who remain consider it uncouth or unlucky to tarry with those still locked in-contract. Others head to the docks and foreign quarter, finding dead countrymen or friendly acquaintances amongst visitors.

The Lock and Tomb district dwarfs all the others in grandeur and import, many of the tallest buildings looking out over the Working Lanes and toiling masses. Headquarters for Dari's powerful companies vie for space and primacy here. The offices of the Timeless Order of Manacle and Coin move between their ever-expanding towers, the top levels given over to the supremely powerful owners while servant-clerks and debtor-archivists labor below. The Blue Sarong Society's open-air salons serve as both a demonstration of their

mastery of aesthetics and their impressive wealth, which the Four Quarters Company attempts to match with their famous gilded gardens, plants preserved in undying metal and thanotic amber. Many lesser companies now occupy the sarcophagus-tower of the fallen Bone Notch Register, decorating the approach to the looming ossuary with their own public works, as impressive for the valuable space they take up as their contents.

The Companies

Dari's indentures find themselves twice-bound by the city's properties: first by a supernatural period of quiescence and agreeability that accompanies nearly every rescue, then by magically powerful contracts enmeshing them within the company's employ. These contracts writ into Old Laws give Dari its economic import and impressive Underworld reputation. Each company has its own method, but their results are the same: they magically prevent the indebted from stealing or allowing harm to befall their employer's goods.

The law of Dari is one of contractual repayment, however, and not endless servitude; even if the companies desired eternal slaves, the suasions of Old Law abandon them if they try to take total advantage of their debtors, as the now-destroyed Bone Notch Register discovered when they tried to sell their employees as chattel to foreign interests. The powerbrokers of Dari watched as the Register's overseers starved and withered away into nothing but avaricious dust.

Accordingly, while tasked with labors that may take them across the Underworld, most of the indentured find their companies treating them as junior employees. And for many, the companies will try to retain their services even after magical suasion expires. There are only so many who die for debt, after all, and training a new employee is always a miserable chore.

THE TIMELESS ORDER OF MANACLE AND COIN

Not the oldest of Dari's companies but certainly the largest, the Timeless Order is known across the Underworld. Fearless, ruthless, and rapacious in its dealings, the organization takes after its founder, the mysterious and powerful Sovereign of Chains (p. 391). The Order pulls more of the newly dead from the waters every season, manacles and collars inscribed with terms of indenture as one-sided and harsh as the Order can make them without risking the fate of the Bone Notch Register.

Their employees transport cargo too distasteful for the other companies to unthinkable ports of call. Stygian

exiles and a healthy concern for foreign powers lead many of Dari's companies to shun commerce with the Deathlords, leaving the Timeless Order's employees to oversee caravans delivering doomed souls to the Thousand at the Lion's command, grosses of war ghosts and horrors to the Mask's eager war machine, and the plunder of lost cities to the Lover's fastness.

Dari's merchants likewise shrink from soulsteel, so the Sovereign of Chains gladly cornered the market, using it in shackle and sword alike. The Timeless Order pays a premium for skilled artisans willing to work the material. Some of the Order's high officers go so far as to wear jewelry of delicately worked soulsteel in graceful loops and gleaming studs, the whispering ornaments rumored to convey Underworld secrets to their bearers while unsettling their counterparts in trade negotiations.

Indentured employees of the Timeless Order are constantly reminded that there are fates worse than working under the Manacle and Coin, and so when the time comes for their debts to be paid, many choose instead to stay on, clinging to the beast out of misplaced loyalty. Some seek to rise in its ranks, holding the chains rather than being bound by them; others have forgotten what it was to live at their own will and see no afterlife beyond what the Order offers.

THE GEOMETER'S DAUGHTERS

Nam the Unceasing died mid-brushstroke, splattered ink leaving a dragon-line which ran across the southern coast of the Blessed Island unfinished upon her final living map. She resumed in death; Nam standing on the banks of the Foundation and the Revelation, pulling the dead from water and mud. She handed them a clay tablet and stylus, and told her new assistants: "It is now time to measure and inscribe."

The Geometer and her student-servants mapped three safe routes from Dari to Stygia before one suggested that she could, in fact, profit from maps of the Underworld. Nam and her growing workshop moved from a tall-legged house surrounded by tents to comfortable stone abode in Old Dari, and then, as the no-longer-indebted employees named themselves her daughters and pulled more free to Measure and Inscribe, a great mansion in Lock and Tomb.

The Geometer's maps are as accurate as any of the Underworld can be, and centuries of experience have refined her once-mortal arts. Local maps shift to correct themselves as safe routes become dangerous or new shortcuts open up, while regional maps curl and

slowly burn as they become less accurate, warning their owners of outdated information through smeared lines of ash. A few can even guide a traveler to ancient behemoth corpses, fallen Underworld stars spilling out their last bright exhalations, or through the myriad horrors of the Labyrinth.

Nam cares more for mapping the world than she does for counting obols, but her eldest Daughters embrace ambition. While Nam has quietly provided geomantic survey information to the Eye and Seven Despairs to keep her Daughters safe in the regions around Cold House, her Daughters attempt to play Dari's other companies, Underworld warlords, and even the agents of Deathlords against each other by offering or withholding accurate maps and surveys.

THE FOUR QUARTERS COMPANY

It's hard to get treasures from sunlit Creation in the Underworld. Even grave-persimmons sweetened by the tearful prayers of relatives lack something of the original fruit, and lumber harvested beneath the living sun gives finely grained furniture a palpable warmth. So when the beloved outcaste-lord Paramount Torch died in unpaid gambling debts and found himself indentured in Dari, he promised his debtholders a harvest from the living world, delivered by his descendants through a shadowland route discovered in his travels.

His masters celebrated their fortune until realizing that the terms of his contract had been met. They briefly attempted to force Paramount Torch to stay in their employ, but discovered that his daughter had sent the green jade daiklaive Spring Perfume along with the luxuries. He took the company by its keen edge, traitors hewn down or bound with shackles of creeping vine.

Trading exotic Underworld rarities and lost treasures to his family in return for Creation's bounty, Paramount Torch was soon able to grow the Four Quarters Company larger and larger. Befriending and sometimes freeing other Dragon-Blooded ghosts who hailed from across Creation, the outcaste expanded a network of contacts and commerce between the living dead throughout the Threshold. Reviled by Immaculate monks who know of it, the Four Quarters Company offers the dead and the living the filial comfort of the ancestor cult alongside a promise that is understood across Creation: Let's all get rich.

Within Dari, Paramount Torch lavishly gifts company leaders and visiting worthies with offerings of the sweet, fragile scent of life, gaining him many friends

and favors. Many wonder if the Four Quarters might one day outweigh the Timeless Order in influence and might, whether through friends bought with heady memories of life or at the edge of ancestral daiklaives.

THE BLUE SARONG SOCIETY

Smiling, painted courtiers escort dignitaries from private tomb-palaces to Stygian galas, gleaming ghostly blades at their side. A veiled and perfumed emissary offers a living prince the hand of his lost love in marriage, bridging the world of the living and the dead. Lost children miraculously returned to their parents tell them about the nice lady who saved them, and the prayers she told the parents to repeat for the next year in return. The doyens of the Blue Sarong Society frown when porters of the Timeless Order claim that Society sells people. No, they insist, they sell hope. Hope to reach one's destination safely; to find the right lover, the right partner, the right hand in the darkness of the Underworld. The indebted who dare bring up the ethics of selling hope find themselves assigned to less glamorous duties.

Always, the Society seeks to extend the debts owed to it past Dari's contracts, enmeshing the living and the dead in favors owed, promises spoken, and families entangled through chthonic marriages. What was once a process of building up influence over stately centuries has now become a matter of years and seasons as the Blue Sarong Society sees the Deathlords' rise and the Timeless Order's subsequent brashness a threat to their carefully cultivated plans. The Society seeks ever greater influence over the living and the dead alike, agents undertaking riskier missions and liaisons as the Society seeks to turn bartered hope and cultivated favor into secret might, casting down the Timeless Order and seizing the Society's rightful place as supreme authority over Dari and its web of debt and commerce.

The Mists

Dari of the Mist cannot exist apart from the lands and clime that surround it and support its strange, undying laws. The city's population is bolstered every year by the days of dry tides. For a brief period, the air around Dari is clear, and the rivers recede to a fraction of their flood height, exposing banks of glittering mud and clay. A bumper crop of the indebted dead squirms there, insensate and helpless, until rescuers dig them out and levy onerous indentures for their troubles.

When the skies turn silver and the mist grows heavy, those in the Tall Houses make sure they're well secured, and those in the city proper check their ceiling for leaks because the season of the argent monsoons is

upon them. Rain hammers the area for days, the rivers roaring to full flood, and almost anyone who dares to cross is swept away to darker waters. This is a momentous day for many indentured, as the magic binding the longest-toiling to their contracts fades regardless of the balance of their debts, freed by storming jubilee. Even those whose contracts are too new or unfulfilled to be freed by the rain celebrate the day, looking to the future as the unliving rarely do. There is an end, they whisper in the presence of contract holders. There is an end, desperate revels in the Walking Lanes sing out. Companies who disagree with the rain's reckoning do not argue with the newly freed, remembering the fate of the Bone Notch Register.

The city's titular mists vary in color and thickness day to day. Great respect is given to fortune-tellers and mystics able to forecast the mist's nature for more than a handful of days in a row, an accolade rarely given out. Sometimes, though, they are able to give warning of particularly dangerous or fortunate fogs, and so it is considered unlucky to ignore their advice.

The quiet mist seeps out of the sky on the blackest nights. All light from afar and movements of the Calendar are blotted out, the smothering blanket of mists muffling sounds and making ghosts doubt their own senses. It is a time when many of the dead are consumed by their inner demons, when specters walk just beyond the city walls, and when only the brave or desperate travel. Even the Timeless Order is loathe to send out its mighty caravans, unwilling to risk their investments.

The sour mists arise from the Revelation when it froths and the Foundation when it curdles, greenish-yellow banks of fog that presage upheaval in the mortal world. Mediums and honored ancestors listen for the amplified voices of those calling from Creation, while companies such as the Blue Sarong and the Four Quarters consider it an auspicious time to begin Creationward business.

On the rarest days, the fog billows crimson and golden, like a tired sun comes to consume Dari. A great ghost arrives: the Unnameable, a leviathan-metropolis casting a gleaming wake in which Dari floats like a minnow. Along with its passage comes memories of that city's ancient dead, and any ghost who can bring the Unnameable's treasures back within Dari's walls can secure their existence for decades. The enormous wealth in treasure or knowledge is counterbalanced by the assurance that any who remain within its walls when the golden-red billows subside will disappear along with the First Age wonders. Some swear they have seen such unfortunates

when the Unnameable returns, acting out the passions of an ancient city that consumed them.

Neighbors

Pirates, smugglers, and renegades have taken shelter in the coastal shadowland of **Fallen Spindle** for centuries, a sprawling settlement built around the broken spire of a First Age lighthouse. In recent decades, Guild-affiliated traders have been seen more and more often, dodging heavy tariffs, Realm-backed blockades, and angry local rulers in Fallen Spindle's harbor and crooked streets. Most of Dari's companies conduct business with independent operators in Fallen Spindle or use the shadowland to access the living lands beyond, but lately, the Timeless Order has begun to engage with Guild traders directly. Trade has rapidly increased as Underworld treasures and resources are traded for ever-increasing amounts of living veneration and manacle-clad labor. The other companies already seek to move against the Timeless Order, looking to cut short its profitable relationship with local Guild factors or to coopt it for themselves.

The Invisible Towers loom and shimmer, starlight structures dating back to the First Age. Ancient ghosts rule over the Towers, their ways arcane to the living and younger dead alike. Still, the oasis of safety they provide has allowed ghostly fortunes to rise, first as Contagion dead traded away ghostly glass relics from Chiaroscuro's founding in return for great wealth, and then as ghosts from the Delzahn and their subjects brought new grave goods to trade. While little congress happens through the well-policed Whispering Circle shadowlands, this has made the Invisible Towers an increasingly valuable destination for Dari's caravans. The companies hope to establish firmer footholds amongst the Towers, nearing open violence as they fight to secure the lucrative trade routes. The Invisible Towers' rulers look on impassively as the companies struggle, assembling something strange and dire from accumulated First Age components.

Many nomadic peoples across the South quietly prayed for their fallen relatives to find their way to the **Sweetwater Mirage** even after Immaculate missionaries attempted to destroy the practice. Ancestral mentors and heroic dead dwelled in the oasis, its waters bittersweet with memories of life. And then Timeless Order of Manacle and Coin came. Unable to sway the locals with foreign goods or ensnare them in one-sided trade deals, the Timeless Order resorted to force, seizing the oasis through war ghosts and turning it into a hub for their ever-expanding interests in the South. The Order mercilessly stamps out any resistance, enslaving or soulforging those who resist their rule, but the other companies have begun to make overtures to

both the dead who call the Mirage home and the living who wish to one day see it. Another uprising runs the risk of the quiet afterlife being damaged beyond repair, but the companies consider that a worthy price to pay for countering the Sovereign of Chain's ambitions.

Kesundang, the Sword Mountain

Look now, to the horizon, and you will see it: Kesundang, the Sword Mountain, which once belonged to an ancient being who tried to wage war against death itself to free its fellows from her grasp. Its sword was embedded into the Underworld, and the city that bejewels its pommel seems to touch the realm's vague sky. From a distance, it is dappled in false moon and sun, wreathed in clouds so thick and opaque that they are more like the strokes of a paintbrush.

Kesundang is situated upon an island, and the winds that bring soul and sail to its shores smell of cinnamon and ambition. Phantom serpents and direhide crocodiles dance near the island, so large that they are mistaken for rocks and reefs. These serpents carry souls from other afterlives that perform proper death rites to be ferried to Kesundang — souls who deserve some semblance of glory, or some semblance of rest.

Who deserves Kesundang? What drives ghosts into the great land, where its city is segmented into districts that run up and down its length? It is the primeval abode of mountain warriors and the ever-striving, those who forge and temper themselves with ruthless dedication. There, they are incarnated as powerful beings of glory, worthy of ancestor cults. Many can become strong enough to challenge the gods.

Others are borne to the mountain, the deathly Essence of Kesundang recognizing those that seek glory and sovereignty. Ghosts who can survive the perilous Forest of Wandering Hunger at its base can climb its royal road and find a burning city waiting for them. Indeed, Kesundang is no stranger to visitors, to glory-seekers, to ghosts who wish for a better reincarnation. Therefore, Kesundang is an eclectic city, as it appreciates ghosts from every culture. This has led to some infighting, of course, and the great city atop the Hilt, known as the Naga Maw, has not yet mastered unity through diversity.

Kesundang has three major regions: Sheath at the base of the mountain, Blade on the way up, and then Hilt, where the great Ema Sarippad measures the life span

A NOTE ON SEGMENTARY STATES

Segmentary states are common in pre-colonial Southeast Asian urban complexes, which serve as the main pattern for Kesundang. Segmentary states very commonly have a single primary "segmentary capital" which holds ritual power over the other cities that are parts of its segments. Each city has autonomy, but is still considered as part of Kesundang as they are all simply segments of a larger state.

of every mortal on Creation after they have died. The grand city of Kesundang spans all of this, as the cultures that perform its rites are segmentary states.

Heath

The base of the mountain is covered in a dense forest where hungry ghosts wander freely, never able to find the path that leads higher. This is the Forest of Wandering Hunger, and many Kesundang chiefs hunt down hungry ghosts and the phantasmic ogres who are born when its blood monsoons mix with fetid muck. Even here, one can hear the

dancing, singing, and raucous laughter of those at Kesundang's peak.

Within the forest cuts a river, and the river opens up into an indigo great lake known as the Lake of Satisfying Suffering. Traveling ghosts bathe in the lake to relieve wounds against their Essence but find their will tested whenever they attempt to leave the forest. If they succeed, then they are free; if not, then they will find the lake again and again. Before they know it, the lake consumes them, pushing back its shore inch by soul-taking inch. When the monsoons relent, the lake drains to reveal the calcified souls lost in its waters, never to reincarnate.

The city of Mulang lies at the base of the mountain path that leads up its argent stone. Its silver walls give the outpost-city a temple-like quality, as it is easy to chisel and craft intricate bas-reliefs upon them. Particularly glorious ghosts who have come to rest in Kesundang travel here to have their exploits crafted upon the ever-expanding kota wall.

Mulang is a large city that prides itself on the warrior-monastery where ghosts master the martial arts travelers bring from across the Underworld. Mulang Temple houses warrior-monks that protect the city's borders, would-be invaders, and erstwhile ogres. Whispers among



the Underworld's prophet-winds sing of the inevitable seizure of the mountain by the First and Forsaken Lion, and it is this that the Mulang warrior-monks perfect their diamond bodies to defend against.

Mulang has cave paths that lead throughout the mountain, forest, and even directly to the shore, but they have recently become infested with the mindless ghosts of indiscriminate slaughters. Born of that same violence, a gigantic snake-spirit slithers through the paths, which have become so large and convoluted that it can hide within it. Even the Mulang warrior-monks dare not face it, having been given a name by those few who glimpse it from a safe distance: the Emerald Serpent of Certain Repose.

Blade

Blade is a winding path that encircles the Sword Mountain. Numerous outposts lie along its bends. Saints and their pupils dwell in these shrines and monasteries, purifying the pilgrims who travel the Blade through trials of ritual combat and grueling austerities, pitting ghosts against nightmare-beasts and tempting them with wealth and pleasure. Most who dare the Blade settle there; having failed to achieve glory, they instead perfect themselves and hone those who would attempt the feat they failed.

These holy rites are threatened by those specters who climb Blade, having escaped the masses that teem in Sheath. Denied entrance to Dragon Maw City, they vent their wrath on any who dares the pilgrimage, becoming a trial in themselves. Exorcists seek glory by stamping out these lurking horrors, banishing them to an appropriate torment such as the Azure Lotus Inferno (p. 104).

Hilt

Atop the Blade lies the Hilt, where the slope curves into a U-shape like the mouth of a massive snake. Beneath that curve lies the titular Dragon Maw City, where the dead dwell in glory. The city burns brightly at night, its light obscured by clouds of brush strokes. There is a somber melancholy, arriving here, at first — like one has arrived at the end of all things. This shatters upon entering the city's walls to meet its joyous inhabitants.

Here, death is not a curse or a punishment; it is a celebration. The great pagodas and stupas connect to each other with holy ropes of red, black, and white. The kettlebells are struck every hour. The brimming

lights never dim. Flowers and gardens are abundant, overflowing. There is no need for want: rice and coconut wine are in excess here, alongside a heady soma that mixes milk, wine, and honey. Communities form around drinking banquets that stretch for days of revelry.

Of course, the joy comes at a cost. Most who dare the Sheath and Blade will be turned away at the Hilt, or fall into despair along the way, or succumb to any of the dangers that bedevil those who make the attempt. There is no joy in Mulang or at the shrines of the Blade; it evaporates like sweat, only to condense within the clouds of Dragon Maw City. That joy sweetens the wine; that joy waters the gardens. If the Sword Mountain took no new pilgrims, that joy would evanesce away, for the city's delight is a stolen one.

The center of the city is the Palace Temple of King Ema Sarripad, enclosed in tall crimson walls, with four stupas jutting out from each corner, halls stretching out in every cardinal direction to create a cross. The peak of the palace is a temple with a giant statue of King Ema, eyes bulging and lion-maned, many-armed so as to wield the responsibilities of a King: the spear for protection, the thunderbolt for enlightenment, and the stylus for recording their subjects.

Pommel

The peak of Kesundang is silent and serene, a stark contrast to the joys of Dragon Maw City. As one walks paths of quiet grass and blossoming hibiscuses, the sound of the city fades away into nothing but bird-chirps. Pathways here are arrayed as the spokes of a wheel, and at its hub is the Tree of Law and Life, a gigantic strangler fig with tree upon tree upon tree atop each other, creating a pagoda of verdance. The branches and the trunk and the roots are all marked with ineffable tallies, representing mortal lifespans in a counting system now lost to time, though perhaps those that sing Old Realm can decipher it.

Ghosts that seek respite from the festivities of the city come up here to watch, to listen, and to meditate. They sometimes watch Ema Sarripad in the aspect of a woman with head shorn as a sign of grief, wreathed in ivory burial raiment. Here, Ema Sarripad is calm, and speaks with the ghosts, and takes her time. She walks up to where the tree must be inscribed, and she etches with her stele — once for every death in all of history. There are no grand proclamations, even for the greatest deaths; tyrants and paupers alike earn the equal dignity of a stroke of her stele. There is nothing

in existence simpler than death.

Everything happens, will happen, and will have happened. Here is the truth of death: it cannot leave. Life cannot leave. Ema Sarripad cannot leave the Tree of Life. She knows that in the dreadful march of time, the dead will destroy Kesundang, and she can do nothing about it. She marks her own lifespan upon the Tree of Life.

Prominent Figures

The head of the Mulang warrior-monks is a woman named **Lotus Blossoming Twice**. She wields a sword of razor-edged hibiscus and wears lamellar made of blackened stone. Stoic, devoted, and stern, she takes her responsibilities with grave seriousness and expects the same of the other warrior-monks who fight under command. She reserves her compassion only for those who intend to climb the Blade whom she deems worthy, but unready, taking them into her care for months or years of patient training.

The four corners of the city are guarded by the **Four Kotapala**, or City-Guardians. The north is guarded by the Guardian-Hawk Vainateya. The south — where most travelers enter — is guarded by the fierce Demon-Knight Wessowan, of the six hands, who wields a parasol folded like a club. The east, where the Garden of Plenty lies, is guarded by Graviya, the Horse-Headed Fire-Wielder, who meditates at the edge of the rocky outcropping upon a burning wheel. Finally, the west, where lies the dangerous path that leads up to the Pommel, is guarded by Snake-Headed Sish, bound for five eternities as atonement for the sins of his last reincarnation. He wields a diamond urumi, which, when uncoiled completely, can affect the flow of time.

The ghost known only as **Delight** is the hostess of Dragon Maw City; her silent signs call the bells to ring or still at her discretion, and no banquet wine is taken before a drop is decanted for her approval. Her golden

palanquin may pass Sheath and Hilt without danger or trial, and so she sometimes ferries those loved ones of Kesundang's heroes who could not survive the journey themselves — but always for a terrible price, such as centuries of service or the forfeiture of treasured memories.

Neighbors

If Kesundang is a sword, the canyon of **Rive** — and the empire therein — was one of its great swiping blows. Its towers are built of twisting iron, and gruesome foundries belch forth the industrial smoke that comes from smelting the rich veins of soulsteel left from millions slaughtered in the sword's attack. Artisans and merchants dare the inner city only when a northerly corpse-wind clears the smoke; even the breathless dead are otherwise reduced to coughing fits.

Stark Hallow rests in the shadow of Kesundang, on an island off its northern coast. Founded by warrior-poets who deemed the indulgences of Dragon Maw City an empty temptation, Stark Hallow is a complex of temple-barracks dedicated to a half-dozen ascetic philosophies. They sometimes raid as high as the Hilt, tossing their spoils into the ocean as a lesson to the ghosts of Kesundang. The Hallow's greatest ghosts render their corpus into ever-finer matter until they become little more than whisper and presence.

The ghosts of **Tsiwa** dwell atop a crocodile behemoth; the lesser crocodiles who swim the waters around Kesundang are its offspring, born of its cast-off teeth and scales. Here are gathered the souls of those who died to the jaws of hungry animals, their corpus forever torn. The Tsiwa sometimes intercept souls destined for the Sword Mountain, forcing them into a century of bondage as a gladiator or jester for their amusement; those who acquit themselves well are sent on their way with panoplies of crocodile-skin armor and ivory spears.

Afterlives

Cross the wind-swept plains and the fetid swamps of the Underworld, and you will find afterlives beyond all counting. Some are primeval, arising from the Essence of death itself — battlefields where dead soldiers waken to fight and fight anew; salt-blasted hells where murderers are condemned to an eternity without slumber. Others are born of ritual and culture, shaped by the living of Creation as home and haven for their honored ancestors.

The Moment of Flame and Darkness

The prison-city Fortitude was born of imperial collapses and carceral madness, the descendants of criminals and condemned outliving their captors in the remains of the prison built to hold them. Its Uznikane people spend their lives in its hive of tunnels. From starvation to killing cold to the constant power struggles between the ruling gangs, the occasional moment of solace is all most Uznikane can look forward to, made worse by the belief that all are born under the weight of curses and sins. Only great deeds and heroic deaths may expiate that burden; those who die in obscurity disappear entirely. In death, both brave champion, and forgotten wretches find what was promised in the Moment of Flame and Darkness.

Those who seek the Moment of Flame and Darkness find an explosion suspended in time. From the great fumarole, towers of flame and shadow pierce the air; plinths float suspended by some instant of Underworld upheaval that simply never ended. This is the Moment of Flame and Darkness, and for Fortitude's dead, it is home. Fleshless heroes clad in the colors of a dozen gangs leap between crumbling peaks and islands in the sky, while lesser denizens scurry to maintain sparse encampments as close to the fire and darkness as they can stand without being consumed.

Those who died in heroic deeds are unbound in the Moment of Flame and Darkness. Their death frees them from the dread weight of hereditary sin, just as excarnation under the open sky has freed their flesh. The boiling darkness shelters them, hindering their senses not at all. They move across shattered ground without concern, and from the flames they find only comfort and warmth.

Strange merchants and savants search out the elements formed in the Moment's endless triumphal flame for use in esoteric constructions, necromantic rituals, or stranger industries. Few outsiders are able to navigate the landscape, and so Fortitude's dead find themselves presented, many for the first time, with the possibility of abundance by retrieving flame-kissed treasures and decanted darkness to trade with eager outsiders.

This trade attracts specters and other horrors, avian-skulled things animated by maggot-light seeking to consume the darkness. The common dead of the Moment often flee, unwilling to risk an unlife newly rich in material rewards, or attempt to entice the often-formidable honored dead to intervene on their behalf. Many unbound heroes throw themselves against Underworld nightmare and specter alike, whether in exultation of their status or as a desperate attempt to confirm it.

Eyeless Horcha is one such hero. A champion still celebrated in Fortitude and much courted by local dead desperate for her protection, it may only be a matter of time before some Underworld potentate or even Deathlord lures her away from the Moment. Envoys from the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears seek to turn Eyeless Horcha's love for her people to dust and poison, and to make her a disciple of the Lover's awful truths.

Those who died unremembered and alone in Fortitude's tunnels, either as a pragmatic sacrifice to the Buried God or from simple misfortune, find themselves as one with the Moment's darkness and flame. Many surrender their identities and personhood to this strange existence, but others, driven by will or emotion, pull themselves free of the greater mass. Some, consumed with hatred or anger, become those very horrors that threaten the Moment, like the Torch of Consumption, a once-sacrifice to the Buried God and now an ever-burning wraith that seeks to lead other monstrosities to assail the Moment or even Fortitude itself when one of the rare shadowland-tunnels opens to allow passage between the worlds.

Ixcoatl's Shadow

While Ixcoatl's theomilitary teaches its citizens that reincarnation awaits those not chosen for godhood,

serpent-soldiers, raiton-priests, and servant-toilers alike find themselves upon the Underworld's shores as often as any others. For those who do not immediately fall into despair or chase after unfinished business in the living world, this poses a question: What do those unprepared for an afterlife do with one?

Ixcoatlitzlim soldiers who feel cheated of a hero's death often see this as a time of testing and waiting. Forming units from likeminded dead, they drill and train, preparing for some day when they will be called again into action. For some, this keeps them sparring, mustering, and sharpening themselves for centuries. Others find the skills they've brought from life and refined in death in high demand in the Underworld, selling their services to whatever general, Deathlord, or hero can offer them reward or purpose.

The Temple of Twiceborn Lives offers another answer to Ixcoatlitzlim ghosts. It is a great edifice of black stone emerging from abyssal waters, where scholars beseech all to record their memories, deeds, and understanding of the world. Ixcoatl's greatest raitonfolk savants and scaled generals have recorded wisdom, strategy, and advice within ebony scroll-cases and upon basalt slabs, alongside clay tablets detailing the best way to skin bush-pigs written by human hunters and tapestries woven by nursery attendants illustrating how to prevent infant serpents, raitons, and humans from quarreling. While the temple's oldest curators can provide visitors with an immense repository of knowledge, they remain silent on how exactly the temple continues to expand so readily or what lies beneath the dark waters at its foundation.

The common people of Ixcoatl die just as surely as its masters. People of the Greenstone clans, humans and froglike beastfolk integrated into the Empire long ago, believe in even more precisely regimented reincarnation and apotheosis. Their grave-settlements spill out around busy barracks and temple tombs, platform-houses and half-sunken frogfolk abodes filled with shades wearing serpent and ration masks, attempting to recreate the order of Ixcoatl's high society in their unives.

The recently conquered people of the Great Canopy Towns offer lavish sacrifices in secret for their dead, hoping to ward off harsh servitude they believe their deceased will suffer from their conquerors. Their ghosts occupy soaring mansions larded with the gifts of the living, waiting for demands from serpent-ghosts and raiton-shades which rarely come. Instead, they find themselves trading with shades of the long-suppressed

Middle People, those caught between Ixcoatl's predecessor empires and subjugated by their unified might. With goods and magics cultivated over centuries, gained through plutonian trade or Underworld raiding, the ghosts slowly build and furnish their own city of the dead. Some wish to defy Ixcoatl in death, while others plan more actively, seeing an underworld strongpoint from which to raid nearby shadowlands.

The living priest-generals of the theomilitary stridently oppose any contact with Ixcoatlitzlim ghosts, engaging teams of exorcists and sacred spearmasters to expel any who insist on making their presence known. The Imperial Dyarchs are rumored to take a more pragmatic view, and several volumes of lost lore donated from the Imperial households to public-works temples of late have been basalt slabs of uncertain provenance.

Sky Pavilion

Long before the Immaculate Philosophy held sway in the Varang city-states, the Varangian dead ordered themselves as they had in life: complex astrological calculations dictating hierarchy, purpose, and import. Rejecting a sky of dead stars and the meager celestial motions of the Calendar of Setesh, the dead of Varang erected Sky Pavilion through enormous effort, fueled by lavish funerary processions and grave gifts: a structure covering all of the Varang lands-of-the-dead, crystal simulacra of constellations gleaming in bejeweled light from a woven sky.

Varang's ghosts need simply look up to follow the stars' course in death. Those heretics who wished to seek undead accolades beyond their astrological sphere were driven beyond Sky Pavilion's borders. While these pariah-ghosts are popular strawmen for the afterlife's many problems, the truth is that Sky Pavilion creaks under the weight of its ghostly notables. Princes and worthies were lauded for centuries with the fabled Varangian consistency, ensuring that Sky Pavilion's ranks swelled with generation upon generation of noble ghosts unwilling to compromise their dignities in death. Their mausoleum-palaces abut one another on regimented streets as if being squeezed ever tighter, and every decision made requires the consent of dozens of high officials — ensuring that such decisions rarely, if ever, get made.

Since the Realm's conquest of the Varang and generations of Immaculate instruction, Varang's newer dead often see their ghostly existence as a failure to fulfill their astrologically appointed duties. Those dead princes who reigned in Varang's glory days attempt to

instill civic pride in the shades of their descendants, but that pride is undercut by the fact that Sky Pavilion's titular wonder is languishing. Its once-glorious mechanisms fall into disrepair year by year, and the cloth-of-night that is its dome is pocked in places by holes where the milky un-light of Underworld stars intrudes into their perfect order.

The treasures that Sky Pavilion barter away to secure partial repairs cannot be easily replaced in an era of Immaculate dominance, but for many of Varang's august dead, their manufactured sky is worth any price. Meanwhile, ghosts from lower spheres see an opportunity to seize what was denied to them in life, the riches of Varang's princes theirs if they dare ascend to mend the failing heavens... or, some now consider, collapse the entire system along with its false sky.

Tsaati Sineth is one such iconoclast, dead no more than a decade and yet flush with ambition and strengthened by worship from a resilient ancestor cult. She agitates for a new system that will cast all ghostly horoscopes into question, defining their spheres not by their day of birth but by the hour of their death. She has found an unlikely ally in the shade of V'neef Asima, a disgraced Immaculate who believes that such a system would send Sky Pavilion's worthies into despair — and leave

them open to Immaculate correction, a deed that she believes would ensure her auspicious rebirth.

The Drowned Island's Fleet

Home to sailors and immigrants, foreign rites see many of Wu-Jian's visitors returned to the final destinations of their home ports and origins. Some, however, are laid to rest in Wu-Jian's own ceremonies, mourned by those who loved and respected them as their bodies are committed to the sea, consumed by crematory flame, or interred in vanishingly rare grave vaults. Those given the rites of Wu-Jian, whether by water or fire or earth, are given ancient parting words to "sail beyond the horizon."

Paupers and artisans find themselves in small boats moored at the edge of a bleak place known as the Drowned Island, supplied by funerary offerings for journey, should they be brave enough to risk travel across Underworld's waves. The rich and powerful awoken on the decks of great ships, sometimes accompanied by rowing automatons or grave-good servants.

The same cannot be said of those who died unknown, unmourned, or unluckily in Wu-Jian, so often waking shipwrecked on the Drowned Island. They receive the



land's bleak hospitality, a nightmare-land overtaken by extrusions of the Labyrinth and patchwork shadowlands suddenly overlapping with the worst parts of Wu-Jian itself. Parts of it lead to the Gyre; others to specter-haunted oubliettes. A ghost trapped on the Drowned Island can find themselves in the presence of unexpected riches, as treasures and relics lost to the ocean settle amidst rotting tides and mud.

At its edges, the smothered island rises to meet dockworks and piers maintained by those well-provisioned dead who have yet to leave the island behind or who have returned on some errand. A berth on a moored ship can be pricey; many more die improperly commemorated than receive Wu-Jian's native rites. Ships of the dead sometimes offer transport to souls escaping the island with absurdly one-sided terms, demanding centuries of service. The wealthy with ample space on their ships sometimes wait to assemble entire crews of indentured ghosts to aid perilous crossings or demand a dead queen's ransom to help desperate ghosts escape pursuing horrors and clinging mud. Few intact ghosts hesitate to pay the punishing prices in return for escape from the mire.

Despite this awfulness, the Drowned Island sees frequent visitors from Creation. Grandmother Fang, a Lintha necromancer, tasks lean and deadly hunting ghosts with dragging back unfortunates for use as raw material, breaking from her people's traditions by treating her ancestors as mere tools. Mediums occasionally cast hopeful lures through brief, tempting doorways, hoping to call forth the recently dead for bereaved or desperate families. And members of the Millstone Children occasionally venture past the borders of the school's pet shadowlands, seeking to prove their mastery of Ivory Pestle martial arts against undead horrors to claim senior status within the school's ranks.

The Slow Gyre and the Splintered Steps

Travel by boat due west from Stygia's walls and the waters of Underworld undergo a change. Their colors shift from dark emerald and bruised purple to impossible shades of shimmering blue and back once more. Currents pull black streams from elsewhere in the Underworld like dark veins beneath the surface, converging on a maelstrom known as the Gyre.

When unfortunates meet the end of their lives suddenly and unknowingly to one of the thousand ways one can die at sea or in a deep river's flow, they often find

themselves amongst Stygia's Blue Mansion (p. 85). The maelstrom, its strange currents, and the rotting hulks atop it await different dead: mariners caught in grim realization that they've made a fatal error upon the deep, caught in the great curl of waves they foolishly risked or the slow, inexorable disintegration of a ship they *knew* they shouldn't have boarded. Their afterlife is roaring wreck, the Splintered Steps above and the Slow Gyre below.

The broken ships atop the ferment make up the Splintered Steps. Some are floating platforms of calm; others partially sunken but never fully disappearing beneath the surface. Small communities that died in the wake of battles and shipbreaking disasters often find themselves here. Strange wrecks and hulls regularly arrive, whether from new wrecks or tugged to the Gyre by its ceaseless currents, and dead sailors nervously pick over their remains.

Below, things stalk the Slow Gyre, from bloated specters to the gut anglers — inhuman, hook-trailing hunters intent on dragging ghosts into the utmost depths. Sunken ship and whirled detritus offer coverage and some manner of protection, and long-time inhabitants of the Gyre defend their spaces viciously. Treasure ships loaded with lost tribute meant for First Age rulers, Shogunate successor states, or dead Great Houses are staked out by ghostly remnants of their crews or later treasure hunters, strife breaking out between their inhabitants when the Gyre brings them closer. Newly arrived dead must either bargain for a space with the jealous masters of these drowned vessels, or seize them by force.

The powerbrokers of the Gyre are patient but vicious, forming a loose coalition known as the Salvage Council. Broken Anchor, a gray-faced Lunar from the depths of the First Age, attempts to assemble seaworthy vessels, though few meet his exacting standards. Admiral Trahn, once known for ruthless valor in the far West, now trades with the occasional visitor with a ready smile, seeking creature comforts to decorate his aimlessly drifting flagship. The First Age hull of the *Without Presumption* holds the drowned court of the Dawn Princes; the flayed ghosts of the last who tried to seize it from them are staked, still writhing to its hull.

The Salvage Council works to claim half-sunken ships, forming a shifting staircase to the bottom of the Gyre itself, where stranger treasures still can sometimes be dredged from its treacherous depths. They grant entrance to their own scavengers and those of potential allies — notably the Eemi League by long-standing

agreement, but recently overtures have come from envoys of the Silver Prince.

The Flint Teeth

Covered in caves and twisted wilderness, the ragged islands in the Stygian archipelago known as the Flint Teeth are occupied by those who died far from home in the hunt or on impossible quests. Awaking in its caverns, most of its ghosts dedicate themselves to pursuing enigmatic quarry: obsidian-footed oryxes, phantom-raptors with feathers of condensed ambition, and man-sized cobras that move through stone like fish through water. It is an afterlife of endless pursuit — sometimes as hunter and sometimes as hunted, but forever moving, seeking, hoping that some greater trophy is over the next hill.

The treasures taken from the Teeth's beasts can make any hunter wealthy, if they are not torn to bits and devoured beyond recovery. Split-faced Khor hunts many-eyed antelope, black-winged cranes, and great skinless bears with skills he once used for his sorcerous masters in Ysyr, offering their butchered parts in trade for news of the shades of Ys sorcerers so that he might hunt them in turn.

The venerable Fen Amsi stalks the wraithsome things that haunt half-flooded coastal tunnels, trading their braided sinews for tokens of the living East. Loshan Vu, failed usurper of Gem, proudly pays tribute to the Fallen Spear Imperium with weapons forged from corpus-rending fangs and claims a (largely theoretical) governorship over the Teeth in return.

The ghosts of the Teeth hunt above and seek below. Memories and desires unmet congeal in the deepest darknesses beneath the afterlife, filling subterranean chambers. Some ghost drink deep, eventually dissolving in the bittersweet memory of goals desperately sought but never obtained. Such terminal passions can be distilled; those who drink them are consumed for a time by the fervent, unmet desire of the twice-deceased.

Others, however, pull themselves away, once-fatal endeavors now fueling them to great deeds in their ghostly existence. The Abhari heretic Wazima Sufyen emerged determined to return to her home and preach her visions of the true gods of death to the living; the fallen cartographer Unwavering Script began mapping the waters of the Underworld; and Manosque Kryallo fills an armory with grave weapons and horrific Underworld magics in preparation for his vengeance upon the Scarlet Dynasty.

The Arid Scape

Blasted by dust-filled wind and swirling cyclones of plutonic salt, baked by horrid failure-suns which shed only heat and desiccation, the Arid Scape welcomes those who die of thirst or heatstroke. The brackish rivers Deadweight and Blacktongue curl around its base, while the salt-seared Metody's Breath cuts its way through its northern plateau. While outsiders caught in the storms may be destroyed if they don't find shelter, those dead who have already perished through desiccation and heat once find themselves inured to its effects. Many are reduced to withered and leathery figures by the Scape's conditions, armoring themselves in their own baked skins.

The Arid Scape is a harsh land of extremity, imagined variously by its inhabitants as either a hellish punishment or a crucible for those with the will to endure. Many of its unfortunates find themselves ill-suited to the Underworld beyond; even if they wanted to leave, their heat-hardened flesh rejects other climes as desperately cold. The waters of the Underworld are a wretched, icy bane to them, and so they tarry within the Scape and become all the more bound to it by the day.

Still, the ghosts of the Arid Scape find meaning wherever they can. Eyeless Maheka Kei stalks the outskirts of Scape when she is not meditating within the storms at its core, her slow death by dehydration in a military bunker having given way to religious devotions to Pasiap. Wine merchant Wide-Palm bargains with visitors for vintages from Creation and the Underworld alike with purified salts from the Scape's inner layers, refusing to leave until he finds the remains of the caravan he died leading. Coal Heart, a fae-blooded warrior who once threatened cities across the South before being captured and executed through exposure by a southern Realm garrison, recruits warriors able to survive the Arid Scape's climes for the First and Forsaken Lion in return for a promised place in the van should the Lion's forces move against the Realm. Those whose flesh is not yet accustomed to the trials of the Scape sometimes leave by the nearby rivers, the gondolier Tall Liu often offering passage to less harsh climes.

Other Afterlives

In the humid **Fields of Jamiyun**, farmers toil and laze in the oppressive heat of a never-ending summer. The ghosts here died of exhaustion in fields and rice paddies throughout Creation. It is a languid afterlife, tiring but peaceful under the rule of King Jamiyun; neighbors

war against one another to control the roads in and out so they might dominate its export of cereals and grains rich with the reverence of honest work. These rivals join together only to fight the Three Bandit Kings, specter-warlords who bedevil the Fields of Jamiyun infrequently with scourges of flame, frost, and locusts.

The **Azure Lotus Inferno** is a valley of wicked beauty, covered in gorgeous lotuses that bloom despite an abominable cold. This grave-chill freezes a ghost's corpus, making the phantasmal echoes of blood and tears run sluggish in their forms. The valley is one of many primal afterlives that ensnares those who die weighed down with guilt for their sins, and those who try to leave find themselves buffeted back by winds of driving hail. Slowly, these wretched ghosts become lotuses themselves; the daring sometimes venture into the valley to retrieve petals for use in necromantic rites or to consult the semi-sentient voices that dwell in the valley's winds, speaking in a rattle of lotus seeds.

In the cavern-fortress of **Seizing**, avaricious ghosts burrow bare-handed through yielding stone in search of veins of gold, electrum, and the rare soulsteel of those whose tunnels collapsed and crushed their corpus in ages past. Pale echoes of the Whispers of the Neverborn enflame the greed of all who dwell here, transforming them into misshapen serpents, ever-hungering to amass wealth that they will never spend. A perilous shadow-land tunnel sometimes connects Seizing to the depths of one of Uluiru's nearly-emptied mines, where the destitute and desperate sometimes unwittingly stumble into death's realm in search of treasure.

Wan Akore is one of the Underworld's failed moons, a lumpy mass of barely luminescent bleached coral. It fell into the Sea of Shadows long ago and now wanders its waters like a moving island. Ghosts who come ashore — whether as explorers or the newly dead caught in its tides and gravity — find the hospitality of the necromancer-sage Zalar, who offers them feverish delights. Those who succumb to his charms will remain on Wan Akore, slowly calcifying into coral so the moon may grow larger, corpus by unwitting corpus.

The Peregrination is a cathedral that ambles on great legs of gristle and ivory; the ghosts of this afterlife follow in its wake, for they are the souls of pilgrims who died in their journeying. It is the fondest hope of these ghosts to ascend the cathedral, overtaking it during one of the rare moments when it stops as if to survey its surroundings, but few can make the sheer climb required to surmount it. Those who manage are welcomed by the cathedral's attendants, who fete

the pilgrim, anoint them in sacred acid-oils, and pour their dissolving corpus into a vast reliquary chalice. Powerful ghosts sometimes visit to sip of the distilled wisdom of those worthy souls, gleaning strange insight or visions of the distant past.

Sometimes, when one of the Underworld's unreliable relict-moons shines just bright enough, travelers may find **the Protruding City**, which hangs from the vault of the gloomy sky like a chandelier. It is a muted, silent place; sounds distort as if submerged in water. Its ghostly citizens regard visitors with ennui and resignation, for communication is impossible — they have no mouths to speak nor hands to sign or write, and more esoteric attempts draw the attention of many-eyed horrors who otherwise slumber in the city's bowels. Savants claim that the city is a cage for those who died as assistants in some First Age working, bound to keep their master's secrets beyond even eternity. The Lover sometimes visits to study the nine obelisks at the city's heart, gleaning necromantic wisdom from their ever-changing inscriptions; in rare moments of contemplative satisfaction, she unmakes a willing supplicant from the city's silent ghosts, granting them the reprieve of oblivion.

In the phantom-forges of **the Ruined and Rattling Temple**, smith-ghosts worn down by time to little more than strong-backed silhouettes operate pyre-flame furnaces to continue their life's labors. The halls are hung with masterpieces, born from the smelted reminiscences of master artisans and warriors, alloyed with Underworldly iron. They rarely work in soulsteel, and then only when a would-be-client stirs all seven forge-lords with rare pleas of heartbreaking beauty... or dire sacrifices of gore and vengeance, which the Old Laws compel them to accept.

Authors who die believing another living soul has never read their greatest works incarnate in **Manuscript**, a wistful, melancholic place of weathered columns and aqueducts that flow with ink. Many go through a ritual of unwriting their manuscripts by reading them aloud to their assembled peers, each time removing one word from the text until it is gone. Some leave pauses where the words once were, which stretch on agonizingly over the iterations, while others remove the silences, lending their work a poetic quality as it dwindles. Listeners often find that these fragmentary works contain details of the linguistic and historical traditions of cultures found nowhere else in Creation, though the authors may have difficulty recalling whether their accounts are factual or fictional.

Those who find joy in the art of combat revere the colosseum called **Tournament**. Dead and living warriors venture there hoping to meet the mythic founders of their arts, learn puissant techniques, and reunite with fallen friends or foes. Many cannot withstand the maelstrom of Essence generated by the duels within its concentric walls; ramshackle viewing platforms and scrying devices litter the approach. Within the first wall, hopefuls endure esoteric regimens of training and sparring until they are winnowed out or defeat one of the Ostiaric Instructors. The second ring, though populated exclusively by legends and mountain-shattering savants, retains an aura of camaraderie, even tranquility. Here, even blood-crazed berserkers and corruption-drowned monstrosities may find an end to their rampages and a path toward self-mastery. Within the final, translucently thin wall, three forms face each other, poised in stances of utter martial perfection. Whenever one of them shifts to a more advantageous position, a flurry of analysis ripples through the community, venerated manuals penned or rewritten.

Stalker's Lair is a mist-shrouded chain of forested islets featuring halls whose baroque architecture is riddled with secret passages and intricate puzzles. The ghosts within enjoy a contemplative afterlife, punctuated by moments of abject horror as they are fed upon by a many-legged behemoth, semi-aquatic and feline. The hunter devours bites of their memories as its food, and it drinks in the resulting fear and confusion. It processes the memories into compressed spheres of glowing Essence, which it regurgitates into caches scattered above and below the water. Debates over the solutions and functions of the various puzzles, methods for avoiding or sealing the beast, and the reason for the

current conditions are constantly shifting as ghosts lose and regain memories they can only hope are their own.

The Dragon King cycle of reincarnation follows its own rules, many of their souls remaining long-dormant in their unhatched eggs, and some walking the Underworld's **Nineteen-Gates Road**, which weaves through a complex series of interconnected afterlives. It carries their souls through trials and lessons, sharpening or correcting their instincts. Passing through the One-Pack Gate requires collaboration between the isolated, and those who corrupted their Essence with monstrous acts must purify it by enduring the Waterless Realm and the ordeal of the Sun Gate at its end. Other ghosts and the rare, determined hero or scholar are permitted passage through up to eighteen Gates, marking them as friends of the Dragon Kings and some assimilating the culture enough to make a home of the worlds they've journeyed through.

The dead of the Anointed Steppe are wrapped in scrolls covered in intricate print, expediting their passage through **The Queues**. Ghosts process along jade walkways which intersect and diverge as their exacting bureaucratic requirements dictate. Elaborately masked sacred animals interrogate the ghosts and process their scrollwork at endless checkpoints. Their heroic and shameful actions are recorded and tallied, the ink flowing from the scroll to manifest into an ethereal display or condense into a physical bauble, gradually freeing the ghost of its attachments. Rarely, especially enlightened or heinous memories materialize as half-sentient entities or artifacts of numinous power, which are ferried away by efficient squads of spirit animals to be safely stored until they can be allocated to appropriate descendants and reincarnations.

Shadowlands

There are places where the lands of the living and dead intersect, coexisting in an ambiguous peace. These are the *shadowlands*, where the two worlds share a common boundary. These liminal spaces prove useful to anyone with plans to move from one realm to the other — ghosts with unfinished business, enterprising traders, and grieving lovers alike.

During the day, the shadowland's borders lead to Creation. Any traveler seeking to escape the Underworld need only find a shadowland and wait for the sun to rise to make their way back to the world of the living. At night, the reverse is true — those who leave its borders

find themselves in the Underworld instead. Mortals and ghosts commune more easily, for the dead are fully material by night in a shadowland and even by day in shadowlands of sufficient age and power.

Despite this communion, shadowlands are not welcoming places. Few crops grow within them; sunlight drifts to the ground as if through a perpetual cloud cover; forgotten horrors crawl to the surface. Enough time spent in a shadowland warps the body and mind of the living. Where the Wyld chaotically transforms, shadowlands draw their residents ever closer to death. Thoughts become morbid and macabre. Bodies become pale and

gaunt as if afflicted with illness. Some mortals resist this change easily, while others succumb to death quickly and join the shadowland's ghostly ranks.

Blessings and ritual magic can mitigate the worst of these changes, but not prevent them utterly — those who dwell within a shadowland are always marked by its influence eventually. They slowly take on wraithsome features like sickly pale hair, razored fingernails, or milk-white eyes that see what the living cannot.

Animals may change as well, becoming skeletal, frightening versions of themselves. Docile labor beasts take on aggressive tendencies or develop a taste for blood, while companion animals obsess over protecting their owners to a lethal degree. In rarer instances, exposure turns ordinary creatures into monsters who feast on the living and threaten to escape into Creation if not contained. Flora is similarly affected, spreading forests of ivory-barked trees and toxic fungi.

These factors make forming a homestead in a shadowland challenging and undesirable. Those who choose to make their livelihood within one are desperate, compelled by death, motivated by faith or belief, or some combination of them all.

Origins

Shadowlands rise from a variety of circumstances, but the most common by far is an atrocity resulting in mass death. These include sites of major battles, cities ravaged by plague, or the aftermath of a great fire or flood. In the wake of these events, the two worlds press violently against one another, forming a shadowland. This is not inevitable. Funerary rites and community mourning can forestall or prevent the development of a shadowland, settling the roiling spirits of the dead. Powerful militaries like the Realm have corps of exorcists and mourners follow in train with their soldiers to consecrate battlefields.

Other shadowlands emerge as the result of obscure processes, creating places where the veil between the two worlds is naturally porous. Poetically-minded academics refer to these improbably ancient passages as the eldways and opine that they marked the journeying of forgotten gods or deathly powers that predate the Divine Revolution. Others are cyclical, appearing and disappearing by some enigmatic calendar — including the shadowland known as the Grief of Meru, five years overdue to open again on the western slope of the mountain at the center of the Blessed Isle by the reckoning of long-dead savants.

Necromancy can tear open shadowlands as well. Reckless or overzealous necromancers sometimes rip at the fabric of Creation, their magic seeking to make the world more like the land of the dead. These shadowlands are oft tainted by the nature of the careless spell that brought them into being, creating breathless chasms, geysers of blood, or barrows haunted by music that lures in unwary mortals to partake of a dance that will last the rest of their short lives.

Other deathly powers create shadowlands on purpose. This is difficult and costly, especially when compared to the expedience of wholesale slaughter, but sometimes subtlety is worth its expense. Necromantic workings, geomantic manipulation, and rare treasures are applied to knit together the worlds of living and dead. Rare phalanx-fruits sometimes blossom on the outstretched hands of certain behemoth-corpses; when planted in Creation, they sprout ashen trees laden with ebony leaves in a matter of days, sucking the land's vitality dry in one greedy gulp to leave a shadowland behind.

Settlements and Cultures

While shadowlands are fraught places for the living, that doesn't stop the people of Creation from building their homes within or nearby. Those who dwell near sometimes grow accustomed to their unique opportunities for travel and interaction with the dead. Closing a shadowland is dangerous, costly, and often outweighed by the emotional appeal of being able to tarry with departed ancestors. When the Elk-horn Clan of Ipshua closed their shadowland with a rite of breathtaking beauty and complexity, it deprived them of certain knowledge — secret routes and obscure medicines — that doomed the clan's survivors.

Places situated near shadowlands often develop unique economies centered on their dealings with the dead, in talisman-hung districts where laborers may tarry with tolerable safety. Clientele includes both the recently and the long-since deceased, causing merchants, night wardens, and street vendors to dabble in ancient turns of phrase to better suit their customers. It's not uncommon for such ventures to retain long-outdated social customs, especially in shadowlands presided over by elder ghosts of significant power.

Ancestor-venerating cultures that do not live within the shadowland make frequent pilgrimages. Ghostly wayhouses often crop up in response, providing nourishment, clean water, and places to rest for living visitors. Those who run such wayhouses may become

information brokers with eyes and ears that bridge the gap between worlds. Exiled custodes of the Dual Monarchs sometimes create such wayhouses or else seek to initiate their owners into the Transcendent Course. Merchants traverse shadowlands as often as pilgrims, charting routes to the Underworld that trade the perils of death for the expedience of its mutable geometry.

Those rare communities who dwell entirely within a shadowland often struggle for fresh food and water. The solutions vary, with some focusing on trade, offering up strange treasures in return for staple crops, meat, and other foodstuffs. Others depend on fragile magic — geomancy, thaumaturgy, and ancient workings — to create pockets of flourishing life. These gardens and greenhouses are precious, both costly and difficult to maintain.

The Skullstone Archipelago

In the vast shadowlands of the Skullstone Archipelago, Underworld stars illuminate black beaches. Living and dead co-exist in harmony under the Sable Order, in the Silver Prince's so-called perfect society. But splendor in death foments intrigue, and the living chafe against inequality. Skullstone faces a time of great change — to its ideals, empire, and people.

An Aristocracy of Death

In Skullstone, those soon to die present themselves to the Black Judges, esteemed necromancer-justiciars. Those whom the Judges deem worthy become thanatocrats — ennobled ghosts whose corpses are preserved in funerary clothes and doused in incense and perfumes. Thanatocrats display their bodies like withered treasures, with some among them learning to pilot them at night. They take leading positions in government and religion, commanding reverence from their descendants; the most-celebrated dead have festivals in their name orchestrated by families of means.

Every major island of the archipelago is home to several Black Judges, but it is thought that they look most favorably upon those who make their final pilgrimage to the capital of Onyx, perhaps recognizing the dedication of the dying or hoping the Silver Prince himself might spy them from overlooking Mount Vashti. Strange elixirs and folk medicine are sought after to delay the moment of death until one can be brought before the Judges. Altogether, roughly one in eight citizens become thanatocrats, a plurality of whom are

drawn from Skullstone's ruling and colonial elite.

Those deemed unworthy or who die away from a Black Judge are made into mindless zombies by morticians of the Gentle Hands of Renaissance. All zombies are property of the state by default; families who want their loved ones back — which is most, for sentimental purposes — must purchase them at a steep price. Most zombies are stripped of their flesh but can be embalmed on commission or at state request. They're commonly dressed in funerary masks and robes and perfumed if embalmed.

Zombies are the engine that powers Skullstone: they farm and mine, dredge for ocean treasures, build and crew ships, and perform other simple, physical labor to free the living from the toil that is common elsewhere in Creation. Even poor families have a few zombies to work their fields, and the wealthiest own hundreds or thousands. Theft or destruction of a zombie, or failure to report a death and hand over its corpse, are offenses punishable by execution, prosecuted viciously by House of Night inquisitors. Most zombies persist for a few decades at most before their body finally disintegrates; precious favorites are given thaumaturgical treatments to preserve them for centuries.

While the Sable Order promises eternal splendor, even great thanatocrats eventually succumb to Lethe's release. This is seen as a defect of character, a fault in either the thanatocrat or her family. Truly ancient thanatocrats are tethered to Creation by prayers of thanks at dusk and dawn, the cultivation of attachments and inflaming of passions, and ceremonial gift-giving. Rarely, the Silver Prince interferes directly, preventing a thanatocrat from passing on without sharing his reasons for doing so. Deliberately forcing a thanatocrat to pass on is a dire insult to the family, the likes of which initiates blood feuds.

Within the shadowland's bounds, it's rare for ghosts to occur naturally. Those who do have not earned their afterlife and are shunned at best, exorcised violently at worst. Hungry ghosts are put down with expedience or else captured and bound to serve the state.

The Archipelago

The Skullstone Archipelago is synonymous with the empire that rules it — once, it held its own name, but few endure who remember. Its largest islands are dead volcanoes, the rest small islets strewn across the cold ocean. Skullstone enjoys little of the moderating current that warms the Great Western Archipelago; fog is

constant, with mild temperatures in the summer and bitterly cold snows all winter. The weather fluctuates weirdly when winds blow in from the Underworld, such as rains of blood. Littoral waters are stained dark through commingling with the Sea of Shadows.

The entire archipelago and its waters lie inside a shadowland, expanded over centuries from Darkmist. On the rare clear day, the sun is weak; little in the way of large flora lives there, while precipitation and fog are nigh perpetual. Erosion is a universal problem, necessitating constantly maintained earthworks to prevent landslides, as well as import of chalk to reduce soil acidity for farming. Of the archipelago's many mountains, only Mount Vashti has endured unscathed, preserved by the Crown of Eternity's unique geomancy.

The archipelago is divided into two parts: **the Heart Isles** in the west and **the Dependency** in the east. The Heart Isles consist of Darkmist — largest of the archipelago's islands by far — and the neighboring Greyshores, Cormorant, Seagate, and Stark's Reef. They're the coldest, wealthiest, and most populous part of Skullstone. Population concentrates in and around Onyx on Darkmist and on coasts, with interiors sparsely populated.

The Dependency refers to the rest of the archipelago, whose islands are all present or former protectorates undergoing the final steps of assimilation. These islands are smaller, warmer, and flatter. Its peoples have integrated into the empire and largely view themselves as Skullfolk, though individual islands often practice old traditions modified to Sable Order orthodoxy. Some forsake their island identities in favor of presenting themselves as distinguished subjects of the Silver Prince, with dreams of becoming wealthy and retiring to Onyx. Others, from more recently incorporated protectorates, quietly preserve their identities and traditions; but even they are believers in the Sable Order, by and large, their homes shaped by the years of cultural hegemony.

Both regions maintain their own tensions. Bandits and dissidents populate the mountainous highlands of the Heart Islands; a group of noble politicians were driven from Cormorant by the Prince for refusing to relinquish lands to the state, where they went on to conquer Kerkeis (**Heirs to the Shogunate**, p. 246). The Dependency decays under high taxation rates and minimal governmental aid, and pockets of would-be rebels seethe across it, wary of the last group who tried — and failed — in the Nineteen Nights of Shame.

Society and Culture

Skullfolk tend towards olive skin with dark eyes and coiling hair in black, blue, or white. Albinism is common, especially in the heart of the empire where bloodlines have lived for centuries in shadowlands. Well-fed, they're unusually tall yet prone to a gauntness that belies strength and health.

Traditional Skullfolk clothing is made from wool and leather to keep out the cold. Belted dresses and tunics are worn under hooded cloaks, robes, or greatcoats; hair is braided or worn up under head coverings. Obsidian, amethyst, and silver jewelry are common among all classes. Most clothes are severe blacks, grays, and browns; in cities, elites flaunt bloody crimsons, gentle violets, bone-white ivories, and hadal blues. The pious and conservative dress in imitation of the dead, donning ornate shawls, grease body-paints, and perfumes.

In the hinterlands, goats and sheep graze upon heath, lichens, and seaweed to produce dairy; strange fish, seabirds, and seals go into stews. Zombies farm crops that are hardy or touched by death: bonewheats, legumes, and root crops. Sickly sweet berries make jams and wines; elites in Onyx enjoy candies, soft breads, and rich blood soups, while sailors eat preserved pemmican. Northwestern whale blubber and spices from the Neck — especially black pepper — are highly prized.

Buildings comprise vast slabs of basalt, bonded with plaster and roofed with mud brick. They're built partially into the earth, often with interior columns and vestibules for storage and shaking off snow. Murals and quilts commonly cover surfaces. Wooden furniture is a sign of wealth; wooden architecture, unimaginable decadence. Living residents burn coal in the winter, making smog a problem in cities, but thanatocrat estates are seldom ever heated, leaving living descendants to make do in the chill.

Highly literate, Skullfolk enjoy novels, plays, calligraphy, and poetry. Word games are a regular pastime, sparring over clever allusions, witticism, and riddles both in salons and through letters. Aspiring bureaucrats flaunt their talents, hoping to impress their peers and superiors.

Skullstone exports tin, fine arts, sealskin, precious metals and gems, wines, and strange shadowland treasures like Darkmist velvet and imports fruits, spices, sugar, tobacco, timber, charcoal, and silk. Its closest trading

partners are Azure and the peoples of the Neck, who are often preyed on economically with draining import quotas and exclusive export deals, often enforced at spear point. Skullstone also facilitates trade between the Underworld and Creation for a fee.

Skullfolk are clannish, raised in close proximity to their extended families, and have a reputation for chauvinism tied to Sable Order values. Abroad, this feeds into their image as reserved, aloof, and enticingly taboo; domestically, they view each other as proud, loud, and hot-blooded. They keep strange hours, as the dead prefer night when they can become corporeal.

Families name children after thanatocrat ancestors or after favored ghost-saints whom the family wants to watch over the child. Virtue names drawn from ideals and imagery of Sable Order philosophy and poetry are given to foundlings and taken by the religious. Examples include Alabaster, Brume, Clarity, Darktide, Fidelity, and Passion.

Government

Skullstone government is strongly centralized around Onyx, with most of its ministries headquartered there. Examples include the House of Night's tax collectors, accountants, and census keepers; the Gentle Hands of Renaissance who train Black Judges and whose morticians maintain thanatocrats' reliquary-corpses; and the Office of Holy Travail, who oversee earthworks, zombies and their labor. Becoming a bureaucrat is a sign of virtue and sagacity as well as a guarantor of wealth, providing better lives for the aspirant's whole family — if she passes the grueling annual examinations hosted in Onyx. Corruption can buy positions, but an incompetent bureaucrat humiliates her entire family.

Two assemblies advise the Silver Prince. The Elder Council numbers seven of the most influential and esteemed thanatocrats who advise on matters of foreign policy, economics, and war. Members hold their seats for centuries; new members are appointed by the Prince from the Younger Council only when a member passes into Lethe.

The Younger Council numbers seventy members, living and dead. Governors — traditionally living bureaucrats appointed as heads of each island — automatically hold office, comprising around half; the rest are nominated from the Black Fleet, merchants, ministries, and noble families. This office is largely ceremonial, serving as a sinecure and vector of intrigue. They can propose

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

Skullstone remands all Ghost-Bloods into the custody of the state, citing that their half-dead status circumvents the Sable Order. Children of any age must be taken if discovered; unregistered adults are jailed. The Ministry of Harmonious Divisions sends each Ghost-Blood somewhere they'll be carefully observed and able to serve the state: bestowing them as charges to bureaucrats or state necromancers, indenturing them to cloisters or tradesmen, or, at the Silver Prince's discretion, taken as palace servants or trained as lictors.

matters to the Elder Council, but these are rarely passed unless already backed by powerful voices in the senior chamber.

Islands controlled by Skullstone that aren't fully incorporated are called protectorates. Each is run by a viceroy, a thanatocrat appointed by the Elder Council. Viceroys maintain their own staff like governors, working through local elites to run protectorates. Theoretically kept in check by lictors, in practice viceroys grow less accountable to Skullstone the more remote their protectorate, with the most influential and remote viceroys running theirs like private kingdoms.

Skullstone's famous Black Fleet is small by the standards of other great Western powers, restricted by Skullstone's lack of timber. It boasts sleek caravels, enormous galleys, and oared carracks. Ships are covered and crewed almost entirely by zombies, hoisting sails and rowing ceaselessly. Fleet ships patrol coastal waters, escort merchant ships, and carry goods to foreign ports. Duties rotate, but at any time, half of the Fleet is engaged in economic activity.

Though it wages no wars, the Black Fleet is Skullstone's favorite weapon of imperialism by carrying dignitaries and spying merchants, extracted resources, Sable Order texts, and necromancers and zombies. Captains and merchants alike keep detailed logs of the happenings in every port they visit, vital information to feed the ministries' trade policies and identify opportunities to pull neighbor isles into the Dependency. Officership is viewed as an unpleasant stepping stone to advancement elsewhere or a path to joining the thanatocracy. The highest levels of the Fleet are largely thanatocrats, and ships crewed exclusively by the dead, colloquially called ghost ships, lead trade expeditions into the Underworld.

Esoteric forces beyond Skullstone's fearsome deathknights also exist, deployed primarily in the Underworld. Creation knows little of these: monsters from the Sea of Shadows tamed by necromancers; whale-corpses possessed by nemissaries; and strange, singular constructs such as the Cloud Eater.

Religion

Religion in Skullstone is centered on worship of thanatocrats and a state-approved pantheon called the Seventy-Seven Exemplars, consisting of ennobled ghost-saints and death-touched gods. Mortals honor the Prince, their bodhisattva, by emulating the virtues of his Exemplars, evoking them at sunrise and sunset and when speaking with the dead. Priests from the Office of Just Reverence oversee Sable Order ceremonies in urban cathedrals and isolated cloisters, filing reports to ensure their deities remain virtuous, loyal, and controlled. The Office is headquartered in the cathedral-city of Remonstrance on Greyshores, the religious hub of the archipelago; away from urban centers, spirits hold more power, and clergy overlook disobedience out of piety or corruption.

The Exemplars include the **Rose Corpse**, patron of young lovers, beauty, and compassion; **Clement Vesper**, psychopomp-god of evening deaths, prayed to for grace and humility; **Amazja Ink-Tears**, saint of the written arts and sadness; and solemn **Suffers-in-Silence**, beseeched for tenacity in hardship and deliverance from misery.

Onyx

On the western slopes of Mount Vashti on the isle of Darkmist rests the metropole of Onyx. The capital of Skullstone glitters softly above Deliverance Bay, an oil painting in monochrome. Obsidian spires rise above crowded street corners, urban lighthouses whose beams cut through dark nights, weather, and smog. Basalt stoas wrap plazas showcasing marble statues of ghost-saints, and thanatocrats take their leisure on palanquins, ferried down vast boulevards by zombies.

Lights of every color stain the night in **Mistbloom** district, home of bureaucrats and would-be officials, adjacent to the city center. Art galleries, fine restaurants, tea houses and bordellos stay open at all hours, their interiors warm and welcoming. Literati debate literature and study for exams, and locals graffiti walls with poetry. Mistbloom is also home to Onyx's famous necrotheaters, where trained zombies perform; in mezzanine boxes, elites intrigue and gossip, hoping

to catch the Silver Prince or one of his deathknights enjoying a show.

Closest district to the Silver Prince's palace, **Curve-of-Ivory** houses Skullstone's elites. Noble families, wealthy merchants, and esteemed government dignitaries dwell in sprawling, multi-story villas of un-mortared, un-insulated stone. Bridges and aqueducts thread canals and grand plazas. Elevated roofed corridors, colloquially referred to as the Ventracles, connect Curve-of-Ivory to the Crown of Eternity for passage to government buildings.

The admission ceremony to **the Obelion**, Onyx's foremost university, sees students have their craniums figuratively split open: now and forever, their minds will be open to the knowledge of Skullstone. Savants and artists from Skullstone, its protectorates, and the Underworld itself gather (or are gathered) in its halls to create, teach, and research — provided they don't question the Sable Order. Eccentricity is the norm; the elderly Baihu Wilting Sun teaches necromancy between meandering lectures about natural philosophy, while legendary sophist Emoln's ghost teaches history and ethics through languid days-long seminars punctuated with sudden, turbulent interrogation and debate.

Most of Onyx's population resides in the labyrinthine **Ebon Canton**. Families crowd in tenements that lean over twisting alleys, aspiring bureaucrats and their families alongside tradesfolk and people from the protectorates dreaming of prosperity and ennoblement. Quality of life ranges from squalid to fair. Criminals and persecuted ghosts conduct dealings in bootleg mausoleums and hidden catacombs.

All trade in Onyx — and most in Skullstone — eventually flows through the port-district **Atramentous Heart**. Tax collectors count tribute in lithic warehouses; thanatocrats board vast ships, one-upping each other in the extravagance of their luggage. Traders from Creation and the Underworld meet here to do business under whale-oil lamp posts, hawking wares and services unique to their worlds; afterlife city-ships hire puissant guards to fend off pirates, undersea ghosts sell shadowpearls to Guild factors, and outcaste privateers buy arms from spectral artificer-princes.

In the **Doors of Tomorrow** sugar refineries, blast furnaces and shipyards throng with zombies who never stop working. The heart of industry and military in Onyx, its drydocks house the Black Fleet. The district is ringed by the headquarters of several dozen impotent

THE HIGH FAMILIES

The so-called High Families are old, influential, and quarrelsome, forever intriguing against one another. Most prominent among them are the Menjaro, eldest and most politically powerful, renowned for their Black Fleet officers and bureaucrats; Sijapuros, genteel merchants, philosophers, and diplomats with the most privately owned zombies; Amhala, the youngest who are gaudy clergyfolk and crimelords who frequently engage in familiar street brawls with Menjaro scions; and the Cerenye, romantic artisans, scholars and explorers.

trade guilds and unions; they exist as an ornament to Skullstone's industry, given ceremonial prestige only as long as they remain unflinchingly patriotic.

Noteworthy Individuals

Seated on the Younger Council, **Vekan Amhala** craves war. The thanatocrat spent his life suppressing rebellions among protectorates, in one case famously exterminating an entire island over a breach of trade agreement to replace its populace with zombie laborers. His piety is as strong as his bloodlust; he believes the Sable Order's steady hand must pacify barbarians before they destroy themselves. As one of the Bloody Poppies (p. 62), his commitment to the conspiracy is tested by his desire to extirpate the entire Menjaro family. He looks for ways to undermine and embarrass them, jeopardizing the entire group if his efforts are exposed.

Solemn **Ember-Among-Ashes**, saint of the hearth and patron to children and paupers, is among the most beloved Exemplars. Pious beyond reproach, they advocate for the common people to the Silver Prince, and they sponsor the monastic order called the Drifting Cinders, whose priests give alms and agitate for more equitable laws. Long favored by the Prince, the two have recently fallen out over new polemics from the Cinders concerning inequality; Ember fears the Cinders may be outlawed, and she replaced as Exemplar.

The very image of a solemn Black Fleet captain, iron-haired **Give-Praise Gloam**, speaks through her first mate until she reveals herself as outrageously foul-mouthed. The cheerfully amoral merchant built her

fortune through smuggling and information trading, cultivating a vast web of contacts. She does this while spying for the Prince, double dipping by selling intelligence to the highest bidder... or the one with the best bottle of wine. Nothing brings her more joy than bringing interesting foreigners home — then, when they're helpless to evade her, pumping them for information of interest.

Neighbors

Eighty years ago, Skullstone lictors deposed the mad prince of **Wreath**, turning the hilly, fertile island into a shadowland protectorate. Now it's the empire's premier holding in the Neck, nexus of all trade between Skullstone and the greater West. Wreath's viceroy, Itaja Menjaro, rules the island as his personal fiefdom, local nobility enriched via cooperation. Anzı funerary customs involve sealing the dead in catamarans bearing grave goods; the viceroy plunders these ships and reanimates corpses to work unto disintegration and forbids ancestors from contacting their descendants.

Rebels look for allies to help reignite revolution and cast off their overlords, especially among their Anzı kinfolk who fled the island — most of whom now reside in the **Crescent Archipelago (Heirs To The Shogunate, p. 244)** — but are viewed strangely for their acceptance of the dead and necromancy. The feeling is largely mutual.

Brimhera is a protectorate by necessity. Desolated by Azurite privateers, the volcanic island-nation signed treaties with Skullstone for aid and protection. Zombies rebuilt Brimherani roads and cities, raised schools and courts; now, trade goes only to Skullstone. Brimhera's dead, once honored as emanations of the island itself, are marginalized under the Sable Order as dead who endure without the blessing of Black Judges. Both worship and discussion of them are discouraged; older Brimherani revere them quietly, while youths abstain entirely. The few unexorcized ghosts endure in the holy Smoke Curtain Grotto, where they hide — and debate — a course of action with the few living who still dare attend them.

Half of a continent sank into the Underworld all at once in the Usurpation, shattering into dozens of ghostly kingdoms divided by swollen black rivers. This is the **Demersal Anarchy**, whose dead have never stopped drowning under endless rains. Mightiest among its warlord-ghosts are the Lacrimal Hexarchs, who rule from citadel-ports of stained glass. Even they struggle to resist Skullstone; the Silver Prince has extracted

wealth and treasures from the region for centuries. Yet none know what relics lay at the Anarchy's heart, where the rains fall hardest, and behemoths wander; the Prince is eager to send an expedition to find out.

Thorns

Once, music echoed along the streets of Thorns, spilling out from concert halls and teahouses and down from sumptuous apartments and salons. Artists captured city life in vibrant paintings and dynamic sculptures. Diners nibbled on airy pastries spread with plum jam and paired dishes with sweet golden wines from the countryside's many vineyards. Students flocked to Thorns' sprawling colleges; aspiring playwrights debuted their works in the grand Vaszyan Theater.

Thus was Thorns in its glory, a mighty city-state to which dozens of lesser duchies owed fealty of varying sincerity. Though it could have been a prime satrapy, the Empress believed Thorns could do more to further her influence as an ally than as a vassal, attacking neighboring states without legally implicating her. With the Realm's blessing, Thorns continued its loose governance over lesser provinces and city-states, collating their tribute and bringing historically quarrelsome aristocrats into line.

Nearly 20 years ago, Thorns' sudden attempt at expansion — and its armies' subsequent failures — drove its population to the brink of civil war. Before the city could fully heal the economic and social wounds left in its aftermath, an even greater disaster brought it low.

Four years ago, the Mask of Winters invaded, decimating Thorns' defenses and turning the once-glorious city into a shadowland — a citadel for the dead and beachhead of invasions still to come.

Recent History

While the city mourned the death of its hereditary autocrat, Mazandan Sepehr, the Realm saw an opportunity to strengthen its influence in the Scavenger Lands. Dismissing the autocrat's elder son as too much like his father — content with Thorns' status in the region and disinclined to rally its nominal vassals into a force of any meaningful strength — a dozen Dragon-Blooded advisors approached the younger son, Istban. They offered him their backing if, in exchange, he'd begin a military campaign against members of the Confederation of Rivers.

The bitter young man needed little convincing: Istban ordered his elder brother blinded and thrown into a

cell. The few administrators who objected had two choices: renounce the heir or occupy an adjacent cell. He remained alone in his imprisonment for another 13 years.

With the throne secure, Istban attempted to rally his vassals for conquest but found little enthusiasm from the duchies for whom Thorns was a ceremonial liege — and now one in disarray. In late 750, he nonetheless sent forth the armies he could levy into the River Province. Later dubbed the Autocrat's War, what Istban and his advisors intended to be a short, victorious conquest that would stir patriotism and increase Thorns' regional footprint instead dragged on for four years.

The final conflict drew in forces throughout the region, including Nexus, Great Forks, and other Confederation lands. All suffered heavy losses to the fierceness of the battle and First Age weaponry deployed from both camps. While no formal treaty was signed, the Battle of Mishaka ended the war — and with it, Thorns' expansionist attempts.

Thorns nearly fell into civil war in the aftermath. The early months of the Autocrat's War sparked nationalist sentiment as common folk sought to rise in station through battlefield service and profits from plunder; Thorns' failure crushed those hopes and made the earlier patriotism ring hollow. Many of the city's brightest young minds enlisted or had been conscripted and died in the fruitless campaign; their losses severely impacted the city's economy, workforce, and culture.

In 763, Istban visited the cells beneath the palace one last time. Years of damp, neglect, and isolation had taken their toll, and his elder sibling was dying. Still, Istban granted him no mercy, leaving him to perish alone in the dark. Shortly thereafter, the prisoner went missing.

The Invasion

Before the massive corpse-fortress Juggernaut burst forth before the gates of Thorns, Creation's denizens knew little of the Deathlords or their Abyssal knights. Thorns' mortal soldiers had no training that prepared them to defend against the invaders. Its Dragon-Blooded garrison was swiftly overwhelmed as the Mask of Winters sent his lieutenants into the city with a host of elite Lookshyan ghosts, zombie infantry, nemissaries, Underworld beasts, and other horrors.



The city fell within days, and the massive casualties and the shocked horror of the populace turned Thorns into a shadowland. Its buildings lay gutted and charred; shrines to its gods were obliterated, the Immaculate temples reduced to rubble and ash. Those survivors who didn't flee hid amidst the wreckage and emerged into a city where the sun shone only weakly, and the ghosts of neighbors who'd died defending their homes helped them sift through the debris.

The Mask of Winters views Thorns as a strategic bastion. It's his beachhead in Creation, chosen for its rough proximity to his Underworld holdings and because it was neither a Realm satrapy nor a member of the Confederation of Rivers. The city holds little sentimental value for him, but the blind deathknight known as the Rightful Heir by Red Iron Rebuked (p. 54) now resides in the autocrat's palace and sits on its throne. Once, he was Istban's elder brother; now — at last — he rules the city that was his by right.

Juggernaut

The undead behemoth that is the Mask of Winters' corpse-fortress lies outside of Thorns, its rotting bulk

forming hills and gorges as the groaning carcass shifts in uneasy slumber. Bone-spikes protrude from its spine, to which massive chains are attached. It rarely moves, but the destruction it can wreak with a swipe of its arm is no trivial matter. It could grasp a Talon's worth of soldiers in its fist and crush them with little effort.

Teams of necromancers, artificers, and sorcerer-engineers have carved barracks and luxurious quarters for the Mask's deathknights within Juggernaut's rotting shell. Scavenger lords trade rumors of artifacts and other treasures hidden in alcoves of hollowed-out bone. Networks of blood vessels serve as a guide for those familiar with the corpse-fortress' layout, but these can be a deadly maze to intruders, leading the unwary toward pits full of bilious fluid or forests of grasping sinew. Cavalry and infantry stream out from between Juggernaut's exposed ribs when the march is called.

The Mask's palace rises from between Juggernaut's shoulders, a castle of polished bone and gleaming gristle. The Deathlord is often in residence within, receiving reports from his agents in Creation and the Underworld. He entertains diplomats in the Unveiled

Hall, whose walls reverberate with the sluggish beat of Juggernaut's dead heart. The Mask uses such meetings as both a threat and a boast: From the tops of the palace's towers, his guests see the sheer expanse of territory he's taken and transformed in such short order. Confident generals understand how swiftly the Mask's armies might overwhelm their own, while more timid or pragmatic rulers recognize the sense in remaining in the Deathlord's good graces.

Thorns Today

Thorns has fallen far from its former splendor, though that decline began long before the Mask of Winters' assault on the city. The heavy casualties incurred during the war with the Confederation sapped much of its vibrancy; scholars and artists were conscripted to fight alongside its working-class infantry, and a generation of rich and poor alike returned home atop funeral wagons. Many left during the following years to escape from poverty, unrest, and grief.

Today, the weak sun throws long shadows across emptied-out quarters. There's work to be had for the living and the dead alike. The city's buildings — characterized by their dramatic pointed arches, rib vaults, and soaring spires and lantern towers — suffered heavy damage in the invasion. Determined to transform it into more than a beachhead for the Mask of Winters' troops, the Red Iron Rebuke funds construction projects to restore Thorns to its former glory.

However, the Underworld's influence can be felt throughout: basalt replaces pale marble, and stained glass windows depict the Mask of Winters and his deathknights' epic deeds. Troops living and dead put on military displays under the Seven Seasons Widow's command in the Amphitheater of the Cloven Sky. Statues of Thorns' famed performers and orators line the arena, though many have grown strange and twisted — vines grow in the cracks and wrap choking tendrils around stone necks, even as storms of scouring rain melt the marble into new shapes.

The stubborn and faithful refuse to leave, eking out a living under their new circumstances or agitating against the new regime from the shadows. Musicians compose dirges and perform for the deathknights and their ghostly visitors. Crime bosses and smugglers fill the void left by murdered administrators. Many who didn't flee after the invasion stayed due to poverty, illness, or fear. Even those with the means to leave find it hard to do so, as the Red Iron Rebuke has implemented new restrictions on travel.

Others revel in the changes, incorporating the shadowland into their new identity. New styles are inspired by Stygian fashion, Underworld festivals are syncretized with Thornish holidays, and customs adopt to the dead, such as keeping nocturnal business hours, making offerings before feasts to nourish ghostly guests, and learning dead languages to converse with Underworld neighbors.

Culture

Most homes in Thorns display elaborately carved and painted gates made of oak that residents and visitors must pass through. Larger estates have two gates: one large enough for a carriage to pass beneath, the other sized for people on foot. The carvings depict the family's ancestors and their deeds, the Elemental Dragons, and blessings from the gods. Most gates are topped with a shingle-roofed dovecote, where household members place offerings and grave-goods for their ancestors. The shadowland's appearance has reunited some families with beloved elders, making the gates a gathering place where youths consult with those who've gone before. Other ghosts, whose families died in the fighting or fled the city, keenly feel the loss of the offerings they once counted on.

Many Thornish dishes feature mahleb, a spice derived from ground cherry seeds. Used in breads and pastries, it's also mixed into a soft cheese that's brined and braided. Savory dishes include stews heavy with beef, potatoes, and cabbage, served with tangy sour cream to cut through the fat. Often, a sweet pasta coated in ground poppy seeds comprises a second course. Though the vineyards have struggled, cooks with access to pre-invasion vintages braise meats or roast vegetables in it, and bottles scavenged from abandoned homes are common barter. Enterprising vintners coax new varieties of grapes out of the bleak shadowlands soil, bottling wines that taste of regret.

Poverty, scarcity, grief, and uncertainty have taken their toll on the city's artistic and scholarly culture. Eager to restore Thorns to the center of learning and culture it was in his youth, the Red Iron Rebuke sponsors public art projects, procures texts for libraries, invites performers to enliven his galas, and commissions playwrights and troupes. Some Thornish artists disdain those who accept his patronage, though they understand the need to put food on the table.

For many, art is rebellion: workers sing protest songs; street performers dramatize the people's plight; philosophers publish scathing missives on hidden printing presses; and graffiti artists depict the Mask and his

THORNISH REFUGEES

Those Thornish who fled the invasion maintain their identity and culture in enclaves wherever they could establish a niche. Since few of those who fled did so with more than what they carried, such communities are often relegated to lower-class neighborhoods where they reside, such as the large community in Nexus' Nighthammer district, Lookshy's Lower City, or near Jiara's river dockyards. Circumstances drive them to an egalitarian welcoming of people coming from any social station to live side by side, united by the memory of Thorns that was. Aided by former smuggling gangs, they maintain informal networks along trade routes to help new escapees find other friends and relatives who may have survived and reunite those separated from their loved ones. Thornish elites with enough wealth or foreign ties eschew such communities and live as guests among their allies abroad, lobbying their hosts in Calin, Rook, or the Realm itself to muster the forces to retake Thorns.

lieutenants in garish detail. The Seven Seasons Widow sends her officers to root out the culprits on occasion, but they rarely find them — residents saw nothing, and the rebellious know to go masked and quiet. Pamphlets are often burned after reading, their details passed on by word of mouth.

Due to its long relationship with the Realm, the Immaculate Order had a strong presence in Thorns. Temples to the Dragons dotted the city, and Immaculate monks were among the first defenders when the Mask of Winters attacked — which numbered them among his lieutenants' first targets. The few survivors were mostly recalled to the Blessed Isle or escorted refugees to safety in other Threshold cities. A few remain, protecting those who seek their aid or funneling information on the deathknights' activities to contacts outside of Thorns. The city's other gods fared better in the invasion's immediate term, though the diminished population has left many adrift as years passed and their worshipers died or fled. Some have left Thorns altogether, following their adherents to other locations.

Governance

Although the Mask of Winters is often in residence in his palace atop Juggernaut, he leaves management

of the city to the Rightful Heir by Red Iron Rebuked. The deathknight has reclaimed the title of autocrat and rules from the palace in which he and his usurper brother were raised. The Heir tells all who will listen that he loves Thorns and wants to do right by its people. His patriotism is real, but in his darker moments, he still seethes — how long did he suffer in his cell? In these times, he privately thinks some suffering is a just lesson for his people.

The Red Iron Rebuke grants titles to those servants and gaolers who offered him succor during his imprisonment. Some, like the pampered seneschal Abarna Djeney, are simply bad administrators, unprepared for being stewards of a city ravaged by poverty and upheaval. Djeney oversaw a wealthy household before the Mask's invasion, and possesses neither an understanding of large-scale food distribution nor the contacts among Thorns' criminal element to prevent theft or procure additional goods. Others were always corrupt or have justified their decisions as doing what it takes to survive.

Though a few of Thorns' many duchies have been brought to heel, most have made only token gestures of fealty to their new liege. These duchies were always prickly about their oaths to Thorns even in its golden age, and the loss of many key roads have made it difficult for the Red Iron Rebuke and his forces to consolidate their control over them, especially those at the hinterlands of Thornish influence. Many offer material support to rebels and insurgents in Thorns proper, either out of honest zeal for independence or the pragmatic belief that keeping the Mask's forces occupied will keep them from marching further afield.

The Red Iron Rebuke holds particular resentment for the Dragon-Blooded and agents of the Realm. He orders any found in Thorns to answer — painfully — for the crime of aiding his brother. However, many Thornish residents adhered to the Immaculate faith, and remember the Realm's influence as a stabilizing one. A rebel group calling itself the Branches of Sextes Jylis works to smuggle refugees to other cities where Thornish exiles have established homes. They stand ready should Jiara's garrison come to their aid or the Mouth of Peace send Immaculate reinforcements from the Blessed Isle, but thus far, their requests for help have gone unanswered.

Rumors have reached the Heir of a potential challenger to his hard-won authority: the ghost of his brother Istban. A group of the usurper's supporters, living and

dead, have rallied around him, providing shelter and offerings, hiding him from the Heir's agents, and seeking opportunities to put him back on the throne. This infuriates the Red Iron Rebuke; though he believes this entity to be a convincing imposter, he treads carefully nonetheless. Mistreating his brother's supporters only drives more people to his side.

While beset with challenges, the Heir does not sit idle waiting to fend them off. Instead, he's plotting an audacious scheme to succeed where his brother failed in leading Thorns to a short and glorious war. Victory could revitalize Thorns' spirit and bring the duchies to heel. Better still, he could strike a blow at the hated Realm and perhaps turn his people against them. With the Realm already facing rebellion in Jiara, he sends his agents to foment dissent and raise in the lesser satrapies that lay between the two great cities. When the time is right, he will declare his crusade of liberation, creating a new league of free states dependent on Thorns for protection. Until then, he seeks to strengthen his position, even making overtures to the Abyssals of other Deathlords.

Afterlife

As a center of art and culture, Thorns' ancestral afterlife was one of ease and leisure. In the lavender-filled gardens of the Misty Revels, ghosts continue practicing the arts they loved in life or begin studying those they were denied access to. Paths wind throughout the island's chilly but pleasant climes, leading to promontories where painters capture Underworld vistas, or to amphitheaters where musicians, orators, and thespians perform. For all its beauty, it is also land of delirium and rueful introspection — its inhabitants find themselves utterly engrossed in their art, isolated from one another even when a crowd gathers to regard the strange tides that sometimes frost the isle's shores with sapphire dust.

Many Thornish ghosts feel a measure of guilt even as they dwell in the Revels. Immaculate teachings prepared them to pass into Lethe and rejoin the cycle of reincarnation after death, and yet they linger. A handful of faithful Immaculate ghosts populate a distant corner of the isle, visiting the Revels proper to harangue others into accepting Lethe's embrace. A patient specter-prince known as Abrigos courts these zealots under the guise of false piety, seeking a foothold in the Revels where he can lure its artists into slavery for the well-to-do of Stygia.

Since the Mask of Winters invaded, fewer and fewer ghosts appear in the Revels. Most are those of Thornish refugees, buried in their new lands with ceremonies carried from home. The ghosts of those who die in Thorns itself tend to remain in the shadowland city, put to work on rebuilding or drafted into the Mask's growing army. Some puissant ghosts of the Revels with enough clarity of mind make the journey back to Thorns, where they take on rebel artists as apprentices.

Note-worthy Individuals

The vineyard god **Drinks-the-Sun** saw much of her domain wither when Thorns became a shadowland. The fields that rang with hymns in her name are now fallow and ashen, and her once-plump cheeks are gaunt. Ever resourceful, she's reinvented herself, taking on additional duties as a protector of the sick — a job the god Bitter Daro abandoned when he fled. An honored guest at Thornish salons both before and after the invasion, she's familiar with the city's power brokers and their rivalries. She carried out a brief affair with the Seven Seasons Widow, though the two haven't been seen together in months.

Merchant prince **Casim Thurat's** route takes his caravan from Thorns to Nexus, providing the shadowland city with food, weapons, slaves, and materials. Thurat's reliability pleases the Mask of Winters, allowing the caravan — including the Liminal Exalt Dame Crimson (**Adversaries of the Righteous**, p. 151) — opportunities to smuggle refugees out of Thorns. Thurat's motives aren't entirely altruistic; his business turns a healthy profit, and he counts some of the city's crime bosses among his valued clients. He has also ferried works of art out of Thorns, selling them to collectors around the Scavenger Lands. While his focus is on masterpieces made by mortal hands, he has, on occasion, acquired artifacts instead; the Prince Resplendent has yet to discover this but is unlikely to respond warmly.

Samaha Terez serves as a scribe for the Abbot of Hunger and Dust, recording his decrees, penning missives, and composing canticles from his wisdom. Formerly a poet in Istban's court, Terez rode out the siege in the hidden passageways formerly used for private conversations and liaisons. She was discovered while venturing into the kitchens, deemed a spy, and dragged before the Abbot, where her eloquence saved her life. She navigates among the Abyssals and their intrigues as best she can but quietly receives overtures for palace intelligence from rebel factions.

Neighbors

Nearby polities are wary of Thorns and its new leadership, scrutinizing every trader and emissary with increasing thoroughness. The Scavenger Lands remembers its sudden expansion when mortal rulers and their Dragon-Blooded allies were in charge; now that it's under control of a Deathlord, local rulers watch warily for what conflicts might arise. The member-states of **the Confederation of Rivers** now comb through their ranks for the Mask's agents, weakening the Deathlord's regional network of informants and infiltrators.

The Mask of Winters is careful in the relationships he aims to build. The horse lords of nearby **Marukan** pay close attention to the Deathlord's movements; their Council of Elders is divided on whether they should treat with the Mask's emissaries or turn them away and risk a war. The plateaus their clans are scattered across offer some protection should Thorns' army march upon them, and near-neighbor **Lookshy** maintains its largest redoubt in their lands, but victory isn't guaranteed. With every new territory Thorns annexes, more Councilors find it prudent to consider to the Red Iron Rebuke's offers.

Lookshy projects a strong posture against the Mask from afar. However, the Seventh Legion makes no preparations to go to war just yet, and encounters between Lookshy and Thorns' diplomats have been wary but cordial. The lack of action on Lookshy's part has forced other polities in the area to consider how best to protect themselves. Some even see opportunities that had formerly been unthinkable — like the silver-rich satrapy of **Perse**, which courts an alliance with the Mask of Winters in the hopes of throwing off Realm suzerainty.

Other Shadowlands

In **Ashen Grave**, dark clouds rain down gentle ash and cinders, the memories of the volcanic eruption that transformed a city into a shadowland. Its ghostly inhabitants are made of vague, smoky corpus and speak with raspy voices; nearby cultures sometimes venerate

them as saints. Faithful cultists are rewarded with access to sulfurous pits that bestow visions of how they will die. Others among the living trade for the Grave's many obsidian treasures with offerings of meat, wine, and ice carted down from nearby mountains.

In the forests of the East, the unfortunate may find the **Depthless Pines**, a place where Creation bleeds away beneath the darkness of the canopy and blends into the Underworld. Most travelers have little idea they've stepped away from the living world until they realize that the forest has fallen silent and what light filters to the ground has taken on a wan and grayish coloring. The ghosts within ride ancient beasts, long extinct; they lead travelers off the beaten path to feast on their flesh and blood or to drive them mad for their amusement. Scavenger Lords pay high prices for the forest's supple gray lumber.

The **Academy Eternal** was a center of sorcerous learning in the Shogunate whose three great masters, terrified of the oncoming Contagion but loath to relinquish their positions, sacrificed countless pupils in experimental rituals. They hoped to create a timeless demesne but instead pulled the surrounding area into the Underworld. The grounds outside the Academy's wards are a maddening sight, unpredictable pockets of time accelerating, freezing, and reversing as their working wars with the Calendar of Setesh. Only a few have been desperate enough to risk their souls and lucky enough to escape the affected region, promising wealth, knowledge, and glory to any who can reverse the working or enter it to free them. By day, its borders lead to the tiny, forbidden island of Regret, off the Blessed Isle's southern coast.

In the cold seas of the Northwest, there lies a ring-island shadowland known as **Seripsa** — or, to some savants, the Atoll of the Dark Mother. Despite its forbidding location, Seripsa sometimes serves as meeting place for powerful dead — even some among the Deathlords, when the need arises. Conflict is forbidden, for the damp and rocky ground is consecrated to the Old Laws; those who betray an oath sworn here find themselves burdened with curses that no spell can countermand, as the waters of the Underworld and Creation alike conspire to drown them at every opportunity.

They had taken the boy's fingernails first. They didn't stop when he told them he could get the money back with interest. By the fourth, he had told them about his secret cache of silver, set aside for finally escaping Nexus one day. By the fifth, he realized they didn't care what he told them, and that he was going to die.

He awoke in the ruined temple, hazy with burning pain and the memories of cruel laughter. As he opened bleary eyes, he saw his own corpse, streaked with blood, pocked with bruises and wounds. His killers were there, frozen in time, etched with smiles of chilling satisfaction.

He was not alone in this frozen time. A vast figure clad in black armor draped with tarnished chains stood in the temple's entry, too large to have crossed its threshold.

"Well then, is it the old god of the temple, come at last to deliver me? Or are you come to ferry my soul away? Well, have at it, I'm not afraid of you!" A lie. Even outside his flesh, the presence of the spirit caused the boy to shiver.

The figure spoke, voice reverberating in the darkness: "No god I, and no shepherd to your soul. I am here to recruit. In a place beyond the world you know, a great war of my making is brewing. I seek lieutenants of uncommon talent to further my design."

The boy barked a bitter laugh. "I think you've made a mistake, lord. I'm nobody. See here where my talents landed me." Then the boy felt the apparition's attention shift momentarily to his dying body, then to the cruel tools and ghoulish faces of his killers.

"I do not make mistakes. You came from nothing but have taken much. Your name commands fear in the dark corners of this city. You are clever. Observant. An assiduous judge of character, and not afraid to get your hands dirty. In you, I see the potential for great things. This life has given you no opportunity to realize it, but I give you that opportunity now. I give you honor as a prince among the dead. I give you the respect of your few peers and the obedience of your lessers. I give you the loyalty of a general if you give me the loyalty of a soldier."

"Oh? And what, you're going to write my name in the clouds while you're at it?"

"No. Your name is to be forgotten with your mortal frailty and your former life, never to be remembered. That is the cost of greatness, vengeance, and survival. If you wish to endure, then all Creation must perish."

The figure reached down and extended a clawed hand. The boy flinched back before he recognized the gesture as a handshake. The boy could sense the truth in the figure's words and the offer of true power before him. He looked down once more at his own body. He saw a dead boy and a wasted life — never living up to his ambition, thwarted by the world. He tasted the slaughter to come, weighed down by the immensity of it, and hot tears pricked his eyes. He knew the price.

"Good," he said, taking the freezing, metal-clad hand in his own. "I want to forget it."

"Then stand in glory, my Chosen. My deathknight. Kill this chaff, then depart south and seek me by my omens. When we meet, our work can begin in truth."

The boy breathed in his Second Breath. He opened his eyes; a heartbeat later, his erstwhile captors began screaming. Their blood was a baptismal crust upon his hands when he finally knelt before his Deathlord at the Thousand, pledging himself as The One Who Walks Behind You.





Chapter Four

Character Creation

This chapter details how to create Abyssal player characters.

Traits

You'll make a number of choices about the following traits in character creation. It may help to skip ahead and read about those traits or reference their description in **Exalted Third Edition**.

Caste: Your Caste is an archetypal role of deathly power. You'll choose Caste Abilities associated with it, gaining a discount on raising those Abilities and learning Charms associated with them. Your Caste also determines your anima powers (p. 142).

Attributes: Your character's innate strengths and aptitudes (**Exalted**, p. 148).

Abilities: Your character's skills (**Exalted**, p. 149). Abilities also determine what Charms you can learn. In addition to your Caste Abilities, you'll pick Favored Abilities, which receive the same discounts, broadening your character beyond their Caste's archetype.

Apocalyptic Ability: One of your character's Caste Abilities is their Apocalyptic Ability. You can learn Charms from it even if you don't meet their Essence minimum.

Specialties: Your character's specific areas of expertise within their Abilities (**Exalted**, p. 123).

Merits: Miscellaneous traits associated with your character's origin and backstory (**Exalted**, p. 157). Some provide mechanical advantages, while others give narrative benefits, like wealth or minions. If you want an artifact or manse, you'll take it as a Merit.

Charms: The Abyssals' supernatural powers. Charms are the most complicated part of the game, but you don't need to read them all — just those available at Essence 1. Each Charm requires a certain Ability

rating, so you may want to pick out Charms you want before selecting Abilities. See Chapter 6.

Intimacies: Your character's relationships, beliefs, and other aspects of their personality (**Exalted**, p. 170). It's easier to resist social influence that goes against your Intimacies, but it's harder to resist influence that your Intimacies support. Some Charms draw on your character's Intimacies.

Step 1: Concept and Caste

Start out by talking with your Storyteller and fellow players about their plans for the game and character concepts. Think about your character's origin, personality, skills, and the heroic archetypes that inspire her. Remember that Abyssals forfeit their names, taking on grim sobriquets instead. Once you've done that, choose your character's Caste (p. 132).

You should also choose which Deathlord your character serves:

The Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible (p. 35): The Bishop preaches a doctrine of oblivion, teaching that utter annihilation is the only escape from the suffering of existence. His deathknights are evangelists, crusaders, philosophers, and inquisitors.

The Black Heron (p. 38): The preeminent killer among the Deathlords, the Heron is a legendary assassin who hides behind the façade of a charming ghost-queen. Still recovering from a devastating defeat centuries ago, she now holds court in Stygia, courting allies and rebuilding her power.

The Dowager of the Irreverent Vulgate in Unrent Veils (p. 41): The Dowager is the Neverborn's most faithful servant, though she's by far the least lucid of the Deathlords. She dredges forth nightmares and monsters from the mysterious Well of Udr, though her deathknights must occasionally hunt them down when they rampage beyond control. Her instructions

are cryptic, but her Abyssals have broad leeway in interpreting them.

The Eye and Seven Despairs (p. 44): A master of necromancy and artifice, the Eye toils ceaselessly at creating undead abominations and world-killing weapons. Their deathknights assist them in their workshops and laboratories, act as intermediaries to those seeking the Eye's horrific creations, and retrieve esoteric knowledge, exotic materials, and lost wonders of the Underworld.

The First and Forsaken Lion (p. 48): A grim warlord eternally imprisoned in cursed armor by the Neverborn, the Lion's true ambition is to conquer the Underworld. Their deathknights are generals and champions of the Legion Sanguinary, the Underworld's paramount fighting force.

The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears (p. 55): The Lover is a cruel witch-queen, driving heroes to despair so they may learn the folly of their attachments and desires. Her deathknights share her cruel enlightenment with the living, lead her forces in war, and subvert mortal societies.

The Mask of Winters (p. 51): A statesman and spy-master, the Mask of Winters is notorious for his conquest of Thorns. He plays politics with mortal princes, turning kingdoms and nations against each other and poisoning them from within. His deathknights are ambassadors, generals, bureaucrats, and spies.

The Silver Prince (p. 59): The Silver Prince reigns over the Skullstone Archipelago, where zombie servants toil. The Prince dreams of cultural domination, believing Skullstone is a perfect society that will one day assimilate all Creation. His deathknights live as royalty, serving as diplomats, privateers, priests, and cultural luminaries.

The Walker in Darkness (p. 63): The Walker in Darkness is a bringer of temptation, promising princes and queens their heart's desire in bargains too good to be true. He leads the Company of Martial Sinners, an elite band of mercenaries, selling their services to plunge the realms of the living into war. His deathknights lead the Company, collect on the Walker's bargains, and speak on his behalf in foreign courts.

Another Deathlord: Other Deathlords might reign in the Underworld. You can work with your Storyteller and playgroup to invent them and explore their themes and ambitions.

No Deathlord: Some Abyssals abandon their Deathlord's service or refuse to ever enter it. These deathknights-errant choose whom — if anyone — they serve.

Step 2: Attributes

Each Attribute begins with one dot. They're divided into three categories: Physical (Dexterity, Stamina, Strength), Social (Appearance, Charisma, Manipulation), and Mental (Intelligence, Perception, Wits). Choose one category as primary, another as secondary, and the third as tertiary. Distribute eight dots between your primary Attributes, six dots between your secondary Attributes, and four dots between your tertiary Attributes. Attributes can't be raised above five.

Step 3: Abilities

Choose five of your Caste's associated Abilities as Caste Abilities.

Dusk: Archery, Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Resistance, Ride, Thrown, War.

Midnight: Integrity, Larceny, Linguistics, Lore, Performance, Presence, Resistance, Survival.

Daybreak: Awareness, Bureaucracy, Craft, Investigation, Lore, Medicine, Occult, Sail.

Day: Athletics, Awareness, Investigation, Dodge, Larceny, Socialize, Stealth, Survival.

Moonshadow: Bureaucracy, Integrity, Linguistics, Occult, Presence, Ride, Sail, Socialize.

Next, pick five other Abilities as Favored Abilities. Taking Brawl as a Caste or Favored Ability also makes Martial Arts a Caste or Favored Ability.

Choose one of your Caste Abilities as your **Apocalyptic Ability**. You can learn Charms of your Apocalyptic Ability as though you had Essence 5 and qualify for repurchases and automatic upgrades as if you had Essence 5 as well. Dusk Castes may choose Martial Arts as their Apocalyptic Ability. An Apocalyptic Ability's benefits don't apply to Sidereal Martial Arts or Charms that grant initiation into sorcery or necromancy.

Divide 28 dots among your Abilities. Each starts at zero and can't be raised above three without spending bonus points. Abilities can't be raised above five. Each



Favored Ability must have at least one dot assigned to it.

Assign four specialties (**Exalted**, p. 123). You must have at least one dot in an Ability to take a specialty in it.

Step 4: Merits

Choose ten dots of Merits.

Abyssals in a Deathlord's service at character creation gain them as a three-dot Mentor for free and distribute five additional dots among the Backing, Command, Contacts, Cult, and Resources Merits.

Step 5: Charms

Choose fifteen Charms (p. 150). Most Abyssal Charms require a minimum rating in their associated Ability — if you don't qualify, you'll need to raise that Ability's rating with bonus points.

You may choose Martial Arts Charms or Evocations in place of Abyssal Charms. If you choose Ivory Circle

Necromancy or Terrestrial Circle Sorcery as a starting Charm, you may also learn spells in place of Charms.

Step 6: Intimacies

Choose Intimacies to represent your Abyssal's beliefs and relationships (**Exalted**, p. 170). Intimacies can represent motivations, religious beliefs, worldview, friends and enemies, morals, idiosyncrasies, or other important parts of her life. Many Abyssals have Ties toward their Deathlord, Principles related to death's chivalry (p. 29), and Ties to the living and the undead.

Starting characters must have at least four Intimacies. At least one must be Defining, and one must be Major. Likewise, at least one must be positive, and one must be negative. There's no maximum on how many Intimacies you may choose.

Step 7: Bonus Points

You have 15 bonus points that can be spent any time during character creation to raise your character's traits.

TRAIT	COST
Primary or Secondary Attribute	4 per dot
Tertiary Attribute	3 per dot
Caste or Favored Ability	1 per dot
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Ability	2 per dot
Specialty	1
Merits	1 per dot
Caste or Favored Charm	4
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Charm	5
Spell (Occult Caste or Favored)	4
Spell (Occult non-Caste, non-Favored)	5
Evocation	4
Willpower	2 per dot

It's most cost-effective to spend bonus points on Caste and Favored Abilities or to raise Abilities above 3. Using them to buy Charms, Evocations, or spells is the least efficient option.

Step 8: Finishing Touches

You begin at Essence 1. Abyssals have $(10 + [\text{Essence} \times 3])$ personal motes and $(26 + [\text{Essence} \times 7])$ peripheral motes, for 13 personal motes and 33 peripheral motes at Essence 1.

You begin with five Willpower, which can be raised with bonus points.

You begin with seven health levels: a -0 level, two -1 levels, two -2 levels, a -4 level, and an Incapacitated level. You may gain additional health levels with Corpse-Body Resilience (p. 263).

Death's Champions

The above rules are for creating Abyssals who've been Exalted for no more than a year. For more experienced deathknights, make the following changes:

- Your starting Essence is 2.
- Choose thirteen dots of Merits, in addition to bonus Merits from your Deathlord.
- Choose twenty Charms.
- Spend eighteen bonus points.

Drawing the Last Breath

A mortal player character (**Exalted**, p. 125) who Exalts as an Abyssal during play gains the following benefits:

- An Abyssal Caste and Caste Abilities.
- Five favored Abilities, each of which she must have at least one dot in.
- Ten Charms.

At the story's end, the Abyssal gains five Charms and two dots of Willpower for free. She assigns two dots among primary Attributes, two dots among secondary Attributes, and one dot among tertiary Attributes.

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

STEP 1: CONCEPT AND CASTE

- Determine your character concept.
- Choose your character's Deathlord.
- Pick a Caste. Note its anima powers.

STEP 2: ATTRIBUTES

- Place one dot in each Attribute.
- Divide 8 dots among primary Attributes, 6 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

STEP 3: ABILITIES

- Choose five Caste Abilities and five Favored Abilities.
- Select one of your Caste Abilities to be your Apocalyptic Ability.
- Divide 28 dots among all Abilities. None may be raised above 3 without spending bonus points, and each Favored Ability must have at least one dot.
- Assign four specialties.

STEP 4: MERITS

- Select 10 dots of Merits.
- If you serve a Deathlord, gain them as a Mentor and distribute an additional five dots among Backing, Command, Contacts, Cult, and Resources.

STEP 5: CHARMS

- Select 15 Charms.

STEP 6: INTIMACIES

- Choose at least four Intimacies, including at least one Defining Intimacy, one Major Intimacy, one positive, and one negative.

STEP 7: BONUS POINTS

- Spend 15 bonus points.

STEP 8: FINISHING TOUCHES

- Record Essence (1), personal notes (10 + [Essence x3]), peripheral notes (26 + [Essence x7]), health levels (-0/-1x2/-2x2/-4/Incapacitated) and Willpower (5).

CASTES

Dusk: Merciless killers, warrior poets, ruthless strategists, and terrifying warlords, Dusk Castes ride out from the Underworld, leading armies of the undead and leaving only death in their wake.

Caste Abilities: Archery, Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Resistance, Ride, Thrown, War.

Midnight: Speakers for the dead, subversive cult leaders, and undying martyrs, Midnight Castes drive the living to despair, spread ancestor cults, and poison societies with their words.

Caste Abilities: Integrity, Larceny, Linguistics, Lore, Performance, Presence, Resistance, Survival.

Daybreak: Master necromancers, genius artificers, and morbid philosophers, Daybreak Castes wield forbidden wisdom and violate the natural order in

pursuit of power.

Caste Abilities: Awareness, Bureaucracy, Craft, Investigation, Lore, Medicine, Occult, Sail.

Day: Relentless assassins, masters of intrigue and infiltration, and merciless inquisitors, Day Castes walk among the living like wolves among sheep.

Caste Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Investigation, Dodge, Larceny, Socialize, Stealth, Survival.

Moonshadow: Underworld diplomats, honey-tongued deceivers, and envoys to the living, Moonshadow Castes sow discontent among the living, make and break treaties, and forge empires of the dead.

Caste Abilities: Bureaucracy, Integrity, Linguistics, Occult, Presence, Ride, Sail, Socialize.

BONUS POINT COSTS

TRAIT	COST
Primary or Secondary Attribute	4 per dot
Tertiary Attribute	3 per dot
Caste or Favored Ability	1 per dot
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Ability	2 per dot
Specialty	1
Merits	1 per dot
Caste or Favored Charm	4
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Charm	5
Spell (Occult Caste or Favored)	4
Spell (Occult non-Caste, non-Favored)	5
Evocation	4
Willpower	2 per dot

The Voice That Speaks in Silence sat motionless upon his mount, a vast skeleton-serpent that framed him like a gruesome, writhing throne. From that vantage, he beheld them: the tomb-bodies of his dead gods, the Neverborn. Blood wept from his caste mark, tracing down his dark skin to the channels engraved in his silver half-mask. He forced himself to recall the patterns he had inscribed, the sacred geometry of their asymmetrical paths dividing and rejoining. They carried the blood over his unblinking left eye, which blazed darkly with his Essence, and to the right corner of his mouth, where laughter-prone lips were set in grim determination. He could *almost* hear it, after all this time....

Time. Its movement was fluid, turbulent, within the Labyrinth. In these tombs, it was a tortured skein, an unsolvable knot, each moment frozen in constant motion. Was this how the Neverborn felt, in the nightmare of their eternal unbeing? Or was he merely a stone that looked upon a mountain and thought itself the same?

Same. His pilgrimage through the Labyrinth was the same as walking Creation's dragon lines in his youth, a simple ritual of endurance. Through rivers of teeth, fields of broken toys, knife-trees and Essence-snares, he walked, arriving here, where he began, where he had given up his name. What had they done with his name, these sleepers? A quirk of his usual humor touched his lips, the laugh lines drinking of his flowing blood. *Neverborn, never-named, what use have you for our names?*

Names. Mere sounds, symbols without significance — like the Whispers that intruded on his thoughts, tantalizing, *daring* him to interpret them. But that, he mused, was the trap. The mind built itself patterns from words, stars, entrails, dreams.... But if he gave in to that impulse now, if he had the hubris to think that *he*, out of every soul that had ever died, could divine the true words of the corpse-gods... he'd end up like a nephwrack, preaching dross to a congregation of eager fools.

Fools. Only they listened overlong to the echoes of the Whispers. *The Whispers break the mind, but the silence breaks the soul.* In the great, yawning spaces between the echoes lurked a paradigm shift, "Perhaps... there is meaning!" becomes "Perhaps... there is *no* meaning!" As one of Death's Lawgivers, to dance upon the knife's-edge of such distinctions was his chivalry.

Chivalry. It defined him: the very rhythm to which he danced. His fingers drummed idly on the broad skull of his throne-serpent, some nameless song so old he had forgotten where he learned it. *Beneath the silence of the Labyrinth is the sound of the Whispers. Beneath the sound of the Whispers is the silence of despair. Beneath that....*

His staring eyes blinked at last, focused on the fingers that tapped away of their own accord. He surged upright, his serpents lashing their tails in irritation, the crystals woven in his long hair chiming. For the second time, he favored the dead gods with a wide, triumphant grin.

Beneath that silence... there is another sound.





Chapter Five

Traits

This chapter details the unique traits of the Abyssals, including their Castes, Great Curse, and character advancement rules.

Abyssal Nature

Death's Chosen are heirs to a legacy of heroism that has been warped and corrupted by the Deathlords, marking them as adversaries of the living and emissaries of the dead.

Life in Death

The Abyssal Exalted have not died, yet death is their very Essence. When faced with magic that has different effects for the living and the dead, Abyssals are considered whichever is most advantageous to them. However, they don't gain the benefits of undeath listed on **Exalted**, p. 503.

Creatures of Darkness

Sworn to the murder of Creation and suffused with the unholy power of the Neverborn, the Abyssals are marked as creatures of darkness by their very nature. This renders them vulnerable to certain magic — especially that of the Solar Exalted. However, this isn't immutable: a deathknight who proves herself an ally of Creation might eventually cease to be a creature of darkness. For Abyssals who seek redemption by becoming Solars (p. 31), this is almost always part of their journey. This is a narrative milestone rather than a mechanical one, something that should come at the resolution of a deathknight's narrative arc or at an especially dramatic moment.

Enemies of Fate

When an Abyssal draws their Last Breath, the thread of their fate is severed by what should be their death — and yet they live. Suffused with the otherworldly power, they who should not live don't exist within

fate's weave. They can never return, no matter how long they spend in Creation, though Sidereal magic can temporarily restore an allied deathknight's place within fate.

Death's Chivalry

Obedying death's chivalry brings an Abyssal into a dark harmony with her Exaltation, calming her troubled soul. When she faces great hardships or makes significant sacrifices to fulfill death's chivalry, she gains one Willpower and rolls one die, losing Limit equal to her successes.

When an Abyssal accomplishes a major character or story goal that upholds death's chivalry, her temporary Willpower rises to equal to her permanent Willpower if it's not already higher. She rolls (higher of Essence or 3) dice, losing Limit equal to her successes.

The Trappings of Death

Outside of the Underworld and the shadowlands, deathknights suffer a -2 penalty on all rolls unless wearing the trappings of death or dwelling within a place associated with death, like a graveyard or Abyssal demesne. The difficulty of noticing the trappings can't exceed 5 — anything subtler than that is insufficient to provide this benefit.

The Lunar Bond

In the First Age, many Solars and Lunars forged bonds between their very souls, ties that would persist beyond their death through every reincarnation. Even the Deathlords' power could not taint this bond. When an Abyssal first encounters her Lunar mate, she usually experiences a flash of recognition. She may not understand what the bond she feels is, but its presence is unmistakable. She forms a Minor Tie toward him — typically a negative Tie at first.



A player who wants to guarantee her Lunar mate will be a prominent and positive figure in her Abyssal's life should take the Allies Merit. Otherwise, her mate's appearance and role are up to the Storyteller — he could be an enemy, friend, rival, lover, or more. Note that not all Abyssals have Lunar mates.

Martial Arts

Abyssals have Mastery with Martial Arts (**Exalted**, p. 427). They can learn Sidereal Martial Arts under the tutelage of a Sidereal — or through battle against one.

Necromancy and Sorcery

Abyssals can initiate into Void Circle necromancy (p. 248), but only Celestial Circle sorcery.

Evocations

Abyssals are resonant with soulsteel and certain exotic substances of the Underworld and neutral with all other materials (**Arms of the Chosen**, p. 16).

Merits

New Merit: Whispers (•• or ••••)

Type: Purchased

Prerequisites: Non-Abyssals must commune with the Essence of the Neverborn within the Labyrinth or a similar font of the dead titans' power to acquire this Merit.

Abyssals seeking spiritual communion with the Neverborn learn to hear the Whispers of the dead titans, an almost-silent susurrus that is the dead titans' perpetual death rattle. Those who wander the Labyrinth may come to hear them too, as the Deathlords have; ghosts who do so are sometimes called specters. There are no words, no demands, no explanations; the Neverborn speak in cryptic premonitions and nightmarish visions. Those who listen to Whispers can glean insight and meaning from them, but they take a heavy toll on minds never meant to bear them and unable to shut them out.

Once per session, a character with Whispers can pay one Willpower to invoke one of the following benefits:

- Introduce a fact about death, the undead, the Underworld, or necromancy without requiring an applicable Lore background, or add (higher of Essence or 3) non-Charms dice if she has one.
- Add (higher of Essence or 3) non-Charms dice on any roll to navigate the Underworld or avoid the perils of its terrain, or on rolls to understand the thoughts and passions of the undead (including read intentions and profile character actions).
- Add (higher of Essence or 3) necromantic motes towards a spell she is shaping. This isn't compatible with sorcery.
- Call on her Whispers in a Decision Point as though they were a Major Intimacy of nihilistic despair and enmity towards all living things — or, for characters with four-dot Whispers, a Defining Intimacy.

Characters with four-dot Whispers may invoke this Merit once per session or once per day, whichever is better.

Some Abyssal Charms have the Whispers keyword, granting additional benefits to characters with this Merit.

Drawback: Whispers can distract or overwhelm those receptive to them. Once per session, the Storyteller may inflict either a –(Whispers) penalty on a social or mental roll or a –1 penalty to Resolve or Guile for an instant. The player can describe what alien or horrifying sensations her character experiences as part of her stunt.

Existing Merits

ALLIES

Abyssals often draw their Allies from the Underworld, enlisting the aid of their Deathlord's other servants or developing a working relationship with outside experts.

Most ghosts and Ghost-Blooded are appropriate for one-dot Allies, usually those who are especially heroic, skilled, experienced, or well-travelled.

Three-dot Allies are more impressive, and might include once-Exalted ghosts boasting centuries of experience and dim reflections of their former Charms,

Dragon-Blooded necromancers bargaining service for lore, and regional powerbrokers like many company-heads in Dari of the Mists.

Five-dot Allies could include fellow deathknights; an Abyssal's Lunar mate; ancient, powerful Exalted ghosts; unique prodigies like Azet-Itthey or the Gaoler of Uqad; lesser behemoths; and major Underworld players like non-Deathlord Signatories.

ARTIFACT

The treasure-houses of the Deathlords are famed; promising Abyssals are often entrusted with useful or puissant artifacts that suit the deathknight's post, temperament, or aesthetic. Other artifacts may be trophies of an Abyssal's personal conquests, taken from fallen foes or commissioned from the great forges of the Underworld.

BACKING

Many Abyssals hold Backing within institutions led by their Deathlords, like the First and Forsaken Lion's Legion Sanguinary or the ecclesiastic hierarchy of the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurable's Shining Way. They may also be embedded within Underworldly power structures like the Stygian collegia or command respect in major afterlives like Kesundang. Deathknights-errant might develop a relationship with the Transcendent Path of the Dual Monarchs, drawing on its network of custodes and gondoliers.

COMMAND

Many Abyssals lead battle groups of zombies (**Exalted**, pp. 502-504), which possess Might 1. Such battle groups cost an additional dot.

CONTACTS

Deathlords assign intelligence to their deathknights at their discretion; those with Contacts have either been entrusted with oversight of a branch of their liege's spy network or else built their own web of informants during their adventures.

CULT

The Deathlords generally permit (or even encourage) their deathknights to cultivate cults. Especially meritorious deathknights may be integrated into their liege's worship as an intercessory saint, taking a measure of the veneration directed towards their Deathlord.

DEMESNE/MANSE

Deathknights are often rewarded with demesnes and manses by their Deathlords, especially as part of other grants of land. Elemental manses in the Underworld

are common; these bear the taint of necrotic Essence, but rarely change their mechanical function. More prestigious Abyssal-aspected demesnes and manses are less abundant but often awarded by the Deathlords for use as personal workshops, shadowland holdfasts, or regional hubs.

FAMILIAR

Abyssals can take undead animals (p. 299) as familiars. Zombie animals can only be familiars if they still retain a spark of the animal's original identity. Some Abyssals take phantom beasts (p. 73) as familiars; doing so stabilizes their Essence and grants them a measure of selfhood, elevating them from projections of the Underworld's nature into sentient creatures in their own right.

INFLUENCE

Abyssals have considerable sway within their Deathlord's operations, so the Influence Merit instead represents some outside position held in addition to their duties to their liege. Minor Influence might come from a role as a member of a Stygian secret society or the overseer of a minor afterlife. More significant postings might include serving as the satrap of a conquered state such as the Demersal Anarchy or claiming dominion over an afterlife significant enough to rival the Signatories.

MENTOR

Abyssal loyalists receive their Deathlords as a three-dot Mentor for free. Other ghosts may be one- or two-dot Mentors, depending on their level of expertise, while ghosts renowned for power and prowess may also be three-dot Mentors.

RESOURCES

Abyssals often receive a stipend from their Deathlord commensurate to the services expected of them. In time, many develop revenue of their own, whether extracting it from their Underworldly fiefdoms or as part of ghostly commerce. Even Abyssals without Resources can expect to live in comfort in their Deathlord's personal territory, though overindulging in this generosity may invite their master's scrutiny or displeasure.

RETAINERS

Most ghosts are two-dot Retainers, as are Ghost-Blooded. These might include scholars with useful expertise in thaumaturgy and the spirit arts, mentors in the politics of the Underworld, skilled lieutenants to lead their forces, and trackers trained in pursuing their quarry through the Sea of Shadows and its strange afterlives.

Especially powerful ghosts may be four-dot Retainers, such as war ghosts with centuries of seasoning or necromancers of the Ivory Circle.

THE KINGEATER

*Your death is going to be the punchline
to a joke that nobody wanted to hear.*





Dusk Caste

Dusk heralds the coming night, the darkness that sweeps across Creation as the sun dies. One day, it will never rise again. Such is the grim promise of the Dusk Caste. They are the right hand of death, the Swords of the Abyss, butchering armies and laying waste to nations. When the Peacebringers ride to war, they leave naught but corpses and silence in their wake. They exult in slaughter, in the forsaken hymns of their victim's screams and the sound of soulsteel cutting flesh.

The Children of Ash count peerless killers, brilliant tacticians, morbid warrior-poets, and merciless warlords among their ranks. They uphold death's chivalry through martial prowess and strength of arms, granting the gift of peace with the edge of a blade. They serve their Deathlords as generals, bodyguards, tacticians, and front-line champions, leading armies of the damned against their masters' foes. It is rare that the Deathlords deploy the full force of their might, but that may soon change now that the Dusk Caste command their legions.

Most Deathlords prefer to choose Peacebringers from those already skilled in violence and warfare, whether it's a young hero cut down on the battlefield or a seasoned veteran who's reached the end of her years. Others are chosen for their murderous potential, given the power to act on the hatred, bloodlust, or avarice that festers within their hearts. Some Deathlords enjoy choosing Dusk Castes from those who died violently, savoring the poetic justice of a Peacebringer avenging their own death.

Renegade Dusk Castes wield their deadly prowess to their own ends. They might roam the Underworld as sellswords or wandering heroes, championing ghostly armies and waging the wars of the dead. Others turn their blades against the wicked, whether otherworldly fiends or all-too-human monsters, protecting those they hold dear by cutting down that which threatens

them. Peacebringers who hold positions of command may convince their soldiers to defect with them, forging elite mercenary companies — and occasionally lending aid to their Deathlords' foes.

Caste Mark: Peacebringers' Caste Marks are a dark mirror of the Dawn Caste's: eight-pointed starbursts of darkness bleeding from their edges.

Anima Banner: A Dusk Caste's anima banners are pitch black, occasionally edged with gray or tinged with dark reds or purples. It's sometimes accompanied by screams of terror, a sound like an endless death rattle, or the scent of blood, ash, or rust.

Iconic Anima: A storm that rains blood and offal; a vast spectral figure of a ferocious nocturnal predator or slavering carrion-eater; a black-mailed fist descending from the sky to strike the earth; a legion of phantom knights marching behind her; etc.

Anima Effects: Dusk Castes' anima effects enhance their battle prowess, making them terrifying champions of death (p. 142).

Caste Abilities: As unparalleled masters of violence and warfare, Dusk Castes choose Caste Abilities from Archery, Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Resistance, Ride, Thrown, and War.

Associations: Death by violence, the season of spring, the color white, the Eastern direction, the full moon.

Sobriquets: Peacebringers, Children of Ash, Swords of the Abyss, They Who Sing Forsaken Hymns.

Concepts: Aristocratic duelist, avenger of the dead, chivalrous warrior-poet, Deathlord's general, foul-mouthed cavalier, gladiator set free in death, killer for hire, slayer of the wicked, veteran legionnaire, war-necromancer.

THE VOICE THAT SPEAKS IN SILENCE

*I do not hate you. I cannot
pity you. But I will grant you
the greatest mercy I know.*



Midnight Caste

Midnight silences the world's endless clamor, revealing the alluring beauty of the night as the sun lies dead. Hidden by the deepest of darkness, the dead conduct their forbidden rites. This, the Midnight Caste teaches, is the true face of death, a beauty unblemished by life's imperfection. They Who Speak Blasphemous Truths preach death's glory to the living, promising freedom from suffering in the embrace of the grave. Such is the Deathspeakers' compassion that they will not rest until all have escaped from the meaningless lie that is life. Among the dead, they are bleak prophets and terrible god-kings, exerting their authority as Death's Lawgivers.

The Children of Silence are skilled in swaying minds and subverting beliefs. They bend the wills of the living and the dead alike through fiery rhetoric, enthralling performances, or spiritual teachings. The ignorant and the foolish shun death's perfection, and so the Echoes of the Abyss must often conduct their dark rites in secret, employing all manner of subterfuge. They serve the Deathlords as evangelists, hierophants, and patrons of forbidden death-cults, spreading their masters' bleak gospel through both the Underworld and Creation. Some Midnight Castes willingly seek out the Whispers of the Neverborn, seeking a deeper communion with the fallen titans.

Many Deathspeakers are chosen from those who have already embraced death in their mortal life: ancestor cultists, funerealists, denizens of shadowlands, morbid outcasts, and more. Others are chosen for their devotion and zeal: ascetics who fast unto death, willing martyrs, cultists who defy the suppression of their faith. Some Deathlords delight in choosing Midnight Castes from those whose faith has been broken, tempting monks to death's service.

Midnight Castes who defy their dread masters often embrace the mantle of Death's Lawgiver. They might champion ancestor cults, speaking for the dead and rebuking their faithless descendants, or preach their own gospels of death. Others seek rulership, wresting kingdoms of the dead away from unworthy rulers

and casting down decrepit regimes. Some scorn the Deathlords but not their cause, becoming dark prophets of the Neverborn and leaders of apocalyptic cults.

Caste Mark: Deathspeakers' Caste Marks are dark reflections of the Zenith Caste's, solid black discs that bleed from their edges.

Anima Banner: Most Midnight Castes' anima banners are blacker than black, visible even in total darkness, though some are tinged with deep blues. It's sometimes accompanied by eerie hymns, the murmuring of insects, or the cries of nocturnal predators, or by the scents of dead flowers, funereal incense, or burnt offerings.

Iconic Anima: A ruined temple or mausoleum; a spectral choir singing paeans to the Abyssal's glory; a sacrificial bull dying atop an altar of blood-stained basalt; leaden tablets engraved with unholy commandments; etc.

Anima Effects: Deathspeakers' anima effects let them reanimate the dead, summon ghosts to their corpses and bind them as familiars, and sway others through words or performance — especially the dead (p. 142).

Caste Abilities: As death-priests, subversive demagogues, and dread prophets of the Neverborn, Midnight Castes choose Caste Abilities from Integrity, Larceny, Linguistics, Lore, Performance, Presence, Resistance, and Survival.

Associations: Death by nature, the season of summer, the color yellow, the Southern direction, the half-moon.

Sobriquets: Deathspeakers, Children of Silence, Echoes of the Abyss, They Who Speak Blasphemous Truths.

Concepts: Ancestor cult priest, blasphemous theologian, disgraced monk, judge of the dead, leader of a forbidden cult, prince of the Underworld, revolutionary leader, speaker for the Neverborn, shadowland nomad, subversive orator.



THE MARINER OF THE FINAL SHORE

*I have seen beyond the furthest horizon,
and it is too beautiful and grotesque to de-
scribe. Come with me, and see it yourself.*

Daybreak Caste

As the hated sun rises to drive back the dark, its light banishes the last lingering mysteries, lest these blasphemous truths be discovered by the living. But there is no secret that can be kept from the Daybreak Caste, no forbidden lore that lies beyond their grasp. The Bleak Exaltation has given them all eternity to master the world's mysteries and hone their unclean arts, achieving a perfection denied to mortal scholars. Relentless in their pursuit of knowledge, the Pyrekeepers seek out ancient libraries of long-dead civilizations, pore over forbidden tomes of deathly lore, and conduct gruesome experiments on corpses and souls.

The Children of Bone seek knowledge of all kinds, from lost texts of long-dead civilizations to the research notes of an alchemist's apprentice on the verge of a breakthrough. Some jealously hoard their learning, burning libraries, murdering scholars, and defacing monuments to keep their secrets out of others' hands. The Deathlords prize the knowledge their Pyrekeepers can offer, along with their skill as necromancers, artificers, and delvers of the Underworld's depths. Some ply the Sea of Shadows, carrying out voyages of exploration or retrieving ancient secrets from far corners of the sunless realm.

The Deathlords seek insight, cunning, and ambition in their Daybreaks. The Pyrekeepers' ranks include the likes of savants, physicians, and learned elders, but also those who've dirtied their hands in pursuit of knowledge, like scavenger princes, grave robbers, and inquisitors. Mortal necromancers are especially prized, gifted pupils eager for their masters' dark knowledge. Those whose curiosity proves their undoing are especially appealing as Daybreaks to some Deathlords.

Renegade Daybreak Castes are still driven by the pursuit of knowledge — indeed, some defect so that they may dedicate themselves wholly to the study of the Underworld's secrets. Some hoard whatever knowledge they find for themselves, while others profit off secrets, acting as intelligence brokers to princes, merchants, and even other Deathlords. Some errant Pyrekeepers turn their wisdom to compassionate ends,

tending to the sick or building marvels of engineering, though the gruesome nature of their work may disquiet the living.

Caste Mark: Pyrekeepers' Caste Marks resemble those of the Twilight Caste: black circles with only the top half filled, dripping with blood that weeps from its edges.

Anima Banner: A Daybreak Caste's anima banner is typically a black mingled with greys, purples, dark greens, bruise-blues, and dark reds. It's sometimes accompanied by the sounds of twisting muscle and splintering bone or the smell of rotting parchment, charnel smoke, or embalmed corpses.

Iconic Anima: Labyrinthine patterns of impossible geometries; an ever-watching eye that shines with baleful light; countless tomes set ablaze in an inferno of pyreflame; a withered tree whose boughs bear gruesome fruit; etc.

Anima Effects: Pyrekeepers' anima effects let them draw power from dark inspiration, grant insight into supernatural forces, and allow them to vanish and reappear in places steeped in death (p. 142).

Caste Abilities: Scholars of the forbidden and masters of death's mysteries, Daybreak Castes choose Caste Abilities from Awareness, Bureaucracy, Craft, Investigation, Lore, Medicine, Occult, and Sail.

Associations: Death by pestilence, the season of autumn, the color orange, the Western direction, the crescent moon.

Sobriquets: Pyrekeepers, Children of Bone, Eyes of the Abyss, They Who Work Unclean Arts.

Concepts: Artisan of undead horrors, battlefield surgeon, calculating strategist, Deathlord's artificer, explorer of the Underworld, historian of a bygone era, necromantic prodigy, obsessive magistrate, scavenger prince, scholar of forbidden knowledge.

THE GALLOWS BRIDE

*Tell my former master his neck
will always be welcome to visit
the edge of my daiklave.*



Day Caste

The light of day promises safety to the living, but its promise is a lie. Death can come anywhere, at any time, and there is no refuge from it. The Day Caste is the proof of this, the hidden knives of the Deathlords. Those Who Dwell Among the Wretched walk unseen in Creation, insinuating themselves into mortal communities like wolves hidden among the flock. Only the trail of bodies in their wake betrays their presence, though the Daywalkers are gone long before their victims are found. All that the living can do is weep over the grisly remains as their delusions of safety are shattered forevermore.

The Children of Blood are masters of subtlety, upholding death's chivalry from the shadows. Many are killers, well-versed in the arts of unseen death, while others are masters of espionage, tracking, or criminal endeavors. Day Castes serve their lieges as assassins, spymasters, thieves, and saboteurs, both among the living and within the citadels of their Deathlord's foes. Some act as their liege's unseen enforcers, leading their Deathlord's secret police to root out dissent and disloyalty within the ghost-king's domains. Others deal with the Underworld's crime syndicates, subverting them to their Deathlord's ends — or their own.

The Deathlords choose many of their Day Castes from those already skilled in subterfuge: grifters, thieves, poisoners, spies, and the like. For other Daywalkers, subtlety isn't a skill but a part of their lives, whether by choice or necessity: dissidents under harsh regimes, escaped slaves fleeing pursuit, urchins living on the streets. Some Deathlords seek only the most callous and hateful of Day Castes, lest the Children of Blood come to feel sympathy for the mortals they must often walk among.

Some renegade Day Castes sell their services as spies and assassins, commanding a hefty fee for their incomparable prowess. Others turn their skills to political or ideological ends, while others seek a redemption of sorts by hunting down and slaying the wicked. Some

renegade Daywalkers never leave their Deathlord's service, working from within to undermine their liege's agenda, assassinate key agents, and leak information to powerful rivals.

Caste Mark: Daywalkers' Caste Marks mirror those of the Night Caste: empty black circles that bleed from their edges.

Anima Banner: A Day Caste's anima banner is typically black and grey, sometimes tinted with sickly greens. It's sometimes accompanied by whispering voices, stifled screams, or eerie silences, or by the scents of extinguished candles or poisonous flowers.

Iconic Anima: Phantom assassins made of sharp-edged shadows; a gallows hung with the corpses of the Abyssal's most recent victims; spectral images of coiling serpents or other venomous animals; a cloud of mist stained crimson with blood; etc.

Anima Effects: Daywalkers' anima effects grant insuperable subtlety, concealing their anima, their presence, and their identity (p. 143).

Caste Abilities: Walking unseen among the living in pursuit of their prey, Day Castes choose Caste Abilities from Athletics, Awareness, Investigation, Dodge, Larceny, Socialize, Stealth, and Survival.

Associations: Death by chance, the season of winter, the color indigo, the Northern direction, the new moon.

Sobriquets: Daywalkers, Children of Blood, Shadows of the Abyss, They Who Dwell Among the Wretched.

Concepts: Criminal kingpin, Deathlord's spymaster, deep cover agent among the living, hunter of the wicked, infamous assassin, relentless bounty hunter, shadowlands smuggler, street urchin, thief spared from the gallows, vigilante detective.



THE ONE WHO WALKS BEHIND YOU

Your meticulous secrecy might as well have been a confession. It took little effort to unravel your scheme.

Moonshadow Caste

As the bloodstained moon eclipses the sun, the dark of night swallows up the day. The living look up to the baleful omen hanging in the sky, holding their breath as they silently pray for it to pass. Such is the grandeur of the Moonshadow Caste. They are envoys of the end, harbingers of doom who speak in honeyed words. They stand at the crossroads of life and death in a darkness that is neither day nor night, bringing together the living and the undead.

The Children of Dust are masters of diplomacy and manipulation, silver-tongued schemers versed in the etiquette of both Creation and the Underworld. As emissaries and ambassadors of the Deathlords, they conduct negotiations with neighboring powers, traveling to the courts of foreign powers to forge binding treaties that *seem* to benefit both sides. Secretly, they sow discord and foment upheaval, rendering communities both living and dead vulnerable to their Deathlord's plots. Some are tasked with preserving order within their liege's domain, arbitrating disputes among the Deathlord's servants and subjects.

The Deathlords often seek their Moonshadow Castes from those gifted in deception: demagogues peddling lies to the masses, treacherous courtiers skilled in palace intrigue, double-dealing power brokers. Even the pettiest of deceptions might catch a Deathlord's eye: the child who lies to avoid her parents' wrath, the rake who feigns love for her paramours, the merchant with crooked scales. Other Webspinners are chosen for their skill in shaping societies or overseeing complex affairs of state, like pitiless tyrants, bureaucratic functionaries, leaders of cultural movements.

Some renegade Moonshadows seek to create a better world, one that has no place for their Deathlord — and perhaps, no place for the dead. Among the living, they often work through envoys, proxies, and agents, manipulating affairs in Creation from the Underworld's

shadows. Among the dead, they can proclaim their authority openly as Death's Lawgivers, excising corruption and unjust laws like a cancer. Some seek to rally opposition against their former liege, forging coalitions between unlikely allies and sabotaging the Deathlord's diplomatic relations.

Caste Mark: Webspinners' Caste Marks are an inversion of the Eclipse Caste's: a black disc within a black ring that bleeds from its edges.

Anima Banner: A Moonshadow Caste's anima banner is typically colored with translucent grays and blacks, sometimes glimmering with faint pale purple and green. It's sometimes accompanied by the sound of clinking chains or scratching quills or by sickly sweet scents of pomegranates, perfume, or honey.

Iconic Anima: A vast spider web, lit by moonlight; a procession of gilded and bejeweled skeletons; a barrow-hoard of ancient treasures; a death-barge sailing a river of shadows; etc.

Anima Effects: Webspinners' anima powers let them seal oaths, learn the magic of strange spirits, and invoke ancient pacts of hospitality.

Caste Abilities: As ambassadors and diplomats of the Underworld, Moonshadow Castes choose Caste Abilities from Bureaucracy, Integrity, Linguistics, Occult, Presence, Ride, Sail, and Socialize.

Associations: Death by deprivation, Calibration, the color silver, the Central direction, the gibbous moon.

Sobriquets: Webspinners, Children of Dust, Judges of the Abyss, They Who Walk Within Webs of Deception.

Concepts: Agent provocateur, assassinated noble, courtly intriguer, Deathlord's propagandist, envoy of the dead, master of brinksmanship, merchant of death, shadowland shaman, tragic poet, Underworld power broker.

Anima

As the Abyssal Exalted expend Essence, they become wreathed in the chilling darkness of their anima banner. **For every five motes of Peripheral Essence she spends in an instant, her anima banner rises one level.**

ANIMA LEVEL	EFFECTS
Dim	The Abyssal's anima is invisible.
Glowing	The Abyssal's anima outlines her body in darkness. Her Caste Mark shines with darkness and begins to bleed, visible through anything placed over it. Stealth and disguise rolls suffer a -3 penalty.
Burning	The Abyssal's anima flares into an aura of radiant darkness. It casts an eerie chill, and objects caught within it may corrode, wither, or rot. Stealth is impossible.
Bonfire/Iconic	The Abyssal's anima ignites into a bonfire stretching into the sky, visible for miles around. Upon reaching bonfire and at suitably dramatic moments, her anima manifests a personalized iconic display: her anima completely illuminates her surroundings within short range. Stealth is impossible.

Anima Effects

For one mote, an Abyssal can:

- Cause her Caste Mark to manifest for as long as she desires.
- Sense the approximate location of any nearby shadowlands.
- Extend fangs, allowing her to deal lethal damage with **decisive** savaging attacks against grappled enemies. She can drink the blood of the living to regain motes if they're willing or helpless, gaining one mote for each level of lethal damage she inflicts.

DUSK ANIMA EFFECTS

Death is Inevitable (Permanent): At bonfire anima, the Peacebringer adds (Essence/2, rounded up) to her base Initiative when she resets to base Initiative after a **decisive** attack.

Fear Made Flesh (Permanent): The Peacebringer adds (Essence/2, rounded up) non-Charisma dice on threaten rolls and other fear-based influence and can affect characters who're normally immune to fear, like zombies and automatons. This doesn't overcome magical immunity to fear.

Walking Apocalypse (10m; Reflexive; Instant): The Peacebringer resets all Charms related to combat and movement. Once per day.

MIDNIGHT ANIMA EFFECTS

Death's Master (10m [3m]; Simple; Instant): Invoking her dread authority, the Midnight binds a ghost with Essence 4 or less to herself. She must touch it and roll ([Charisma or Manipulation] + [Performance or Presence]) against its Resolve. Success binds it to her as a familiar (**Exalted**, p. 161) but doesn't compel obedience. She can summon it to her reflexively for three motes or banish it for free, returning it to its Underworld abode. She may bind up to (Essence) ghosts, releasing previous bindings to take new ones.

Prophet of the Void (5m; Supplemental; Instant; Mute): The Deathspeaker adds (higher of Essence or 3) non-Charisma dice on an inspire, instill, or threaten roll. The undead count as having a Minor Intimacy supporting it, and she can influence even mindless undead. This power's cost is waived at bonfire anima.

Wake From Death: (1m or 10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): For one mote, the Midnight reanimates a corpse as a zombie (**Exalted**, p. 502). Once per day, she can spend ten motes, one Willpower to summon the ghost of someone who's been dead no more than three days to his corpse. This doesn't let her bind the ghost.

DAYBREAK ANIMA EFFECTS

Chthonic Gateway (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant): The Pyrekeeper can use this power on her turn to vanish into her anima's darkness. This isn't immediate — if she moves or suffers forced movement or knockdown before her next turn, this power is negated. Otherwise, once her next turn begins, she disappears. She reappears at the next sunrise at a location associated with death that's somewhere within ten miles. She might appear in a shadowland, an Abyssal manse, a great mausoleum, the tomb-palace of a ghostly prince, or the like.

Essence-Flensing Insight (5m; Simple; Instant): The Daybreak rolls ([Perception or Intelligence] + [Awareness, Investigation, Lore, or Occult]) against the Guile of a supernatural being to discern a useful detail about his magical power. This might reveal that a Zenith Caste with numerous Integrity Charms will be difficult to persuade or that a Dragon-Blood's daiklave can smite creatures of darkness. She must already be aware a character is supernatural to use this power on him. This power's cost is waived at bonfire anima.

Twisted Genius Inspiration (—; Reflexive; Instant): While at burning anima or higher, the Pyrekeeper can either gain one Willpower, add (Essence + highest Mental Attribute) necromantic motes to a spell she's shaping, or add a free full Excellency on any mental action, other than Join Battle. (The Excellency counts as a Charm bonus). Once per day.

DAY ANIMA EFFECTS

Caul of Shadows (Permanent): At bonfire anima, the Abyssal's anima engulfs her in darkness, making it impossible to discern her identity or any details of her appearance. This concealment is perfect, defeating even magic like Eye of the Unconquered Sun (**Exalted**, p. 273).

Embrace of Shadows (2m; Reflexive; Instant; Mute): The Daywalker mutes all motes spent in an instant.

Walking in Daylight (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Mute): The Abyssal ignores up to (higher of Essence or 3) points of penalties on a Stealth roll.

MOONSHADOW ANIMA EFFECTS

Death's Emissary (Permanent): While conducting diplomacy or other legitimate business with spirits or the Fair Folk, the Webspinner and her companions are protected by ancient pacts, requiring her hosts to observe local customs of hospitality and preventing them from attacking her or her entourage. If the Moonshadow or one of her companions breaks the peace first, they lose this protection.

Keeper of the Old Laws (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant): When the Moonshadow hears someone make a promise or swear an oath, she may invoke the Old Laws to seal the pact. She may manifest her Caste Mark and anima banner in a brief display if she wishes. Those who violate the pact suffer consequences chosen by the Storyteller, often a punishment that reflects the nature of their violation.

Unworldly Emissary Secrets (Permanent): The Moonshadow can learn Eclipse Charms for eight experience or four bonus points each.

Character Advancement

Abyssals gain five experience points per session.

Attribute increase	current rating x4
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Ability increase	current rating x2
Caste/Favored Ability increase	(current rating x2) – 1
New Ability	3
Specialty	3
Purchased Merit	new rating x3
Willpower	8
Abyssal Charm	10 (8 if Ability is Caste/Favored)
Martial Arts Charm	10 (8 if Martial Arts is Caste/Favored)
Sidereal Martial Arts Charm	12 (10 if Martial Arts is Caste/Favored)
Spell	10 (8 if Occult is Caste/Favored)
Evocation	10

Abyssal Experience

Abyssals can earn Abyssal Experience by fulfilling Experience and Role Bonuses. She can achieve each of these once per session, which grants two Abyssal Experience. It can be spent on any experience cost except learning Abyssal Charms.

EXPRESSION BONUS

Once per session, a deathknight can earn two Abyssal Experience from:

- Expressing or upholding Major or Defining Intimacies in a way that reveals something significant about her or provides character growth.

- Facing significant challenges or danger to uphold Major or Defining Intimacies.

- Facing significant obstacles from Flaws (**Exalted**, p. 167).

ROLE BONUS

Once per session, a deathknight can earn two Abyssal Experience from:

- Intentionally ceding the scene's "spotlight" to another player character to set him up for an interesting or dramatic moment or directly supporting him in such a moment.

- **Dusk Caste:** Using martial prowess in service to death's chivalry; defeating a powerful enemy; harming, killing, or destroying someone or something the Peacebringer has a negative Major or Defining Tie toward; inciting violent conflict or wanton destruction to uphold a Major or Defining Intimacy.

- **Midnight Caste:** Using social influence or leadership in service to death's chivalry; Inspiring a nontrivial character to uphold one of the Abyssal's Major or Defining Intimacies in a significant way; enduring great hardship for the sake of a Major of Defining Intimacy; or spreading the worship of the dead, the bleak doctrine of the Deathlords, or similar teachings.

- **Daybreak Caste:** Using intellect, knowledge, or necromancy in service to death's chivalry; discovering lost lore of the Underworld or similarly valuable knowledge; learning something that helps advance or protect a Major or Defining Intimacy; creating a lasting work of supernatural power, like an artifact or necromantic working.

- **Day Caste:** Using stealth, subterfuge, and underhanded means in service to death's chivalry; stealing something that helps further her or her Circle's goals; gaining an advantage against someone by uncovering his secrets; upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy through illicit or illegal means.

- **Moonshadow Caste:** Bringing the living and the dead together in service to death's chivalry; resolving a significant dispute; overcoming social or geographical obstacles that stand in the way of her or her Circle's goals; inspiring or taking part in the destruction or transformation of a social institution.

Training Times

Raising traits with experience points requires training or time spent gaining practical experience. Multiple traits can be trained simultaneously if it makes sense. A mentor can reduce the times listed below, as can devoting one's time fully to training.

Attribute	(new rating) months
Non-Caste/ Favored Ability	(new rating) weeks
Caste/ Favored Ability	(new rating) days
Specialty	two weeks
Purchased Merit	(new rating) weeks
Willpower	one month
Charm	(Ability + Essence minimum) days, or (Ability minimum) days if Caste/Favored
Spell	(Circle x2) weeks
Evocation	(Essence minimum x4) days

Raising Essence

An Abyssal's Essence increases once she's spent a certain amount of experience (not including Abyssal experience). She must then cultivate her Essence while meditating in the Underworld's depths or other places tainted by death, though a player character's Essence may increase instantly in dramatic, character-defining moments.

Essence 2	50 xp
Essence 3	125 xp
Essence 4:	200 xp
Essence 5:	300 xp
Essence 6:	Only available at Storyteller's discretion.

When using experienced character creation rules (p. 123), reduce these thresholds by 50.

The Great Curse

The Abyssals' corruption did not spare them from the Great Curse. It still festers within the depths of their souls, taking root in the deathknights' apocalyptic vows. A deathknight might rebel against the Deathlords and the Neverborn, but even those who defy the cause of death and betray their masters must contend with the darkness within.

Gaining Limit

An Abyssal who defies her dark purpose rolls dice and gains Limit equal to her successes under the following circumstances:

- When she purposefully saves a life or acts indirectly to save many lives, she rolls three dice. Mercy shown in the name of death's chivalry doesn't incur this.

- When she interacts with the living as though she were one of them, she rolls two dice. This doesn't punish simply for being seen as one of the living — she's free to infiltrate Creation, so long as she never forgets that her place is among the dead.

- When she answers to the name she had in life or otherwise acknowledges her mortal life, she rolls one die.

Each of these triggers can only occur once per scene.

Losing Limit

The Abyssal can lose Limit in a number of ways

- Upholding death's chivalry (p. 29).
- Accomplishing a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134), which lets her lose one Limit.
- Spending downtime among the dead, which lets her lose one Limit. She can gain this benefit in Creation if she surrounds herself in the trappings of death.

Bleak Expiation

An Abyssal doesn't experience Limit Breaks or reset her Limit when she reaches Limit 10. Instead, the Abyssal Great Curse takes the form of **Bleak Expiation**, a torment inflicted upon the deathknight by her own baleful Essence.

Expiation occurs under the following circumstances:

- Once the Abyssal reaches Limit 10, the Abyssal automatically suffers Expiation at the next dramatically appropriate moment.
- The Storyteller can call for Expiation once per session.
- An Abyssal's player can invoke Expiation once per session. The Storyteller may delay it if it would be dramatically inappropriate in the current scene.

EXPIATION IN BRIEF

A summary of Expiation:

Step 1: The Abyssal reaches Limit 10, or her player or the Storyteller inflicts Expiation (maximum once per session, each).

Step 2: The Abyssal rolls (higher of Essence or 3).

Step 3: The Abyssal loses Limit equal to her successes, minimum one.

Step 4: The Storyteller spends the purged Limit on the Expiation's effects (1 for Minor, 2 for Major, 3 for Defining).

When an Abyssal suffers Expiation, she rolls (higher of Essence or 3) dice, or ten dice if she's at Limit 10. She loses Limit equal to her successes, minimum one, as the Great Curse stirs. The Storyteller determines what form this takes, allocating the Limit purged by the roll among the manifestations listed below or similar effects. The severity of a manifestation is rated like an Intimacy, based on how much purged Limit it costs: **one for Minor, two for Major, or three for Defining.**

BLIGHT

A Blight taints the world with death's Essence, corrupting natural things with the touch of rot, entropy, and decay.

Minor Blights are eerie and unnerving but can't cause anything more than superficial harm. Their effects are limited to the Abyssal's immediate presence — out to long range in combat. Ongoing effects last for one day unless otherwise specified. Examples include:

- Food spoils or crumbles to ash.
- Temperatures fall rapidly.
- Flames are snuffed out.
- Nearby vegetation wilts, and grass dies when the Abyssal walks over it.
- Standing water freezes.
- A chill wind follows in the Abyssal's wake.
- Shadows lengthen and grow darker.

Major Blights have a larger scope, capable of affecting a large town or a significant portion of a city. It can inflict meaningful harm or destruction comparable to what mundane dangers or calamities might cause. They last one session unless otherwise specified.

- Crops wither and cattle are born stillborn in large numbers for the next season.

- A sudden thunderstorm fills the sky, raining down tears and crackling with black lightning.

- Corpses rise as ravenous zombies, remaining animated until the next sunrise.

- Insects, vermin, and other small animals die en masse.

Defining Blights can affect small cities or much of a large city, potentially inflicting supernatural perils. They last one session unless otherwise specified.

- A shadowland opens for (Abyssal's Essence) days.

- A great thunderstorm fills the sky, crackling with black lightning and raining down chips of razor-sharp bone.

- An earthquake ravages the land, unearthing ancient graves.

- The dead rise en masse as rampaging zombies, remaining animated for the rest of the story.

CORRUPTION

The Great Curse poisons the Abyssal's soul, twisting her into a heartless champion of the grave. Whatever compassion they cling to turns to ash, while hatred drowns out the light of hope.

All levels of Corruption share three effects: imposing Intimacies, weakening Intimacies, or inflicting Whispers.

Imposing Intimacies

The Abyssal gains an Intimacy with the same intensity as the Corruption. This can't be resisted with Willpower, and the Intimacy can't be weakened by any means for the rest of the session. Examples of suitable Intimacies include:

- Negative Ties, especially toward the living.

- Intimacies based on cynicism, despair, or sorrow.

- Principles that reflect a positive outlook on death.

- Principles that align with death's chivalry.

- Ties of fascination for things that are darkly beautiful, like graveyards, blood, wolves, or spiders.

Weakening Intimacies

The Corruption weakens an Intimacy of the same intensity or lower. It can't be restored to its former intensity for the rest of the session. Suitable Intimacies are those antithetical to the kinds of Intimacies that Corruption can inflict. Examples include:

- Positive Ties toward the living.

- Intimacies based on hope, joy, or compassion.

- Principles that reflect a negative outlook on death.

- Principles that run counter to death's chivalry.

- Intimacies related to things from the Abyssal's mortal life.

Imposing Whispers

The Abyssal temporarily gains Whispers (p. 129). Minor Corruption inflicts two-dot Whispers for one session. Major Corruption can inflict two-dot Whispers for one story or four-dot Whispers for one session. Defining Corruption inflicts four-dot Whispers for one story. The Abyssal can gain Whispers permanently for experience debt (p. 224).

STIGMATA

Stigmata brand the Abyssal as one of the damned, marking her with an eerie and unworldly figure. Some are subtle, omens recognized only by the wise. Others are unmistakable, revealing the Abyssal's dark nature to all who see her.

Minor Stigmata are subtle, either difficult to notice or possible to explain away. They last one scene unless otherwise specified. Examples include:

- The Abyssal's skin becomes unnaturally cold.

- The deathknight casts no reflection, or her reflection appears as a rotting corpse.

- The smell of grave dirt and decay clings to the Abyssal.

STORYTELLING EXPIATION

The Great Curse isn't meant to punish players. The Storyteller should use it to create dramatic moments or conflicts for a deathknight that will be enjoyable for the players, if not for their characters. Keep this in mind both when deciding when to invoke Expiation and when choosing effects. Choosing multiple Minor effects may be less harsh than a single Major or Defining one, but it may set up a better moment in the story.

- Raitons follow the deathknight in large numbers.
- The Abyssal's shadow distends, its proportions growing warped and inhuman.
- The deathknight's presence unnerves animals.
- The deathknight's eyes glow red, are filled with solid black, or undergo similar changes.

Major Stigmata are much harder to conceal or explain, marking the Abyssal as a thing of death. They last one session unless otherwise specified. Examples include:

- The Abyssal's hands drip endlessly with blood, soaking through anything used to cover them.
- The Abyssal's shadow takes on a life of its own, moving independently of her.
- Animals flee from the deathknight's presence unless they're familiars or have been trained for battle.
- The Abyssal suffers a Minor Stigmata for one session.

Defining Stigmata are unambiguous and unconcealable manifestations of monstrosity. They last one session unless otherwise specified. Examples include:

- The Abyssal's flesh rots and withers, giving her the appearance of a shambling corpse and inflicting a -3 penalty on Appearance rolls.
- Eerie phantoms swirl around the Abyssal, weeping or silently screaming.
- Mortals find the Abyssal's presence unbearable, bleeding from the eyes when they look on her and treating any positive Ties toward her as one step weaker.
- The Abyssal suffers a Major Stigmata for one story.

THRALLDOM

Thralldom usurps the Abyssal's will, holding her to the vows she's sworn. It compels the Abyssal to do something that either upholds death's chivalry, exemplifies her Caste's role, or otherwise serves the Neverborn's will. The Thralldom's level determines what level of task it can compel (**Exalted**, p. 216): inconvenient tasks at Minor, serious tasks at Major, and life-changing tasks at Defining.

Thralldom can only compel acts that the Abyssal could complete in the current or next scene. It can't force her to act against an Intimacy whose intensity equals or exceeds the Expiation's, nor can it compel anything that would be unacceptable influence (**Exalted**, p. 220).

The Bleeding Lily Crowned in Shackles sat in an uncomfortable chair amid a ring of similarly inauspicious personages. Another hour stretched into infinity. She stared into the gruesome vaulted ceiling and entertained her mind by counting the bony joins where each buttress met the roof like the ribs of a great beast. As a Moonshadow, she oversaw the summit and bound any agreements the long-dead council might request.

Other deathknights shifted in their chairs, which were never meant to support the weight of physical bodies. Some were enforcers shipped to this summit alongside their snake-tongued courtiers as a show of strength. A Dusk Caste that the Bleeding Lily recalled as the Kingeater lounged near her with one long leg carelessly slung across its carved arm. Every so often, her eyes flitted toward the Lily with a hint of salacious intent. The Bleeding Lily did not return the looks — one fraught lover was enough.

Her daydream shifted to Meadow's warm touch and the full softness of her lips against her mouth and neck. The second this dusty specter called a recess, she planned to slip out of the shadowland and find her way to her shepherdess's field. The next time she met the Lily's eyes, though, the Dusk flashed a roguish wink. The Lily felt her cheeks flush and glared back. This provoked a burst of inappropriate laughter from the Kingeater.

"Is something the matter?" the ghostly chairman asked.

"Nothing, your grace," the Kingeater said in an appealing, rough voice, "but I think the members of this assembly with flesh and blood may be growing tired. Perhaps we can resume at midnight."

The ghost considered her words and then nodded, albeit grudgingly. "We shall be adjourned, then."

The Lily wasted no time bolting from the chamber. She kept her head down and focused on the motion of one boot in front of the other. She failed to notice the Kingeater crossing her path until they collided. The Dusk seized a fistful of her blouse and pulled her uncomfortably close. She smiled mercilessly at the Lily with pointed teeth grazing her painted bottom lip. "Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

The Lily pushed against the solidness of the Kingeater's chest and her silver and black jacquard vest to force space between them. "None of your business. I need to stretch my legs."

The Kingeater's wicked smirk widened into a wolfish grin. "Which is it? An unbelievable excuse or none of my business?"

The Lily decided whether to be disgusted or aroused and settled on a mix of both. "Don't you have something better to do?"

The Kingeater eyed her with brutal scrutiny. "You have someone else, then, who you're rushing off to meet. Let me guess.... Some mortal you're keeping your identity from? How dreadfully romantic."

The Lily flushed. "No, nothing like—"

The cold kiss of metal pressed against her throat as the Kingeater blocked her passage with knife in hand. "You're a lovestruck fool, the Bleeding Lily Crowned in Shackles. That kind of romance isn't for us."

"I disagree," the Lily said. Dark Essence circulated through her body, and she moved, faster than thought, past the Kingeater. Without looking back, she sprinted toward the sliver of daylight, winking through the exit.

• • • •

The shepherdess watched the sun dip toward the horizon and waited until the moon rose high. Knowing her lover would not appear tonight, Meadow stood and returned home.





Chapter Six

Charms

Great and terrible is the power of the Abyssal Exalted. Their prowess is a dark reflection of the Solars' arete, corrupted by the bleak power of the Neverborn and the baleful legends forged by the Deathlords.

Power of Death's Chosen Excellencies

The Abyssals' simplest powers are their Excellencies. When a deathknight makes an (Attribute + Ability) roll, she may add dice to it for one mote each with that Ability's Excellency. She may also use Excellencies to raise her static values — Evasion, Parry, Resolve, and Guile — paying two motes for each +1 bonus.

Gaining Excellencies: An Abyssal automatically gains the Excellency of any of her Caste or Favored Abilities she has at least one dot in, as well as any other Abilities she knows at least one Charm from.

Dice Limit

Abyssals can't add more than (Attribute + Ability) dice from Excellencies or other magic to a roll, or more than $[(\text{Attribute} + \text{Ability}) / 2, \text{rounded down}]$ to a static value.

Charms and Ability Restrictions

By default, Abyssal Charms can only enhance actions and static values that use their associated Ability. This includes Simple and Reflexive Charms that create actions, which must use the Charm's Ability. For instance, a Melee Charm can't be used to counterattack with Brawl unless it specifies otherwise.

Some exceptions exist. If a Charm enhances or creates a roll or static value that normally doesn't use that

Charm's Ability — e.g., Occult Charms that enhance attacks — that Charm can be used with the normal Ability for that roll or value. Additionally, some Charms allow the Abyssal to substitute one Ability for another for certain rolls or values. They can enhance such actions with Charms of both Abilities.

Abyssal Charms can be freely combined with Evocations.

Keywords

Abyssal Charms use the following keywords in addition to those listed on **Exalted**, p. 253.

VERSATILE

Combat Ability Charms with this keyword can enhance attacks and parries with Martial Arts if the Abyssal uses a weapon compatible with that Ability. Versatile Charms from multiple combat Abilities can't enhance the same action.

WHISPERS

This keyword provides additional benefits for Abyssals with the Whispers Merit (p. 129). Such effects often use (Whispers) calculations. Its value equals the Merit rating of the Abyssal's Whispers.

Whisper Charms sometimes **invoke** the Abyssal's use of her Whispers. This means they count against the reset limit on using Whispers. This doesn't cost Willpower.

Charm Concept: Negative Principles

Some Abyssal Charms invoke or exploit negative Principles. Like negative Ties, these are Principles that express or are based on a negative emotion. Examples include "Fear is the greatest teacher" or "I am easily stirred to wrath."

Archery

BARROW-KNIGHT PANOPLY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Archery 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal is one with her arsenal, each weapon an extension of her killing intent.

While the Abyssal has one full-cost attunement to an artifact weapon, she reduces the attunement cost of further artifact weapons by three motes each. This doesn't stack with other discounts. It doesn't matter what Ability the weapons use.

If the deathknight ends her full-cost attunement, she must commit enough motes to bring another attunement to its full cost, or else all discounted attunements end.

Special: This Charm may alternatively be learned as a Brawl, Melee, or Thrown Charm.

BLOODTHIRSTY ARROW

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Archery 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's arrow twists through the air in search of her prey.

The Abyssal reduces an enemy's Defense bonus from cover by one or inflicts -1 Defense on an enemy without cover.

If the attack benefits from aiming, it can strike enemies behind full cover, passing directly through the obstruction as long as there's some opening for the attack to pass through. However, such enemies still receive +3 non-Charm Defense from the cover.

BOLTS OF INESCAPABLE DREAD

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bloodthirsty Arrow

Loosing an artful warning shot, the Abyssal destroys her foe's hopes of escape.

LESSER OF TWO EVILS

Charms like Bolts of Inescapable Dread let characters roll against either Defense or a different static value. Targets can't use Charms that increase their Defense to raise the other value (or vice versa), but can still use other defensive Charms, like penalizing attack rolls. The same is true for other effects that target the lower of two static values.

The Abyssal fires a warning shot as a difficulty 1 gambit against the lower of an enemy's Defense or Resolve. Enemies suffer -2 Resolve if their Initiative is lower than the Abyssal's or they can't perceive her.

If the gambit succeeds, the Abyssal's terrified victim suffers a -1 penalty on all rolls for the rest of the scene, which increases to -3 on disengage and Awareness rolls. He also suffers -1 Evasion and Resolve, which increases to -2 while within close range of the Abyssal.

If the victim crashes the Abyssal or deals 3+ **decisive** damage to her with an attack, he may pay one Willpower to resist this effect.

Special activation rules: The Abyssal can use this Charm reflexively on her first turn in combat, and it doesn't count as her attack for the round. If she wins Join Battle, she can use this Charm immediately, making a gambit against any number of enemies who see the shot. She makes a single Initiative roll, adding +1 difficulty for each nontrivial enemy past the first, up to a maximum difficulty of 4.

DEADLY FEATHERED MAELSTROM

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bloodthirsty Arrow

Her fingers an unnatural blur, the Abyssal draws and fires a barrage of arrows.

The Abyssal makes up to (Dexterity) **decisive** attacks dividing her Initiative evenly among them, rounded up. She doesn't need to aim to attack enemies at medium range. Each 10 on these attack rolls adds one die to that attack's damage roll. Her Initiative doesn't reset until all attacks are completed.

ELEGANT EXECUTIONER'S ART

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bloodthirsty Arrow

The deathknight draws in close, savoring the fear in her victim's eyes.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she attacks from close range. A **withering** attack's Accuracy is calculated as if it had been made from short range, and it adds (higher of Essence or 3) Overwhelming. A **decisive** attack adds a non-Charms success on the attack roll.

With an Archery 4 repurchase, this Charm can enhance attacks from any range as long as the deathknight uses her movement action to move towards her target on the same tick. She also gains this benefit against enemies she's reflexively pursued as part of a successful rush since her last turn.

RAVENOUS HUNTER'S YEARNING

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Bloodthirsty Arrow

The Abyssal dedicates herself to the hunt, making her more alert, deft, and aggressive.

The Abyssal chooses an individual to be her quarry. She adds one non-Charms die on rolls to track him, rush him, or oppose his disguise or Stealth rolls for each of the following that's true:

- She's faced her quarry in combat in the current story.
- Her quarry has a -1 or higher wound penalty.
- She has a Major or Defining Tie that supports pursuing her quarry.
- Her quarry has a Tie of fear that applies to her.

This Charm's Willpower cost is waived if the Abyssal uses it against an enemy after damaging him with a **decisive** attack or crashing him with a **withering** attack.

With an Archery 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a three-mote surcharge to treat all the living as her quarry. This can't receive the discount above.

TWISTING SPITEFUL SHAFT

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bloodthirsty Arrow

The deathknight's arrow burrows through her victim's flesh, boring deeper and deeper toward his heart.

The Abyssal adds one die of damage to a **decisive** attack. If it deals 3+ damage, her arrow begins burrowing into her victim. His wound penalty is increased by -1, and he suffers (Abyssal's Essence) dice of lethal damage at the start of each of his turns for the rest of the scene, ignoring Hardness.

Removing the arrow requires a (Wits + Medicine) roll at difficulty (higher of Abyssal's Strength or 3) as a miscellaneous action.

HUNDRED PACES BITE

Cost: 2i; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's hunger knows no bounds, supping on distant bloodshed.

When the Abyssal deals damage with a **decisive** attack, she steals (1 + attack roll extra successes) motes. She can't gain more than (Dexterity, Perception, or Strength) motes per round with this Charm.

RELIC ARROW METHOD

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform, Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

STEALING MOTES

A number of Abyssal Charms let them steal motes. Motes can only be stolen from characters with mote pools of their own, and the deathknight can't steal more motes than an enemy has. She may choose whether to drain personal or peripheral motes with such effects, adding them to the same pool she steals from.



The Abyssal plucks a phantasmal arrow from the memories of war that echo through the Neverborn's nightmares, a bolt of smoke and hatred given form.

The Abyssal can make an Archery attack without needing ammunition (including firedust). Once per scene, she can suffuse an arrow with undying hatred, adding two non-Charm dice on the attack roll.

A second purchase of this Charm lets the Abyssal use it to reflexively reload weapons with the Slow tag. This makes such weapons compatible with magic that creates multiple attacks as long as she reloads for each attack.

Whispers: When the Abyssal uses this Charm to add dice on an attack roll, she can invoke her Whispers to convert them to non-Charm successes.

BANISHED BOW ARSENAL

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Relic Arrow Method

The Abyssal's empty hands cannot be trusted; her weapon is always but the void's breadth away.

The Abyssal banishes an Archery weapon and its associated ammunition Elsewhere. She can recall them to her hands by reflexively ending this Charm.

EXQUISITE RELIC BOW

Cost: 5m, 1wp (+1m); **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Relic Arrow Method

The Abyssal's killing intent takes form as a spectral weapon, a vicious bow of night-black Essence or a flamewand roaring with sickly green pyreflame.

The Abyssal creates an artifact Archery weapon from Essence. The type of weapon created and its exact appearance are the same each time she uses this Charm.

The deathknight can use Relic Arrow Method's dice-adding effect to enhance attacks made with the summoned weapon without regard for its once-per-scene limit, although each use beyond the first incurs a one-mote surcharge.

This Charm may be repurchased any number of times, each repurchase adding an Evocation to the summoned

weapon. These Evocations draw their themes and function from the deathknight's personality, Caste, and iconic anima banner.

HAIL OF GELID DEATH

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Deadly Feathered Maelstrom

The Abyssal's arrow freezes and shatters in mid-air, showering razor-sharp ice on friend and foe alike.

The Abyssal makes a **decisive** attack roll against all other characters — friend or foe — within medium range of a point within her weapon's range. This makes it possible to attack foes beyond her weapon's range.

The attack has a base damage of (Perception) dice against each hit enemy, and she divides her Initiative evenly among them. Battle groups and trivial characters aren't included in dividing up her Initiative, but still suffer the same damage as other foes.

If the Abyssal's attack benefits from aiming, she may avoid harming allies instead of that action's usual benefit.

SPLINTER OF THE VOID

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Aggravated, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hundred Paces Bite, Relic Arrow Method

Necrotic Essence engulfs the Abyssal's arrow, a crackling black nimbus of annihilation.

The Abyssal's **decisive** attack ignores (higher of Essence or 3) points of Hardness and rerolls 1s on the damage roll until they cease to appear. It deals aggravated damage to living enemies.

IRON SLEET ATTACK

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Splinter of the Void

The Abyssal's arrow radiates unearthly cold, freezing her victim's lifeblood from within.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after rolling 3+ successes on a **decisive** damage roll. She can forgo one level of damage to prevent her target from taking his movement action this round — or next round, if he's already taken one. Alternatively, against an enemy who's successfully rushed or disengaged from the deathknight, she can deny him that action's benefit, letting her move without provoking his reflexive movement.

SUN-SWALLOWING VORACITY

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Splinter of the Void

The Abyssal's arrow shares her hunger for the world's end, drawing in and devouring all light.

If the Abyssal's attack hits, it extinguishes all light sources other than anima banners that her projectile passed within short range of while in flight. Mundane light sources are snuffed out, while magical lights return once the scene ends.

If the attack's target has an anima banner, it's reduced by one level if he suffers **withering** damage or resets to dim if he's crashed. Against **decisive** attacks, he loses one anima for each level of damage he suffers.

When used outside of combat, no roll is required unless the deathknight attempts a particularly difficult shot.

FATAL SNIPER FOCUS

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ravenous Hunter's Yearning

The Abyssal lines up a shot with a deftness and precision that puts all living flesh to shame.

The Abyssal ignores penalties from non-visual conditions on an attack roll and can attack out to extreme range, limited only by her ability to perceive her foe. **Withering** attacks calculate their Accuracy bonus as their target was at short range.

PULSE OF THE PREY

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fatal Sniper Focus

The Abyssal's senses hone in on her foe's Essence, granting accuracy to match her malice.

The Abyssal reflexively aims before making a **decisive** attack and converts the dice added by aiming to non-Charm successes.

With an Essence 5 repurchase, this Charm can be used on **withering** attacks against crashed enemies. It hits and rolls damage even if the attack roll fails. She can only do so once for each crash period.

UNHESITATING VIOLENCE ATTITUDE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fatal Sniper Focus

Even as she withdraws, the Abyssal rains death down on her foes.

When the Abyssal successfully disengages, she may reflexively make a **withering** or **decisive** attack against an enemy whose opposed roll she beat.

GASP OF DEAD GODS

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Splinter of the Void

As the deathknight draws back her bowstring, she calls up a swirling maelstrom of wailing phantasms that collapses into a light-eating bolt of entropic Essence.

The Abyssal makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy with lower Initiative. She ignores the limitations of her weapon's range and can attack out to long range without needing to aim or at extreme range with an aim action. The attack has a base damage of (current temporary Willpower), which doesn't include the deathknight's Initiative or reset it. This is doubled as long as the Abyssal meets one of the following conditions, tripled for two conditions, or quadrupled for three or more:

- The attack benefits from aiming.
- The target is crashed.
- The target has a wound penalty of -2 or higher.
- The Abyssal is within close range of her target.

- The target has a Tie of fear that applies to the deathknight.

With a repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a three-mote, three-anima surcharge to add her Initiative to this Charm's damage. (It isn't multiplied). She resets Initiative on a hit. If she kills her victim, she gains (his Essence + 3) motes as she drinks in the last of his life's Essence.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by crashing an enemy whose Initiative was at least ten points higher than the Abyssal's.

MERCILESS HUNTER'S HAND

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unhesitating Violence Attitude

Seizing upon even the slightest moment of weakness, the Abyssal dispatches her foes with deadly force.

When an enemy within range of the Abyssal's weapon is crashed, she may reflexively make a **decisive** attack against him.

PERFECT MURDER MEDITATION

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pulse of the Prey

The deathknight's murderous intensity refines her precision and focus.

The Abyssal makes a **decisive** attack, adding up to (higher of Essence or 3) attack roll extra successes as dice of damage for each of the conditions below that she meets. If she meets three or more conditions, she adds all extra successes to damage.

- The attack benefits from aiming.
- The target is crashed.
- The target has a wound penalty of -2 or higher.
- The Abyssal is within close range of her target.
- The target has a Tie of fear that applies to the deathknight.

PIERCING GHOST BARB

Cost: —(+4m, 2i); **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Bloodthirsty Arrow

The Abyssal's loosed arrow becomes a wailing phantasm, passing through all obstructions to strike true.

The Abyssal can pay a four-mote, two-Initiative surcharge when she uses Bloodthirsty Arrow to make her projectile intangible until it strikes her foe, rendering the attack unblockable. She ignores light and heavy cover completely and can pierce full cover without needing to aim or have an opening to attack through. The target's soak and Hardness are halved against the attack, rounded down, except for any granted by magic.

The ghost-arrow's flight can be impeded by wards against the undead and by living plants. An enemy wielding a just-uprooted sapling could block it, while a wall that's had a line of salt drawn along one side would prevent the arrow from passing through.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack that resets the Abyssal's Initiative and building back up to 15+ Initiative.

RAPACIOUS VULTURE APPROACH

Cost: 1m, 1i; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pulse of the Prey

The deathknight's hungry gaze sights new prey as she flits from shadow to shadow, her every move a prelude to murder.

The Abyssal can take a move action and aim on the same turn and can flurry an aim with a rush or disengage.

If the Abyssal moves toward a foe and uses Pulse of the Prey against him on the same turn, she waives that Charm's Willpower cost.

SCREAMING WRAITH ARROW

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Perilous, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Piercing Ghost Barb

An arrow of pure malice flies from the Abyssal's bow, and those struck by it feel their flesh, blood, and Essence scream in torment.

The Abyssal makes a **withering** attack against an enemy within short range, adding her Initiative to its raw damage. This resets her Initiative to base, though she still gains Initiative from the attack as usual.

If the Abyssal's Initiative is at least ten higher than her target's, the added damage is post-soak.

With Essence 4, if this crashes its target, he suffers (Abyssal's Essence) dice of lethal **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness, as his heart seizes from fear.

SETTING SUN PURSUIT

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Ravenous Hunter's Yearning (x2)

A long hunt only heightens the Abyssal's hunger for bloodshed.

The Abyssal may use this Charm after a successful tracking roll, rush, or Awareness roll opposing a character's Stealth. She banks a special pool of Initiative equal to her total successes on that roll, maximum (Perception or Wits). When she Joins Battle against that enemy, she may add the pooled Initiative to the Initiative she receives from Joining Battle.

Alternatively, when the Abyssal makes a **decisive** attack against that enemy, she may add the pooled Initiative to its damage roll. She can use this to attack him while crashed, using only the Initiative from the pool for the attack's damage.

WORLD-WOUNDING DARKNESS

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Sun-Swallowing Voracity

The Abyssal wounds the world, revealing the terrible emptiness beyond existence.

The Abyssal makes a special **decisive** attack against all characters within short range of a point within her weapon's range, without needing to aim. The roll is difficulty 1 by default, but the Storyteller may increase it for especially tricky shots.

If successful, the projectile pierces through reality, creating a void that draws in everything within close range. Characters within short range of the projectile must roll (Stamina + Resistance) or (Dexterity + Athletics) against the Abyssal's attack roll. Battle groups suffer a -4 penalty.

Those who fail this roll are pulled into close range of the void and fall prone. Affected targets suffer (Abyssal's Essence) dice of **decisive** damage as the void tears flesh from bone, plus an additional die of damage for each success by which the Abyssal's roll beats theirs, up to a maximum of the deathknight's Initiative. This damage ignores Hardness and doesn't reset the Abyssal's Initiative.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal uses Sun-Swallowing Voracity together with this Charm, it extinguishes all light within medium range of where the projectile falls, as well as those it passes within short range of.

HEART-NUMBING SPIKE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 4

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Gasp of Dead Gods, Screaming Wraith Arrow

As the deathknight and her alien masters have flensed away their old identities, so must her foe.

If the Abyssal deals 3+ **decisive** damage, her enemy loses one Willpower, plus an additional Willpower for each 10 on the damage roll, maximum (higher of Abyssal's Essence or 3). For each point of Willpower he loses, one of his positive Intimacies is weakened by one step. Defining Intimacies can't be affected unless the damage dealt exceeded the target's base Resolve. The Abyssal can target specific Intimacies she's aware of; otherwise, the Storyteller chooses. The victim may resist this by paying an additional Willpower for each Intimacy he wishes to preserve.

If this attack incapacitates the Abyssal's victim or reduces his Willpower to zero, he loses all memories associated with any Intimacies that are completely eroded. If someone or something reminds him of an Intimacy, he may pay three Willpower to regain his memories of it.

Reset: Once per scene. Once the Abyssal uses this Charm against a character, he's immune to further uses for (his Resolve) days.

LAST DAYS PORTENT

Cost: 15m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: World-Wounding Darkness

The deathknight takes aim at the hated daystar, plunging the battlefield into a night broken only by the dim constellations of the Underworld.

The Abyssal looses an arrow at the sun, rolling (Dexterity + Archery) at difficulty 5. If successful, her projectile implodes, devouring all sunlight. This has the following effects, which last for (1 + extra successes) hours:

- Darkness blankets the battlefield, extending out to (Essence + 3) range bands from the Abyssal's location when she used this Charm, inflicting a -3 penalty on vision-based rolls.
- Light sources within range are extinguished, as with Sun-Swallowing Voracity. Anima banners' radiance is diminished as if they were one step lower.
- The darkness counts as a shadowland, although it doesn't open into the Underworld.
- It counts as being night for relevant effects.

In the Underworld, Malfeas, and other realms of existence, the Abyssal can snuff out the light of their alien suns or their nearest equivalent.

When the Abyssal uses this Charm to uphold a negative Defining Intimacy or a Defining Principle based on death's chivalry, she may extend its range to (Essence) miles once per story.

Reset: Once per day.

UNCANNY EXTERMINATION INSTINCT

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 5

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Perfect Murder Meditation, Rapacious Vulture Approach

The Abyssal's killing precision has become second nature, an effortless extension of her being.

The Abyssal adds (Essence) dice of **decisive** damage or raw **withering** damage on an attack that benefits from aiming.

Athletics

RAITON'S NIMBLE PERCH

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight's footwork and poise approach perfection, moving with the grace of those no longer burdened by flesh.

The Abyssal gains perfect balance and can stand or run on surfaces too narrow or weak to support her normally without needing to roll.

SPIDER POUNCE TECHNIQUE

Cost: 2m (1m); **Mins:** Athletics 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal moves in impossible bounds, landing in a hunched crouch only to leap away again.

The Abyssal uses a reflexive move action to jump one range band vertically or horizontally without needing to roll.

If the deathknight uses this Charm on multiple consecutive turns, the cost of activations past the first is reduced by one mote.

EARTH-FORSAKING ATTITUDE

Cost: 3m (+3m per 3 range bands); **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Spider Pounce Technique

The Abyssal drifts through the air with eerie weightlessness.

The Abyssal can make a horizontal leap without needing anything to kick off against and can end her movement in midair. On her next turn, she must use this Charm again to continue the leap or fall to the ground. In addition to any horizontal motion, she descends one range band for each consecutive use of this Charm past the first, though a stunt can circumvent this. Leaps that span multiple range bands require a running start.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can avoid all damage from a fall. For falls greater than two range bands, she must pay a three-mote surcharge plus another three motes for every three range bands beyond the third.

With an Athletics 4, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a two-mote surcharge to use this Charm without jumping, gliding eerily across the ground. She doesn't lose elevation while gliding through mid-air and can cross multiple range bands without needing a running start.

FALLING SCYTHE ATTACK

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Earth-Forsaking Attitude

The Abyssal arcs through the air with the fatal force of a reaping scythe to cull the ranks of the living.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she jumps into close range with an enemy and makes a non-ranged attack against him on the same turn. She adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice of post-soak **withering** damage or **decisive** damage.

If the Abyssal uses Earth-Forsaking Attitude to avoid falling damage after this attack, she reduces its total cost by two motes.

DREAD STRENGTH DISCIPLINE

Cost: 3m or 3i per dot; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

A dark strength braces the Abyssal's every muscle and tendon, letting her crush stone to powder and rip her enemies' heads from their shoulders.

The deathknight gains up to (lower of Essence or Strength) bonus dots of Strength, paying three motes or three Initiative per dot. This can raise her above Strength 5. She also adds these dots on **decisive** damage rolls.

COWARDS DIE SCREAMING

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Strength Discipline

Witnessing the Abyssal's impossible might, her victims know that their time is nigh.

The Abyssal treats a successful feat of strength roll as a threaten roll against any number of characters who witnessed it. If the feat required Strength 5+, all targets suffer -1 Resolve against this influence.

In combat, this influence costs one Initiative to resist, in addition to the usual cost.

CORPSE-MIGHT SURGE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Strength Discipline

Exerting herself beyond the limits of what mortal flesh can endure, the Abyssal revels in unholy strength.

The deathknight adds (Essence) dice on a feat of Strength and adds +2 to her effective Strength rating to determine what feats she can attempt. If this raises her effective Strength over a feat's minimum, each dot over adds an additional bonus die.

RUINED WORLD ARMAMENT

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Steel gates and stone walls are no guarantee of safety against the deathknight; before her awful strength, they are yet another weapon.

The Abyssal gains the following benefits when fighting with improvised weapons:

- She waives the Initiative cost to attack with them.

- They gain +1 Accuracy.

- They add +(Essence/2, rounded up) to their damage and Overwhelming.

- Medium and heavy weapons gain the Smashing tag. If they already had it, the deathknight waives the Initiative cost and Defense penalty for making smash attacks.

BROKEN MAUSOLEUM BARRICADE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ruined World Armament

The deathknight topples monuments and shatters tombs to shelter herself amid their stony ruin.

The Abyssal treats a successful feat of strength roll as a roll to take cover (**Exalted**, p. 198) — either behind whatever object she lifted up or the rubble left behind by a feat of demolition. The cover's Defense bonus is increased by +1 until her next turn. This doesn't use her movement action.

With Athletics 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal can pay a two-Initiative surcharge when she uses this Charm to make a feat of strength reflexively. Such feats are limited to scenery and other narratively unimportant things, letting the deathknight lift or destroy them to provide cover.

HEADSTONES FLUNG LIKE PEBBLES

Cost: -(3m); **Mins:** Athletics 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Ruined World Armament

Death's Lawgiver topples cenotaphs and monuments, casting them aside with a casual toss.

When the Abyssal makes a Thrown attack with an improvised weapon, she can roll (Strength + Athletics) for the attack roll and ignores penalties for using objects unsuited to throwing. She can pay three motes to increase its range by one band, maximum long, and add one die of **decisive** damage or post-soak **withering** damage for each range band the projectile crosses.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can make a ranged feat of demolition by throwing an improvised weapon, gaining the benefits above. Instead of adding damage, each range band it crosses adds one die on the roll if she extends the feat's range.

SHADOW RACES THE LIGHT

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's wicked swiftness preys on her foe's imperfections, winnowing away his speed.

The Abyssal makes a rush or an opposed Athletics roll in a speed-based competition, the opposing character's 1s and 2s force him to reroll successes, starting with 7s and moving up.

BEHEMOTH-FELLING APPROACH

Cost: 2m, 2i; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Strength Discipline, Shadow Races the Light, Spider Pounce Technique

The deathknight topples even the greatest of foes, slaying titanic beasts with bounding strikes, superior strength, and incomparable speed.

When the Abyssal attacks a Legendary Size enemy, she adds an automatic success on the attack roll and ignores the defensive benefits her enemy receives from his size. This doesn't let her grapple him.

This Charm's Initiative cost is waived, and it loses the Perilous keyword against enemies the deathknight has a negative Major or Defining Tie toward.

BLOOD-CURDLING SWIFTNESS

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Shadow Races the Light

The Abyssal lunges for her victim with inhuman speed, a gruesome nightmare too swift to escape.

The Abyssal treats a successful rush as a threaten roll against her target. If successful, he must use his next turn to flee the deathknight or otherwise seek safety, suffering a -3 penalty on movement actions opposing her until that turn ends. This costs one Willpower and (Abyssal's Essence) Initiative to resist.

With Athletics 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to extend this Charm's influence to all enemies who witnessed the rush.

FLICKERING IMAGE STRIKE

Cost: 3i; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Raiton's Nimble Perch, Shadow Races the Light

The deathknight outpaces her enemy with impossible speed, surrounding him with ghostly afterimages that seem to strike from every angle.

When the Abyssal attacks an enemy at close range whose Initiative is lower than hers (prior to paying this Charm's cost), she rolls (Dexterity + Athletics) opposing his (Perception + Awareness). If successful, the attack becomes a surprise attack, imposing a -2 penalty on her victim's Defense against the attack.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack that resets the Abyssal's Initiative and then rising to Initiative 6+.

KILLING FIELD ATTITUDE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Shadow Races the Light

There is no escape from the deathknight, for anywhere she stands is a killing field for her foes.

The Abyssal can use Athletics Charms that enhance rushes on rolls opposing an enemy's disengage.

MIST OVER ICE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Until the Exalt stops running

Prerequisite Charms: Raiton's Nimble Perch, Shadow Races the Light

Lightening her body with Essence, the Abyssal's tread becomes as insubstantial as a ghost's.

While running, the Abyssal can move over unstable surfaces, even water. She never risks damaging or breaking thin or flimsy surfaces and isn't affected by environmental hazards whose surface she runs over. This Charm remains active for as long as she continues to run.

With Athletics 5, Essence 2, the Abyssal can activate this Charm with instant duration, letting her safely pause on an unstable surface for long enough to complete a single action. However, this doesn't grant any protection against environmental hazards.

CROUCHING GARGOYLE STANCE**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 4, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Mute**Duration:** (Essence + 2) rounds**Prerequisite Charms:** Mist Over Ice

The Abyssal draws on her unsurpassed speed and incomparable balance to move in defiance of gravity, scuttling up walls or loping along ramparts.

The Abyssal can move up or down sheer vertical surfaces like walls or move upside down on horizontal surfaces like ceilings. If she ends this Charm's duration while somewhere she couldn't normally stand and doesn't renew it, she falls as usual.

NOWHERE IS SAFE**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 4, Essence 2**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** One hour**Prerequisite Charms:** Shadow Races the Light

The Abyssal moves with the speed denied to those born of flesh — she is as a shadow, a nightmare, a creeping dread.

The Abyssal doubles 9s on rushes and opposed Athletics rolls in speed-based competitions. When she rushes an enemy, he loses one Initiative for each 10 she rolls. Outside of combat, she moves with incredible speed, capable of maintaining a speed of (Dexterity x10) miles per hour over open terrain.

If the Abyssal reactivates this Charm at the end of its duration, she waives its Willpower cost.

If the Abyssal has Superior Weapon-Body (p. 162), it adds (Essence) dice on rolls enhanced by this Charm instead of doubling 9s.

ROARING VOID LUNGE**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Athletics 4, Essence 2**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Nowhere Is Safe

The howls of the Neverborn race behind the Abyssal like the thunder that follows a nightmare of lightning.

When the Abyssal succeeds on a rush, her target loses two Initiative.

DEATH DRAWS NEAR**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 2**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Blood-Curdling Swiftess

The Abyssal closes in on her prey with a languid ease matched only by her impossible speed.

When the Abyssal rushes an enemy, up to (Essence) of his 1s subtract successes. She also gains this benefit on opposed Athletics rolls for races and similar tests of speed.

If the Abyssal knows Killing Field Attitude, this Charm's benefit applies on rolls opposing disengages.

EBON LIGHTNING FLASH**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 2**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Dual**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Raiton's Nimble Perch, Shadow Races the Light

The Abyssal lunges towards and past her foe in a single perfect motion, glancing over her shoulder to watch her victim's corpse split in half.

To use this Charm, the Abyssal must have Initiative 6+. She can attack a lower-Initiative enemy within medium range, instantly dashing into close range before she strikes. She doubles the damage dealt by a **withering** attack or adds (Essence) dice of damage on a **decisive** attack. This uses her movement action.

This Charm is incompatible with Falling Scythe Attack and the flight from On Wings of Night.

INDOMITABLE FORCE UNLEASHED**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 2**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Dread Strength Discipline

As her flesh falters and threatens to yield, the Abyssal steels herself with unliving Essence, erupting with terrible might.

After rolling a feat of strength, the Abyssal may use this Charm to reroll all dice that show failures.

DEATH'S INEVITABLE GRASP

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Indomitable Force Unleashed

The Abyssal's strength is as inexorable as the doom she portends, dragging down pillars and shattering chains.

The Abyssal adds (Strength) non-Charms dice on a feat of strength.

SHRAPNEL RAIN DEMOLITION

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ruined World Armament

The Abyssal crushes her foe beneath stone and shrapnel, burying him in an untimely sepulcher.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after using an improvised weapon to deal 3+ **decisive** damage or crash an enemy. She destroys the weapon with the force of her blow, trapping the target beneath the debris. He's knocked prone and can't take any movement actions until the obstruction is cleared with a feat of strength or other action. The minimum difficulty of such rolls and the minimum Strength requirement for feats is (Abyssal's Strength).

SKY-CLEAVING WRAITH

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Until the Abyssal stops leaping

Prerequisite Charms: Earth-Forsaking Attitude

Gathering her Essence, the Abyssal leaps to the sky with a horrible screaming sound, her passage carving a bloody red cut through the sky.

The Abyssal can use her movement action to make a tremendous leap on her turn, jumping up to four range bands horizontally or three range bands vertically. She can't jump fewer than three range bands normally, but using Spider Pounce Technique lets her make a controlled jump of two range bands. Such leaps can't be flurried, but the deathknight can make one reflexively on the turn she uses this Charm.

If there are any enemies within close range when the Abyssal leaps, she must make a disengage roll with (Strength + Athletics) to do so. If she succeeds, enemies

within close range whose opposed rolls failed by 2+ successes fall prone. Trivial enemies automatically fall prone.

ON WINGS OF NIGHT

Cost: 10m, 1wp (2m or 2i per turn); **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Sky-Cleaving Wraith

Eerie wings unfurl from the Abyssal's anima, beating down soundlessly to send her skyward.

The Abyssal can fly with her movement actions, letting her move vertically or horizontally through the air and hover in place when not moving. If she uses Stepping Outside Existence while in flight to rush an airborne foe, she waives its Willpower cost.

In combat, the Abyssal must pay two motes or two Initiative at the start of each subsequent turn. Otherwise, this Charm ends, causing her to drift harmlessly down to the ground.

Special activation rules: The Abyssal can use this Charm reflexively at the apex of a leap made with Sky-Cleaving Wraith, waiving its Willpower cost.

STEPPING OUTSIDE EXISTENCE

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death Draws Near, Nowhere is Safe

Driven by hunger for a distant foe, the Abyssal lunges through the darkness that lies beyond the world.

The Abyssal rushes an opponent within medium range. If successful, she instantly teleports into close range with him without crossing the space in between, instead of a rush's usual benefits.

While using Nowhere Is Safe, this Charm's range becomes long.

SUPERIOR WEAPON-BODY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Corpse-Might Surge, Death Draws Near, Earth-Forsaking Attitude (x2)

The Abyssal has honed her body to a perfection denied to the living.

The Abyssal doubles 9s on Athletics rolls.

SWIFTER THAN A SCREAM

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ebon Lightning Flash

The thrill of murder urges the Abyssal onward to her next victim with incredible speed.

After incapacitating a nontrivial enemy with a **decisive** attack, the deathknight can move one range band toward another nontrivial enemy. If she enters close range with him, she may reflexively make a **decisive** attack against him with (Dexterity + Athletics) dice of damage. This follow-up attack doesn't reset her Initiative.

If the Abyssal uses this Charm multiple times in a single tick, she waives the Willpower cost of activations past the first.

INCARNATE DOOM ASCENDANCY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Corpse-Might Surge, Indomitable Force Unleashed

The Abyssal is entropy incarnate. The things of the living world are paltry flinders in her grasp.

The deathknight lowers the minimum Strength for all feats of strength by two.

LAST WIND EMPOWERMENT

Cost: —; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Stepping Outside Existence

Desperate to take one last step before death can claim her, the Abyssal draws on a surge of unimaginable speed.

The Abyssal can take a second movement action on her turn this round.

Reset: Once per scene.

MOUNTAINS BECOME DUST

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 4

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Corpse-Might Surge, Indomitable Force Unleashed

Knowing that all things will cease to exist one day, the deathknight finds strength within herself to hasten things to their ends.

The Abyssal adds a free full Excellency on a feat of strength and can attempt it even if its physical scale would normally be impossible given her size and leverage. She could punch a hole through a keep's wall large enough to let a battle group through or lift an entire building.

A feat of demolition can damage or destroy a portion of a large object, extending one range band beyond what she could normally accomplish. A feat of strength can lift objects she'd normally lack the leverage to, as though her grip's leverage extended one range band beyond what she could normally lift. Every three extra successes extends a feat's scale by one range band.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by performing a difficulty 10+ feat of strength.

LIGHT-KILLING STRIDE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 5

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Last Wind Empowerment

The Abyssal transcends speed and distance — she is the darkness that precedes light, the death at the end of all life.

The Abyssal automatically succeeds on a rush or an opposed Athletics roll in a test of speed. On extended actions, she counts as having rolled one more success than her opponent, if her own roll isn't higher.

If multiple characters use an effect like this Charm, such as Solars' Living Wind Approach, each receives a result of one success more than the highest number of successes on any one roll.

Reset: Once per scene.

TITAN'S LAST LABOR

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 5

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Incarnate Doom Ascendancy

Cast down into darkness and reborn to end the world, the Abyssal draws forth infinite strength to scar Creation with her legend.

The Abyssal doubles 7s on a feat of strength and ignores its minimum Strength requirement.

TEMPLE-SHATTERING RUINATION CURSE

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 3a; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 5

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mountains Become Dust, Titan's Last Labor

The deathknight lays low mighty temples and palaces, making their rubble monuments to her might.

The Abyssal can activate this Charm after destroying a structure with a difficulty 10+ feat of demolition. The

structure's ruins and the land out to one mile from them are cursed:

- The cursed land counts as a shadowland until the end of the story or until the Abyssal uses this Charm again. It doesn't open into the Underworld. If the deathknight uses this Charm in the Underworld or a shadowland, the ruins instead draw specters and other undead afflicted with Whispers to it.
- A Defining Blight (p. 146) chosen by the Abyssal afflicts the land, lasting until at least the end of the current story.
- The first time someone sees the ruins, he's instilled with a fear-based Intimacy if the feat's successes exceed his Resolve. The Abyssal chooses the Intimacy upon using this Charm. For instance, a ruined Immaculate temple might spread a Principle that the Immaculate Order is powerless against the dead. Mortals and Essence 1 ghosts must spend three Willpower to resist this influence, while trivial characters are automatically affected and can't resist with Willpower.



- If the feat upholds a negative Defining Intimacy, the ruins permanently become a lesser Abyssal demesne. If the feat accomplished a legendary social goal, it forms a greater demesne.

Reset: Once per story.

Awareness

AWFUL CLARITY INSIGHT

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Awareness 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Death has sharpened the Abyssal's senses, lending her perception inhuman clarity.

The Abyssal doubles 9s on Awareness rolls. She rerolls 6s until they cease to appear on rolls enhanced by Superior (Sense) Focus.

OMINOUS PORTENT METHOD

Cost: —; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Awful Clarity Insight

The Abyssal has a sixth sense for danger, eerily prescient in matters of life and death.

When the Abyssal makes an Awareness roll to detect a hidden enemy or other danger, she adds a non-Charm success. She gains one mote for each 9 she rolls and two motes for each 10. This can't exceed the number of motes spent enhancing the roll.

Additionally, the Abyssal can make Awareness rolls while asleep, unconscious, or incapacitated, suffering no penalties for doing so. She may awaken instantly upon successfully detecting a threat or even revive herself from unconsciousness if incapacitated, though she still suffers the effects of incapacitation.

SUPERIOR (SENSE) FOCUS

Cost: 3m or 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: One scene or Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Awful Clarity Insight

ABYSSAL AWARENESS VS. MULTIPLE FOES

When the Abyssal uses the Awareness Excellency, she can pay a two-mote surcharge to extend its duration until her next turn, providing its bonus to all Awareness rolls she makes to detect hidden enemies. Some Awareness Charms specify that their duration can be extended this way. The Abyssal need only pay the two-mote surcharge once to extend the duration of all valid Charms she activates at the same time, including the Excellency.

Death opens the Abyssal's senses to drink in the richness of the world she must slay.

Upon learning this Charm, the Abyssal's player chooses one of the following sets of senses: sight, hearing and touch, or smell and taste. While using this Charm, the Abyssal gains the following benefits with the chosen senses:

- She adds two dice on (Perception + Awareness) rolls using an enhanced sense, or two successes on unopposed rolls. The Storyteller is encouraged to give her wide leeway in stunting incredible feats, albeit potentially at high difficulties: counting a mass of soldiers at a glance, hearing at frequencies below human range, "reading" a tapestry by touch alone.
- She increases the range at which she can make out small details with the enhanced sense: 300 feet for vision or hearing, or (Essence x600) feet for scent. This range is increased for larger details at the Storyteller's discretion.
- She ignores up to one point of penalty on rolls with any Ability caused by external conditions that impede the enhanced sense, aiding in feats like seeing in total darkness, listening through stone walls, or scenting old trails.
- With a stunt, she can use specialties in other Abilities on Awareness rolls using the enhanced sense

This Charm lasts one scene for three motes or indefinitely for six motes, one Willpower.

The Abyssal can repurchase this Charm to select an additional set of senses. She must pay this Charm's cost separately for each set she enhances but can enhance multiple sets of senses with a single activation.

COUNTLESS GRASPING PHANTOMS

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Superior Hearing and Touch Focus

A spectral chill radiates from the Abyssal, a spiritual emanation that rimes the world with her icy fingerprints.

Grasping spectral limbs hang in the air around the Abyssal out to short range, with the following effects:

- The Abyssal's sense of touch extends through these phantoms, letting her make touch-based Awareness rolls without physical contact. She can use Charms that enhance her sense of touch on any Awareness rolls made in this range.
- When a hidden enemy within this range moves and rolls (Dexterity + Stealth) to maintain concealment, he suffers a -2 penalty from the grasping phantoms.
- When she Joins Battle, she adds three non-Charm dice if she's aware of at least one concealed enemy in the scene.

If the Abyssal knows Inhuman Perfection of Hearing and Touch, this Charm's range extends to medium, and she can determine the size, shape, and velocity of anything that moves through this range without needing to roll.

VOID STARES BACK

Cost: —; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Superior Sight Focus

No mere darkness dares hinder Death's Lawgiver.

The Abyssal ignores penalties from poor lighting and darkness on vision-based Perception rolls with any Ability.

While using Superior Sight Focus, when the deathknight Joins Battle while in poor lighting, she adds

bonus dice equal to the penalty these conditions inflict on other characters' rolls.

BLOODSHED BECKONS

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Superior (Sense) Focus (x2)

Her senses honed to a razor's edge, the deathknight is attuned to the flow of violence.

The Abyssal adds (Perception + Awareness) dice on a Join Battle roll. For each 10, she rerolls one failed die, starting with 1s and moving up.

For each failed die that's rerolled into a success, the Abyssal banks one automatic success. For the rest of the scene, she can add these banked successes on any Awareness rolls she makes opposing an enemy's Stealth.

DISCERNING BARGHEST VIGIL

Cost: —; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Superior Smell and Taste Focus

The Abyssal's predatory focus discerns subtle scents that linger like the shallow breaths of the slow-dying.

The Abyssal's sense of smell lets her reflexively discern how many people are present within the same room or similar space as her or within medium range in combat. This includes characters who are hidden from her, potentially revealing that an enemy is hidden somewhere within range.

For each character within this Charm's range, the Abyssal can discern what general category of being they are: a human, an animal, a spirit, a zombie, etc. If she detects the scent of someone she's encountered within the last day or had extensive past experience with, she identifies him automatically.

With Awareness 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal can always detect dematerialized characters by scent.

MORBID INSPIRATION WITNESS

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Awful Clarity Insight

The deathknight finds apocalyptic insights in the setting of the sun, the entrails of slaughtered beasts, and the death rattles of her victims.

The Abyssal rolls ([Intelligence or Perception] + Awareness) with (Essence) successes as she finds inspiration in the morbid, the eerie, or the darkly beautiful: an albatross dropping dead in flight, three black cats crossing the same street in sequence, lightning striking a distant temple. She banks her successes and gains a Major Principle representing a creative goal inspired by it: the wings of a dying butterfly might inspire her to create a flying monstrosity, while the eerie light of the sun setting on a shadowland might inspire a work of oracular poetry. She can't voluntarily erode this Intimacy, and it can't be weakened below Minor as long as she has any banked successes remaining.

The Abyssal can add up to (Essence) banked successes on Craft, Linguistics, Occult, and Performance rolls related to her creative goal. They count as a non-Charm bonus, except on extended rolls. Medicine rolls involved in creating or altering undead can also be enhanced. These rolls need not directly contribute toward the Abyssal's goal — a deathknight obsessed with building a butterfly-winged horror could add successes on a Linguistics roll to boast of her plans in a letter to a rival.

Upon fulfilling her goal, the Abyssal loses her Principle. If she has any banked successes remaining, she rolls twice that many dice and gains motes equal to her successes, as well as one Willpower for each ten. If she ends this Charm before completing her goal or spending all banked successes, she loses one Willpower and can't use this Charm again for the rest of the session.

Whispers: When the Abyssal adds banked successes on a roll, she may invoke her Whispers to add an additional (higher of Essence or 3) non-Charm dice. She can't do so on extended actions/

SHADOW-EATING SPIRIT

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Superior (Sense) Focus

Even the bravest must strain to meet the depthless pits of the Abyssal's eyes.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after an Awareness roll opposing another character's Larceny or Stealth. Up to (Essence) of his 1s subtract successes when determining if he beats the Abyssal's roll. This doesn't affect other characters' opposed rolls.

Special activation rules: This Charm's duration can be extended as per the Awareness Excellency.

FERVENT CAPRICE FOCUS

Cost: —(+1m, 1wp); **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Morbid Inspiration Witness

Driven by obsession, the Abyssal discovers dark truths beyond mortal ken.

The Abyssal can pay a one-mote, one-Willpower surcharge when she uses Morbid Inspiration Witness to heighten her obsession, letting her spend banked successes on the following effects. She must use them in a way that advances her creative goal or directly relates to it.

1 success: Add one mote toward the cost of a Craft, Linguistics, Medicine, Occult, or Performance Charm.

2 successes: Retroactively reveal a small but useful quirk in an object or undead she's created: a zombie's teeth have been capped with iron, a daiklave's pommel houses a useful storage compartment, an antidote she's brewed is highly flammable.

3 successes: Add (higher of Essence or 5) silver craft points or (Essence) gold points toward the cost of a Craft project or Craft Charm.

3 successes: Challenge or introduce a fact using one of the Abyssal's Crafts or a specialty in Craft, Linguistics, Medicine, Occult, or Performance as a Lore background.

5 successes: Add one Willpower toward the cost of a Craft, Linguistics, Medicine, Occult, or Performance Charm.

5 successes: Waive the Willpower cost of resisting influence that opposes the Abyssal's Principle from Morbid Inspiration Witness.

SHROUD-PIERCING CLARITY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Shadow-Eating Spirit

Who can escape the Abyssal's notice? Her awareness is the inevitability of the grave.

The Abyssal reduces the cost of Shadow-Eating Spirit by one mote and is no longer limited in how many 1s she can penalize the opposing character for.

If the Abyssal has purchased Superior (Sense) Focus twice, the opposing character's 2s also subtract successes.

If the Abyssal has all three purchases of Superior (Sense) Focus, the opposing character's 1s subtract two successes instead of one.

GHOSTLY SENTINEL TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m per wraith, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Countless Grasping Phantoms

Wraiths of smoke and spectral metal emerge from the death-knight's outstretched hand, cast off to be her roving eyes.

The Abyssal can create up to (Essence) wraiths, paying three motes each. The wraiths act as extensions of her perception, allowing her to make Awareness rolls based on any sense as though she were in a wraith's position. Additionally, she can ignore penalties on non-Awareness action from darkness, mist, or other sensory impediments if at least one wraith would not suffer them from its vantage. If Countless Grasping Phantoms is active, that Charm's spectral sense of touch is also conveyed through the wraiths, extending its effect to encompass characters within short range of any wraith as well as the Abyssal.

The wraiths appear within close range of the Abyssal. On each of her turns, she can reflexively move a single wraith one range band or use her movement action to reflexively move each wraith one range band. As dematerialized entities, they are capable of passing through walls and similar material obstructions. They can't move beyond long range from her.

The wraiths are immaterial. Against magic capable of attacking dematerialized targets, they have Evasion (Abyssal's Perception), and can be destroyed with a

difficulty 3 gambit. They can't be targeted by normal **withering** or **decisive** attacks. If the Abyssal conceals herself with a Stealth roll, the wraiths also receive the benefits of her roll against enemies capable of perceiving dematerialized targets.

The Abyssal may purchase the following upgrades for her wraiths for three experience points or one bonus point each:

Dauntless: The difficulty of gambits to destroy the wraiths increases to (Abyssal's Essence + 3, maximum 6).

Eager: The cost of creating wraiths past the first is reduced by two motes.

Enduring: The Charm's duration is extended to one day.

Far-Roving: The wraiths' maximum range increases to (Perception + Essence) range bands.

Haunting: Rather than creating a stationary wraith, the Abyssal can create one that ceaselessly pursues an individual she can see, manifesting within close range of him and following him unflinchingly out to its normal range limits.

Insightful: The Abyssal can make profile character and read intentions rolls through her wraiths.

Legion: The maximum number of wraiths is increased to (Perception + Essence).

The player may work with the Storyteller to create new upgrades.

PULSING VEINS FOCUS

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Discerning Barghest Vigil

The Abyssal always recognizes the scent of her prey.

When the Abyssal makes an Awareness roll against a living character, she adds successes equal to his wound penalty. If she succeeds on a roll opposing a living enemy's Stealth in combat, she gains one Initiative as her hunger mounts.

Special activation rules: This Charm's duration can be extended as per the Awareness Excellency.

SHADOW-SLAYING IMPULSE**Cost:** 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 2**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Uniform**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Bloodshed Beckons, Ominous Portent Method, Shadow-Eating Spirit

The deathknight deprives her foes of the shadows' safety, forcing them into the open.

The Abyssal reflexively makes a **decisive** attack against a concealed enemy that she's aware of. If she hits, her enemy is driven from his current hiding spot to a new one and must roll (Dexterity + Stealth) to maintain his concealment as usual. He can reflexively move one range band if necessary to do so, but this uses his movement action for the round. If there aren't any other hiding spots he can reach, his concealment is broken automatically.

INHUMAN PERFECTION OF (SENSE)**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Superior (Sense) Focus

The Abyssal's unwavering focus casts aside the frailty of mortal limitation.

This Charm upgrades Superior (Sense) Focus and must be purchased separately for each set of senses. While using Superior (Sense) Focus to enhance the chosen set of senses, the deathknight gains additional benefits:

- The range at which she can make out fine sensory detail is further extended: one mile for vision or hearing or (Essence/2, rounded up) miles for scent.

- Instead of reducing sensory penalties by one, she halves them, rounded down.

- When she makes a (Perception + Awareness) roll using an enhanced sense, she reduces the cost of any instant-duration Awareness Charms she uses to enhance it by one mote each. If all five of her senses currently benefit from this Charm, she gains this discount on all Awareness rolls, including Join Battle.

- While using Awful Clarity Insight, she rerolls 5s until they cease to appear on Awareness rolls using the enhanced sense.

ALL-SEEING OVERLORD'S LAIR**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Indefinite**Prerequisite Charms:** Ghostly Sentinel Technique, Inhuman Perfection of (Sense) (x2)

The deathknight knows all within her dread domain, watching from every shadow.

The Abyssal extends her senses throughout a stronghold she's claimed for herself — an attuned manse, her Stygian manor, a fortress occupied by her army. She gains the following benefits:

- She can perceive everywhere within the structure at once, unimpeded by its walls or similar obstructions. She must still make Awareness rolls as usual to focus on details, adding (Essence) non-Charm successes on such rolls.
- For particularly dramatic and noticeable things — a bonfire anima, a warstrider on the march, a bellowing tyrant lizard — the Abyssal can perceive them as long as they're within (Essence) miles of her lair or (Essence x5) miles while using the applicable Inhuman Perfection of (Sense).

- Enemies within range of the Abyssal's senses can't make unexpected attacks against her, even if she failed to beat their Stealth roll.

- Ghost Sentinel Technique's range is extended to encompass the entirety of her lair. If she has the Far-Ranging Upgrade, they can travel up to (Essence) miles from it.

This Charm ends if the Abyssal leaves her stronghold.

With Essence 4, the Abyssal can use this Charm in shadowlands or the Underworld without needing control over them. This extends her senses out to one mile, treating that area as her citadel, but her perception can't cross a shadowland's boundaries into Creation.

UNYIELDING PHANTOM FIXATION**Cost:** 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Shroud-Piercing Clarity

Transcending the limits of mortal perception, the Abyssal bears witness to the world's bleak truths.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after an Awareness roll to reroll all dice. She can activate additional Charms to enhance the reroll.

NONE DECEIVE DEATH

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One tick

Prerequisite Charms: Inhuman Perfection of (Sense) (x2)

The living crave pleasant illusions, closing their eyes to the world's sorrow, but the deathknight faces truth unblinkered and undaunted.

The Abyssal experiences a moment of heightened awareness out to long range. She sees through the concealment of any hidden enemies within range and likewise perfectly sees through disguises — even shapeshifting. Invisibility, magical silence, and the like are no impediment to her senses, and she can see through all forms of sensory illusion or other magic that distorts or impairs the senses, including Sidereals' resplendent destinies.

While using Inhuman Perfection of (Sense), this Charm's range extends an additional (Essence) bands of extreme range for the enhanced sense.

UNRELENTING OBSESSION GENIUS

Cost: —(+4m); **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Fervent Caprice Focus

Turning her gaze inward, the Abyssal glimpses feverish impossibilities of her own invention.

The Abyssal can pay an additional four-mote surcharge when she uses Fervent Caprice Focus, making the Intimacy she gains an Obsession (**Exalted**, p. 169). Doing so lets her spend banked successes on the following effects as long as it's related to her goal:

4 successes: Add one white point toward the cost of a Craft project or Craft Charm.

5 or 7 successes: Use a Craft, Linguistics, Medicine, Occult, or Performance Charm that's currently "down" without needing to reset it. This costs seven successes

for Charms that can only be used once per story and five successes for other Charms.

7 successes: Waive the cost of a Craft, Linguistics, Medicine, Occult, or Performance Charm with instant duration.

7 successes: Temporarily gain a Craft, Linguistics, Medicine, Occult, or Performance Charm for Morbid Inspiration Witness' duration. The Abyssal must meet its prerequisites and can only use it for purposes of her goal.

Reset: Once per session, the Abyssal can invoke her Whispers to roll (Whispers) dice, banking her successes.

PIERCING GAZE OF THE UNMAKER

Cost: 10m, 1wp (+10m); **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: All-Seeing Overlord's Lair

The Abyssal's perception transcends the prison of the world, casting her gaze upon all that she must one day destroy.

The Abyssal casts her perception out from afar. She may choose a specific location — a manse, a small village, a city district — within (Essence x5) miles, letting her observe it as with All-Seeing Overlord's Lair. This doesn't let her perceive anything beyond the observed area's boundaries.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can choose an individual, object, or other specific thing, like "my nemesis, Panther," "my daiklave," or "the intruders in my lair." If a qualifying target is within (Essence) miles, she can observe its immediate surroundings. If there are multiple targets that fit the Abyssal's description, she can pay a ten-mote surcharge to observe up to (Essence + Perception) of them. She can only observe one at a time, requiring a miscellaneous action to switch between viewpoints.

Anyone observed with this Charm feels a faint unease, as if being watched by something malevolent. If the Abyssal seeks out a specific individual, she can heighten this, letting her make a (Manipulation + Awareness) threaten roll against him. This Charm's range is doubled while using All-Seeing Overlord's Lair or while all five of the Abyssal's senses are currently enhanced with Inhuman Perfection of (Sense).

With an Essence 5 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a twenty-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to waive this Charm's range limit once per story. She can even peer even into other realms of existence.

Reset: If the Abyssal fails an Awareness roll against a target of her observations, she can't use this Charm against him again for the rest of the session.

BraWl

BRUTISH VIOLENCE EXERCISE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Brawl 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal overwhelms her foe's defense with sheer force, sending him reeling back.

The Abyssal can use Strength instead of Dexterity on unarmed attacks and attacks with heavy weapons and to calculate her Parry with such weapons. This doesn't benefit from effects that grant bonus Strength dots, double successes on Strength rolls, or replace her Strength with a higher value.

KILLING FIST TECHNIQUE

Cost: —(1m); **Mins:** Brawl 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's violent endeavors have honed and hardened her fists.

The Abyssal's unarmed attacks can deal lethal damage, and she can parry attacks that deal lethal damage bare-handed. For one mote, an unarmed **withering** attack ignores (Essence) soak. If she has an Intimacy relevant to her motivation for fighting, she ignores (Essence + Intimacy) soak.

DEAD MAN'S GRASP

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Death's Lawgiver seizes her enemies with a grip like rigor mortis.

The Abyssal adds an automatic success on a grapple attack roll and (higher of Essence or 3) dice on the Initiative roll.

INESCAPABLE IRON GRIP

Cost: 2m per round of control; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dead Man's Grasp

Bracing her limbs with the tenacity of the unliving, the deathknight tightens her grasp.

When the Abyssal would lose rounds of clinch control from being attacked or damaged, she can prevent this by paying two motes per round of control she preserved. She can use this Charm after the attack and damage rolls.

TERMINAL VELOCITY APPROACH

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dead Man's Grasp

The deathknight grants her enemy the mercy of a swift release from her grasp, sending him to meet his end.

When the Abyssal throws a grappled enemy, she can hurl him out to short range and increases how many rounds of control she can benefit from to (Essence + Strength + 4). The enemy adds his base wound penalty to the difficulty to rise from prone and must always roll to do so. If the Abyssal uses this Charm after grappling an enemy with Titan-Murdering Grasp (p. 177), she can throw even Legendary Size enemies.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal can expend two rounds of control to extend the throw's range to medium, inflicting damage as a short-range fall (**Exalted**, p. 232) instead of adding damage with them. This doesn't stack with falling damage from other effects, like Lashing Tempest Palm. If she expends four rounds, she can throw her enemy to long range and inflict damage as a medium-range fall.

OWL SEIZES MOUSE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

A blur of killing speed, the deathknight rips into her enemies before they can do anything but scream.

The Abyssal can use this Charm at the beginning of a round to immediately take her turn, regardless of Initiative order. She must use it to attack an enemy at short range, reflexively moving one range band toward him. She can use any combat Ability to attack. This doesn't use her movement action for the round.

With Brawl 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to steal (Essence, maximum 5) Initiative from her target, which she gains, before making the attack.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against an enemy once per scene unless reset against him by crashing him.

RAVAGING TORMENT BLOW

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal preys on her maimed foe's weakness, striking at already-broken bones and digging her fingers into open wounds.

The Abyssal adds dice equal to her target's wound penalty on the raw damage of a **withering** or **decisive** attack. If his wound penalty has been increased above its base value, only (Essence) extra points count toward this.

While using Dark Messiah's Wrath, (higher of Essence or Strength), points of extra wound penalties count toward the Abyssal's damage.

AGONY CRUCIBLE STRIKE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ravaging Torment Blow

The Abyssal strikes with cruel precision, inflicting as much pain as possible.

The Abyssal adds an automatic success on an attack roll. If her target suffers a -1 or higher wound penalty, the success is non-Charm. If she deals 5+ **withering** damage or any **decisive** damage with an attack, her victim's wound penalty increases by one until the end of her next turn.

BLOOD-DRINKING PALM

Cost: 2i; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Agony Crucible Strike or any three Martial Arts Charms

Bloodying her fists against countless foes, the Abyssal feasts on crimson bounty.

When the Abyssal deals damage with a **decisive** attack, she steals (enemy's wound penalty + 1) motes after damage has been applied, maximum (Dexterity, Stamina, or Strength). If she incapacitates her victim, she steals (his Essence + 3) additional motes, which don't count toward this limit.

Against grappled enemies, the Abyssal can make a savaging attack, feeding on them with bared fangs. She deals lethal damage and increases the number of motes she can steal to her current rounds of grapple control, if that's higher.

DARK MESSIAH'S WRATH

Cost: 3m, 1lhl; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Ravaging Torment Blow

The deathknight's calm and restraint conceal a roiling core of rage, ceaselessly gnawing at its fetters as it strains to break free.

The Abyssal abandons all restraint, entering a berserk fury:

- When she attacks, each 10 on the attack rolls adds one die of **decisive** or post-soak **withering** damage, maximum (Strength).

- She ignores wound penalties on attack rolls and influence rolls.

- She treats her wound penalty as one point higher if that's advantageous for her. She can use her wound penalty in place of an enemy's for Brawl Charms like Ravaging Torment Blow.

- Her Principles reflecting a positive outlook on death and Intimacies relevant to her motivation for fighting count as one step stronger. Defining Intimacies increase their Resolve bonus by one instead.

- She can't withdraw, use social influence for purposes unrelated to combat, or cease fighting until all enemies are incapacitated or have fled. She's still capable of tactical thinking and intelligent decisions.

Ending this Charm prematurely crashes the Abyssal, setting her to Initiative -3 (if not already lower).

SCREAM-ROUSING SERMON

Cost: —; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Dark Messiah's Wrath

Even in the depths of murderous rage, the Abyssal preaches her bleak gospel with bloodied fists and thunderous words.

While using Dark Messiah's Wrath, the Abyssal gains +1 Resolve. It no longer prevents the Abyssal from making influence rolls unrelated to combat so long as they inspire despair, sorrow, or other negative emotions, instill Principles that she holds or negative Ties, or leverage such emotions or Intimacies with persuade actions. She adds dice equal to her wound penalty on such rolls, maximum (highest social Attribute). An enemy whose Resolve is beaten by an influence roll loses one Initiative, even if he resists with Willpower.

LASHING TEMPEST PALM

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ravaging Torment Blow

The Abyssal's blow unleashes a maelstrom of spiritual pressure, sending her victim flying.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after making a **decisive** damage roll. As long as she rolls at least one success, her enemy is knocked prone and loses one Initiative, which she gains after resetting to base. With more successes, she can strike with even greater force:

- With 3+ success, she can knock her victim into an object or surface within close range to inflict damage per a short-range fall (**Exalted**, p. 232), destroying flimsy objects like thin wooden walls.
- With 4+ successes, she can strike him into an object or surface at close range with enough force to

FALLING SIDWAYS

Creative stunts can potentially allow characters to mitigate or avoid falling damage (**Exalted**, p. 232). This is true for falling damage from effects like Lashing Tempest Palm, not just regular falls.

inflict damage per a medium-range fall and leave cracks in thick stone walls, or knock him to short range, inflicting damage per a short-range fall.

- With 5+ successes, she can knock an enemy to short range and inflict damage per a medium-range fall.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal doubles her successes on the damage roll for the purpose of determining how far she can fling her enemies. With 7+ successes, she can knock an enemy out to medium range and inflict damage per a medium-range fall.

PLAYING WITH BROKEN PREY

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ravaging Torment Blow

Try as he might to defeat the deathknight, her foe's grievous injuries take their toll.

When an enemy with lower Initiative attacks the Abyssal, she adds his wound penalty to her Parry or Evasion, maximum (Dexterity). If the attack misses, it doesn't inflict an onslaught penalty.

PAIN BEYOND ENDURANCE

Cost: 4m, 1i, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ravaging Torment Blow

Striking without regard for anything but breaking her victim, the deathknight floods his mind with pain.

The Abyssal makes an unsoakable **withering** attack. She doesn't gain Initiative from the damage roll — instead, for every four Initiative she'd gain, her enemy's wound penalty increases by -1 until the start of her next turn.

With an Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal gains Initiative from the damage roll.

EMBRACE OF THE GRAVE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dead Man's Grasp

The Abyssal's deadly embrace is as inescapable as the mortal coil.

After succeeding on a grapple gambit's attack roll, the Abyssal can use this Charm to add her attack roll extra successes as bonus dice on the control roll.

RENDING ENTROPY STRIKE

Cost: 4m, 1m per die; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ravaging Torment Blow

Entropic Essence and apocalyptic fury fuel the death-knight's savage strike.

After a successful attack roll, the Abyssal can use this Charm to add attack roll extra successes as dice of damage, paying one mote per die.

SCREAMING VICTIM DEMOLITION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lashing Tempest Palm

The Abyssal shakes the pillars of Creation until they shatter, burying her foes beneath rubble and corpses.

The Abyssal makes a reflexive feat of demolition with a forceful blow, adding (Strength) automatic successes. She can spend Initiative instead of motes on the Athletics Excellency or other Athletics Charms she uses on the roll. If successful, the Abyssal completes the feat with a single strike, even if it would normally require an extended period of time. If she fails, she can't retry that feat until her next round.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can use this Charm after knocking an enemy back with Lashing Tempest Palm or throwing him with Terminal Velocity Approach, treating the falling damage roll as a feat of demolition

to destroy whatever her enemy collides with. (The automatic levels of damage inflicted for falling count as automatic successes on the roll). If successful, her victim suffers (feat's minimum Strength/2, rounded up) additional dice of **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness.

SINNER-FLAYING REMONSTRATION

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Owl Seizes Mouse

The Abyssal's murderous instincts respond to the slightest provocation with brutal speed, lunging to strike her foe before he can touch her.

The Abyssal reflexively clashes an attack with a **decisive** attack.

A Brawl 5, Essence 3 repurchase reduces this Charm's cost to four motes if the Abyssal's wound penalty and her victim's wound penalty have a combined total of -4 or higher.

HUNDRED-HANDED ONSLAUGHT

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Sinner-Flaying Remonstrance

The Abyssal's fists swing with blinding speed, hammering her enemy with blow after blow.

The Abyssal makes ([Stamina or Strength/ 2, rounded up] + 1) **decisive** attacks against a single enemy, dividing her Initiative evenly among all attacks, rounded up. Each 10 that appears on the damage roll of these attacks adds one die to the damage rolls of all subsequent attacks made as part of this Charm.

A Brawl 5, Essence 3 repurchase increases the number of attacks the Abyssal can make to ([Stamina or Strength] + 1) and adds additional damage dice: +1 die on the first attack, +2 on the second, and so on.

ILLUSTRATIVE OVERKILL TECHNIQUE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Agony Crucible Strike



The deathknight cows her foes with grotesque feats of ecstatic violence.

When the Abyssal's **decisive** attack incapacitates a nontrivial opponent, she can use this Charm to make a (Strength + Brawl) threaten roll, adding any excess levels of damage beyond her enemy's remaining health levels as non-Charm successes. Resisting this influence costs one Willpower and Initiative equal to the Abyssal's extra successes over the target's Resolve. If the slain enemy was especially powerful, like an Exalt, this influence costs an additional Willpower to resist. The same is true if the Abyssal's attack caused narratively significant destruction, like destroying a landmark with Screaming Victim Demolition.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can use this Charm on her turn to reflexively kill a trivial opponent within her weapon's range. She makes a threaten roll but doesn't receive any of the benefits above. This doesn't count as her attack for the round, but she can only do so once per turn.

UNMATCHED CRUELTY APPROACH

Cost: —; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Versatile, Withering-only

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Dark Messiah's Wrath

The Abyssal takes grim satisfaction in her enemies' despair.

When the Abyssal crashes an enemy with a **withering** attack, she gains an additional (Essence, maximum 5) Initiative.

VIOLENCE BEGETS VIOLENCE

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Withering-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Playing With Broken Prey

Every move made against the deathknight is a step toward one's own grave.

After an enemy deals enough damage with a **withering** attack to reduce the Abyssal's Initiative below his, she can use this Charm to make a **withering** counterattack. She doesn't gain Initiative from its damage roll.

Alternatively, the deathknight can defend against grapples, using this Charm after an enemy's control roll. His 1s subtract successes. If the Abyssal beats his roll, she takes control of the grapple rather than merely escaping it.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge when she uses this Charm to make a counterattack, letting her gain Initiative normally from the damage roll.

Reset: Once per round unless reset by recovering from Initiative Crash

ENTROPIC SCOURGE ANNIHILATION

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pain Beyond Endurance (x2)

Wreathing her fists in a corona of annihilating Essence, the deathknight tears through all resistance.

The Abyssal's **withering** attack is unsoakable and doubles 9s on its damage roll.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack with Initiative 20+.

EXPLOSIVE GORE EULOGY

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Illustrative Overkill Technique

Having concluded her bloody sermon, Death's Lawgiver casts what remains of her victim back into his allies' arms.

When the Abyssal uses Illustrative Overkill Technique after incapacitating a nontrivial enemy, she may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to make a **decisive** attack with her victim's corpse, slamming or flinging it at an enemy within close range. Her Initiative doesn't reset from the attack that triggered Illustrative Overkill Technique. The attack benefits from any Charms used on the initial attack, assuming they're compatible, and the Abyssal can use additional Charms to benefit it.

If the Abyssal knows Terminal Velocity Approach, this Charm's range extends to short. She can increase it further by expending excess levels of damage instead

of adding them as successes on her threaten roll. Forgoing one level extends it to medium, while three levels extends it to long.

While using Dark Messiah's Wrath, the Abyssal waives this Charm's Willpower surcharge.

Reset: Once per round

FOE-FED ABATTOIR

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unmatched Cruelty Approach

Screams and desperate cries for mercy only stoke the Abyssal's hunger for violence.

When the Abyssal's Initiative is reset by succeeding on a **decisive** attack, she can use this Charm to add +2 to the base Initiative she resets to.

FIVE KNIFE FIST

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Killing Fist Technique, Ravaging Torment Blow

Jagged spikes of dark Essence burst from the Abyssal fingertips, rending through bone and steel.

The Abyssal adds +(Strength) Overwhelming on an unarmed **withering** attack. On a **decisive** unarmed attack, she instead doubles 10s on the damage roll and rolls an additional die of damage for each damage roll 10.

A repurchase of this Charm lets the Abyssal use it as a Simple Charm for five motes, one Willpower, extending its duration to one scene. Alternatively, she can invoke this version reflexively for two motes, one Willpower after damaging an enemy with the Supplemental version of this Charm.

GRIEVOUS AGONY ATTACK

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Agony Crucible Strike, Pain Beyond Endurance, Rending Entropy Strike

With cruel abandon and monstrous force, the Abyssal shatters her enemy's bones.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a **decisive** damage roll, letting her forgo levels of damage to inflict one of the crippling effects below. She must deal at least one level of damage. Against grappled enemies, she can expend two rounds of grapple control in place of one level of damage.

Arm-Wrenching Twist (2 levels): The victim loses the use of one arm, dropping anything held in that hand and suffering a -3 penalty on actions that require both hands.

Foe-Blinding Jab (2 levels): The victim is blinded, suffering a -3 penalty on rolls that depend on vision.

Skull-Ringing Strike (2 levels): The victim is dazed and concussed, losing (Abyssal's Strength) Initiative. He suffers a -3 penalty to all mental and social rolls and a -1 penalty on physical rolls.

Leg-Hobbling Blow (3 levels): The victim falls prone as the Abyssal wounds his leg. He suffers a -3 penalty on movement actions and treats all terrain as difficult terrain.

Characters with Exalted Healing recover from these effects after a day's rest. Mortals require medical treatment.

With Essence 5, the amount of damage that the Abyssal must forgo for each effect is reduced by one.

TITAN-MURDERING GRASP

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Embrace of the Grave

No giant is beyond death.

The Abyssal adds (Essence) automatic successes on a grapple attack roll, and her enemy's 1s on the control roll subtract successes. For the duration of the grapple, she adds (Essence) dice of damage on savaging attacks. If she knows Blood-Drinking Palm, its Initiative cost is reduced by one.

The Abyssal can use this Charm to grapple enemies with Legendary Size, though she can't drag, restrain, throw, or slam them without an appropriate stunt.

LIFE-ANNIHILATING CASTIGATION

Cost: 7m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Perilous, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Entropic Scourge Annihilation

Soul-destroying pyreflame swirls like an inferno around the Abyssal, revealing the awful depths of her wrath.

The Abyssal makes a **withering** attack, multiplying her post-soak damage by her (opponent's base wound penalty + 1) and rerolling 1s on the damage roll.

If the deathknight crashes her opponent, pyreflame erupts from within him, inflicting (Abyssal's Strength) dice of aggravated **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness and rerolling 1s until they cease to appear. Each 10 on the **withering** damage roll adds another die of **decisive** damage — and if the Abyssal used Entropic Scourge Annihilation, so do 9s. An opponent killed with this attack is burned away to nothing, leaving no ghost or even ashes.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by incapacitating an especially powerful enemy, like an Exalt.

MANIFOLD MURDER ARTS

Cost: —; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Foe-Fed Abattoir

Exulting in rage and bloodlust, the Abyssal becomes an unstoppable force of violence.

The Abyssal invokes a free full Brawl Excellency.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack that resets the deathknight's Initiative and then reaching Initiative 12+.

VOID AVATAR EMBODIMENT

Cost: 15m, 1wp, 3a; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 5

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Aggravated, Clash, Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Manifold Murder Arts, Sinner-Flaying Demonstration

Apocalyptic darkness envelops the deathknight, leaving her a howling void of violence, a shadow cast against the world.

The Abyssal gain the following benefits:

- Her unarmed attacks are limned with the annihilating darkness of the void. They count as artifact weapons when used with Brawl, deal aggravated damage, and ignore Hardness.

- Enemies with Ties of fear toward her suffer a – (Intimacy) penalty on attack rolls against her.

- Once per round, she can pay one Willpower or five Initiative to clash an attack made against her with a special (Stamina + Brawl) **decisive** attack. If she wins the clash against an enemy at close range, he suffers (Abyssal's Essence + attack roll extra successes) dice of aggravated damage, ignoring Hardness. This doesn't include the Abyssal's Initiative or reset it. Against ranged attacks, winning the clash provides no benefit beyond blocking the attack.

- She can't be reduced below Initiative 1 by attacks made from beyond close range.

- When using magic that provides increased benefits based on how high her wound penalty is, her overflowing necrotic Essence lets her count as having a –5 base wound penalty when it's advantageous to her.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal uses Dark Messiah's Wrath together with this Charm, she waives that Charm's cost.

Bureaucracy

CALCULATED AVARICE UNDERSTANDING

Cost: —; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Experienced in unscrupulous dealings, the Abyssal cheats others while ensuring none ever dupe her.

The Abyssal gains the following benefits.

- She adds (Essence) automatic successes on rolls with any Ability to appraise the condition of goods or recognize their value in a given market.
- She adds an automatic success on read intentions rolls against prospective buyers or sellers seeking to transact with her.

- She gains +1 Resolve against bargain rolls and similar influence.

- She gains +1 Guile against effects that would reveal her dishonesty in mercantile dealings, such as misrepresenting the value of goods being sold.

SERPENT KNOWS ITS OWN

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Calculated Avarice Understanding

Death's Lawgiver knows the worth of all things, whether measured in silver, grain, or blood.

The Abyssal makes a special ([Perception or Wits] + Bureaucracy) read intentions roll against someone seeking to buy from her or otherwise deal with her in a mercantile context. Success reveals his Resources rating and whether he intends to cheat or exploit her in their deal. If he does, she adds (Essence) Resolve against all bargain rolls that character makes in that scene.

Alternatively, if the Abyssal can't tell if someone is interested in buying her wares or otherwise engaging in trade with her, she can use this Charm to discern both his intent and his Resources rating.

WICKED BARGAIN MASTERY

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Calculated Avarice Understanding

Having bartered her name and soul away for immortality, Death's Lawgiver is no stranger to hard bargains.

When the Abyssal makes a bargain roll with Presence or Socialize, she adds (Bureaucracy) dice and rerolls 6s until they cease to appear.

SUBTLE FUNCTIONARY WAYS

Cost: —; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Death's Lawgiver conceals truth behind lies and knowledge in ignorance, employing subtle nuances of tone, body language, and professional jargon to shape assumptions.

The Abyssal may reflexively invoke one of the following attitudes. Each can be leveraged with social influence as though it were a Minor Intimacy.

Corruption: Any character who desires or intends to have dealings with a corrupt official will perceive the Abyssal as dishonest, dissolute, and open to bribes in whatever position of authority she may hold, ensuring she will be sought out by those looking to make backroom deals, solicit abuses of her power, or otherwise circumvent the law. Characters attempting to uncover or investigate corruption never experience this assumption, even if they seek to deal with corrupt officials as part of their investigation.

Honesty: The Abyssal appears utterly incorruptible in whatever position of authority she may hold. Investigators and auditors are inclined to pass her over when rooting out corruption or abuses of power, and those in need of help that only an honest official can provide will assume that she can aid them.

Expertise: The Abyssal affects the bearing of a professional, well-versed in matters of bureaucracy, finance, and trade, and will be sought out by those in need of such help.

Incompetence: The Abyssal comes across as a newcomer or an incompetent in mercantile or bureaucratic concerns — a perfect dupe for dishonest swindlers, predatory lenders, or savvy legal professionals.

Only one attitude can be active at a time, but the Abyssal can change between them reflexively.

TRAITOR-EXTIRPATING INSTINCT

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Subtle Functionary Ways

The deathknight judges a soul's worthiness to serve.

The Abyssal makes a (Perception + Bureaucracy) read intentions roll against a member of an organization, adding (Essence) automatic successes. Success reveals the strongest Tie he holds toward it. She succeeds automatically against characters who don't use magic to resist or who have less temporary Willpower than her.

With a Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal can use this Charm to discern Ties toward organizations she belongs to rather than her target. She only succeeds automatically against characters whose *permanent* Willpower is lower than her own, even if they don't use magic.

ELOQUENT EXAMPLE INSPIRATION

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One investigation

Prerequisite Charms: Traitor-Extirpating Instinct

Blood and fear grease the wheels of bureaucracy, leading inexorably toward the truth.

The Abyssal begins an investigation into an organization by making a demonstration out of one of its members, publicly punishing him for some offense, real or fabricated. She doesn't need any authority within an organization to investigate it so long as the group's leadership approves her punishment — either in advance or by giving it their imprimatur after the fact.

The Abyssal adds five automatic successes on Investigation and Socialize rolls made in the course of the investigation. When she deals with organization members while pursuing the investigation, their fear encourages honesty. This counts as a Minor Tie of obedient fear toward her. If their Resolve (including modifiers from Intimacies) is lower than the Abyssal's (Charisma or Manipulation), this counts as a Major Tie instead.

This terror is all the greater if the Abyssal initiates her investigation with a fatal punishment. The Tie is imposed in all interactions, not just those related to the investigation, and organization members suffer -2 Resolve when determining its intensity.

EFFICACIOUS HIERARCHY OF THE DAMNED

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One task

Prerequisite Charms: Subtle Functionary Ways

Death's Lawgiver brings order to the Underworld with unmatched efficiency, bypassing millennia-old backlogs or obstruction from timeless ghost-ministers.

The Abyssal significantly accelerates the rate at which an organization can complete a task: tasks that would take a century or less are completed in a season, those

that would take a season are completed in a month, those that would take a month are completed in a week, those that would take a week are completed in a day, those that would take a day are completed in minutes, and those that would take less than a day are completed practically instantly. At the Storyteller's discretion, this may represent the project having been initiated in advance rather than ludicrous speed.

This doesn't speed physical labor carried out by the organization's members but rather affects planning, authorization, allocation of resources, and similar bureaucratic tasks. The Abyssal must interact with the organization to use this Charm but need not lead it — soliciting the task or aiding the organization with it is sufficient.

With Essence 2, the time needed to complete a task is instead reduced by (Essence) degrees — for example, if obtaining a loan from a ghostly trade consortium would normally take a month, an Essence 2 Abyssal could obtain it in a day, an Essence 3 Abyssal could obtain it within minutes, and an Essence 4 Abyssal could obtain it almost instantly.

PRINCIPLES OF MISRULE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal is well-versed in the failings of the living and dead alike, citing their vices with ministerial scorn.

The Abyssal can use Bureaucracy specialties as Lore backgrounds to challenge or introduce facts, substituting Bureaucracy for Lore when she does. She doesn't need a specialty for facts closely related to her backstory or experiences, like the markets of a merchant prince's homeland.

The Abyssal doubles 9s if the fact involves corruption, deceptive business practices, or other bureaucratic wrongdoing or if it involves the Underworld or the undead. She doubles 8s if it involves both.

BOTTOMLESS HOARD UNEARTHED

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Wicked Bargain Mastery

Clothed in finery befitting a prince of the dead, the deathknight wields her wealth as a weapon.

When the Abyssal openly flaunts her wealth as part of an influence roll with any Ability, she adds (her Resources – target's Resources) non-Charms dice. She can always leverage her evident wealth as part of the action as though it were a Minor Intimacy. She also gains these benefits on threaten rolls that involve threats of financial repercussions.

If the Abyssal makes a significant financial expenditure in relation to a social event, like throwing a lavish masquerade or spending extravagantly on her wardrobe for a gala, this Charm's duration is extended for the entirety of the event, and she doesn't subtract her target's Resources from her own do determine how many dice she adds. The Resources expended should equal the highest Resources rating possessed by any of her guests, minimum Resources 3.

DUE TO THE DEAD

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bottomless Hoard Unearthed

Debts to Death's Lawgiver weigh heavy on the soul.

When the Abyssal makes an instill, persuade, or threaten roll with Presence or Socialize, she can leverage debts that a target owes to her or an organization she represents as if they were Intimacies. A debt's effective intensity depends on what it would take to pay off, either with a Resources expenditure (**Exalted**, p. 578) or by performing a task (**Exalted**, p. 216).

Minor: An expenditure lower than the target's Resources rating or an inconvenient task.

Major: An expenditure up to one dot higher than the target's Resources rating or a serious task.

Defining: An expenditure at least two dots higher than the target's Resources rating or a life-changing task.

The debt need not be real or legitimate, but the character must believe he owes it.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a character once per scene.

ACCURSED OVERLORD AUTHORITY

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Eloquent Example Inspiration

The Abyssal rules with an iron fist, shaping her subordinates to her vision of the world.

The Abyssal expresses one of her Major or Defining Intimacies through her leadership of an organization, requiring her to spend a scene engaged with that organization in a way that supports the Intimacy. Examples include making a dramatic speech to her followers, promulgating a set of rules, or employing Eloquent Example Inspiration. All organization members who witness this or hear of it from others intuitively realize the Abyssal's Intimacy.

This has the following effects:

- All organization members who are aware of the Abyssal's Intimacy gain its benefits as if they had it themselves, but it can't be leveraged against them with social influence. A character who violates the Intimacy loses this benefit.
- The Abyssal adds (Essence) dice on influence rolls against group members that align with the Intimacy.
- The Abyssal adds (Essence) on Awareness, Investigation, and Socialize rolls against group members to uncover violations of the Intimacy.

If the Abyssal chooses a negative Tie, a positive Tie whose object is dead or undead, or a Principle that expresses a positive view on death, the added dice are non-Charm, and this Charm's cost is reduced by two motes.

The Abyssal can stack this Charm to affect multiple organizations and can use it up to (Essence) times on each organization.

With a Bureaucracy 5, Essence 4 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a seven-mote surcharge to actually impose the Intimacy on organization members rather than only granting its benefits. Characters with positive Defining Ties to the Abyssal when she uses this Charm can't voluntarily erode the imposed Intimacy. If such a character has the imposed Intimacy at Defining intensity, they can treat any influence it opposes as unacceptable. Resisting this influence requires spending three Willpower per day over (Abyssal's Essence) different days, after which a character can begin weakening the Tie. The Abyssal can only have one such enhanced use of Accursed Overlord Authority at a time.

CUNNING SUBVERSION STYLE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 2
Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Subtle Functionary Ways

Mustering the forces of decay and despondency, Death's Lawgiver consigns her rivals' aspirations to the grave.

The Abyssal slows the interval of time necessary to complete a project or bureaucratic task by (Essence) steps: from days to weeks, weeks to months, months to seasons, or seasons to years. This doesn't slow physical labor, but the project is plagued by misfortune; plans go awry, workers are wracked by paranoia, and dark rumors keep volunteers away. Trivial characters involved in the venture sometimes die under mysterious circumstances, leaving their ghosts to haunt the organization.

The deathknight need not interact directly with the task, nor need she be aware that it's happening; the ruthless efficiency of her leadership is sufficient to bring ruin to any challenge. She doesn't learn whether such a task is underway. If there isn't, this Charm's curse lingers, falling upon the first such task that begins during its duration.

Up to (Essence) different projects can be simultaneously delayed by stacking this Charm.

GRAVE IMPOSITION

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Serpent Knows Its Own, Wicked Bargain Mastery

The deathknight brooks no argument or vacillation, pinning down each point of negotiation with frightening efficiency.

The Abyssal doubles 7s on a bargain roll with Presence or Socialize. If her target resists with Willpower, she gains one Willpower.

SHADE-SUMMONING CONSCRIPTION

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Efficacious Hierarchy of the Damned, Principles of Misrule

The Abyssal's shadowy network of underlings and cats-paws draws the wicked and the damned into her service.

The Abyssal rolls ([Charisma, Intelligence, or Manipulation] + Bureaucracy), doubling 9s. Every two successes let her immediately gain one dot of Followers or Retainers. The characters these Merits represent are recruited into the Abyssal's organization. She can specify her requirements of the characters she recruits in detail; if any recruits that match her description exist to be recruited, her agents will find them.

At the end of the story, the Merits are lost as the recruited characters move on from the organization unless the Storyteller deems that the Abyssal's treatment of them qualifies to retain them long-term as Story Merits (Exalted, p. 158).

With Essence 3, the Abyssal can also use this Charm to gain Allies, Contacts, Cult, and Mentors.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a legendary social goal.

HATEFUL SCORN PANOPTICON

Cost: —; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Accursed Overlord Authority

Like blood seeping into the earth, the deathknight's malevolence suffuses her organization.

When the Abyssal uses Accursed Overlord Authority with a negative Tie toward an individual, she may proclaim that individual an enemy of the organization. She senses whenever an organization member encounters her enemy, discerning the location of the encounter and the approximate distance and direction there. This doesn't reveal the nature of the encounter or the identity of the group members involved.

With Essence 4, the Abyssal can use this with negative Ties toward groups, letting her sense when one of her organization's members encounters someone acting in their official capacity within the enemy group.

REGIME-TOPPLING WHISPER

Cost: 13m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Cunning Subversion Style

The Abyssal's words eat away at organizations like acid, sowing discord with rumors and lies.

The Abyssal rolls ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Bureaucracy) to sabotage a project or other bureaucratic task she's aware of, as her player retroactively describes a whisper campaign or similar effort she's previously mounted against the project's leader. That character opposes the deathknight's roll with whatever (Attribute + Ability) pool is most appropriate to the targeted project.

If the Abyssal succeeds, the sabotaged project will suffer at least (Essence) botches over its duration. Each extra success she rolls adds an additional (Essence) botches. Such botches typically result in breakdowns of communication within the organization, failing morale among project members, and strained relationships between the project's leader and others within the organization, if they aren't already the case.

Reset: This Charm can't be used on an organization more than once per story.

SHADOW CHANCERY ENTERPRISE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: One project

Prerequisite Charms: Efficacious Hierarchy of the Damned

The deathknight's secret plans come to fruition, unseen in the darkness.

The Abyssal initiates a bureaucratic project or task in complete secrecy. Investigation or Bureaucracy rolls to investigate the project and read intentions rolls that would reveal details of it fail automatically unless they're enhanced by magic or support a Defining Intimacy. Even then, they suffer a -4 penalty, and 1s subtract successes. For details that wouldn't normally require a roll to notice, like overhearing a conversation, investigators must roll at difficulty 1.

The organization's activities might still be evident, even though their details are obscured. If it raises a profane monument in a city square, the ongoing construction would be apparent, but not what is being built.

ROTTING PALACE PROCLAMATION

Cost: 15m, 2wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Shade-Summoning
Conscription, Shadow Chancery Enterprise

Death's Lawgiver instills decay into the bones of an institution as she drains the life from it.

The Abyssal rolls (Manipulation + Bureaucracy), doubling 9s, to reveal that she's embedded a double agent in a rival organization. Her agent's position is established by spending successes on Backing and Influence for him. Each dot cost one success. At the Storyteller's discretion, the double agent can be an existing character rather than a new recruit.

UNSLEEPING WICKEDNESS INDUSTRY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Accursed Overlord Authority, Rotting Palace Proclamation

Unmatched in her foreplanning, the Abyssal relies on her servants to fulfill her will at the moment when it matters most.

As the Abyssal spends a scene engaging with the business or members of an organization she leads, her player retroactively reveals a project that the organization's completed (**Exalted**, 226). The project must be feasible to the organization's nature and resources. For example, a trade consortium could corner a market or organize a caravan with a mercenary escort but would struggle to enact laws or repair a city's infrastructure.

Reset: Once per story.

SOUL-DOMINATING DEBT

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Due to the Dead

On the occasions that she can be moved to largesse, the deathknight demands repayment with interest.

The Abyssal makes a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Bureaucracy) bargain roll with (Essence) automatic successes against a single character, demanding repayment of a debt to her or an organization she belongs to. Success magnifies the weight of the debt in her victim's mind, driving him to repay it as soon as possible.

For debts that must be paid in money or goods, he'll provide an amount representing a Resources expenditure one dot higher than what he owes (**Exalted**, p. 578). If repayment requires performing a service,

this counts as a persuade roll to convince him to do so, reducing the level of supporting Intimacy needed to support by one (**Exalted**, p. 216). The Abyssal can demand repayment for debts that aren't actually owed but no more than a one-dot Resource expenditure or an inconvenient task. If he dies before repaying the debt, he lingers as a ghost, still bound to repay it.

Resisting this influence costs (Abyssal's Essence) Willpower. Doing so renders a character immune to this Charm for one week.

The Abyssal doesn't need to roll against characters whose permanent Willpower is equal to or less than (her Essence, maximum 5). They can't resist with Willpower. They'll give whatever she asks to repay the debt, even pledging to serve her for the rest of their lives — and beyond. Whether the debt actually exists is irrelevant.

IRON TYRANT REIGN

Cost: 15m, 2wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Unsleeping Wickedness Industry

Death's Lawgiver enacts an unquestionable decree, suffusing her dread authority with the weight of the Old Laws.

The Abyssal enacts a law, rule, or regulation, conferring Accursed Overlord Authority's effect on it and imbuing it with one of her Defining Principles. The Abyssal doesn't have to proclaim it by her own authority — she only needs to be involved in its enactment. The law affects all who read or hear it within a region who are subject to its authority. It also affects mindless undead.

Written codifications of the law bleed through any covering placed over them. The words outlast even physical destruction — if a carved stone stele is shattered, the Abyssal's edict lingers in the very air.

SUFFER NO BETRAYAL

Cost: —; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Hateful Scorn Panopticon

Transgressors against death's law must be brought to justice.

Hateful Scorn Panopticon alerts the Abyssal when an organization member acts against Accursed Overlord Authority's Intimacy or witnesses someone else doing so. (This isn't limited to negative Ties).

If the transgressor is also an organization member, the Abyssal can instantly form a Defining Tie of hatred toward him and reflexively use Accursed Overlord Authority to impose the Intimacy on that organization. She waives its Willpower cost against mortals and Essence 1 ghosts.

Craft

ENTROPIC CRUCIBLE UNDERSTANDING

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight's legend of blood and destruction inspires her to feats of dark genius and fatal design.

The Abyssal gains craft points as though she'd completed a basic project (**Exalted**, p. 240) when she:

- Upholds death's chivalry (p. 29) using something she's created or through her intellect.
- Obtains valuable raw materials or components for one of her Crafts.
- Introduces a fact related to one of her Crafts or challenges such a fact.
- Succeeds on a Medicine roll while using equipment or supplies she created.

APOCALYPTIC FERVOR RENEWAL

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Entropic Crucible Understanding

Sworn to the world's destruction, the Abyssal hastens its final day with her dark creations.

The Abyssal adds the following "advanced" objective to the basic objectives for gaining craft points (**Exalted**, p. 240). Each advanced objective she achieves grants an additional two silver points for a basic project or one gold point for others.

• If another character gains or strengthens a Tie toward her, she gains extra points if it's a negative Tie or a Tie of awe, desire, or obsession.

• If the project provides a benefit to her, she gains extra points if it will aid in serving death's chivalry.

• If the project supports one of her Intimacies, she gains extra points if that Intimacy is a negative Tie, a positive Tie to one of the dead, or a Principle involving death.

This Charm is compatible with effects like Entropic Crucible Understanding that let non-Craft actions trigger project awards.

PERFECTION OF BLEAK DESIGN

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Craft 1, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Envisioning every flaw that might mar her handwork, the Abyssal flenses them from her design.

The Abyssal rerolls 6s on a Craft roll until they cease to appear.

With a Craft 3 repurchase, the Abyssal also rerolls 5s until they cease to appear.

VOID DEMIURGE'S ART

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Perfection of Bleak Design

The Abyssal's eerie genius demands expression in works worthy of her prowess.

The deathknight doubles 9s on a Craft roll for a basic or major project.

A Craft 5, Essence 2 repurchase makes this Charm compatible superior projects. The Abyssal may double 8s for a surcharge of one Willpower and one gold point.

A third purchase at Craft 5, Essence 3 makes this Charm compatible with legendary projects. The Abyssal may double 7s for a surcharge of one white point. (She doesn't need to pay the previous repurchase's surcharge).

COMPATIBILITY CHECK

Charms like Void Demiurge's Art that specifically enhance Craft rolls for projects can't be used with other Craft rolls, like Magnificent Cenotaph Allure's influence roll.

THOUSAND LIFETIMES EXPERTISE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's prowess exceeds that of artisans fettered by mortal lifespans, a master of countless crafts.

When the Abyssal learns this Charm, each dot she has in a Craft Ability grants her an additional dot that she may place in another Craft Ability with a lower or equal rating. Likewise, each Craft dot the Abyssal purchases with experience grants another dot that can be assigned to a Craft with an equal or lower rating.

For example, an Abyssal with Craft (Blacksmithing) 3 and Craft (Brewing) 1 would receive four extra Craft dots when she learns this Charm. If she raises Blacksmithing to 4 later, she'd gain another Craft dot.

CHARNEL WORKSHOP MASTERY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

No scrap of carrion or splinter of bone is beneath the Abyssal artisan's notice, imbuing her work with deathly power.

The Abyssal excels in making use of the dead as raw materials: forging armor from iron mixed with bone-coal, tanning hides for a cloak, tempering a daiklave by executing a prisoner. So long as such materials form an essential component of a project, she only needs two extra successes to trigger an increased Craft reward on basic and major projects (**Exalted**, pp. 240–241).

Additionally, when the Abyssal uses a nontrivial character's remains for a major project, the cost for her first roll is reduced by (victim's Essence, maximum 5) silver points. If she killed him herself, it's reduced by (applicable Craft) points, if that's higher.

With Craft 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal can enhance superior projects using remains from supernatural beings. She reduces the first roll's gold point cost by (victim's Essence/2, rounded up) or (his Essence) if she killed him herself. Soulsteel artifacts always receive this benefit, treating soulforged ghosts as Essence 1 unless they've already been established as characters.

FRENZIED FORGE WITHIN

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal works like a woman possessed, shaping molten iron with her bare hands and forging masterpieces in a single, sleepless night.

The Abyssal undertakes a basic or major project without needing tools or a workshop and completes it with incredible speed. Most can be finished in seconds or minutes if she has all the necessary materials. The most arduous, work-intensive projects can be completed in an hour if basic or a day if major.

With a Craft 5, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a four-mote, one Willpower surcharge to use this Charm on superior and legendary projects. Such uses aren't Mute. Such projects are typically completed within (6 – Essence) weeks, though five-dot or N/A artifacts and manses take that many months instead. This doesn't speed tasks not directly related to using Craft, like gathering resources or recruiting laborers. This limit most often applies to manse construction – under typical conditions, they still take at least a season to complete.

CEASELESS WICKED TOIL

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Frenzied Forge Within

The Abyssal's hands are never idle, leaving her prepared for every contingency.

The Abyssal reveals that she's previously created a mundane object and has it on her, rolling (Wits + Craft) at a difficulty of the object's Resources rating. She must have a Craft appropriate to the object, and the object must be something she could have feasibly kept hidden on her.

On a successful roll, the revealed item counts as exceptional equipment (**Exalted**, p. 580). The Abyssal gains craft points as though she'd completed a basic project (**Exalted**, p. 240), even if the object would normally require a major project.

On failure, the Abyssal still produces the object, but it suffers a flaw determined by the Storyteller: a -1 penalty on all uses, falling apart at end of scene, etc. She doesn't gain craft points.

Special activation rules: The Abyssal can use Magnificent Cenotaph Allure or Five-Fold Malice Curse when she uses this Charm to confer their effects on the revealed object. These Charms use the result of Ceaseless Wicked Toil's roll instead of their own.

Reset: Once per scene.

FUTILE LABOR'S REWARD

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Apocalyptic Fervor Renewal, Charnel Workshop Mastery, Frenzied Forge Within

Even in a doomed world, the Abyssal's genius will endure until the moment of the end.

Upon learning this Charm, the Abyssal rolls (Intelligence + highest Craft) with a free full Excellency. She gains silver points equal to her successes and a gold point for each 10.

At the end of each story in which the Abyssal actively used Craft, she repeats this roll.

MAGNIFICENT CENOTAPH ALLURE

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal artist creates works of haunting passion and heartbreaking beauty.

Upon completing a Craft project to create a painting, sculpture, or similar work of art, the Abyssal imbues it with emotion, rolling a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Craft) inspire roll. A character viewing the object for the first time is exposed to this influence. Ghosts are especially susceptible to such powerful passions, suffering -1 Resolve against the Abyssal's art. Alternatively, she can convey an instill roll to create either a positive Tie or a Tie of fear toward herself or to the undead in

general. The embedded influence lingers for (Essence) weeks after this Charm ends.

The Abyssal can use this Charm on up to (Essence) objects at a time.

With a Craft 4, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal may use this Charm on anything she crafts, as long as she incorporates artistic or ornamental elements into it.

EMPTY HEART AESTHETICS

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Magnificent Cenotaph Allure

The Abyssal's artistry lays bare the futility of mortal striving and the fleeting transience of joy.

When the Abyssal uses Magnificent Cenotaph Allure, she can convey an instill roll to weaken certain positive Intimacies. She can target either positive Ties to a specific object, like "the Realm," or positive Principles related to a certain subject, like "positive outlooks on life." The Storyteller should be flexible in applying this — for instance, if the Abyssal targets positive Ties to the Realm, her influence could also undermine positive Ties to the Scarlet Dynasty. Some viewers may be unaffected if they lack sufficient context — a portrait depicting a prince's famed defeat in battle would mean little to someone who has never heard of him. Affected characters can't use the weakened Intimacy to strengthen their Resolve or in Decision Points until they've recovered Willpower from resting.

THE ANVIL SCREAMS

Cost: 4m, 4s/g/wxp; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Perfection of Bleak Design

The Abyssal pushes her craft to its very limit, drawing dark inspiration from past horrors.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a roll for a major, superior, or legendary project, adding a non-Charm success and rolling (Essence) non-Charm dice.

This Charm's craft point cost depends on the kind of project enhanced: silver points for major, gold for superior, or white for legendary.

With Essence 3, the dice bonus increases to (Intelligence + Essence).

EMPTY MIND ENLIGHTENMENT**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Craft 4, Essence 2**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Void Demiurge's Art

Emptying her mind of distraction, Death's Lawgiver unleashes subconscious nightmares to guide her craft.

When the Abyssal uses Perfection of Bleak Design on a major, superior, or legendary project, she adds a non-Charm success for each failed die that's rerolled into a success.

If a rerolled die shows a 10, or a number that the Abyssal's doubled with Void Demiurge's Art, she adds an additional non-Charm success.

DREAD MIRACLE FORGING**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Futile Labor's Reward

The Abyssal forges horrors the likes of which Creation has never seen, plumbing untold depths of forbidden artifice.

The Abyssal permanently gains a superior project slot (**Exalted**, p. 241).

This Charm can be purchased up to (Essence) times.

INSPIRING DARKNESS REVERIE**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Dread Miracle Forging, Thousand Lifetimes Expertise

Night brings renewed inspiration for the Abyssal, whether in the beauty of a quiet world or the vivid terror of her nightmares.

Each night, at the stroke of midnight, the Abyssal gains (Essence + 2) silver points and one gold point for each Craft she has at 5. She doesn't gain this bonus during downtime.

FIVE-FOLD MALICE CURSE**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Stackable**Duration:** Indefinite**Prerequisite Charms:** Apocalyptic Fervor Renewal

Death's Lawgiver weaves deathly curses into her works; woe betide those who receive her gifts.

When the Abyssal completes a major or greater project, she can curse her creation. She chooses a trigger for the curse from the list below:

- Upon giving the cursed object to someone, she can give them either a duty or a prohibition related to that object or the terms of that deal. It can't be greater than a serious task. If the target fails to perform the duty or violates the prohibition, willfully or otherwise, the curse falls upon him.
- The Abyssal may choose one of her own Major or Defining Intimacies. She can't choose a positive Tie to the living, except for her Lunar mate. The curse is triggered if the object's bearer acts in a way that opposes that Intimacy.
- The Abyssal may have the curse trigger when the object's bearer does anything intended to harm or inconvenience her.

Once per scene, when the trigger condition is met, the curse falls upon the target. The Abyssal rolls (higher of Essence or 3) dice, as if undergoing Bleak Expiation (p. 145), using her successes to inflict Blights or Stigmata chosen by her player on the curse's victim. She adds an automatic success if it required a superior project or two successes for a legendary project. It doesn't trigger if the target doesn't have the cursed object on his person or if he's outside a cursed structure.

This Charm can be stacked to curse up to (Abyssal's Essence) creations.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal may pay two white points to make a curse permanent. It no longer requires a mote commitment and doesn't count against her maximum number of cursed creations.

MALICIOUS MECHANISM MASTERY**Cost:** 3m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** Perilous**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Ceaseless Wicked Toil

The deathknight greets her enemies with an unseen arsenal, laying traps of exquisite cruelty in anticipation of her foes' folly.

The Abyssal reveals that an enemy within medium range has stumbled into one of her traps, a one-time environmental hazard with difficulty (relevant Craft). If the Abyssal uses this Charm against an enemy within short range of a corpse, she adds +2 to the hazard's difficulty.

Damaging traps have Damage (Essence)L, plus an additional die for each success the target failed by. Snares, pit traps, and the like instead inflicts the effects of being grappled on an enemy who fails his roll, with one round of control plus an additional round for each success he failed by. The Abyssal can't take the usual special grapple actions but doesn't suffer any penalties. A trapped character or his ally can spend their entire turn to reduce the clinch's rounds of control by two. Attacking or damaging the Abyssal doesn't subtract rounds of control.

If the Abyssal has a relevant Craft, she gains three silver points if her target fails his roll. If a damaging trap incapacitates a nontrivial enemy or a snared nontrivial enemy surrenders or is incapacitated, she gains additional gold points equal to his Essence.

VISION-WRACKED CREATOR'S FUGUE

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Entropic Crucible Understanding

Descending into her soul's dark depths, the Abyssal harnesses wild genius and unfettered imagination with iron will.

After five minutes in meditation or sleep, the Abyssal may exchange craft points of one type for another. She may exchange silver points for gold points or gold points for white points at a rate of two to one, or white points to gold points or gold points to silver points at a rate of one to two. Each activation only allows her to convert one type of craft points.

BARROW-MOUND STOCKPILE

Cost: —(+7m); **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Ceaseless Wicked Toil

Prolific in her dark craft, the Abyssal artisan is rarely found empty-handed.

When the Abyssal uses Ceaseless Wicked Toil while facing a significant challenge, she can pay a seven-mote surcharge to reveal more dramatic contingency and preparation, as long as it could be completed with a single major project (**Exalted**, p. 239–240). Examples include a strategic cache of ammunition, a canoe concealed by a lakeside, or a lavish banquet awaiting unexpected visitors. This awards craft points like a major project, or a basic project if she fails the roll.

If this preparation's larger than the Abyssal could carry on her person, her player declares a nearby location where it's stashed. She can't reveal something that would solve the challenge outright.

Reset: Once per session.

DRAWN TO DEATH'S BEAUTY

Cost: —(+4m); **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Apocalyptic Fervor Renewal, Empty Heart Aesthetics

Who can look away from death? The Abyssal's works draw in those who gaze on them like moths to folly's candle.

The Abyssal can pay a four-mote surcharge when she uses Magnificent Cenotaph Allure to imbue her art with death's mesmerizing allure. Characters affected by its influence are compelled to approach and claim her work, which counts as a Defining Intimacy. They suffer a –3 penalty on Perception and Awareness rolls to notice anything else. In combat, they must use their movement action each turn to approach it.

Affected characters will face risks equivalent to a serious task (**Exalted**, p. 216) under this compulsion but won't take actions that would obviously physically harm them. If no safe path exists, they'll stop and observe from where they are.

This costs three Willpower to resist, separate from Magnificent Cenotaph Allure's influence.

This effect fades immediately when Magnificent Cenotaph Allure ends. The Abyssal can only have a single enhanced use of that Charm at a time.

FALLEN AGE'S REQUIEM**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Inspiring Darkness Reverie

Death's Lawgiver bears a dream of paradise to the Underworld's sunless lands, bringing forth glories to forge a new age.

Upon learning this Charm, the Abyssal gains three white points. When she rolls for Futile Labor's Reward (p. 186), she gains an additional three white points.

SOUL-TARNISHING TREASURES**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Psyche**Duration:** Indefinite**Prerequisite Charms:** Five-Fold Malice Curse

Death's Lawgiver pours her malice into her works, tempting those who bear them to dark deeds.

Upon completing a craft project, the Abyssal imbues it with a malign influence, compelling the object's owner to engage in some destructive or criminal behavior related to it. A sword might demand violence, while a chalice might encourage drinking to excess. The Abyssal makes a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Craft) persuade roll to determine the compulsion's strength.

If the object's owner has a Resolve lower than the Abyssal's successes, he faces its temptation whenever he has the opportunity to engage in the chosen act. He enters a Decision Point, requiring him to cite an Intimacy whose intensity depends on the level of project used for the creation: Minor for basic or major projects, Major for superior projects, or Defining for legendary projects. This influence only triggers while a character has the object on his person (or is inside of a structure) and doesn't affect the Abyssal.

Once a character has faced (Abyssal's Essence) Decision Points, he's immune to this Charm's influence for the rest of the story. However, the only way to be permanently freed of it is to abandon the object — even magic capable of breaking Psyche effects is ineffective. Abandoning the object requires entering a Decision Point and citing an Intimacy as above, but costs three Willpower.

COVETED PRIZE CRAFTWORK**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** Psyche**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Soul-Tarnishing Treasures

The Abyssal pours the allure of immortality into her work, encouraging the weak-willed to fight to possess it.

The Abyssal makes a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Craft instill roll against a single target as she displays something she's crafted with at least a major project. If successful, her target gains a Minor Obsession (**Exalted**, p. 169) with acquiring it. If he had a Major or Defining Tie that supported the Abyssal's influence, his Obsession is Major instead.

Until the Abyssal's target obtains the object, he can't regain Willpower from resting, his dreams poisoned by avarice. If he succeeds in obtaining it, he can't give it up. Whenever he makes a read intentions roll, he must make a Willpower roll against his Obsession if he hasn't already done so that day. If he fails the Willpower roll, he fails the read intentions roll automatically and believes his target seeks to obtain the Abyssal's creation.

Each time a character succeeds on a Willpower roll against his Obsession, its hold on him is weakened, letting him regain Willpower from sleep that night. Once he's done so (Abyssal's Essence) times, he loses the Obsession and is freed from this influence. However, once a character obtains the Abyssal's work, he can only resist by abandoning it, requiring him to enter a Decision Point and cite a Major or Defining Intimacy to pay three Willpower. Even magic capable of breaking Psyche effects is ineffective.

If he dies, he always returns as a ghost if able, still subject to this Charm's influence and incapable of resisting it. The ghost remains obsessed with protecting the object and his hungry ghost stalks and attacks anyone who possesses the object.

Reset: This Charm can't be used against a character more than once per story.

WORLD-SLAYING ARSENAL EPIPHANY**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Barrow-Mound Stockpile, Frenzied Forge Within (x2), Void Demiurge's Art

A master of artifice and a forger of souls, Death's Lawgiver unveils dread wonders of her design.

The Abyssal can use Barrow-Mound Stockpile to create a two-dot artifact without needing to roll. She receives five gold points as long as this satisfies a basic objective (**Exalted**, p. 240).

With Essence 5, the Abyssal can create three-dot artifacts with this Charm.

Reset: Once per story.

WRETCHED BLACKSMITH CLANGOR

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Empty Mind Enlightenment, Perfection of Bleak Design (x2), Void Demiurge's Art (x2)

Striving beyond the ambition of mortal smiths, the Abyssal unleashes her unfettered genius.

When the Abyssal rolls for a Craft project, every three successes she receives lets her roll an additional non-Charm die. Successes from these dice are counted in determining how many total dice she can roll with this Charm — e.g., if she rolled three successes with the extra dice, she'd then roll another die.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, when the Abyssal rolls enough successes with this Charm's extra dice to let her roll additional dice, she rolls an additional three non-Charm dice. This benefit can only trigger once, even if she rolls 3+ successes on the new dice.

BETRAYAL-SPURRING GIFTS

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Coveted Prize Craftwork or Drawn to Death's Beauty

The gifts and treasures that fall from the hands of Death's Lawgiver are fetters for those who claim them, subjugating them to her dark will.

The Abyssal may use social influence to leverage gifts she's made for others as though they were Ties of gratitude to her. Gifts created with basic or major projects count as Minor Ties; those made with superior projects count as Major Ties; those made with legendary

projects count as Defining Ties. The gift need not be on a target's person so long as he remains in possession of it.

Additionally, while using this Charm, the Abyssal waives the mote costs of Drawn to Death's Beauty, Five-Fold Malice Curse, Magnificent Cenotaph Allure, and Soul-Tarnishing Treasures, including uses that are already active. Once this Charm ends, she must commit those Charms' mote costs as usual to maintain them.

Dodge

EPHEMERAL PRESENCE ELUSION

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Dodge 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight is as insubstantial as a ghost, slipping past the blades of her enemies.

The Abyssal can activate this Charm after an attack roll against her to subtract one success.

FLITTING SHADOW FORM

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ephemeral Presence Elusion

Skilled in cheating death, the Abyssal escapes even impossible perils.

The Abyssal ignores penalties to her Evasion, including surprise attack penalties.

GRACIOUS GIFT OF DESPAIR

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flitting Shadow Form

All attempts to strike the deathknight are futile, revealing the meaninglessness of life itself.

If the Abyssal successfully dodges an attack, she counterattacks with a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Dodge) roll to instill a Principle expressing her attacker's despair, helplessness, or insignificance. If she strengthens an existing Principle, it still requires a

supporting Intimacy (**Exalted**, p. 215), but the Abyssal need not be aware of that Intimacy.

If the Abyssal succeeds, her attacker loses (Essence) Initiative. He can't oppose her disengage rolls until the end of her next turn unless he pays one Willpower to resist, separate from resisting the instill roll.

RISEN REVENANT GRACE

Cost: 1m, 1i; **Mins:** Dodge 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal is not seen to rise — one moment, she lies prostrate; the next, she stands light on her feet.

The Abyssal reflexively rises from prone (**Exalted**, p. 198), doubling 9s. This doesn't count as her move action and can be done outside her turn. If she uses this Charm upon waking from sleep or while resting, she waives its cost and doubles 8s if a roll is necessary.

INCOMPARABLE PHANTOM FORM

Cost: —; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Suffusing her body with spectral Essence, the Abyssal becomes translucent and insubstantial.

When defending against an attack, the Abyssal may spend Initiative as if it were motes on the Dodge Excellency against it. Doing so adds (Essence) to the maximum bonus she can add to Evasion with Charms.

While using Untouchable Phantom Mien (p. 193), each point of Initiative spent on the Dodge Excellency counts as two motes.

With Dodge 5, Essence 3, the deathknight gains one mote when she dodges an attack with this Charm, maximum once per round.

SHADOW FADES AT DAWN

Cost: 1m, 2i; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Uncanny Impulse Evasion

As darkness ever outpaces the light it flees from, the Abyssal moves beyond her foes' reach.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after dodging an attack, leaping one range band in any direction.

UNCANNY IMPULSE EVASION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Incomparable Phantom Form

The Abyssal moves before she knows why, guided by her preternatural instinct for danger.

The Abyssal can dodge an ambush or a similar unseen peril. Her base Evasion is set to 2, and she adds +1 Evasion for every 1 and 2 on the attack roll (or comparable roll for other hazards). If this raises her Evasion 5+, she may use other Dodge Charms against the ambush and can use them after the attack roll. She only needs Evasion 4+ against enemies with lower Initiative and mortals.

AS RECEDING FROST

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Incomparable Phantom Form

As the Abyssal escapes, the chill of her passing strips the speed from her pursuers.

When the Abyssal disengages, 1s on opposing character's rolls subtract successes.

UNHARRIED SPECTER STEP

Cost: —(1m); **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: As Receding Frost

The Abyssal drifts across the battlefield with the blasé indifference of one well accustomed with death.

After the deathknight successfully disengages, if her enemy pursues her and she uses her reflexive movement, she can gain two Initiative if she uses her next movement action to enter close range with him.

Additionally, the Abyssal can spend one mote when she disengages to avoid losing Initiative.

BLACK FEATHER BLINDING

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Incomparable Phantom Form

A cloud of dark feathers bursts from the Abyssal, concealing her within the swirling storm.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after dodging an attack, unleashing a whirlwind of black feathers that extends out to short range until her next turn. Enemies caught within it suffer a -2 penalty on vision-dependent rolls, which increases to -3 on attacks against the Abyssal.

With a Dodge 5, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to extend the whirling feathers out to medium range. The buffeting feathers inflict their penalty on all physical actions. Enemies lose one Initiative each time they move into or within the feathers and at the end of each round.

STOLEN VICTORY REVERSAL

Cost: —; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Incomparable Phantom Form

The Abyssal's flawless evasion daunts her foes, breaking their will to fight.

When the Abyssal successfully dodges an attack, her attacker loses one Initiative.

With a Dodge 5, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal gains the lost Initiative.

ARTLESS ARROWS SPURNED

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Uncanny Impulse Evasion

Disdaining her foes' bumbling attempts to hurt her, the Abyssal redirects attacks to those more deserving.

If the deathknight successfully dodges an attack, she may redirect it against an enemy within close range. She must still use this Charm before the attack roll, as usual. The attack and all effects enhancing it are rerolled, using the same dice pool, against the new target. Any Initiative a **withering** attack would grant the attacker goes to the Abyssal instead.

If the Abyssal is hit by the attack she used this Charm against, she waives this Charm's cost the next time she uses it. She must do so before her next turn or lose this benefit.

DOOM-DENYING GRACE

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Ephemeral Presence Elusion

As the Abyssal effortlessly evades a killing blow, it seems less and less possible that she might ever be struck.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after successfully dodging an attack, subtracting one success from subsequent attack rolls against her.

This Charm is incompatible with armor.

FROZEN FEARS BLOSSOM

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Gracious Gift of Despair

Fed by ennui and misery, the seeds of despair blossom into frozen flowers.

When an enemy with a Principle instilled by Gracious Gift of Despair or a similar Intimacy attacks the Abyssal, she adds +1 Evasion. If she successfully dodges, his despair crystallizes into shards of ice around his heart, dealing (lower of Intimacy or Abyssal's Essence) dice of lethal **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness. This can be used together with Gracious Gift of Despair's counterattack.

A damaged enemy suffers a -1 crippling penalty on physical rolls from chill within. The penalty from multiple uses of this Charm stacks.

ENTROPIC HOARFROST RADIANCE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Frozen Fears Blossom

The deathknight draws forth the chill of death's misery from hearts conquered by despair.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal chooses two of the below enhancements to Frozen Fears Blossom. Some enhancements require her to pay a surcharge.

The Death of Joy (+2m): If the Abyssal deals damage, her target must weaken one of his positive Intimacies.

Icy Wake of Despair (+3m): If the Abyssal deals damage, the ground freezes out to short range around him, becoming difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199) for the rest of the scene.

Razor Ice Blast (+2m, 2i): If the Abyssal deals damage, shards of ice erupt out to short range from her victim, a one-time environmental hazard with difficulty 4, Damage (Abyssal's Essence)L. Her victim doesn't receive a roll to resist the hazard.

Soul-Freezing Chill (+2m): The inflicted penalty also applies to the target's Resolve. The Abyssal need only use this effect once to apply it to all stacked penalties from multiple uses.

The Abyssal may purchase additional enhancements for three experience points or one bonus point each. Her player may work with the Storyteller to create new enhancements.

ICY SEPULCHER ENTOMBMENT

Cost: —(+1m, 1i); **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Entropic Hoarfrost Radiance

The Abyssal's enemies are already prisoners to their own despair; all that is necessary is to demonstrate this truth.

When the Abyssal uses Frozen Fears Blossom against an enemy with a Major or Defining Principle instilled by Gracious Gift of Despair or a similar Intimacy, she may pay a one-mote, one-Initiative surcharge to imprison him in ice. If the Abyssal uses Gracious Gift of Despair together with Frozen Fears Blossom to raise such a Principle to Major or Defining, the strengthened Intimacy can trigger this Charm.

If the counterattack deals damage, the Abyssal's attacker is encased in rime, inflicting a -3 penalty on physical rolls and preventing him from taking movement actions. This penalty subtracts successes instead of dice on rolls to attack the Abyssal or to oppose her disengage rolls.

Breaking the enemy out of the ice requires a Strength 3 feat with difficulty (Intimacy + 2). Alternatively, he can be freed by magical fire or heat, but only if it deals 1+ **decisive** damage to him.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to use this Charm against an enemy who only has a Minor Principle.

UNTOUCHABLE PHANTOM MIEN

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Flitting Shadow Form

The Abyssal blurs and distorts in motion, untouched even by the attacks that seem to strike her wraith-like form.

The Abyssal ignores penalties to Evasion against lower-Initiative enemies. At the end of each round, if she's within close range of an enemy and hasn't been hit by any attacks that round, she gains one Initiative.

FLICKERING WISP TECHNIQUE

Cost: —(2m); **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Shadow Fades at Dawn or Unharried Specter Step

The Abyssal dissolves into mist and shadow, crossing the killing field in a blink.

When the Abyssal uses Shadow Fades at Dawn or Hanging Shrike Focus (p. 195), she can vanish and reappear at her destination without crossing the space between. She must be able to see the destination.

The deathknight can also pay two motes to gain this benefit when she uses the reflexive movement from a successful disengage.

STRIKING AT SHADOWS

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Stolen Victory Reversal (x2)

Exploiting every flaw in her enemy's form, the Abyssal lets him defeat himself.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after dodging an attack, causing her attacker to lose Initiative equal to the 1s on his roll.

VANISHING SHADE EVASION

Cost: 3m per success; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flitting Shadow Form

The deathknight finds every flaw in a foe's attack, spurning their imperfect violence.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after an attack roll against her, causing her attacker's 1s to subtract successes for three motes each. If she successfully dodges, she can reflexively roll Stealth to establish concealment if she's in a suitable hiding spot, adding her opponent's lost successes on her roll.

FUTILE BLOWS SPURNED

Cost: 4m per level; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Vanishing Shade Evasion

The deathknight dances through killing blows, emerging unsullied and unscathed.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a **decisive** damage roll against her, negating levels of damage for four motes each.

WRAITH-FORM AVOIDANCE

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Stolen Victory Reversal (x2)

Cloaked in nothingness, the Abyssal dances through all that would harm her.

The Abyssal perfectly dodges an attack or other source of harm, even if it's undodgeable. This doesn't let her defend against ambushes. Uncountable damage is negated completely; she becomes immune to a recurring source of uncountable damage.

Reset: Once per scene, unless the Abyssal successfully dodges three decisive attacks using Incomparable Phantom Form.

BEYOND DEATH'S REACH

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive



Keywords: Uniform**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Striking at Shadows*The Abyssal's invincible grace is proof of her superiority over the living.*

The Abyssal can use this Charm after successfully dodging an attack to gain one Initiative for each 1 or 2 on the attack roll.

FOE-SHAMING DEFENSE**Cost:** 5m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Counterattack, Perilous, Withering-only**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Striking at Shadows*The Abyssal toys with her enemy, evading his blow at the last possible moment to force him to overreach.*

After successfully dodging an attack, the Abyssal can use this Charm to make an unblockable **withering** counterattack, rolling (Dexterity + Dodge) opposing the initial attack roll. The counterattack has (Essence + Dexterity + 5) raw damage and Overwhelming (higher of Essence or 3). If she damages her attacker, he's knocked prone and suffers a -3 penalty on rolls to rise from prone.

The Abyssal doesn't gain Initiative from hitting or dealing damage with this counterattack. Instead, she banks it in a separate pool until the end of the scene. She also banks any Initiative gained by crashing her attacker. The banked Initiative can only be spent on Dodge Charms. It's lost if she's crashed or uses this Charm again.

HANGING SHRIKE FOCUS**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Uniform**Duration:** One scene**Prerequisite Charms:** Shadow Fades at Dawn*The deathknight hangs in the air as if on spectral wings, gazing down on her victims before delivering them to their deaths.*

The Abyssal can use this Charm on her turn to leap up to three range bands straight up, floating in mid-air at the leap's apex. This uses her movement action. If there are any enemies within close range when she uses this Charm, she must make a disengage roll as part of this action to successfully ascend, adding (Essence)

automatic successes.

While airborne, aiming against an enemy who's below the Abyssal both adds dice on the attack roll and lets her attack at medium range or beyond.

When this Charm ends, the Abyssal descends gently to the ground without taking damage. If the Abyssal ends it prematurely to drop down and makes a non-ranged attack on the same turn, it receives the benefits of aiming.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal jumps or ascends beyond close range from the ground with a Charm or other effect, she can use this Charm to hang in mid-air, waiving its Willpower cost.

JUBILANT MAYHEM INCITEMENT**Cost:** -(3m, 2i); **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** Perilous, Uniform**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Artless Arrows Spurned*Arrows fly and blades swing seemingly at random, inciting pandemonium among the deathknight's foes.*

The Abyssal may pay three motes and two Initiative when she redirects an attack with Artless Arrows Spurned, make the redirected attack a surprise attack.

The redirected attack also counts as a special instill roll against all enemies who witness it, other than the original attacker. The redirected attack's target applies any Defense penalties he suffers to his Resolve as well against this.

Affected characters believe the attacker struck his ally out of malice, incompetence, or inexcusable carelessness. This weakens positive Ties toward him for characters who have them and instills negative Ties with a context chosen by the target's player for those who don't.

QUEEN OF KILLERS PIROUETTE**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Clash, Dual**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Artless Arrows Spurned*With a smile and a graceful spin, the Abyssal effortlessly turns her opponent's blades back to their throats.*

The Abyssal clashes an attack with (Dexterity + Dodge).

If successful, her enemy's attack is turned back against him, hitting him automatically and retaining all effects used to enhance the original attack. Any Initiative a redirected **withering** attack would grant the attacker goes to the stylist instead.

If the Abyssal knows Foe-Shaming Defense, winning the clash also knocks her enemy prone.

TENEBOUS CLOUD DISSOLUTION

Cost: 10m, 1wp (1i per turn); **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual, Mute, Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Flickering Wisp Technique

The Abyssal melts into the air, becoming nothing more than dark, chill fog.

The Abyssal dissolves into a cloud of fog with the following effects:

- She gains +2 Evasion. With an appropriate stunt, she can dodge undodgeable attacks.
- She can't take physical actions except for dodging, Stealth rolls, and movement actions, as well as Charms like Breath-Seizing Mist that are explicitly compatible. She's still able to speak.
- In combat, she can move two range bands on her turn as an action that can't be flurried. She can do so reflexively on the turn she uses this Charm.
- She can hover up to close range above the ground, letting her float over difficult terrain and certain environmental hazards unimpeded. She can't cross running water.
- She can pass through doors, walls, and other obstructions as long as they aren't airtight or magically warded against such intrusion.
- She's immune to **decisive** damage unless its source is enhanced by magic, based on heat or cold, or benefits from an appropriate stunt. Even then, **decisive** damage rolls against her subtracts (Essence) successes unless they're based on heat or cold.
- Grappling her is impossible without appropriate magic.

The Abyssal must pay one Initiative at the start of each of her subsequent turns, or this Charm ends. It also ends if she's crashed.

Reset: Once per scene.

BREATH-SEIZING MIST

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Until expulsion

Prerequisite Charms: Tenebrous Cloud Dissolution

The Abyssal flows into her victim's lungs as a river of freezing mist, choking the life out of him from within.

While using Tenebrous Cloud Dissolution, the Abyssal pours herself into an enemy's lungs. She rolls (Dexterity + Dodge) opposed by the (Stamina + Resistance) of a character within close range. In combat, this is a difficulty 5 gambit that's unblockable and undodgeable. Trivial characters and sleeping characters don't receive a roll to resist.

If successful, the victim begins to suffocate (**Exalted**, p. 232) and is unable to speak. He suffers a -3 penalty on all actions. The Abyssal can't take other actions while suffocating him, but she can't be targeted by attacks or similar physical actions unless they benefit from appropriate magic or a stunt. She waives Tenebrous Cloud Dissolution's Initiative cost and can't end that Charm voluntarily unless she leaves her host.

On each of the victim's turns, he can attempt to expel the Abyssal with another (Stamina + Resistance) roll opposing her (Dexterity + Dodge roll). This action can't be flurried. If he fails, the Abyssal steals (Essence) Initiative from him. She's also expelled if she ends this Charm prematurely.

While this Charm can affect enemies who don't need to breathe, like zombies or characters using certain magic, it can't affect enemies with no lungs or respiratory system at all, like most automatons.

IN AWFUL GLORY CROWNED

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 5

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Icy Sepulcher Entombment

The deathknight revels in her enemies' despair, glorying as they succumb to the freezing weight of their failure.

If the Abyssal raises an enemy's penalty from Frozen Fears Blossom to (higher of his base Resolve or 3), she can use this Charm to crash him. He's incapacitated instead if the exploited Intimacy is Defining or if he's a mortal, Essence 1 ghost, or trivial character, surrendering utterly to despair.

Either way, the Abyssal's victim loses Willpower equal to the levels of damage dealt by the final use of Frozen Fears Blossom. If this leaves them without any temporary Willpower, they gain a Tie of obedience toward the Abyssal with intensity equal to that of the exploited Intimacy.

Mortals and trivial characters affected who lose all Willpower die of despair unless the Abyssal spares them. Such characters always leave a ghost, as do those who die in the same scene this Charm was used. Their Ties of obedience linger past their death.

THOUSANDFOLD SHADOW PERFECTION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Wraith-Form Avoidance

The deathknight savors her enemy's despair in the face of an invincible foe.

After dodging an attack with Wraith-Form Avoidance, the Abyssal is suffused with dark power. She gains one Initiative plus an additional Initiative at the start of each turn. She loses this benefit if she's hit by an attack, enters concealment, or is at long range or further from all enemies.

Integrity

DEATH'S INSCRUTABLE MASK

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal stills her heart, assuming the enigmatic mien of a corpse.

The Abyssal can use Integrity instead of Socialize to calculate her Guile. As long as her demeanor in a scene remains subdued and unemotional, she gains +1 Guile against rolls that would reveal her emotion-based Intimacies or similar information about her emotions.

IMMUTABLE GRAVEN MYTHOS

Cost: 4m (1wp); **Mins:** Integrity 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Such is the Abyssal's dedication to her grave purpose that she remains immutable by will alone.

When the Abyssal is exposed to a Shaping effect, she can defend with this Charm, regardless of what Ability she uses to resist. She adds (higher of Essence or 3) successes on her opposed roll or adds (higher of Essence or 3) to the targeted static value. If the Shaping effect is rolled, its 1s subtract successes.

Even if the Abyssal fails, she can pay one Willpower to mitigate the consequences. If a transformation is normally permanent, it becomes possible for the Abyssal to break it, though it's up to her to figure out how — often with the use of Lore, Medicine, or Occult.

The Abyssal also can't be changed in a way that kills her, leaves her unable to take any actions, or stops her from using Charms or other magic at all — at least, not immediately. The Storyteller can inflict a weakened version of the effect that develops progressively, giving the Abyssal ample time to find a way to break it, as above — seasons, or even years. Alternatively, the Storyteller can alter the transformation's nature so that it doesn't have such an impact on the deathknight.

With an Integrity 5, Essence 2 repurchase, Immutable Graven Mythos's bonus becomes non-Charm. Against Shaping effects that are normally unrolled, the Abyssal rolls (Essence + current temporary Willpower) against the opposing character's (current temporary Willpower). That character loses one success and one Willpower for each 1 or 2 that he rolls. Success negates that effect and renders the Abyssal immune to it for the rest of the session. If the Shaping isn't created by a character, the Storyteller sets a difficulty for the Abyssal's roll.

Whispers: The Abyssal can invoke her Whispers instead of paying the Willpower cost to mitigate a Shaping effect's consequences.

LESSER HORRORS SCORNE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Integrity 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One tick

Prerequisite Charms: None

Having tasted death itself, the Abyssal is inured to the infirmities of the flesh.

The Abyssal ignores wound penalties to her Resolve and Guile, as well as penalties from crippling effects or symptoms of disease.

BOUND BY THE OLD LAWS

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 2, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Having damned herself with one promise, it is not lightly that the Abyssal makes her vows.

When the Abyssal formally commits to an agreement, she may instantly form a Minor Principle expressing her grim resignation to upholding her part of the deal. (This counts as a negative Principle). If she genuinely intends to honor the bargain, her sincerity becomes self-evident to any other parties to the agreement. If she doesn't, she adds (Integrity/2) dice on Manipulation-based influence rolls against them for the rest of the scene.

Upon fulfilling an agreement, the Abyssal discards this Principle, if she still has it, and gains one Willpower. She can't gain more than one Willpower per day this way.

MURDER-SAINT DEDICATION

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Integrity 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Whatever compassion the Abyssal feels for the living, she does not permit it to impede her.

The Abyssal gains +2 Resolve against influence that would weaken a negative Intimacy. This doesn't protect Ties to the deathknight's Lunar mate; her heart is not so easily hardened against him.

This Charm's cost is waived when used to protect Ties toward mortals. With Integrity 5, it's waived for Ties toward any of the living.

VENOMOUS SCORN REBUKE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Integrity 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Murder-Saint Dedication

Death's Lawgiver has little patience for fools and sinners, swift to upbraid their unrighteous ways.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she witnesses someone act in a way that violates one of her Defining Intimacies or death's chivalry. She forms a Minor Tie of contempt for him. As long as she openly expresses her scorn, she increases that Tie's Resolve bonus by one and adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice on influence rolls that solely target the offender or seek to turn others against him.

The Abyssal retains the Tie after this Charm ends.

With Integrity 5, the Abyssal can use this Charm when one of her Major Intimacies is violated.

Whispers: The Abyssal can invoke Whispers to use this Charm without provocation, tapping the limitless hatred of the Neverborn.

UNDYING STAGNATION DEFENSE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal permeates her being with death's stasis, passing unchanged through the courts of chaos.

The Abyssal and her equipment are immune to the effects of exposure to the Wyld and other environment Shaping effects that would alter her body, mind, or equipment. She instinctively senses such perils in time to use this Charm and can use it even while asleep or incapacitated.

GLOAMING SOUL REINFORCEMENT

Cost: 5m per 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lesser Horrors Scorned

Confronted by despair or temptation, the deathknight draws from unknown depths to steel her mind.

The Abyssal can spend motes instead of Willpower to resist social influence or other mind-affecting magic, paying five motes per Willpower.

BLOOD BEFORE SURRENDER

Cost: 4m, 1ahl; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

WYLD EXPOSURE

Resisting exposure to the Wyld is a (Wits + Integrity) roll; failure results in unwanted transformation that count as Flaws (*Exalted*, p. 167), addiction, or Derangements. The difficulty, consequences for failure, and frequency at which the roll must be made depend on the Wyld's intensity. Certain ritual practices, meditative disciplines, and warding talismans may add bonus dice; accepting faerie hospitality may impose penalties. Once a character fails a roll against exposure, she doesn't need to make rolls for that specific location again for the rest of the story.

Different Wyld locales have their own distinctive character. The mutations they inflict reflect this: a glacial ziggurat transforms people into living ice; a subterranean labyrinth twists those who pass through it into pale, elongated creatures; a forest of speaking beasts traps humans in animalistic forms.

INTENSITY	DIFFICULT	INTERVAL	POSSIBLE EFFECTS
Bordermarch	3	Monthly	Addiction. Largely superficial transformations. No Derangements.
Middlemarch	5	Weekly	Addiction. Minor Derangements. Undesirable transformations, inflicting a -2 penalty on a limited range of actions or similar detriments: physical dependency on an unusual substance, vulnerability to iron, etc.
Deep Wyld	7	Daily	Addiction. Major Derangements or increasing existing Major Derangements to Defining. Life-altering transformations: bodily reconstructions that impose a -3 penalty on a broad range of actions; eternally rotting and unhealing flesh; sapient, parasitic organs; etc.

Characters who roll against the Wyld may choose to go into experience debt to purchase up to five dots of thematically appropriate mutations whether they succeed or fail.

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Murder-Saint Dedication

Blood trickles from the Abyssal's lips as she pushes herself to her utmost, burning away her own deathless vitality to sustain her resolve.

When the Abyssal's Resolve is beaten by an influence roll to convince her to undertake a serious or life-changing task (*Exalted*, p. 216), she can use this Charm to perfectly defend against that influence.

Reset: Once per story, unless reset when events prove the Abyssal justified in refusing the influence in a way that benefits or aligns with death's chivalry or one of her one of her Defining Principles.

BECOMING THE UNFEELING SHADE

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Blood Before Surrender

Afflicted with unwanted feelings, the Abyssal feeds them to the yawning void where her heart should be.

When the Abyssal is targeted by social influence that leverages one of her positive Intimacies, she discards that Intimacy, losing it completely. If that Intimacy provided the support necessary for an instill or persuade roll (*Exalted*, pp. 215–216), the roll fails automatically unless she has another Intimacy that can support the action.

The Abyssal can't voluntarily reform the discarded Intimacy for the rest of the story. If someone tries to instill her with that Intimacy, the roll follows the rules for overturning influence (*Exalted*, p. 221).

Whispers: The Abyssal can invoke her Whispers to discard any Intimacy when she uses this Charm, consigning it to the nightmares of the Neverborn.

Reset: Once per session, unless reset by upholding a negative Major or Defining Tie.

ETERNAL ENMITY APPROACH

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Venomous Scorn Rebuke

The Abyssal draws strength from her hatred, implacable in the face of those she has named her enemies.

Upon purchasing this Charm, she chooses one of her negative Defining Intimacies. It can't be weakened by any means other than her voluntarily doing so, and any influence that would cause her to act against it is unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220).

Characters can attempt to undermine this Charm's defense with a special instill roll, rolling twice and taking the lower result. The cost of any magic that enhances either roll must be paid separately. If successful, the chosen Intimacy loses this Charm's protection until the Abyssal gains Willpower from upholding it.

If the Abyssal voluntarily weakens the enhanced Intimacy, it likewise loses this Charm's protection until she raises it back to Defining intensity. Alternatively, she can choose another of her valid Intimacies to apply his Charm to.

An Essence 3 repurchase lets the Abyssal choose a second Intimacy for this Charm.

DARK PROMISES FULFILLED

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bound by the Old Laws

Drawing the oaths that bind her tight around her soul, the Abyssal summons up power to work her dark miracles.

Brooding over her obligations, the Abyssal chooses one of the agreements she's sworn to with Bound by the Old Laws and still has a Principle for. She rolls ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Integrity), adding (Intimacy) non-Charm dice, and gains a special pool of peripheral motes equal to her successes. She can only spend these motes on magic used to uphold her end of the deal, and she can't spend them in combat. If she's a necromancer or sorcerer, the banked motes can also be spent on spells.

These motes are lost if not spent by the end of the day. If the Abyssal completes her part of the agreement

before then, she retains up to (higher of Essence or 3) of them, or all of them if she fulfilled a serious or life-changing task to hold up her end (**Exalted**, p. 216).

Reset: Once per day.

VILLAIN'S HEART RENEWAL

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Murder-Saint Dedication

The Abyssal laughs at the failing efforts and faltering words of the so-called heroes who stand against her.

When a character makes an influence roll against the Abyssal, she gains motes equal to his 1s and 2s. She also gains this benefit against rolls to inflict Shaping effects or sorcerous curses on her. She can only spend these motes on influence rolls, read intentions actions, Resolve, and Guile. Any unspent motes are lost at the end of the scene.

SWORN TO EVERLASTING VENGEANCE

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Bound by the Old Laws, Murder-Saint Dedication

The Abyssal swears an oath of vengeance to stain the Old Laws red, binding herself to an insatiable need for bloody revenge.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when an enemy deals her a significant defeat or setback, violates one of her Major or Defining Intimacies in a significant way, or commits a similar wrong against her, or when she learns of such an offense. She gains a Defining Tie of vengeful hatred towards the transgressor. This replaces any existing Ties she has toward them. It's up to the Abyssal what form her vengeance will take, but it must be either proportional or excessive compared to the wrong done to her.

As long as the Abyssal retains this Tie at Defining intensity, she gains the following benefits:

- She gains +2 Resolve against the offender unless he leverages the Tie with an appeal to her hatred.
- If she cites the Tie in a Decision Point, the cost to resist is reduced by one Willpower.

- She can use Venomous Scorn Rebuke against the offender without provocation. Instead of forming a new Tie of contempt, she applies the Resolve modifier bonus to this Charm's Intimacy.

The Abyssal can't voluntarily weaken the Tie while this Charm remains active. If she goes a session without working toward her revenge at all, she loses one Willpower.

Upon avenging herself, the Abyssal is filled with grim satisfaction, fully replenishing her motes and temporary Willpower. Her Tie is converted into a Defining Principle chosen by her player to reflect the impact of this experience on her worldview.

Reset: Once per story, unless reset by successfully attaining revenge. If the Abyssal maintains this Charm for multiple stories, she must wait until the current story ends for it to reset.

AFFLICTION OF THE OATHBREAKER

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dark Promises Fulfilled

Woe to those who dishonor their pacts with Death's Lawgiver, for their sins cannot be kept hidden.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when someone makes a promise to her or commits to an agreement with her, forging a bond between them. If the deathknight has a Lunar mate, she can do so for promises made to him in her presence. Should the target break his word, the Abyssal immediately senses his betrayal. She discerns the general circumstances and context of the violation, and she gets a general sense of direction toward the location where it took place. If she's been there before, she identifies its exact location. For the rest of the story, she doubles 8s on Perception rolls to find the offender.

A Moonshadow Caste waives this Charm's cost if she uses it together with her oathbinding anima power.

DARK WILL ASCENDANT

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Gloaming Soul Reinforcement

Finding grim certainty in her dark purpose, the Abyssal's will is renewed.

The Abyssal gains one Willpower, which can raise her above her permanent Willpower. She can't use this Charm while in combat.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by upholding death's chivalry or a negative Defining Tie.

FAITHFUL KILLER'S REPRIEVE

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Blood Before Surrender

Embracing her purpose as a world-killing weapon, the deathknight finds certainty amid storms of doubt.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after her Resolve is beaten by influence that forces her into a Decision Point. She can cite an act of death's chivalry she's performed in the current story — or the previous one if it ended shortly ago — as if it were a Defining Intimacy in a Decision Point. Doing so waives the Willpower cost to resist.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by upholding a Defining Intimacy with an act of death's chivalry.

FIVE HEARTS HATRED

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Eternal Enmity Approach

Even specters tremble at the viciousness that seethes within the Abyssal's soul.

Against influence that would weaken one of the Abyssal's negative Intimacies, up to (Essence) 1s subtract successes from the roll against her (but not other targets). If the targeted Intimacy is Defining, the Abyssal can wait until after the influence roll to use this Charm.

Reset: An Intimacy can only be protected this way once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal that upholds it.

FREEDOM IN CHAINS

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Gloaming Soul Reinforcement

The deathknight has sworn an oath to the Neverborn that can never be unspoken. No lesser binding can truly hold her.

The Abyssal can use this Charm to break free of Psyche effects, possession, or any other magic that exerts control over her body, mind, or soul. Before she can do so, she must first be forced to act against one of her Intimacies or against death's chivalry by it. After a scene spent contemplating or brooding over these events, she can use this Charm to break free of that effect's control.

Reset: Once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal in a way that upholds death's chivalry.

CLARITY IN HATRED

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Instant or Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Freedom in Chains

Clinging to what little remains to define her, the Abyssal finds an unassailable truth in the worst of herself.

The Abyssal perfectly defends against a Psyche effect, Shaping effect, or sorcerous curse by invoking one of her negative Defining Intimacies. She can commit this Charm's cost indefinitely to become immune to that kind of effect for as long as she keeps that Intimacy at Defining intensity. Defending against a Shaping effect only grants immunity to other Shaping effects that change the same aspect of the Abyssal — resisting a physical transformation won't help her against spiritual mutilation.

If the Abyssal invokes a Principle protected by Eternal Enmity Approach, she must give up its protection for this Charm's duration.

With Essence 5, this Charm's cost is reduced by three motes.

Whispers: The Abyssal can invoke her Whispers instead of an Intimacy. If she extends this Charm's duration, she can't invoke her Whispers again until it ends.

Reset: Once the Abyssal ends this Charm, she can't use it again until she's spent a scene acting in accordance with a Defining Intimacy she intends to use it through.

REVENGE BEYOND REASON

Cost: —(+4m); **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Eternal Enmity Approach, Sworn to Everlasting Vengeance

There are no words that can sway the Abyssal from her path of hate.

When the Abyssal uses Sworn to Everlasting Vengeance, she may pay a four-mote surcharge to grant its vengeful Tie the protection of Eternal Enmity Approach.

WORLD-ENDING VOID APOSTLE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Gloaming Soul Reinforcement

As the Abyssal's world crumbles around her, something vast and terrible stirs in the depths of her soul, urging her to embrace her apocalyptic purpose.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she faces a profound challenge to her beliefs and Intimacies — being forced to act against a Defining Intimacy, being imprisoned by enemies who challenge her loyalty to her Deathord, watching someone she has a Defining Tie of love for die. She may waive the costs of up to three Charms used to defend against social influence, physical injury, or disease or to threaten those who've wronged her. This can't waive experience costs.

Reset: Once per day unless reset by making a significant sacrifice in order to uphold a Defining Intimacy or death's chivalry.

EGO-SLAYING MASTERY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Becoming the Unfeeling Shade, Dark Will Ascendant

Meditating upon nothingness, the Abyssal silences the ceaseless clamoring of the self.

The deathknight adds a free full Excellency to Resolve or Guile, or on an Integrity roll.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by successfully asserting Resolve against influence that opposes one of the Abyssal's Defining Intimacies.

IMMORTAL MALEVOLENCE**Cost:** 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 5**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Ego-Slaying Mastery, Revenge Beyond Reason, World-Ending Void Apostle

The Abyssal has fettered her soul and found eternal life, rising again and again from certain death so long as there is hatred still left in her heart.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she's incapacitated or would suffer death for any reason, surviving it by calling on a Defining Intimacy protected by Eternal Enmity Approach. She seems to die, yet endures in a torpor that's indistinguishable from death by anything less than Eye of the Unconquered Sun.

Come the next sunset, the Abyssal rises with all damage and crippling injuries healed, no matter how severe they were. She may drag herself out of a grave, well, or the ashes of a pyre where hopefuls burned her corpse. The only way her foes can kill her is to wait for her to rise, then try again. She can invoke World-Ending Void Apostle when she rises and can use it with Charms to aid in escaping imprisonment.

In exchange for the Abyssal's survival, the chosen Intimacy loses Eternal Enmity Approach's protection for the rest of the story.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal uses Sworn to Endless Vengeance together with this Charm to swear vengeance on the enemy responsible for her "death," she waives its Willpower cost. If she successfully takes her revenge, she restores Eternal Enmity Approach's protection to the chosen Intimacy.

Investigation

CRIME-UNVEILING WICKEDNESS**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Investigation 1, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Beneath the Abyssal's conscious mind dwells a watchful darkness, always seeking out traces of mystery.

Whenever the Abyssal could gain relevant information from a case scene or profile character action, her intuition reveals this fact to her. The Storyteller should

give her player a vague description of why it would be useful — for example, that there's a hidden trap she could detect with a successful case scene roll or that someone present in the scene is behaving suspiciously enough to warrant a profile character roll.

DREAD INQUISITOR'S SURMISE**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Investigation 2, Essence 1**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** Crime-Unveiling Wickedness

The Abyssal has come to expect crime and vice from those around her and rarely finds herself disappointed.

Whenever a character the Abyssal can perceive makes a Larceny roll, she is intuitively aware of this fact and adds (Essence) non-Charm dice on an Awareness or Investigation roll to detect this use of Larceny. She also gains this benefit when a disguised character attempts to do something he couldn't without the benefit of the disguise — such as walking past guards keeping out all but a select few — even if he doesn't roll Larceny.

UNCANNY DETECTIVE PRACTICE**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 1**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** Mute**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Crime-Unveiling Wickedness

The guilty cannot hide their secrets from the death-knight's gaze.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal's player chooses one of its two techniques: **Cunning Scrutiny Style**, which enhances case scene rolls, or **Guilt-Sensing Eye**, which enhances profile character rolls. Each technique lets the Abyssal add (Essence) successes and doubling 9s on its respective action's roll and complete the action in a handful of seconds.

The Abyssal can repurchase this Charm to learn the second technique.

MALEVOLENT MOTIVE INTUITION**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Uncanny Detective Practice

Hatred is a motive the Abyssal knows oh so well.

When the Abyssal succeeds on a profile character roll, she also learns one of her target's negative Ties. Alternatively, a successful case scene roll also reveals a negative Tie that motivated the events being investigated, if there is one. The Storyteller should reveal the Tie most relevant to the Abyssal's purpose for making the roll.

If the Abyssal uncovers an Intimacy that she possesses herself, she's refunded up to (her Intimacy) motes spent on the roll, effortlessly recognizing such familiar enmity.

With Investigation 5, the Abyssal can narrow her focus to negative Ties with a specific emotional context, like hatred or fear.

WHISPERS OF THE VENGEFUL DEAD

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute, Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Uncanny Detective Practice

The unquiet dead call out for justice, and Death's Lawgiver answers.

The Abyssal adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice on a profile character roll. For every three extra successes she rolls, she can ask one of the following questions:

- Is he planning to commit an act of violence?
- Who is his greatest enemy among the dead?
- What has he done to disrespect or anger the dead?
- Whose death would hurt him the most?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind, the Abyssal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Whispers: The Abyssal can invoke her Whispers to ask an additional question. She can wait until after using her other questions to do so.

Reset: Once per scene.

DECEPTION-PIERCING STARE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Uncanny Detective Practice

Having seen through the great lie of life, Death's Lawgiver easily winnows falsehoods from truth.

The Abyssal can tell if someone is lying when he makes a statement. If the statement contains partial or incomplete truths, she discerns which parts of the statement are false or misleading.

Against magic capable of contesting this perfect discernment, the Abyssal rolls (Perception + Investigation) for her opposed roll, adding (Essence) automatic successes. The opposing character's 1s and 2s subtract successes from his roll.

PHANTOM JUSTICIAR TECHNIQUE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Uncanny Detective Practice

Fleeting suspicions and dark insights come to the Abyssal unbidden, guiding her investigation.

The Abyssal adds a free full Investigation Excellency.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset when a successful Investigation roll reveals information that aids the Abyssal in upholding or protecting one of her Intimacies or death's chivalry.

DEPRAVED HEART SYMPATHY

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant or Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Uncanny Detective Practice

The Abyssal knows the guilty mind well, needing only the scantest of evidence to lay bare a culprit's heart.

The Abyssal makes a profile character roll by examining someone's belongings, physical evidence of their activities, or the like, without having to observe him directly. Access to abundant evidence or items of personal importance to a suspect might grant circumstantial bonus dice, while sparse, outdated, or misleading evidence inflicts a penalty. Tasting someone's blood suffices as long as it was shed no more than an hour ago and adds (Essence) non-Charm successes on the roll.

If the Abyssal successfully profiles her target, she can then commit this Charm's cost to preserve the profile in her memory. Doing so reduces Uncanny Detective Practice's cost by two motes when used to follow up



on that investigation. Additionally, Crime-Unveiling Wickedness alerts her to anyone who fits the profile or any sequence of events that is consistent with the profiled character's customary methodology.

CORPSE-QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crime-Unveiling Wickedness

Invoking the Old Laws' authority, Death's Lawgiver compels the testimony of the dead.

As the Abyssal examines a corpse, she rolls (Wits + Investigation) against the Resolve it had in life. She may face penalties if a great deal of time has passed since its death or if it's in poor condition, but if she can overcome these, it's possible to wrench answers from corpses that are no more than skulls.

Success revives an echo of the corpse's selfhood, though little of its personality remains. The Abyssal can ask the corpse one question, plus an additional

question for each extra success. Corpses' memories of their lives fade rapidly. A freshly slain corpse remembers only the last (Abyssal's Essence) days of its life. After a day, this is reduced to (Abyssal's Essence) hours, then that many minutes once a second day has passed. Once a third day passes, the corpse can only remember its final moments. Corpses can also recall events in their immediate surroundings from the last (Abyssal's Essence) days.

Against a zombie or other reanimated corpse, the Abyssal doesn't roll. Instead of this Charm's usual effect, it stirs the zombie's lingering selfhood and lets the deathknight question it through normal social influence or Charms like Unsurpassed Interrogation Method, even if it's mindless.

Reset: Once per scene. This Charm can't be used on the same corpse more than once.

FELLOW KILLER RECOGNITION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Malevolent Motive Intuition

Sworn to the end of all life, the Abyssal recognizes those who share her red-handed calling.

The Abyssal senses whether someone has ever killed another person, seeing hallucinatory bloodstains on the hands of those who have. The more deaths he's caused, the greater the profusion of blood, giving the deathknight a general sense of how many lives he's taken. She senses both direct and indirect responsibility for death, seeing blood on the hands of both an assassin and his employer or a soldier and the king who ordered him to war.

This Charm is usually unrolled. However, the Abyssal must make a special profile character roll if her target has a relevant Intimacy — a Tie of guilt, a Principle of pride in never being caught, etc. That Intimacy increases his Guile against her roll, like with Resolve. She must also make this roll if such a revelation would compromise her target's disguise or significantly complicate it.

This Charm isn't dependent on vision — a blind Abyssal might identify killers by a ghostly chorus of the victim's wails or some similar omen.

Whispers: If the Abyssal successfully identifies a killer, she may invoke her Whispers to receive a fleeting vision that somehow relates to the most recent death. While such visions are too brief and hazy to provide directly actionable information, they may supply leads, identifying people, places, or events where Crime-Unveiling Wickedness might lead the Abyssal to relevant information.

LINGERING ECHOES OF ANGUISH

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fellow Killer Recognition

Violence leaves stains more indelible than blood.

The Abyssal makes a special case scene or profile character roll to sense lingering traces of violent acts. On a successful case scene roll, she experiences a nightmare-like vision of an act of violence that's taken place at that location. Successfully profiling a character likewise gives her a vision of one of his violent acts. While these visions reveal the general nature of the act, they're too hazy and distorted to give an accurate depiction of events or reveal the identities of those involved.

By default, the Storyteller should choose whichever violent event is most relevant to the Abyssal's current intentions. Alternatively, an Abyssal may choose to view either the first act of violence or the most recent one. However, traces of violence fade over time, depending on the nature of the act:

- Physical altercations, minor scuffles, and the like can be detected and linger for days.

- Acts of violence that cause significant physical harm or emotional trauma linger for weeks.

- Death or torture lingers for years.

- Battles, mass executions, and the like linger for decades.

- Acts that cause a shadowland to open linger indefinitely unless the shadowland is closed.

SHADOWED INFORMANT SCRUTINY

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Deception-Piercing Stare

The Abyssal spymaster knows better than to trust even her most loyal agents, scrutinizing their reports for the slightest flaw or falsehood.

When another character reports the results of his investigation to the Abyssal, she mentally reconstructs the scene from his description. The witness need not have actually made an Investigation roll but must have examined the scene in a way similar to what a case scene or profile character roll entails.

The Abyssal makes her own case scene or profile character roll to examine the reconstructed events, rolling ([Perception or Wits] + Investigation). If the witness actually made an Investigation roll, his successes are added to her roll as non-Charm successes. She can use Investigation Charms to enhance her roll and otherwise examine the scene, like using Deception-Piercing Stare to evaluate statements. However, she can't use Simple Charms or Charms that require her to examine physical evidence.

MYSTERY-SLAYING GENIUS

Cost: —; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Phantom Justiciar Technique

The deathknight's razor-keen reasoning exposes truths that others would rather stay buried.

The Abyssal doubles 8s on an Investigation roll.

Reset: Once per scene.

UNSURPASSED INTERROGATION METHOD

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Deception-Piercing Stare

If love of justice will not sway the guilty, then fear of Death's Lawgiver must suffice.

The Abyssal makes a special (Wits + Investigation) threaten roll to interrogate a character. If successful, her target must answer one question truthfully and to fully, plus an additional question for each of her extra successes. He can refuse to answer or give a false response by paying one Willpower per question.

If the Abyssal's victim escapes her presence, he doesn't have to answer any further questions. In combat, enemies can refuse to answer without spending Willpower, but may still answer at the Storyteller's discretion, especially if they have a relevant Intimacy.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a character once per session.

HEART-HAUNTING CONDEMNATION

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Whispers of the Vengeful Dead

Those who defy the justice of Death's Lawgiver must face the wrath of the dead, tormented by accusing specters and dreams of chains.

The Abyssal makes a ([Charisma, Manipulation, or Wits] + Investigation) threaten roll, accusing someone of a crime or wrongdoing and urging him to confess and face punishment, provide restitution to his victims, or otherwise atone. She doubles 8s if she presents evidence of her claim or doubles 7s if the evidence is conclusively damning. If she beats his Resolve but he spends Willpower to resist this influence, he's cursed to face the Abyssal's justice.

Each night, the cursed character is beset by haunting apparitions, eerie omens, and awful nightmares, echoing the Abyssal's accusations. Their psychological impact is represented by the deathknight repeating her influence with another threaten roll, as above, which she can enhance with magic as usual. Against mortals with Willpower less than or equal to the deathknight's Essence and trivial characters, a successful roll may result in them being haunted to death should the Abyssal wish it, found drained of blood or entirely bleached of color.

This haunting counts as a sorcerous curse. It ends once the Abyssal has made a number of additional rolls equal to her extra successes, minimum one.

With Essence 5, when the Abyssal uses Lingered Echoes of Anguish to witness a crime or wrongdoing that offends one of her Defining Intimacies, she can use this Charm from afar, paying a thirteen-mote surcharge. Her initial threaten roll is conveyed by a haunting manifestation, no matter where her target may be. She can only do so once per story.

Reset: This Charm can only be used on a character once per story.

SHADOW-MAGISTRATE'S EIDOLON

Cost: —(+4m or +9m); **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Lingered Echoes of Anguish

The shadows of the unseen world whisper secret truths to those who listen.

The Abyssal can pay a four-mote surcharge when she uses Lingered Echoes of Anguish to experience a more lucid vision, reliving events from the perspective of the primary aggressor as if she had been there. She can make Awareness and Investigation rolls to examine things and can use magic to enhance these rolls normally. She can also use Investigation Charms that make sense in this context, like Deception-Piercing Stare, though she can't use Simple Charms.

The Abyssal experiences the emotional state of the character whose perspective she adopts, though gleaning any insight into his thoughts, motives, or memories requires a profile character roll against him within the vision. She gains a Minor Intimacy chosen by her player based on whatever emotion the killer felt.

Alternatively, the Abyssal may pay a nine-mote surcharge to reconstruct a vision of a non-violent event

with a case scene roll. There must be physical evidence of the event for her to examine, and she may suffer a penalty from old, damaged, or misleading evidence. She can choose whose experience she perceives the scene from.

SOUL-INVADING GLANCE

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche, Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unsurpassed Interrogation Method

Death's Lawgiver rips secrets from her suspect's mind, battering down the doors to mind and soul.

The Abyssal makes a special profile character roll to pull information from someone's mind. If successful, she can psychically interrogate them, as with Unsurpassed Interrogation Method. She can choose to learn one of the target's Intimacies instead of asking a question.

If the Abyssal succeeds, her victim can feel a malevolent presence intruding on his mind as she seeks out information but can't identify her as the source. Once her interrogation is complete, his memory of it is erased unless he spent Willpower to refuse at least one question.

Whispers: The Abyssal can invoke her Whispers to ask an additional question. She can wait until after using her other questions to do so.

UNWORLDLY INSIGHT REVELATION

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute, Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mystery-Slaying Genius

The Abyssal seems to know things she couldn't possibly know, drawing inferences and making deductions beyond mortal reason.

When the Abyssal succeeds on a case scene or profile character roll, she uncovers an additional clue for each extra success. This won't necessarily solve the entire mystery with one good roll — the clues she receives should either involve the evidence she examines and how it relates to what she already knows or take the form of a lead on a person, place, or event around which Crime-Unveiling Wickedness would lead to relevant information. If the Storyteller runs out of clues

to give, the Abyssal's player can propose theories on these topics for him to confirm or deny instead.

Even if the Abyssal fails, she still uncovers a single clue.

Whispers: The Abyssal can invoke her Whispers to uncover an additional clue on a successful roll. She can wait until after other clues have been revealed to do so.

BLEAK JUSTICE MALEDICTION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Haunting Condemnation

The deathknight's terrible condemnation falls upon all who would lend aid to the guilty.

When the Abyssal uses Heart-Haunting Condemnation, she can commit its cost indefinitely, causing its curse to slowly spread to everything the offender cares about. When he uses a positive Tie to an individual to resist the haunting's influence — either by raising his Resolve or in a Decision Point — the curse spreads to the subject of the Intimacy. If the original roll beats the new victim's Resolve, they're cursed with dire misfortunes and hauntings that make clear that the offender is the cause of that character's woes.

For example, if a swindler draws upon his Intimacy of love for his wife to deny his victims restitution because their relationship rests on the opulent lifestyle he can afford her, his wife may be attacked as his victims converge on their home to retake his ill-gotten wealth. Any who die due to the curse linger as ghosts and haunt the offender as the cause of their misfortune.

OMNISCIENT SPYMASTER'S WEB

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Shadowed Informant Scrutiny, Soul-Invading Glance, Unworldly Insight Revelation

The Abyssal has eyes everywhere and nowhere, seeing all things through her agents, informants, and spies. How could any secret be kept from her?

The Abyssal's player reveals information previously supplied to her by her contacts, spy network, or other sources, rolling (Investigation + Investigation) to retroactively gather information on a case. This provides

clues based on her successes, as with Unworldly Insight Revelation, but she's not limited by the evidence available to her when determining what this can uncover.

The roll's difficulty depends on the complexity of the Abyssal's investigation and the evidence already available to her. Ferreting out a kingdom-spanning conspiracy with no evidence at all would be difficulty 10+, but it might fall to difficulty 7 after initial investigations turn up a lead or even to difficulty 3 if she secures a major collaborator's confession.

Reset: Once per story.

Larceny

MASTER CRIMINAL PANACHE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Larceny 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal knows the ways of the ruthless and the desperate, effortlessly insinuating herself into the criminal underworld.

The deathknight may reflexively invoke any of the following attitudes. Each can be leveraged with social influence as though it were a Minor Tie.

Familiarity: Criminals perceive the deathknight as a fellow criminal, viewing her as a potential accomplice to be recruited, a threat to their turf, or potentially as a member of their own organization.

Menace: The Abyssal exudes terror. Criminals and those who are frequently victimized by criminals view her as a threat to be avoided — a serial killer, vigilante, or similar peril.

Receptivity: The Abyssal adapts the bearing of one open to illicit business. Characters seeking to solicit illegal or seedy services perceive the Abyssal as the perfect procurer of whatever they wish to obtain, while those offering such services perceive her as a desirable customer.

Vulnerability: The Abyssal chooses a specific crime. Characters intending to commit that crime will view her as their ideal victim — charlatans see her as a guileless rube, thieves as a wealthy and inattentive target, and so on.

Only one of these attitudes can be active at a time, but the Abyssal can change between them reflexively.

ILL-GOTTEN PLUNDER'S PROVENANCE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Master Criminal Panache

Whether staked by force or cunning, the Abyssal's claims of ownership are impossible to refute.

When the Abyssal makes an instill roll to convince someone that an object or structure belongs to her, her target can't use Intimacies to increase his Resolve against it or spend Willpower to resist unless her claim directly contradicts something he knows to be true.

INCONSPICUOUS FUNERAL GUEST

Cost: —; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Shrouded in subtle portents of the grave, the deathknight moves unnoticed through the herd of the living.

The Abyssal adds +2 difficulty to rolls to notice her trappings of death or their morbid significance and causes opposing characters' 1s to subtract successes. Characters must make a roll at difficulty 2 for trappings that wouldn't normally require a roll to recognize. Trivial characters fail automatically.

If the Abyssal uses a disguise to impersonate someone who's already dead, she counts as wearing trappings of death.

With Larceny 5, Essence 2, opposing rolls' 2s also subtract successes.

LOCK-WEATHERING TOUCH

Cost: 1m or 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal shatters whatever bars her way.

For five motes, the Abyssal destroys a mundane lock, manacle, or similar restraint with a touch, rusting it to nothingness.

Against magically enhanced locks, the Abyssal can pay one mote to double 9s and add (Essence) successes, assuming she has appropriate tools. She bypasses the lock even on a failed roll — instead, failure indicates an unfortunate development, such as a guard coming to investigate, her lockpicks breaking, a trap being triggered, or similar.

DEATH CLAIMS ALL

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's thieving hands are unburdened by any concern for law or propriety, effortlessly claiming trinkets and treasures.

When the deathknight rolls Larceny to steal an object that isn't currently in use or an attuned artifact, she adds (Essence) successes and succeeds automatically unless opposed by magic. This theft can't be detected without magic or superhuman senses, and such efforts still suffer a -4 penalty.

Against magic that automatically reveals the use of Larceny actions, like Crime-Unveiling Wickedness, this Charm forces their user to make a (Perception + appropriate Ability) roll opposing the Abyssal's roll for the theft. Observers' 1s and 2s subtract successes on this roll.

With a Larceny 4, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a three-mote surcharge to render her theft undetectable for (Essence) minutes, even if it's done in plain sight. This ends prematurely if a character directly notices the stolen object's absence, such as a messenger attempting to deliver a missing scroll.

RAPACIOUS WRAITH'S GRASP

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Death Claims All

Reaching through silence and shadow, the deathknight harries her foes.

The Abyssal makes an unarmed disarm or distract gambit with (Dexterity + Larceny). This can also be used to make custom gambits that benefit from diversion and legerdemain. If the gambit succeeds, the Abyssal's victim loses Initiative equal to the gambit's

cost. If this crashes him, the deathknight gains the lost Initiative in addition to receiving an Initiative Break.

If the deathknight knows Reality-Subverting Gesture, she can use it to make a gambit at short range and double 9s on the attack roll.

INIQUITOUS VERDICT ASSURANCE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Elusive as a specter, the Abyssal consigns all evidence of her misdeeds to the shadows.

The deathknight adds (Essence) successes and doubles 9s on a conceal evidence roll. Investigation rolls to detect the hidden evidence fail automatically unless enhanced by magic or superhuman senses.

FALSE HEART MIEN

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: None

A master of disguise, the Abyssal moves unnoticed among the living.

The Abyssal adds two successes and doubles 9s on a disguise roll and ignores penalties for disguising herself as someone of a different race or gender. Additionally, her disguise can include increasing or reducing her height by 10 inches, increasing or decreasing her weight by up to 10%, changing her apparent age, and altering her voice or accent.

Rolls opposing the Abyssal's disguise fail automatically unless enhanced by magic, and even magically enhanced attempts suffer a -2 success penalty. Even a successful roll opposing the disguise doesn't reveal the Abyssal's identity or appearance, only that she is not who she appears to be.

FLICKERING SHADOW MASQUERADE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: False Heart Mien

The Abyssal shrouds herself in falsehoods with but a gesture, changing faces between blinks of an eye.

The Abyssal completes a disguise roll in seconds. She can ignore penalties for lacking appropriate equipment with clever stunting. In combat, she gains (Manipulation) Initiative if a successful disguise roll provides a tactical advantage.

With a Larceny 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a five-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to use this Charm reflexively. In combat, she can only use it on her turn. This makes it compatible with Simple Charms like False Heart Mien. If she uses this Charm together with a non-Excellency Larceny Charm that enhances disguises, she waives this Charm's Willpower cost.

RED-HANDED VILLAIN ARTISTRY

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Iniquitous Verdict Assurance

The Abyssal leaves a macabre signature for investigators, whether a grisly message written in blood or a rose left in place of stolen treasures, stirring both revulsion and obsession.

When the Abyssal leaves behind a message, calling card, or other distinctive signature as part of a conceal evidence roll, she adds (Charisma or Manipulation) dice. Her roll also counts as an influence roll against anyone who cases the scene. By default, this can either be a threaten roll or an instill roll to create Ties of obsession, hatred, or morbid fascination with the crime's perpetrator, but the Storyteller can allow other rolls that fit the deathknight's crime scene.

If an investigator's Resolve is beaten by the Abyssal's influence, his case scene roll suffers a penalty equal to her threshold successes, minimum (Abyssal's Essence), and his 1s subtract successes, even if he spends Willpower to resist. Failure represents the target being so fixated on the Abyssal's grisly signature or his preconceptions about the suspect that he overlooks actual evidence.

VILLAINOUS MASTERMIND'S FORESIGHT

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Red-Handed Villain Artistry

The ever-thoughtful criminal, Death's Lawgiver remains three steps ahead of rivals and investigators.

After a scene spent making preparations, the deathknight rolls (Intelligence + Larceny), banking contingency points equal to her successes. She might prepare by casing a building, stealing useful information, forging credentials, bribing local law enforcement, laying groundwork for an alibi, or the like.

The Abyssal may spend contingency points on the following effects reflexively:

3 points: Waive Red-Handed Villain Artistry's cost.

3 points: Retroactively reveal exceptional equipment (**Exalted**, p. 580) for a specific Larceny action (lock-picking, disguise, etc.) on the deathknight's person.

3 points: Make a conceal evidence roll retroactively to conceal a piece of evidence. The Abyssal can use magic to enhance this roll as usual. The contingency point cost to use Inescapable Burden of Guilt or Red-Handed Villain Artistry on the roll is reduced by two points each.

3 points: Waive the Willpower cost of a Charm that enhances disguise.

4 points: Waive Inescapable Burden of Guilt's cost.

5 points: Gain +2 Guile or Resolve for one scene.

5 points: Reduce Insidious Shade Infiltration's cost by five motes.

7 points: Retroactively erase a small piece of evidence, making it impossible to detect or uncover by any means.

The Abyssal must know any Charms enhanced with Villainous Mastermind's Foresight.

INESCAPABLE BURDEN OF GUILT

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Red-Handed Villain Artistry

The Abyssal frames another for her wicked deeds, consigning the innocent to the magistrate's judgment and the gallows' finality.

When the Abyssal makes a conceal evidence roll, she arranges the scene such that the evidence appears to implicate a specific character she's aware of rather than the actual culprit. An investigator who fails his



case scene roll believes he's succeeded but receives a false clue that points him towards the framed character. Even a successful roll turns up the false clue the Abyssal planted in addition to the actual evidence. A successful investigator is aware of the discrepancy but not of which piece of evidence is true.

UNJUST APPROPRIATION METHOD

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ill-Gotten Plunder's Provenance

All things belong to death; the Abyssal merely hastens its inevitable claim.

After successfully stealing an object from someone, the Abyssal makes a special (Manipulation + Larceny) instill roll against him. If successful, the target believes that the object belongs to the Abyssal and always has. He can resist for one Willpower but must wait at least (Abyssal's Essence) minutes to do so, giving her time to flee the scene.

VANISHER'S SUBTLE HAND

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death Claims All (x2)

The Abyssal secrets away the tools of her iniquitous trade and the spoils she's reaped thereby.

The deathknight conceals an object small enough to hide in one hand somewhere on her person. It's impossible for other characters to notice until she retrieves it. She can stack this Charm to banish up to five objects.

STOLEN CHOICE COERCION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unjust Appropriation Method

Dangling a stolen necklace or holding a knife to a hostage's throat, the Abyssal drives a hard bargain with ill-gotten leverage.

When the Abyssal uses something she's stolen from a character as part of a bargain, persuade, or threaten roll against him, her influence costs an additional Willpower to resist. If her target has a Tie toward the object or other relevant Intimacy, the deathknight adds (Intimacy) non-Charm successes. This Charm isn't limited to stolen objects — taking hostages or usurping a king's throne also qualify.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a character once per session.

FLAWLESS DOPPELGANGER DISGUISE

Cost: —(5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: False Heart Mien

The Abyssal is a thief of faces, concealing her dark nature behind another's visage.

The Abyssal can use False Heart Mien for five motes, one Willpower to add an additional (Essence) non-Charm successes on the disguise roll and waive the penalty for impersonating specific characters or altering her body type beyond that Charm's normal limits.

Even characters using magic can't roll to contest the deathknight's disguise unless she acts grossly out of character, and they suffer an additional -4 penalty. This increases to -5 if they have previously failed a roll against that disguise.

Additionally, the Abyssal's disguise can alter the appearance of her anima banner and Caste Mark to imitate other types of Exalt and manifest supernatural sensory displays, such as the lightning that crackles around a storm god or the eerie chill that attends the presence of a dread specter.

UNMASKED HORROR REVELATION

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flawless Doppelganger Disguise

As the masquerade comes to its close, the Abyssal reveals the horror hidden behind her mask.

When the Abyssal removes a disguise, she makes an ([Appearance or Manipulation] + Presence) threaten roll against any number of characters who can perceive

her, ignoring multiple target penalties. She can't target characters who've already seen through her disguise. The Willpower cost to resist is increased by one. In combat, affected characters also lose (Abyssal's Essence) Initiative and can't spend Willpower to resist if crashed.

If the Abyssal used a disguise to impersonate someone, characters with positive Ties to that person suffer their Intimacy's Resolve penalty against the deathknight's influence. They must pay an additional point of Willpower to resist.

If the Abyssal knows Flickering Shadow Masquerade, she can use this Charm to reveal herself in only the briefest of flickers rather than removing her disguises. Nontrivial characters may make a roll against her disguise to clearly see her true appearance.

Reset: Once per scene.

REALITY-SUBVERTING GESTURE

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death Claims All (x2)

The Abyssal's phantasmal grasp reaches through the veil to seize her prize.

The deathknight doubles 9s on a roll to pickpocket or steal an item and can call stolen items to her hand from up to (Essence x3) feet away or short range in combat. Such objects vanish instantly into her hand without crossing the space between them, undeterred by any obstacles.

THIEVING ENTROPY FEINT

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Rapacious Wraith's Grasp

The deathknight's skillful fingerwork deprives her attacker of grace and skill.

The Abyssal can use Rapacious Wraith's Grasp reflexively to clash a **decisive** attack for a one-Willpower surcharge.

INSIDIOUS SHADE INFILTRATION

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lock-Weathering Touch

The Abyssal moves as a shadow, seeping through the barred gates that protect the living from horrors such as her.

The Abyssal moves through a doorway, window, portcullis, grate, or similar opening as if it wasn't there. In combat, this uses a reflexive move action.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, the Abyssal can use this Charm to pass through any barrier, not just doors and similar openings. If she uses it on multiple consecutive turns, she waives the Willpower cost of all uses past the first. Obstructions that span more than a single range band, like a fortified city's walls, require multiple uses of this Charm, one for each range band. While moving through such obstructions, the deathknight gains the benefits of full cover (**Exalted**, p. 199), though appropriate magic or stunts might circumvent this. If she doesn't renew this Charm at the start of her turn while doing so, she's ejected from the barrier at the point she entered it.

CHAINS CANNOT HOLD

Cost: —; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Insidious Shade Infiltration

The Abyssal's soul is a chained and tortured thing, breeding contempt for any lesser restraint.

The Abyssal can use Insidious Shade Infiltration to escape restraints, like being tied up or manacled to a wall. While grappled, she can use it reflexively to roll (Wits + Larceny) at a difficulty of her enemy's current rounds of control. Success frees her from the grapple. If she fails, she can't use it again for the rest of that grapple.

CUNNING HINDSIGHT REVEAL

Cost: —; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Villainous Mastermind's Foresight

Patient as death and cunning as night, the Abyssal schemer is never caught without a plan.

The Abyssal can use Villainous Mastermind's Foresight reflexively without need for a planning

scene, revealing a scheme already in motion. She adds a free full Excellency on the roll and mutes all motes spent on it.

Reset: Once per story unless the Abyssal's plan faces a significant setback or obstacle from an unexpected obstacle.

RELICS JUSTLY CLAIMED

Cost: —(+3m); **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Thieving Entropy Feint

The deathknight's elusive grasp claims wrests away her foe's treasures, looting barrow-relics from their soon-to-be tomb.

The Abyssal gains the following benefits when she uses Rapacious Wraith's Grasp:

- She can pay a three-mote surcharge to use it reflexively on her turn without it counting for the attack for the round. She can only do so once per turn.

- She doubles 9s on the Initiative roll.

- If she succeeds on a disarm gambit against an enemy within close range, she can reflexively ready the weapon if she has a free hand. If it's an artifact, she automatically breaks its former wielder's attunement and can choose to attune it herself.

PHANTOM THIEF PERFECTION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 5

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Flawless Doppelganger Disguise, Insidious Shade Infiltration, Reality-Subverting Gesture, Villainous Mastermind's Foresight

The Abyssal master thief seizes every distraction to work her wickedness unseen.

The Abyssal can use this after a Perception roll opposing her Larceny. 1s and 2s on opposing rolls subtract successes — not just on that roll, but on all rolls opposing the Abyssal's Larceny. This includes rolls made at the same time by other characters. The penalty stacks up to a maximum of (higher of Essence or 3) successes.

DEATH-CHEATING DECEPTION**Cost:** 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 5**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Phantom Thief Perfection

Having cheated death once, it is a small matter to do so again.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she's incapacitated or would suffer death for any reason. Any damage that would fill her Incapacitated health level is negated, as are other fatal effects. Her anima fades to dim, and she immediately joins battle with (Wits + Larceny), ignoring her wound penalty, and gains a pool of motes equal to twice her successes. These motes can only be spent on Dodge, Larceny, and Stealth Charms to aid in avoiding or escaping the present danger and are lost if not spent by the end of the scene.

This also counts as a roll to enter concealment if the Abyssal's current location affords her a suitable hiding spot or if there's one within close range. If it's the latter, the Abyssal reflexively moves to it, without using her movement action. Onlookers who she hides from are convinced that they saw her die.

Reset: Once per story.**UNSEEN MIDNIGHT MASTERMIND****Cost:** —; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 5**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Phantom Thief Perfection

Having attained the pinnacle of the thief's art, the deathknight eliminates all that might give away her schemes.

The Abyssal invokes a free full Larceny Excellency and mutes any motes spent on the enhanced roll.

Reset: Once per scene.

Linguistics

SCATHING CYNIC ATTITUDE**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Linguistics 1, Essence 1**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Merciless in her criticisms, the Abyssal dismisses the words of lesser authors and orators.

The Abyssal can calculate her Resolve with ([Intelligence, Perception, or Wits] + Linguistics) against effects conveyed through language — spoken, written, or otherwise. She gains +1 non-Charmed Resolve against written influence.

BLOOD QUILL CALLIGRAPHY**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Linguistics 2, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Written-only**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Abyssal poet's blood serves as ink, her finger more deft than any quill.

The Abyssal can write without ink or implements, using her finger like a stylus to scribe words in her own blood. This adds (Essence) automatic successes on written threaten rolls and other fear-based influence. Ties of fear to the undead and Principles expressing a negative outlook on death always penalize character's Resolve against it.

With Linguistics 5, the Abyssal's writing is unaffected by the passage of time, weather, and similar causes of damage or degradation, as does whatever surface it's written upon. It bleeds through attempts to cover it up. It can only be removed by a character's direct efforts; actions to do so have a minimum difficulty of (higher of Essence or 3).

FRENZIED BRUSHSTROKE CORRESPONDENCE**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Mute, Written-only**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Where the deathknight's brush strikes paper, words flow like bloodstains, only half-formed before she moves to the next.

The Abyssal writes with superhuman speed. She can compose a brief note almost instantly, a full-page letter or poem in seconds, or a multiple-page letter or short story in minutes. It's of little use in writing longer works, as it doesn't speed the Abyssal in composing her writing. When used to copy an existing text, she can transcribe a large book in a day or a document that would take hours to copy in a matter of minutes.

MUSE-WRACKED MANIA

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute, Written-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal composes faultless arguments and evocative verse, casting unneeded words aside.

The Abyssal doubles 9s on a written influence roll.

A Linguistics 5, Essence 3 repurchase that requires any four other Linguistics Charms lets the Abyssal pay a one-mote surcharge to double 8s.

A third purchase at Linguistics 5, Essence 5, lets her pay a two-mote surcharge to double 7s.

PRIMEVAL TONGUE ECHO

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

A thousand dead languages echo through the Underworld, a wellspring of understanding beyond knowledge.

The Abyssal can understand speech in a foreign language, hearing the words' meaning in an inhuman, rasping voice rather than the speaker's own. Each use of this Charm lets her understand a few simple sentences or one complex one.

With a Linguistics 4 repurchase, the Abyssal can use this Charm to speak an unknown language with an eerie voice that isn't her own. Each use lets her communicate a few short, simple sentences. However, she can't communicate abstract or highly complex statements, and any influence rolls she makes with this still face the usual impediments for lacking a shared language.

PALTRY ENIGMA DISMISSAL

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Primeval Tongue Echo

False documents and strange ciphers wither on the page under the deathknight's scrutiny, for even deception may die.

The Abyssal rolls ([Perception or Intelligence] + Linguistics) to identify forgeries, break encryption, or see through similar ways of obscuring a text's meaning. She doubles 9s and adds (Essence) non-Charm successes. She succeeds automatically against mundane encryption and forgeries. Success lets her decipher the text as she reads it, completing hours or days of work in minutes.

MYSTIQUE-SPOILING GUESS

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Paltry Enigma Dismissal

The Abyssal's extensive reading and preternatural intuition make clear the meanings of even the most cryptic texts.

When the Abyssal reads a text, she makes a special ([Intelligence or Perception] + Linguistics) read intention roll against its writer. Success lets her player ask the Storyteller one of the following questions about the writer, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes.

- Is he hiding anything in this text?

- Which of his Intimacies is most strongly related to this text?

- How could I learn his identity?

- What regrets does he have that are related to the text?

Against a dead writer, the Abyssal may ask an additional question, even if she fails.

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind, the Abyssal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

TOMB OF BURIED MEANING

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's words are haunted by shades of subtle meaning meant for a select few.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal's player chooses one of this Charm's two techniques: **Insidious Undertone Trick**, which conveys hidden meaning through speech, or **Unwritten Word Apparition**, which does so in writing. Depending on which technique she uses, her speech or writing contains a hidden message that can only be understood by its intended recipients. For writing, she must be familiar with the intended recipients.

Each use of Insidious Undertone Trick lets the Abyssal conceal a few simple statements or a single complex statement, while Unwritten Word Apparition can conceal a message up to half as long as the document it's hidden within. Obscured writings can be uncovered by magic like Paltry Enigma Dismissal, but such effects cost an additional Willpower and have a minimum difficulty of (Abyssal's Linguistics). Effects that are normally unrolled require a (Perception + Linguistics) roll.

The Abyssal can repurchase this Charm to learn the second technique.

FALSE GOSPEL FORGERY

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Written-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Tomb of Buried Meaning

Deception comes easily to the deathknight's skillful hand.

The Abyssal perfectly forges a signature she's familiar with or copies a text so precisely that it's indistinguishable from the original. She can reproduce illustrations, maps, and other visual details included in a text. However, she can't forge wax seals or the like — only writing.

Attempts to detect this forgery fail automatically unless enhanced by magic. The difficulty of rolls to see through is increased to a minimum of the Abyssal's (Essence + Linguistics) at the time she uses this Charm.

With a Linguistics 4, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to perfectly replicate someone's writing voice as long as she has access to at least three samples of his writing, or a single book-length work. The difficulty to see through the forgery is increased by one, and characters can't roll to see through it unless they have a specific reason to scrutinize the text.

SEVERED TONGUE CONTRACT

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Blood Quill Calligraphy, Primeval Tongue Echo

Invoking pacts scribed in blood, the Abyssal claims the voices of those who deal with her as death will claim their final breath.

The Abyssal makes it possible for a willing character to transfer his knowledge of a language to another: trading it for a favor, staking it on a game of chance, or lending it to an ally. Both characters must sign a contract in blood. This doesn't just transfer his knowledge of the language — the recipient gains the donor's accent, vocabulary, and understanding of slang and idioms. The donor loses all understanding of that language. The contract can specify a duration or a condition that will terminate it. Otherwise, it lasts for as long as this Charm remains active. If the donor faces a threat to a Defining Intimacy because he lacks his voice, he may pay one Willpower to resist, ending the contract early. Characters with Willpower 5+ can resist if any Intimacy is threatened but must pay (Abyssal's Essence) Willpower if it isn't Defining.

If the Abyssal knows False Gospel Forgery (left), she can use it to forge someone's signature and steal one of their languages for herself. She must have access to his blood, which can be obtained by dealing lethal damage to him in combat or through whatever means the deathknight can think of outside of it. She makes a special (Manipulation + Linguistics) influence roll against him, regardless of distance. His Intimacies don't modify his Resolve against this influence. If successful, she steals one of his languages for this Charm's duration, as above.

Moonshadow Castes waive their oath-binding anima power's Willpower cost if they use it to seal this contract, inflicting retribution on those who violate it by spending Willpower to resist or breaking any other term of the contract. This isn't compatible with forgeries.

SOUL-DARKENING VERSE

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Written-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Blood Quill Calligraphy

Those who read the Abyssal's heartless words find their passions too feeble to refute her dark truths.

When the Abyssal makes a written instill roll to weaken an Intimacy, targets can't use that Intimacy to bolster their

Resolve against her influence. If it's a positive Intimacy, she adds (Essence) automatic successes on the roll.

EVANGEL-INSPIRING BLASPHEMY

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Written-only

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Frenzied Brushstroke Correspondence, Soul-Darkening Verse

The deathknight's words are full of apocalyptic urgency, spreading her bleak gospel to all corners of the world.

The Abyssal makes an influence roll to instill a negative Principle and drive her readers to share its message. If her influence succeeds against a target and he doesn't resist with Willpower, the influence also counts as a successful persuade action, supported by the instilled Intimacy. This can be resisted with Willpower separately from the instill roll, but costs an additional Willpower to resist.

Affected characters will spread the Abyssal's words. The lengths they'll go to depend on the instilled Intimacy's intensity (**Exalted**, p. 216). They add (Abyssal's Essence/2, rounded up) dice on instill rolls to spread the Principle or weaken Intimacies that oppose it.

This Charm's effects linger for (Essence + [Charisma or Manipulation]) days after it ends. Once this period elapses, the Abyssal's text no longer compels this evangelism. Affected characters are freed from her persuasion but lose the benefits it provides.

With Linguistics 5, Essence 3, even the unwilling spread the Abyssal's message, as long as her influence failed by no more than (her Essence) successes. This also applies against those who spent Willpower to resist her instill roll. Each night, they recite the text in their sleep if they didn't proselytize while awake. They unconsciously make an instill roll against anyone there to hear them — including others who are asleep. They may avoid speaking this by gagging themselves while sleeping or taking similar measures, but doing so prevents him from regaining Willpower from sleep. This Psyche effect costs three Willpower to resist.

INFINITE BLASPHEMY GLOSSOLALIA

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Primeval Tongue Echo

The deathknight borrows the whispers of her titanic masters, for whom language is mere contrivance.

The Abyssal speaks in an anti-language: a discordant rasping that can be understood by all creatures of darkness — most notably, the undead and demons. She adds (Essence) automatic successes on influence rolls with any Ability against creatures of darkness and waives Primeval Tongue Echo's cost when used to understand them. Those incapable of understanding her speech find it painful to hear and count as having a Minor Tie of animosity toward the deathknight.

Once per session, when the Abyssal uses this Charm to communicate with someone who speaks a language that's extinct or nearly dead in Creation, she gains (Essence) motes and one Willpower from this connection to eons of linguistic death.

Whispers: The Abyssal may invoke her Whispers to make her speech understandable to anyone who has a negative Intimacy.

SCRIBE OF DEAD TONGUES

Cost: —; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Primeval Tongue Echo (x2)

Dredging up echoes of ancient tongues, Death's Lawgiver pours over the writings of those long dead.

The Abyssal can use Primeval Tongue Echo to read or write in languages she doesn't know. When reading, she sees seemingly unintelligible scrawls and whorls in place of the actual writing that she nonetheless understands intuitively. When writing, an eerie force guides her hand to trace out unfamiliar letters and characters. Each use lets her read or write a single page of writing.

If the Abyssal knows Infinite Blasphemy Glossolalia, she can pay a one-Willpower surcharge when she uses Primeval Tongue Echo to write a text in that Charm's anti-language, manifesting as whirling scrawls like the ones she sees.

COMPREHENSION-SLAYING OBSCENITY

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Written-only

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Infinite Blasphemy Glossolalia

The Abyssal pens a missive that is not merely incomprehensible but actively antithetical to understanding.

The Abyssal makes a special (Manipulation + Linguistics) influence roll to compose a message to a single target. His Intimacies don't modify his Resolve against this influence. If successful, he loses the capacity to understand or communicate in any language. However, he can understand Infinite Blasphemy Glossolalia's anti-language as if he were a creature of darkness (p. 218).

This influence costs (Abyssal's Essence) Willpower to resist, instantly restoring knowledge of all lost languages. Otherwise, it lasts until this Charm ends. Mortals, Essence 1 ghosts, and trivial characters can't resist.

A repurchase reduces this Charm's mote cost by the intensity of the target's strongest Intimacy based on fear or antipathy toward social interactions or belief in the meaninglessness of things. It also lets the Abyssal convey this Psyche effect through spoken influence.

CONVICTION-WARPING WORDS

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Tomb of Buried Meaning, Soul-Darkening Verse

Against the deathknight's words, all virtue is a weakness.

This Abyssal makes a special (Manipulation + [Linguistics, Performance, Presence, or Socialize]) persuade roll, either spoken or written. She can use one of her target's Intimacies that *opposes* her influence to justify her influence, urging a course of action that the Intimacy supports and then convincing her target to do the opposite. That Intimacy penalizes her target's Resolve rather than increasing it. She could appeal to a general's courage in convincing him to surrender, prey on belief in the Immaculate Philosophy to turn patri-cians against the Scarlet Dynasty, or subvert a monk's temperance to lead him into temptation.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can make an instill roll, as above. Her influence has the opposite effect of what her words suggest, weakening Intimacies instead of strengthening them or vice versa. She can still leverage opposing Intimacies as above.

This influence can't be resisted with Willpower normally. Persuade rolls can still be overturned (**Exalted**, p. 221), but the Willpower cost for the victim increases to (Abyssal's Essence). Instilled Intimacies can still be voluntarily strengthened or weakened normally, but

the victim can't distinguish them from his own feelings unless magic is used to break this Psyche effect.

APOSTATE'S SCORNFUL DISPATCH

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Written-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Conviction-Warping Words

The Abyssal pens a vitriolic critique, freeing her student from foolish beliefs and pointless passions.

The Abyssal makes an instill roll to weaken an Intimacy, lowering the level of supporting Intimacy necessary to weaken Major and Defining Intimacies by one (**Exalted**, p. 215). If she weakens a positive Intimacy, it costs an additional Willpower to resist for every three extra successes, maximum (higher of Abyssal's Essence or 3).

SOUL-SNARING TRACT

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Written-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Apostate's Scornful Dispatch

The Abyssal prophet's dread scriptures shatter the minds of those who read them, replacing their delusions and misconceptions with a single, undeniable truth.

The Abyssal makes an instill roll to create or strengthen a Principle that she has at Major or Defining intensity. Affected characters gain the instilled Principle at Major intensity or strengthen an existing Intimacy to Defining. For negative Principles and Principles that express a positive outlook on death, this costs an additional Willpower to resist for every three extra successes, maximum (higher of Abyssal's Essence or 3).

FEAR NOT THE GRAVE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Written-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Evangel-Inspiring Blasphemy

The Abyssal teaches that death is not a thing to be feared, only a step along the path to freedom in nonexistence.

The Abyssal makes a special (Charisma + Linguistics) instill roll to compose a missive to a single target: morbid poetry, philosophical arguments, bleak evangelism. Success extinguishes her target's fear of death, with the following effects:

- He gains +2 Resolve against fear-based influence based on threats of death or physical violence to him.

- His Intimacies related to fear of death or harm are weakened by one step.

- His Intimacies related to acceptance or celebration of death count as one step higher.

- Fear of death plays no part in his decisions — a revolutionary attacks a tyrant heedless of her guards, a monk protests an unjust law by fast-ing unto death, etc. Acting against this requires entering a Decision Point and citing a Defining Intimacy or a Major Intimacy if danger is im-minent. However, his player can still treat influ-ence that would directly result in his death as unacceptable.

This influence can only be resisted when the target faces a significant risk of physical harm. He enters a Decision Point and may cite a Defining Intimacy and spend three Willpower to end this effect.

With an Essence 5 repurchase, affected characters be-come immune to applicable fear-based influence and suppress Intimacies related to fears of death or harm completely. They can only resist if faced with a risk of death, not just injury.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a given character once per story.

LANGUAGE-ABSORBING HUNGER

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Infinite Blasphemy
Glossolalia, Scribe of Dead Tongues

Filled as she is with death's own hunger, the deathknight savors the bloody meat of new languages.

The Abyssal develops temporary fluency in a single language after only an hour of conversational expo-sure. She waives Primeval Tongue Echo's cost to com-municate in that language.

After a week of intense practice or constant exposure to the language, the Abyssal develops heightened fluency, and no longer faces impediments for lacking a common language when communicating in that language.

After a season of linguistic immersion or consistent practice, the Abyssal permanently learns the language, retaining it even after this Charm ends.

CAPTIVE AUDIENCE FLOURISH

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Conviction-Warping Words

The Abyssal's words are too captivating to ignore and too beautiful to abandon.

As the Abyssal pens a text, she imbues it with mind-warping power, making a special (Manipulation + Linguistics) influence roll with (Essence) automat-ic successes and ignoring multiple target penalties. Target's Intimacies don't modify their Resolve against this. Anyone who reads a single line of the text is ex-posed to this influence and must continue reading the text for at least (Abyssal's Essence) minutes or until he's finished.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can use this Charm with spoken influence, rolling as above. Affected characters are entranced by her voice, even if they don't under-stand her, taking no actions for as long as she continues to speak.

Both versions of this Charm can't be resisted with Willpower, but a character is freed from the Psyche effect if he's attacked or placed at risk of direct physical danger.

ENTHRALLING SCRIPTORIAL PERFECTION

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Written-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Captive Audience Flourish

The Abyssal's spellbinding words cage the hearts of those who read them, curdling even the bitterest of hatred into envy.

The Abyssal makes a written inspire, instill, or per-suade roll that also counts as a roll to instill a Tie of admiration, respect, or fascination toward the Abyssal. Alternatively, for writing that doesn't convey other social influence, she makes a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Linguistics) instill roll. Characters with negative Ties toward her are instilled with a Tie of envy instead. If a target already has such a Tie, the level of Intimacy needed to support his influence is re-duced by one (**Exalted**, p. 215). This Intimacy can't be

voluntarily eroded unless a target resists this influence by spending (Intimacy + 1) Willpower.

Affected characters are enthralled by the Abyssal's peerless writing style. They increase the Tie's Resolve penalty by -1 against the Abyssal's influence with any Ability but can use it to bolster their Resolve against any other influence. As long as they have the Intimacy, they cannot regain Willpower from sleeping unless they spend at least an hour each day reading and re-reading the Abyssal's writing.

FLASHING RAITON QUILL

Cost: —; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Written-only

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: False Gospel Forgery, Frenzied Brushstroke Correspondence, Soul-Darkening Verse

Beneath the surface of the Abyssal's words lies a seething void of meaning and malevolence.

The Abyssal uses two Simple Linguistics Charms together in a single text. If both Charms require a roll, she only rolls once, using the lower of the two dice pools. This roll benefits from any enhancements, like bonus dice or double 9s, provided by either Charm.

GOSPEL OF OBLIVION

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fear Not The Grave (x2), Soul-Snaring Tract

Nothing matters.

The Abyssal makes a special instill roll against a single character, either spoken or written, to corrupt one of his Minor or Major Principles. She must leverage an Intimacy of at least the same intensity as the one targeted.

If successful, the Abyssal may rewrite the targeted Principle, warping it in a way that expresses the futility of life, the value of death, the inevitability of the end, or similar bleak beliefs. This costs three Willpower to resist.

This Charm can affect Defining Principles if their object is mortal or if the target shares a Major or Defining Principle with the Abyssal.

Reset: This Charm can't be used against a character more than once per story.

Lore

ESSENCE-DRAINING TOUCH

Cost: 1wp or 3i; **Mins:** Lore 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Understanding the cycles of Essence that flow through both the living and the dead, the Abyssal siphons away another's power.

The Abyssal steals up to (Essence x3) motes from a willing or helpless character with a touch. Once per scene, she may roll (Wits + Lore) when she uses this Charm, stealing an additional mote for each success.

With a Lore 3 repurchase, the Abyssal can instead transfer up to (Essence x3) of her motes to a character. If she rolls (Wits + Lore), he gains additional motes equal to her successes, which she doesn't lose.

A third purchase at Lore 4, Essence 2 lets the Abyssal use this Charm reflexively on her turn and lets her waive its cost the first time she uses it in a scene. When she rolls for extra motes, she rolls an additional non-Charm die for each 10.

CRYPT BOLT ATTACK

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Essence-Draining Touch

The deathknight looses a bolt of crackling darkness from her outstretched palm.

The Abyssal makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack with a bolt of necrotic energy, rolling (Dexterity + [Archery or Thrown]) against an enemy within medium range. It has the following traits:

- The Accuracy of an artifact Archery weapon: Close -1; Short +5; Medium +3; Long +1; Extreme -1.
- Damage (10 + Essence)L. The Abyssal doesn't add her Strength to its raw **withering** damage.
- Overwhelming (Essence + 1).
- It can be enhanced with either Archery or Thrown Charms but can't combine Charms

from multiple combat Abilities unless they're explicitly compatible.

- The bolt's necrotic energies wither flesh and corrode metal. An enemy that takes **decisive** damage from a bolt suffers -1 soak and Hardness for the rest of the scene. This penalty stacks up to a maximum of -5. Mundane armor is destroyed if the penalty reaches the maximum.

The Abyssal can enhance her attack with Archery or Thrown Charms but can't combine Charms from the two Abilities.

ACCURSED RADIANCE EMPOWERMENT

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Crypt Bolt Attack

Invoking baleful power and forbidden wisdoms, the deathknight unleashes countless curses against her foes.

This Charm upgrades Crypt Bolt Attack. Upon purchasing Accursed Radiance Empowerment, the Abyssal's player chooses two of the upgrades below. She can purchase additional upgrades for three experience points or one bonus point each.

The Abyssal can't combine multiple upgrades on the same attack unless otherwise specified. Some upgrades require a surcharge or can only be used with certain kinds of attacks.

Death's Cold Caress (+2m; Dual): The deathknight's crypt bolt takes the form of a freezing wind that can't be blocked without magic. If it deals 5+ **withering** damage or any **decisive** damage, her enemy is rimed in ice, suffering a -2 penalty on physical actions and -1 Defense for the rest of the scene. He can break free as a miscellaneous action that can't be flurried or if he takes **decisive** damage from a heat- or flame-based source.

Eternal Darkness Curse (+3m; Decisive-only): The Abyssal's crypt bolt takes the form of swirling shadows. If she deals 3+ **decisive** damage, her enemy is blinded for the rest of the scene, suffering a -3 penalty on vision-based actions.

Eyes-Like-Daggers Glance (Uniform): Entropic radiance lances from the Abyssal's eyes, letting her use crypt bolts without needing a free hand. This can be combined with other upgrades.

Immolating Pyre flame Blaze (+2m; Decisive-only): Loosing a bolt of pyre flame, the deathknight sets her enemy ablaze if she deals 3+ **decisive** damage. He suffers (Abyssal's Essence) dice of lethal damage at the start of each of his turns, ignoring Hardness. Putting out the flames requires a miscellaneous action that cannot be placed in a flurry.

Screaming Phantom Curse (+3m; Decisive-only): The Abyssal's crypt bolt takes the form of ravening phantoms. If it deals **decisive** damage, her victim's onslaught penalty can't be reduced below (Abyssal's Essence) when it refreshes for the rest of the scene. A character with magic capable of striking dematerialized foes can disperse the phantoms with a difficulty 2 gambit.

Soul-Slaying Doom (+2m; Decisive-only): The Abyssal's **decisive** crypt bolts deal aggravated damage to ghosts and the living and gain double 10s on the damage roll against them. The souls of mortals slain by them are destroyed, as are ghosts who are incapacitated by them. This can be combined with other upgrades.

The Abyssal's player may work with the Storyteller to create new upgrades.

DREAM-SLAYING DEFENSE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One hour

Prerequisite Charms: Essence-Draining Touch

The Abyssal wraps herself in a shroud of deathly stasis, carving a path through chaos.

The Abyssal and everything within short range of her are immune to the effects of Wyld exposure (p. 199). Calcifying chaos forces the Wyld's environs to obey Creation's natural laws, preventing anomalous phenomena like inverted gravity or sudden changes to the landscape.

If the Abyssal renews this Charm at the end of its duration, she waives its Willpower cost.

WORLD-LORE CONSUMPTION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal savant's hunger for knowledge is insatiable, a maw ever ravening for secrets.

The Abyssal adds (Essence) non-Charm successes on Lore rolls that benefit from a specialty. If she succeeds on a difficulty 3+ roll to introduce or challenge a fact, she gains a Lore background in a relevant topic (**Exalted**, p. 153). This doesn't grant her a specialty.

At the end of each story, the Abyssal gains a Lore specialty appropriate to that story's events at no experience point cost.

A LESSON IN SORROW

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: World-Lore Consumption

There is no hope in the truths pronounced by Death's Lawgivers, only the promise of inevitable despair.

When the Abyssal successfully introduces a fact and speaks it aloud, her roll also counts as an inspire roll to spread a negative emotion, as long as it's appropriate to the introduced fact's impact on her audience. For the rest of the scene, affected characters suffer a -2 penalty on rolls or a -1 penalty on static values when they take an action that's opposed to the inspired emotion.

With a Lore 4 repurchase, the Abyssal can instead treat her roll as an instill roll to create or strengthen negative Intimacies. This Charm's penalty applies to actions that oppose that Intimacy.

Whispers: The Abyssal may invoke her Whispers to inflict -2 Resolve against her influence. Mortals and Essence 1 ghosts with Willpower less than or equal to her Essence are automatically affected and can't spend Willpower to resist, as are trivial characters.

FATAL FLAW SCRUTINY

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: A Lesson in Sorrow

Schemes and stratagems crumble to dust before the deathknight's withering scrutiny.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after interacting with someone she has a negative Tie for or observing a project, plan, or other agenda carried out by such a character. She makes an ([Intelligence or Perception] + Lore) introduce fact roll to reveal a weakness or flaw in her target, adding (Intimacy) non-Charm dice. While

the Abyssal must still have a relevant Lore background, she can introduce facts that she couldn't have feasibly known in advance, letting her reveal details of a target's personal life and the like. The Storyteller can still veto facts that contradict established setting details or interfere with the story.

Once the Abyssal has introduced such a fact, she can use this Charm to add (Intimacy) non-Charm dice on a social and mental action with any Ability that exploits the revealed weakness. This isn't compatible with attacks, Shape Sorcery rolls, or extended actions.

If the Abyssal uses this Charm to introduce a flaw for a new target, she can no longer use it to enhance rolls that exploit other flaws she's previously identified.

TEACHING INCOMPREHENSIBLE TRUTHS

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: A Lesson in Sorrow

Death's Lawgiver opens her students' minds to knowledge beyond the ken of the living, imparting the secret wisdom of the void.

The Abyssal trains a student, letting him incur experience debt to purchase up to (Abyssal's Intelligence) dots of relevant Attributes or Abilities. This can raise his trait ratings above the Abyssal's own. For Quick Characters, this can raise dice pools up to fourteen dice and static values up to seven. The training time required is divided by (Abyssal's Intelligence + 5), although the Abyssal needs only spend a single scene mentoring her student during this time.

For every three points of experience the Abyssal's student spends or incurs as experience debt, she may weaken one of his Intimacies by one step if it opposes one of her Principles or negative Ties. He can't voluntarily strengthen the eroded Intimacy until he suffers narratively meaningful consequences for acting against it.

A Lore 5, Essence 3 repurchase lets the Abyssal train up to (Essence) students with a single use of this Charm. Not all students need take the same traits, although the Storyteller may require her to stunt appropriate instruction for training widely disparate subjects. Alternatively, she can train up to (Essence x5) students but can only grant them (Intelligence/2, rounded up) dots each.

EXPERIENCE DEBT

Certain Charms let a player character increase or gain new traits by incurring experience debt equal to the normal cost of purchasing those traits. Any experience points she subsequently receives go toward paying off the debt until it's paid in full. An Exalt's player may choose to pay off a debt solely with Abyssal Experience, Solar Experience, or similar if she could spend it on that trait. Until the debt is fully paid, the character can't benefit from other effects that cause experience debt. Storyteller characters never go into experience debt but can't benefit from such effects more than once per story.

WAKING NIGHTMARE INSPIRATION

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: World-Lore Consumption

Delving into the depths of nightmare, the Abyssal emerges haunted by what she has witnessed.

The Abyssal enters a fugue-like trance, gaining a temporary Lore specialty from the forbidden knowledge her waking nightmares reveal. The specialty must involve death, the undead, the Underworld, ancestor worship, disease, poison, or other subjects thematically appropriate to the Abyssal Exalted.

The Abyssal's eerie half-sleep also grants her +1 Guile, as well as +1 Resolve against influence unrelated to the Lore specialty. However, she suffers a -1 penalty on Perception-based rolls that don't involve the specialty.

Whispers: The Abyssal may invoke her Whispers to change the chosen specialty as her waking nightmares shift and distort.

Reset: Once per day.

BROKEN WORLD UNDERSTANDING

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Lore 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Waking Nightmare Inspiration

The Abyssal's piercing intellect gleans secrets buried beneath the world's skin.



The Abyssal rolls ([Intelligence or Perception] + Lore) to examine a mundane object or structure, artifact, hearthstone, manse, or undead construct. The difficulty is 3 by default. For hearthstones and manses, it's the target's Merit rating if it's higher, or 10 for N/A Merits. Success lets her player ask the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes.

- Who created it?
- Why was it created?
- What does it do?
- How can I destroy or diminish it?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind, the Abyssal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

BLEAK WISDOM MALISON

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Fatal Flaw Scrutiny

Confronting the weak with their frailties and follies, the Abyssal teaches the wisdom of despair.

When the Abyssal uses Fatal Flaw Scrutiny to reveal a weakness in someone's agenda, she can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to confront him with the futility of his actions. If her successes equal or exceed his Resolve, he suffers a —(Abyssal's Essence/2, rounded up) penalty on mental and social rolls related to his agenda, and 1s subtract successes. This lasts until the Abyssal uses Fatal Flaw Scrutiny on another character or until that character spends three Willpower to resist.

CONFLAGRATION OF BLIGHT

Cost: —(+3m); **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Crypt Bolt Attack

Radiant with lightless flame, the Abyssal unleashes an inferno of damnation.

When the Abyssal makes a **decisive** attack with Crypt Bolt Attack, she may pay a three-mote surcharge to

unleash a wave of necrotic energy, applying her attack against all characters — friend or foe — within close range of the primary target. She divides her (Initiative + Essence) evenly, rounded up, among each struck character to determine the damage rolled against them, ignoring Hardness.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can center the blast on herself. This doesn't harm her, only those within close range.

NIGHT-HORROR SUMMONS

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Waking Nightmare Inspiration

A menagerie of horrors haunts the Abyssal's dreams, a legion of horrors baying to be unleashed against the world.

The Abyssal rolls ([Intelligence + Lore]) as she wakes from sleep, bringing one of her nightmares into the world. Her player chooses an animal or a non-sapient undead whose Resolve is less than or equal to her successes to base the nightmare's traits on. Animals that would be three-dot familiars (**Exalted**, p. 161) add +3 Resolve against this, as do undead with Essence 2+. Undead with Essence 4+ can't be used at all.

Nightmares based on animals are undead, gaining the usual benefits of this, as well as the Blood Scent, Deathly Stench, and Plaguebearer Merits (**Exalted**, p. 503). Nightmares based on the undead gain up to five dots of mutations chosen by the Abyssal's player.

The Abyssal lacks direct control over the nightmare. Instead, the Storyteller chooses a Defining Intimacy that reflects the primal emotions and deep-seated fears of the Abyssal's dreams, which guides the nightmare's actions. For instance, it might have a Defining Tie of hatred toward an enemy who grievously wounded the deathknight or a Defining Principle of mindless rage that echoes the Abyssal's own wrath. The Storyteller should choose an Intimacy that will guide the nightmare to act in the Abyssal's interests, though not necessarily in the way she expected.

The Abyssal can only have one nightmare unleashed at a time. Using this Charm again causes the previous nightmare to fade away.

With an Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a ten-mote surcharge to gain greater control over her nightmare. She can

command it to perform a single task—even a life-changing one—without needing to make an influence roll.

Reset: Once per day.

SEEKER OF FORBIDDEN TRUTHS

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Waking Nightmare Inspiration

In the libraries of ancient necropolises, the dreams of dying titans, and texts forbidden by fearful monks, the deathknight uncovers disturbing insights.

After a scene spent poring over moldering scrolls, conducting strange experiments, divining omens from entrails, or the like, the deathknight rolls (Intelligence + Lore), banking insight points equal to her successes. She may spend insight points on the following effects reflexively:

1 point: Reset the once-per-scene limit on introducing a fact.

3 points: Add (higher of Essence or 3) necromantic motes toward shaping a spell. The Abyssal may use this benefit multiple times on the same spell.

3 points: Retroactively reveal a codex, scroll, or the like on the deathknight's person that's exceptional equipment for Lore or Occult rolls concerning a specific topic, comparable in breadth to a specialty.

5 points: Add (Essence/2, rounded up) successes on Investigation, Lore, Medicine, and Occult rolls for one scene.

5 points: Automatically succeed on a roll to introduce or challenge a fact involving a topic that Waking Nightmare Inspiration could grant a specialty in, as long as the Storyteller deems success possible.

5 points: Add one Willpower toward the cost of a Lore Charm or spell.

5 points: Gain +2 Resolve for one scene.

7 points: Automatically succeed on a roll to introduce or challenge any fact, as long as the Storyteller deems success possible.

7 points: Use Night-Horror Summons retroactively, revealing that the Abyssal's nightmare is present somewhere in the scene.

The Abyssal must know any Charms enhanced with insight points.

BLEAK SAGE EMINENCE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Essence-Draining Touch (x3)

The Abyssal finds solace in the awful truths of the world, for such horrors will one day fall by her hand.

When the Abyssal makes a Lore roll, she gains one mote for each 10. If an effect lets her succeed automatically, she can still make the roll for the purpose of gaining motes.

NIGHTMARE-CARVING MURMUR

Cost: 15m, 1wp per interval; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Terrain)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bleak Sage Eminence, Night-Horror Summons

Death's Lawgiver bends the Underworld to her will, as if it were no more than another nightmare of the Neverborn.

The Abyssal can use this Charm to shape the Underworld to her will. She can only use it within the Underworld proper, not including shadowlands. She can shape an area that extends out to (Essence x5) miles from her. She can't shape inhabited regions if their denizens don't want her to.

This shaping is an extended (Intelligence + Lore) action with a one-minute interval, requiring a separate use of this Charm for each interval. The goal number depends on the effect the Abyssal wishes to invoke. Once she reaches the goal number, she can continue the shaping with a new effect, resetting her successes to zero. The roll has a base difficulty of 5, subject to the following modifiers:

CONDITION	DIFFICULTY MODIFIER
Shaping a primal or ritual afterlife	+2
Shaping the Labyrinth	−2
Each roll past the first	+1

For example, an Abyssal who uses this Charm in the Labyrinth would roll first at difficulty 3, then difficulty 4, difficulty 5, and so on.

The Abyssal can make one of the following alterations once she reaches its goal number. Some require her to first lay groundwork with other alterations — most notably, erasing existing terrain features to make way for new lands.

Erase Terrain (Goal Number 5): The Abyssal eliminates a major feature of the landscape — a river, a mountain, a fortress. It fades away gradually, leaving barren wasteland in its place. Using this in ritual and primal afterlives can't override their fundamental nature; whatever remains will still be thematically appropriate to them. Manses and other supernatural features can't be erased, but don't prevent the Abyssal from shaping around them.

Alter Terrain (Goal Number 10): Once the Abyssal has erased all terrain features, she can remake the land. She creates a new terrain feature, raising up a hill out of the earth, opening a lake, or growing a forest of living bone. She can also add natural resources to the land, like veins of precious metal or deposits of the ore used to forge soulsteel. Particularly drastic changes may require multiple uses of this effect — creating a mountain to rival the Underworld's tallest would require one use to create a hill, another to expand it into a mountain, and further uses to make it even larger. When shaping a primal or ritual afterlife, anything she creates will manifest in a way that fits their themes, regardless of what she intends.

Demesnes (Goal Number 20 or 30): After creating a terrain feature, the deathknight may transform it into an Abyssal demesne. This has a goal number of 20 for two-dot demesnes and 30 for four-dot demesnes.

Objects and Structures (Goal Number 3, 10, or 20): After creating natural resources, the Abyssal can shape them into mundane objects or structures suited to the landscape she's created. She could raise a funereal citadel from a mountain's stone or shape veins of precious metal into jewelry for a reshaped necropolis' ghostly populace. The goal number depends on the type of project that would be necessary to create the object: 3 for basic, 10 for major, and 20 for superior. Such creations often appear eerie, uncanny, or disturbing.

Soulsteel (Goal Number 30): After creating the necessary ore, the Abyssal can shape it into soulsteel by binding ghosts within it. These unfortunate shades must either be willing or helpless. Creating enough soulsteel for an artifact weapon or armor requires at least five ghosts or a single powerful shade. Creating enough soulsteel for multiple such artifacts or larger artifacts like warstriders require an additional use of

this Charm to expand the shaped soulsteel — potentially more than one, depending on the scope of the Abyssal's ambitions. Each use requires more and more ghosts, up to as many as a hundred per interval.

Monstrosities: The Abyssal populates the shaped region with a nightmarish horror, with traits like those created by Night-Horror Summons.

The Abyssal can continue shaping for as long as she can pay this Charm's cost. The roll's difficulty resets to its starting value each time she completes an alteration. She can act freely while shaping, including in combat, but can't take other extended actions. This Charm ends prematurely if the Abyssal fails a roll for it or is incapacitated.

Shaping the Underworld risks stirring dark forces. If she rolls six 1s in a single interval, the Storyteller may declare that a formidable threat is drawn to her or that she faces a peril like an earthquake or sudden storm as the shaped terrain rebels against her. Each interval, the number of 1s needed to trigger this is reduced by one, minimum (Abyssal's Essence). If the Abyssal rolls more 1s than necessary, she may face even greater perils, like an undead behemoth rising from the Labyrinth.

Reset: Once per story.

ENDEAVOR-DOOMING PROGNOSTICATION

Cost: —(+8m); **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bleak Wisdom Malison

Death's Lawgiver pronounces her enemies' failure with infallible foresight, crushing the hopes of those who fail to heed her.

The Abyssal can pay an eight-mote surcharge when she uses Bleak Wisdom Malison to apply its penalties not just to her target, but everyone who takes part in the affected plan or agenda. (She doesn't need to beat their Resolve). Additionally, that agenda will face at least one major narrative obstacle as a result of its fatal flaw. A warlord's dreams of conquest might be stymied as crop blights leave her legions with empty stomachs, while a sorcerer's working might draw vengeful shades of those slain by sorcery to him.

HOPE'S END REVELATION

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bleak Wisdom
Malison, Seeker of Forbidden Truths, Teaching
Incomprehensible Truths

Death's Lawgiver has gazed upon the end of all things and shares the dark truths she has seen with her unwilling disciples.

The Abyssal makes a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Lore) instill roll with (Essence) bonus dice against a single character, revealing the futility of his life and of life itself. If successful, he gains a Major Principle reflecting his newfound understanding that his life is meaningless and loses two Willpower. In combat, he also loses four Initiative. If he has a Major or Defining Intimacy that supports this belief, the instilled Principle becomes Defining. He can't voluntarily weaken this Intimacy until he gains Willpower from upholding a Defining Tie that opposes it.

Reset: Once per scene.

PROMISED NIGHTMARE UNLEASHED

Cost: 30m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Until ended

Prerequisite Charms: Endeavor-Dooming
Prognostication, any three Lore Charms

A prophet of the Neverborn, Death's Lawgiver unbinds one of the countless dooms the slain titans have dreamt for the world.

For three nights, the Abyssal communes with the dreams of the Neverborn, drawing their ire towards the region. She rolls (Intelligence + Lore) against a difficulty of her choice to divine the severity of the calamity she will unleash. The Abyssal's player should work with the Storyteller to determine the exact nature of the doom based on her successes.

Difficulty 5: A natural disaster with significant local consequences: plague spreads through the region; an unseasonal chill ruins a harvest; a sudden flood destroys critical infrastructure.

Difficulty 7: A terrible supernatural disaster: an otherworldly tempest wracks a port city; ghost-locust swarms devastate crops and feed on the living; an earthquake opens a passageway into the Labyrinth.

Difficulty 10: A direful calamity falls on a region: A great maelstrom of the Underworld spills forth; an

undead behemoth emerges and begins to rampage; the dead begin rising and slaughtering their own friends and family, and so on.

Once the Abyssal has foretold a calamity, she must spend seven days spreading the knowledge and despair of its coming. During this time, she must commit this Charm's cost. Omens manifest in the region, allowing characters to recognize something terrible is coming with a difficulty 3 ([Intelligence or Perception] + Occult) roll.

Death's Lawgiver may offer a stricture, allowing those who abide by it to avoid the worst effects of the disaster — the blood of an Immaculate monk drawn on a doorway conceals the residents from the attention of the specters haunting the streets or branding livestock with her Deathlord's sigil will spare some from blight. After this week, the foretold disaster comes to pass. The prophesied doom can be averted by slaying the Abyssal before the seven days have passed or if she goes a day without spreading despair at its coming. She may also release her commitment to spare the region from disaster.

Reset: Once per story.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal uses Nightmare-Carving Murmur in the immediate aftermath of a disaster unleashed with this Charm, she waives the cost of that Charm's first use and reduces the base difficulty of the roll by two.

Medicine

PITILESS TRIAGE JUDGMENT

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Medicine 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

A connoisseur of death, the Abyssal diagnoses mortal frailties with inevitable certainty.

When the Abyssal rolls to diagnose a patient, she succeeds automatically. For diseases or poisons she has no prior knowledge of, she discerns only the general category of disease or poison they belong to and whether or not they're supernatural.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can use this Charm to add +2 Resolve against any influence roll that questions or opposes a medical judgment she's made after diagnosing or triaging patients.

MIASMA-HALTING DOOM**Cost:** 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 2, Essence 1**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Death's Lawgiver brings plagues to heel, slaying disease with death-graced hands.

When the Abyssal treats a disease, she adds (higher of Essence or 3) bonus dice. If she's successfully diagnosed the disease, they're non-Charms dice. Against mundane diseases, her victim immediately makes a (Stamina + Resistance) roll against the disease's morbidity and can use the Abyssal's successes in place of his own as usual. If he succeeds and spends at least a day in convalescence, the disease's intensity is immediately lowered by one step. This Charm can cure incurable diseases.

With a Medicine 3 repurchase, the Abyssal's treatment roll adds bonus dice equal to her successes on her patient's next roll against the disease, in addition to its usual effect. Her patients can make immediate (Stamina + Resistance) rolls against supernatural diseases.

UNSURPASSED PLAGUE KISS**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Decisive-only**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Miasma-Halting Doom

The Abyssal's strikes carry the touch of remembered plague.

When the Abyssal makes a successful **decisive** attack, she exposes her victim to her choice of any mundane disease she has ever suffered or treated. Its morbidity and virulence are increased to (Medicine) if that's higher.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can contaminate food or water, tainting enough to expose a single victim to the disease.

With Medicine 5, Essence 2, the Abyssal may repurchase this Charm to add a supernatural disease she's suffered or treated to her repertoire. She can do so for multiple diseases. She must pay a one-Willpower surcharge to inflict a supernatural disease.

EMPTY GRAVE REPRIEVE**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Abyssal physician drags her patients back from death's door, refusing to let anyone else determine when those under her care should die.

The Abyssal doubles 9s and adds (higher of Essence or 3) non-Charm dice on a Medicine roll to treat a poison or disease she's successfully diagnosed.

With Medicine 5, the Abyssal may pay a five-mote surcharge to double 8s.

With Medicine 5, Essence 4, the Abyssal may pay a six-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to double 7s.

FLESH-MENDING DISCIPLINE**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Flesh twists and roils under the Abyssal physician's ministrations, postponing the promise of inevitable decay.

The Abyssal rolls (Intelligence + Medicine) with double 9s to treat a patient's wounds. This requires at least fifteen minutes of treatment. As long as a patient remains in convalescence for the rest of the day, he heals levels of non-aggravated damage equal to the Abyssal's successes.

The Abyssal can also use this Charm to repair reanimated corpses. She waives its Willpower cost when she does and heals the undead instantly, without requiring convalescence.

DANCE OF WRITHING MAGGOTS**Cost:** 10m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Flesh-Mending Discipline

Flesh dances beneath the deathknight's touch, knitting wounds shut and sloughing off rot in a chorus of sickening pops and squelches.

After an hour spent treating a patient, the Abyssal diminishes any aggravated damage her patient suffers from into lethal damage. When used on animated corpses, this takes only a few minutes.

The Abyssal can use this Charm together with Flesh-Mending Discipline to reattach recently severed limbs and mend similar crippling effects. After treating the site of the injury with this Charm, she can use Flesh-Mending Discipline. The difficulty is based on the wound's severity as if it were a crippling injury (**Exalted**, p. 201). The Abyssal must forego levels of healing equal to the maximum amount of damage that injury could be taken for.

When used on living patients, this Charm can't revive dead tissue or regenerate missing tissue. This typically requires that treatment be performed within a few hours of the injury, though damaged bones remain viable for several days.

LIFE-MOCKING ASSEMBLY

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal is an artist of dead flesh, transforming bone and viscera into undead masterpieces.

The Abyssal spends a few minutes laboring over a human or human-like corpse with surgical tools, reanimating it as a zombie (**Exalted**, p. 502). It has a Defining Tie of obedience towards her that can't be weakened. With Survival 3, she can reanimate animals unless they have Legendary Size.

If the deathknight has dots in a Craft that involves the preparation or use of dead flesh, such as embalming, taxidermy, tanning, or cooking, she receives craft points for meeting objectives like with a basic project (**Exalted**, p. 240).

With Medicine 4, Essence 2, the Abyssal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge and spend an hour in surgery to create a superior zombie called a corpse-soldier. Alternatively, she can upgrade a zombie she's created with an hour-long surgery. Battle groups of corpse-soldiers have average Drill and Might 2. Reanimated animals can't be made corpse-soldiers.

CANDLE LEFT BURNING

Cost: 1m (0m); **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Miasma-Halting Doom (x2)

CORPSE-SOLDIER

Essence: 1; Willpower: 1; Join Battle: 8 dice

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x3/-2x3/-4x3/Incap.

Actions: Feats of Strength: 7 dice (can attempt Strength 5 feats); Senses: 7 dice; Stealth: 5 dice; Threaten: 9 dice; Tracking: 5 dice

Appearance 3 (Hideous), Resolve 1, Guile 1

COMBAT

Attack (Bite): 8 dice (Damage 13L/2)

Attack (Claws): 10 dice (Damage 10L)

Attack (Grapple): 8 dice (8 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 8 dice

Evasion: 3; Parry: 4

Soak/Hardness: 8/0

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Miasma of Rot: The first time a living character comes within close range of a corpse-soldier in a scene, he must roll (Stamina + Resistance) at difficulty 4 to resist nausea. If he fails, he loses three Initiative and suffers a -1 penalty on all rolls for the rest of the scene.

Plaguebearer: Infected wounds left by a corpse-soldier's bite have virulence 5 (**Exalted**, p. 233).

MERITS

Mindless: Corpse-soldiers treat social influence as unacceptable. In battle groups, they have perfect morale.

The Abyssal need not snuff the flame of contagion entirely, making plague rats of her patients.

When the Abyssal's treatment cures a patient of a disease, she can choose to still leave him contagious. He suffers no ill effects but remains a vector for contagion. She can also use this Charm after inflicting a disease with Unsurpassed Plague Kiss, immunizing her victim against it while leaving him contagious.

Diagnosing the disease is impossible without magic like Pitiless Triage Judgment that specifically

enhances such rolls. Even then, such rolls still suffer a -4 penalty. This can't affect incurable diseases like the Great Contagion.

The Abyssal can also use this Charm on herself when she successfully resists exposure to a disease or is cured of it. Its cost is waived when she does so. Unlike her patients, she may choose to suppress the disease's contagiousness at will.

The Abyssal can stack multiple uses of this Charm, both to affect multiple patients and multiple diseases.

FEEBLE PATIENT PRESERVATION

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Medicine 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Dance of Writhing Maggots

The deathknight imbues her patient with unliving resilience, lest he succumb to the rigors of her treatment.

The Abyssal grants a character a number of temporary -0 health levels equal to her Essence. These temporary levels are the first to be filled and vanish when damaged.

When used on animated corpses, this Charm costs only five motes, or one mote for trivial characters.

Death's Essence takes a toll on mortals: once this Charm ends or their last temporary health level is damaged, they suffer a die of bashing damage, ignoring Hardness.

IVORY WHIRLWIND RESTORATION

Cost: 5m, 1wp or 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dance of Writhing Maggots

Her hands moving with blinding speed, the Abyssal hastens her patient's return to the slaughter.

The Abyssal completes up to an hour's worth of medical treatment in a handful of seconds, potentially letting her use Simple Medicine Charms in combat. With an appropriate stunt, she can do so even if she lacks the necessary tools and supplies.

INFIRMITY-INFLECTING GESTURE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pitiless Triage Judgment, Unsurpassed Plague Kiss

Striking with surgical precision, the deathknight severs the flow of Essence through her victim's meridians.

The Abyssal makes one of the following gambits with (Dexterity + Medicine). This is usually an unarmed attack, but it can also use needles and other weapons with the Subtle tag. Any extra successes on a gambit's Initiative roll cause the deathknight's victim to lose that much Initiative.

Creeping Rigor Affliction (Difficulty 5): The Abyssal renders a limb numb, inflicting a -3 crippling penalty on rolls using that limb. Numbing an arm leaves the victim unable to use it for any actions and causes the victim to drop anything he was holding with it. Numbing both legs causes him to fall prone and leaves him unable to rise.

Meridian-Charring Agony (Difficulty 3): The Abyssal sets her victim's meridians ablaze with agitated Essence, increasing his wound penalty by -1. If his total wound penalty equals or exceeds an action's difficulty, he can't place that action in a flurry. If the action was already incompatible with flurries, his wound penalty subtracts successes instead.

Sense-Stripping Gesture (Difficulty 4): The Abyssal suppresses one of her victim's senses, inflicting a -3 penalty on relevant rolls.

Snuffed Candle Curse (Difficulty 2): The Abyssal suppresses her victim's natural vitality. He doesn't heal naturally and loses the benefits of Exalted Healing (**Exalted**, pp. 165-166) if he has it. He suffers a -4 penalty to resist illness or poison.

The crippling effects inflicted by these gambits last until a character receives at least an hour of medical treatment, requiring an (Intelligence + Medicine) whose difficulty is the same as the relevant gambit's.

With a Medicine 5, Essence 5 repurchase, this Charm's effects can be used to make a damaging **decisive** attack with an appropriate weapon. The Abyssal may inflict one of the above effects by forgoing one level of damage, though the attack must deal at least 2+ damage.

NECROTIC GRAFT TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flesh-Mending Discipline, Life-Mocking Assembly

The Abyssal's unholy prowess marries living flesh to cadaverous rot, uniting them with needle, thread, and Essence.

The Abyssal grafts undead flesh onto a willing character in a procedure that takes at least an hour, granting them up to (Intelligence) dots of mutations — Innate or Purchased Merits that alter or improve a character's body — for which they must incur experience debt (p. 224). When used on zombies and similar animated corpses, the Abyssal can instead grant up to (Intelligence + 1) dots of mutations.

These mutations are always gruesomely obvious, giving the recipient the Hideous Merit (**Exalted**, p. 162) unless the deathknight also gives them the Subtle mutation. It's possible to surgically remove these mutations, though the process is lengthy, painful, and damaging.

SUPERIOR NECROSURGEON METHODOLOGY

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Necrotic Graft Technique

The Abyssal necrosurgeon settles for nothing less than perfection, endlessly reconstructing and refining her grisly creations.

The Abyssal surgically enhances a zombie or other reanimated corpse over the course of an hour. This confers one of the following benefits:

- +1 die to all Strength-based dice pools and raw **withering** damage. An undead can only receive this benefit once.
- +1 die to all Dexterity-based dice pools. An undead can only receive this benefit once.
- +1 die to all Stamina-based dice pools and +1 soak. An undead can only receive this benefit once.
- A -4 health level. An undead can only receive this benefit (higher of Abyssal's Essence or 3) times.

This can't increase dice pools above 14 dice.

With Occult 5, the Abyssal can use this Charm on ghosts, surgically modifying their corpus.

VENOM-BLEEDING AGONY

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Empty Grave Reprieve, Pitiless Triage Judgment

Even the foulest of toxins shudder before the Abyssal, fleeing from her patient's veins.

The Abyssal makes a roll to treat poison reflexively, without facing increased difficulty for rushing. As long as she rolls enough successes to reduce the poison's duration by at least one, she can purge the toxin entirely, causing it to seep from the patient's eyes and mouth as a black, tarry discharge. If its remaining duration exceeds her successes, her patient suffers one final interval of the poison's damage.

CHARNEL CHIRURGEON DEFTNESS

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Necrotic Graft Technique

The Abyssal reshapes ruined flesh, replacing maimed organs and severed limbs with deathless perfection.

The Abyssal treats a crippling effect or a similar physical malady with an extended (Intelligence + Medicine) roll. It has a one-month interval, difficulty 5, and a goal number of 20. If successful, the effect's severity is lowered by one step, as if it were a crippling injury (**Exalted**, p. 201). Once a crippling injury has been reduced to the lowest level, success heals it fully. This healing can't regenerate damaged or missing tissue, but it can replace it by grafting on undead flesh.

This Charm can also be used to treat Derangements. This works as above, except that Derangements can't be fully healed, only reduced to Minor intensity.

At the Storyteller's discretion, some minor injuries may be treated with a single roll, taking only an hour to treat.

HORROR-IN-PARALLEL ASSEMBLY

Cost: —(+5m or 5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Life-Mocking Assembly, Ivory Whirlwind Restoration

Ever efficient in her craft, the Abyssal necrosurgeon swiftly stitches together hordes of shambling monstrosities.

The Abyssal can pay a five-mote surcharge when she uses Life-Mocking Assembly, Necrotic Graft Technique, or Superior Necrosurgeon Methodology, letting her apply those Charms' benefits to up to (Essence x5) animated corpses. This doesn't increase the time needed to complete the surgery.

If the Abyssal has access to a well-stocked surgical theater and numerous assistants, she can instead pay a five-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to apply the enhanced Charm to enough corpses to form a battle group of up to Size (Essence). This takes one day, plus an additional day for each dot of Size over 2.

This Charm is incompatible with Ivory Whirlwind Restoration — the Abyssal's superior speed is already factored into its effect.

WOUND-EATING TOUCH

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ivory Whirlwind Restoration

Even the most grievous wounds retreat from the Abyssal's touch, heeding her dread authority.

The Abyssal heals (Essence) levels of non-aggravated damage or converts that many levels of aggravated damage to bashing with a touch. With animated corpses, she heals (Essence + 2) levels instead.

Mortals treated with this Charm are flooded with necrotic Essence. They suffer a penalty equal to the levels of damage healed on all rolls until they spend a full day in convalescence.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by upholding death's chivalry or a Major or Defining Intimacy by treating a patient. This Charm can't reset itself.

ABATTOIR-EMPTYING EXPEDIENCE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Wound-Eating Touch

The deathknight has no patience for mortal frailty, denying her patients the peace of convalescence.

The Abyssal can pay a five-mote surcharge when she uses Ivory Whirlwind Restoration to let her patient instantly complete any convalescence necessary for the treatment.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by upholding death's chivalry or a Major or Defining Intimacy by treating a patient. This Charm can't reset itself.

DARK SAVIOR'S REDEMPTION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 4

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Empty Grave Reprieve, Pitiless Triage Judgment

Drawing power from the nearness of death, the Abyssal drives it away with her deft hands and brilliant mind.

The Abyssal waives the mote and Willpower costs of a single Medicine Charm.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by providing medical treatment that stabilizes a character incapacitated by lethal or aggravated damage (**Exalted**, p. 173).

DEATH-DENYING PRIMACY

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dark Savior's Redemption

The Abyssal casts aside the possibility that she might fail her patient, annihilating every error and imperfection from her treatment.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a Medicine roll to reroll all failed dice. If at least half of the rerolled dice roll successes (round down), she gains one Willpower.

DRAGGED BACK FROM LETHE'S SHORE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Death-Denying Primacy

Even as her patient lies on the brink of death, the Abyssal pulls him back to the suffering that is life.

Once per day, the Abyssal can use Empty Grave Reprieve on any Medicine roll to treat an ailment, including rolls for Charms like Flesh-Mending Discipline.

SHATTERED TOMB SALVATION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 5

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death-Denying Primacy

No soul shall depart its mortal coil while Death's Lawgiver bids it stay.

The Abyssal doubles the total number of successes on a Medicine roll.

Reset: Once per story.

FOETID EARTH MIASMA

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Candle Left Burning, Infirmary-Inflicting Gesture

Burying seven cursed corpses in the earth in a blasphemous ritual, the Abyssal taints the land's Essence with the spiritual energies of blight and decay.

The Abyssal taints a region by interring the corpses of seven victims who died at her hand to mark its boundaries. This ritual must be performed at night and takes at least one interrupted hour. The afflicted region can be up to (Essence x 10) square miles. She blights the region with one of the mundane diseases she can use with Unsurpassed Plague Kiss, inflicting the following effects:

- Those in the blighted region must roll to resist being infected by the chosen disease each day they spend within it. The disease can't be fully cured without magically enhanced treatment, and is unusually contagious, gaining +1 virulence.
- The spiritual corruption inflicts a -3 penalty on Stamina rolls. This subtracts successes instead of dice from rolls to resist disease.
- Blight ravages the land: water takes on a foul, almost fungal quality and mosquitos proliferate around it; the air grows stale and smells of sickness in enclosed spaces; wood grows punky and

rotten far quicker than it should. Mass deaths resulting from disease are far more likely to form a shadowland than usual.

The blight can be nullified by disinterring the bodies and giving them proper funerary rites. Uncovering this vulnerability typically requires Lore and Occult rolls or suitable magic — and even then, the bodies must be found, typically requiring use of Awareness, Investigation, or Survival.

Reset: Once per story.

STITCHED-FLESH CHAMPION ENDEAVOR

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Superior Necrosurgeon Methodology

Driven by morbid obsession, the Abyssal surgeon stitches together her magnum opus, an unliving champion greater than the sum of its parts.

The Abyssal creates a stitched-flesh champion, a masterpiece of her gruesome craft. She can create one from a number of corpses or by modifying one of her corpse-soldiers. Either way, this takes a week of surgery, although each use of Ivory Whirlwind Restoration reduces this by one day. The Abyssal gains a Minor Tie of obsession toward her champion, which cannot be reduced below Minor for as long as the champion remains.

The champion has the traits of a corpse-soldier as well as the following benefits. If it's created from an existing corpse-soldier, it retains any improvements it's received.

- Its Essence increases to equal the Abyssal's, and its Willpower increases to (her Essence + 5).
- The Abyssal's Caste Mark glows on its brow. Those familiar with her can recognize her champion as belonging to her with a difficulty 3 (Perception + Occult) roll.
- It loses the Mindless Merit, gaining cognitive faculties comparable to an Intelligence 1 human.
- The Abyssal increases one of its dice pools by four dice and all others by two, maximum fourteen dice.



- All of its static values increase to 5, and the Abyssal may increase one of them to 6. Static values that have already been increased to 5+ with other effects are increased by +1 instead, maximum 7.

- Its soak increases to (Abyssal's Essence + 10) and it gains Hardness 10.

- It gains (Abyssal's Essence) -4 health levels.

- It doubles 8s on feats of strength and can attempt Strength 7 feats.

- It can benefit from each of Superior Necrosurgeon Methodology's effects an additional (Abyssal's Essence/2) times.

- The Abyssal adds (Essence) to the number of mutations she can grant it with Necrotic Graft Technique. She can use that Charm after a scene of surgical modification to instead exchange that many dots' worth of mutations for others, .

The Abyssal can only have one champion at a time.

Reset: Once per story.

Melee

BLADE-SUMMONING GESTURE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Melee 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight calls her weapon from afar, beckoning it to her imperiously outstretched hand.

The Abyssal summons her weapon from within short range to her hand, rolling (Wits + Melee) at difficulty 4. If successful, her weapon flashes instantly to her hand without crossing the space between. On a failed roll, she pulls the weapon towards her, but it does not reach her hand until the beginning of her next turn, and its movement can be stopped by physical obstacles. She can't use this Charm to steal other character's weapons.

VOID SHEATH TECHNIQUE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Blade-Summoning Gesture

The deathknight's weapon vanishes into her shadow.

The Abyssal banishes a weapon Elsewhere. Ending this Charm returns it to her hand.

DREAD REAPER'S PASSAGE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Melee 1, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight passes across the battlefield like a shadow, undeterred by those who stand between her and the next to die.

The Abyssal can move away from an enemy at close range without needing to disengage as long as she moves into close range with another enemy and makes an attack against him that turn. She can use Brawl, Martial Arts, or Melee to make the attack.

ELEGANT FLOWING DEFLECTION

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Melee 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal strikes aside her enemy's blow with contemptuous disregard.

The Abyssal ignores all penalties to her Parry other than those inflicted by surprise attacks. If she successfully blocks an attack, her attacker loses one Initiative.

While using Eye of the Tempest (p. 239), this Charm cost is reduced by one mote, and it adds +1 Parry.

DEATH WELL-REMEMBERED

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Flowing Deflection

Burning with an indomitable will to survive, the Abyssal turns aside her enemies' blows with impossible grace and speed.

The Abyssal ignores all penalties to her Parry. On damage rolls against her, up to (her Essence) 1s subtract successes.

While using Eye of the Tempest, this Charm's cost is reduced by two motes.

GRIM SENTINEL'S VIGIL

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Flowing Deflection

When the deathknight stands between her ward and danger, not even death itself may pierce her guard.

The deathknight reflexively takes a defend other action (**Exalted**, p. 196). Her protection lasts for this Charm's duration, but her charge must be within close range of her to receive it. This Charm ends if she uses a defend other action on a different character.

VENGEFUL RIPOSTE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Flowing Deflection

Blades flash, blood falls, and the Abyssal is the victor.

The deathknight responds to an attack with a **decisive** counterattack. If her enemy's attack damages her, she forms a Minor Tie of hatred toward him.

HEADSMAN'S DREAD CLEAVER

Cost: —; **Mins:** Melee 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight swings huge, foe-cleaving blades with effortless prowess, striking with control born of unloving strength.

The Abyssal can use Strength instead of Dexterity on attacks with heavy and medium weapons, and to calculate her Parry with such weapons. This doesn't benefit from effects that grant bonus Strength dots, double successes on Strength rolls, or replace her Strength with a higher value.

FIVE SHADOW FEINT

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Melee 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Abyssal's weapon moves like a flickering shadow, unhindered by her enemy's guard.

The Abyssal adds an automatic success on an attack roll and rerolls 1s until they cease to appear.

UNFURLING IRON LOTUS**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Melee 2, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Uniform**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Five Shadow Feint

The Abyssal's weapon moves like a flickering shadow, unleashing a cascade of blows as beautiful and brief as the petals of a blooming flower.

When the Abyssal's **withering** attack reduces an enemy's Initiative from being higher than her own to lower than it, she can use this Charm to reflexively make a **withering** or **decisive** attack against that enemy.

With a Melee 5, Essence 2 repurchase, once per scene, the deathknight can treat her Initiative as 3 higher to determine whether she can use this Charm.

TIME-SCYTHING TECHNIQUE**Cost:** 1m, 1wp, 3a; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Uniform**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Unfurling Iron Lotus

The Abyssal's blade trails wisps of anima like a bloodied war banner as she strikes with incomparable speed.

The Abyssal reflexively makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack.

SAVAGE SHADE STYLE**Cost:** 1m per die; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Dual**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Five Shadow Feint

Honing her instinctive aptitude for murder with fatal Essence, the deathknight strikes a telling blow.

The Abyssal adds up to (Strength) dice of post-soak damage to a **withering** attack or adds up to (higher

of Essence or 3) attack roll extra successes as damage dice on a **decisive** attack, paying one mote per die.

CRIMSON BANQUET HUNGER**Cost:** 2i; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Decisive-only, Versatile**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Abyssal's blade scars the soul, bleeding Essence from her foe.

When the Abyssal deals damage with a **decisive** attack, she steals motes equal to the levels of damage dealt. She can't gain more than (Dexterity, Stamina, or Strength) motes per round from this Charm.

This Charm is compatible with Martial Arts weapons.

FLUTTERING MOTH DEFENSE**Cost:** 1m per success; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 2**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Uniform**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Elegant Flowing Deflection

The deathknight blunts an attack's force against her blade, consigning her enemy's might to the void.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after an attack roll against her, causing up to (Essence) of her attacker's 1s and 2s to subtract successes from the attack roll. This costs one mote per success.

LIFE-SEVERING BLADE**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 2**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Uniform**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Savage Shade Style

Inevitable death rides on the edge of the Abyssal's blade.

The deathknight can use this Charm after an attack roll that benefitted from a full Excellency, rerolling (Essence) failed dice on the attack roll, starting with 6s and moving down.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by rolling 8+ total successes on an attack against a nontrivial enemy.

RESPLENDENT SHADOW BLADE**Cost:** 5m, 1wp (+2m); **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 2**Type:** Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Blade-Summoning Gesture

Shadows and spite coalesce in the deathknight's hand as she draws the black blade of her hatred.

The Abyssal creates an artifact Melee weapon from Essence. The type of weapon created and its exact appearance are the same each time she uses this Charm.

The Abyssal can pay a two-mote surcharge when she uses this Charm to suffuse her weapon with soul-breaking despair. An enemy crashed by a **withering** attack with it loses a point of Willpower, as do those who take enough **decisive** damage to increase their wound penalty. Reducing a mortal or Essence 1 ghost to zero Willpower breaks his will; he falls to the ground in the fetal position, unable to act or even defend himself for the rest of the scene as if incapacitated.

This Charm may be repurchased any number of times, each repurchase adding an Evocation to the summoned weapon. These Evocations draw their themes and function from the deathknight's personality, Caste, and iconic anima banner.

SLASHING GHOST TALON

Cost: 3m, 1a; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Blade-Summoning Gesture, Five Shadow Feint

Rending black Essence and vengeful shades lash out from the deathknight's strike, cutting distant foes deep.

The Abyssal makes an attack — **withering**, **decisive**, or gambit — against an enemy within short range. The attack's range extends to medium with Initiative 10+ and long at 15+. **Decisive** attacks ignore Hardness.

Special activation rules: When the Abyssal uses a Melee Charm to make a clash or counterattack, she can use this Charm reflexively to enhance that attack's range.

SOUL-DRINKING BLADE

Cost: 1wp or 2i; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Banquet Hunger

The Abyssal binds the souls of her slain to her blade, denying them the reprieve of Lethe and oblivion alike.

When the Abyssal fatally incapacitates a living character or permanently destroys a spirit with a **decisive** attack, she can use this Charm to draw his soul into her weapon, gaining (victim's Essence +3) motes as she feeds on it. If she uses this Charm multiple times in a scene, the mote rewards of subsequent uses are halved, rounded up.

Imprisoned souls can't communicate coherently, but the Abyssal can use Corpse-Questioning Technique (p. 205) and similar magic to interact with them. Even without such magic, she can draw on bound souls' knowledge to provide tutelage in their areas of expertise, dividing the training time necessary for appropriate traits by at least (Essence + 1). She also gains this benefit when awakening Evocations from an artifact weapon that a soul's been bound in.

The Abyssal can only have up to (Essence) souls bound at a time. She can free them as she wishes. They're also set free if the weapon they're imprisoned in is destroyed. At the Storyteller's discretion, other magic may be capable of freeing them, particularly Occult Charms.

SCREAMING STEEL WRAITH

Cost: 4m, 2i; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Savage Shade Style, Soul-Drinking Blade

Unleashing one of the wretched souls bound within her blade, the Abyssal strikes with the strength of her victim's ceaseless suffering.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after dealing at least one level of **withering** or **decisive** damage, unleashing a soul bound with Soul-Drinking Blade to roll (Essence) dice of **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness. The howling shade flees, but rarely finds peace in this freedom, often succumbing to specterhood.

On **decisive** attacks, this Charm's cost is paid after the Abyssal's Initiative resets to base.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by using Soul-Drinking Blade to capture a nontrivial enemy's soul.

ARTFUL MAIMING ONSLAUGHT

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Savage Shade Style

The Abyssal's blade arcs through the air like cruel lightning, leaving behind severed limbs and bloody stumps.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after landing a **decisive** attack, before the damage roll. If her victim doesn't commit to accepting the highest level of crippling injury possible (**Exalted**, p. 201) in advance, the Abyssal adds (Strength) dice of damage and rolls an additional die for every 9 and 10 on the damage roll. She gains one Willpower if this incapacitates him or he accepts a crippling injury.

If the enemy takes a crippling injury, it doesn't count against his once-per-story limit on doing so, and he's immune to this Charm for the rest of the scene.

This Charm's Willpower cost is waived against trivial opponents, and the deathknight can choose what crippling injuries they suffer rather than their player. However, the Abyssal can't gain Willpower from maiming such foes.

EYE OF THE TEMPEST

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Death Well-Remembered

The Abyssal is at peace amid the bloody storm of battle, turning aside blows without the slightest wasted motion.

The Abyssal ignores wound penalties and onslaught penalties to her Parry, as well as penalties for being grappled or from magic that specifically targets creatures of darkness.

HUNDRED RAZOR CIRCLE

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Vengeful Riposte

Where the Abyssal walks, she cuts down all who stand against her.

When the deathknight is attacked, she may make a **decisive** counterattack. Hitting with a counterattack doesn't reset her Initiative until the next round begins.

INSTANT MURDER FLASH

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Time-Scything Technique

Like a ravening specter, the Exalt cuts down all opposition in the blink of an eye.

The deathknight makes (lowest of Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina) **decisive** attacks against one or more enemies. She can divide her Initiative among attacks however she wishes for their damage, minimum one per attack. She resets to base Initiative after completing all attacks if any of them hit, or loses two initiative per attack if they all miss. If the Abyssal uses any non-Excellency Melee Charms to enhance her attacks, she need only pay their cost once to benefit all of them.

With a Melee 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal can make up to (highest of Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina) attacks and adds Initiative equal to the number of attacks she makes to the total she can allocate among them. She may move a single range band before each attack.

Special activation rules: When the Abyssal uses Time-Scything Technique, she can use this Charm reflexively to make its multiple attacks, as above, instead of just one.

OBLIVION DEVOURS ALL

Cost: Varies; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death Well-Remembered

The Abyssal is an invincible force of entropy, striking away even the mightiest attacks with contempt.

The Abyssal gains the following defenses:

- For four motes, she can parry an unblockable attack.
- After a **decisive** damage roll against her, she can pay four motes and any amount of Initiative, subtracting one success from the damage roll for each Initiative spent.
- For four motes, one Willpower, she may perfectly parry a source of uncountable damage, like a detonating First Age superweapon. If the damage is recurring, she becomes immune to it for the rest of the scene.

SHARP-EDGED STUDY OF REVENGE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Vengeful Riposte

Those who turn their blades upon the deathknight find her vengeance swift, cruel, and inventive.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal chooses two of the techniques below, which enhance any counterattacks she makes with Vengeful Riposte or Hundred Razor Circle. Additional techniques can be purchased for three experience points or one bonus point.

Bitter Violence Caprice: The Abyssal can make the counterattack against an enemy other than her attacker. If she chooses an enemy that her attacker is protecting with a defend other action, he can't use his Parry to protect that character unless he chooses to have his attack miss.

Broken Toys Riposte: The Abyssal can counterattack with a disarm gambit. Mundane weapons are destroyed on a success.

Cruel Severing Steel: Against attacks that beat her Parry, the Abyssal makes her counterattack before the damage roll. Every two levels of damage she deals forces her attacker to reroll one successful die on the attack roll, starting with 7s and moving up. If this reduces his successes below her Parry, she counts as having blocked the attack.

Mortal Folly Deception: The Abyssal can make a distract gambit with her counterattack. The Initiative cost is halved, rounded down.

Vindictive Blade's Thirst: Crimson Banquet Hunger's cost is waived when enhancing the counterattack.

The Abyssal's player may work with the Storyteller to create new techniques.

THIEVING RAITON CLAWS

Cost: —(+2m, 2i); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Perilous
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Blade-Summoning Gesture

All weapons bend to the Abyssal's superior killing power, betraying their masters to serve in the hand of death incarnate.

When an enemy within short range is disarmed, the deathknight may pay a two-mote, two Initiative surcharge to use Blade-Summoning Gesture on his weapon to call it to her hand. If she fails the (Wits + Melee) roll, the weapon still flies to her hand, but it can be prevented if an enemy readies it before her next turn.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can pay using Blade-Summoning Gesture for a two-mote, two-Initiative surcharge to enhance a disarm gambit, wresting a weapon from her enemy's hand to her own. She can target an enemy within short range and rolls the attack with (Wits + Melee). If successful, his weapon instantly flashes to her hand without crossing the intervening space. This gambit isn't made with the Abyssal's own weapon but by her will alone.

CHARNEL EMPEROR REBUKE

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Counterattack, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Unfurling Iron Lotus, Vengeful Riposte

Those with the temerity to strike the deathknight are quickly relieved of their foolish hopes of survival.

The Abyssal can use this Charm to make a **withering** counterattack after an attack roll beats her Parry but before the damage roll. She doesn't gain any Initiative from the counterattack's damage roll but instead rolls that many dice of **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness.

COILED SHADOW STRIKE

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Charnel Emperor Rebuke

The deathknight's blade flickers like a shadow against the fading sun, cutting down her would-be attackers.

The Abyssal reflexively clashes an attack with a **decisive** attack.

THOUSAND WOUNDS FEINTING

Cost: —(7m, 1wp); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Coiled Shadow Strike

The deathknight's scything rebuke delivers far more than sevenfold vengeance.

The Abyssal can use Charnel Emperor Rebuke and Coiled Shadow Strike against the same attack for a total cost of seven motes, one Willpower, waiving the restrictions of the Counterattack and Clash keywords. If she wins the clash, she doesn't roll damage until after Charnel Emperor Rebuke's counterattack, which adds its **decisive** damage to the clash attack's damage roll.

ELEGANT BLOODLETTING ART

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Life-Severing Blade

The deathknight wields her weapon like an artist's brush, painting the battlefield crimson with every strike.

The Abyssal strikes a direful blow against a crashed enemy. On a **withering** attack, each attack roll extra success converts one die of damage to an automatic success. On a **decisive** attack, each extra success re-rolls a failed die on the damage roll, starting with 6s and moving down.

UNTHINKING MURDER MOVEMENT

Cost: 5m, 2i, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Artful Maiming Onslaught, Elegant Bloodletting Art

The deathknight's killing arts cut down foes with effortless grace, bloodying her blade without a hint of exertion.

The Abyssal makes a **decisive** attack, which is unblockable and undodgeable unless her opponent enhances his Defense with magic. It deals (Essence + attack roll extra successes) dice of damage, ignoring Hardness. This doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base.

If the Abyssal's Initiative equals or exceeds this attack's base damage, she waives the Willpower cost to use Artful Maiming Onslaught on the attack.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by dealing 3+ damage to a nontrivial enemy with a **decisive** attack that resets the Abyssal to base Initiative, then reaching 12+ Initiative.

GREATEST KILLER DEMONSTRATION

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Flowing Deflection, Five Shadow Feint

The deathknight knows well the countless paths that lead to death.

The Abyssal invokes a free full Melee Excellency.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by incapacitating an enemy.

SOUL-CLEAVING WOUND

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Artful Maiming Onslaught, Soul-Drinking Blade

The Abyssal's weapon maims spirit and flesh alike.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after making a **decisive** damage roll, letting her forgo levels of damage to inflict one or more of the effects below. She must still deal at least one level of damage.

Conviction-Maiming Strike (1 level): The Abyssal wounds her victim's higher soul as a Psyche effect. Any Intimacies he has that aren't based on emotion count as one step weaker. If he doesn't have any, he loses one Willpower instead.

Essence-Bleeding Cut (3 levels): The Abyssal scars her victim's very Essence, causing him to lose motes equal to the damage roll's successes. He treats his Essence as one lower for magic that uses it in calculations and reduces the number of motes he regains each round in combat or each hour outside of it by one. He reduces them both by two instead while suffering a -2 or higher wound or crippling penalty. Enemies without mote pools instead fall unconscious for the rest of the scene.

Will-Devouring Edge (3 levels): The Abyssal's victim loses a point of Willpower and a dot of *permanent* Willpower. If this reduces his permanent Willpower to 0, he falls unconscious for the rest of the scene. The first time he spends Willpower in a scene, he must pay an additional point, and he can't recover Willpower from rest.

Passion-Severing Slash (1 level): The Abyssal maims her victim's lower soul as a Psyche effect. Any Intimacies he has that are based on emotion count as

one step weaker. If he doesn't have any, he loses one Willpower instead.

For most characters, these spiritual wounds require magic to heal, often Medicine or Occult Charms. Characters with Exalted Healing recover from them after a full day of convalescence.

GLORIOUS CARNAGE TYPHOON

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Instant Murder Flash (x2)

Armies fall screaming before the Abyssal's terrible might.

The Abyssal makes a **decisive** attack against all enemies within close range, rolling (Initiative/2, rounded up) dice of **decisive** damage against each hit enemy. Against trivial enemies, she rolls her full Initiative and ignores Hardness.

With Essence 5, this Charm's cost is reduced by one mote.

With an Essence 5 repurchase, if the Abyssal incapacitates at least one enemy with this Charm, she may pay six motes, one anima, and two Initiative to reflexively make a **withering** attack against all enemies within close range. She gains full Initiative from the highest damage roll but can't gain more than three Initiative from other damage rolls (this doesn't include Initiative Breaks for crashing enemies). If she crashes at least one enemy with this attack, she may use Glorious Carnage Typhoon again reflexively to make a **decisive** attack again, as above.

APOCALYPSE BLADE UNBOUND

Cost: —(4m, 1wp); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Artful Maiming Onslaught or Oblivion Devours All

Violence begets violence, hastening the hand of Death's Lawgiver as she reaps a harvest of souls.

The Abyssal gains a special pool of Initiative that can only be used to pay the Initiative costs of Melee Charms and gambits. The pool begins empty each scene and can hold up to (Essence) Initiative. This Initiative can't be targeted by **withering** attacks and similar effects. She can use



Melee Charms with the Perilous keyword while crashed if she pays their Initiative cost entirely from this pool. If they don't have an Initiative cost, she can use them in crash as long as she has any Initiative in this pool.

When the Abyssal receives Initiative from a **withering** damage roll, she may transfer up to one point to this pool for each 10 on her damage roll. When she deals damage with a **decisive** attack, each 10 on the damage roll adds one Initiative to the pool.

The Abyssal can pay four motes, one Willpower after a **withering** damage roll that crashes its target, or a **decisive** damage roll to gain Initiative for 9s as well. Alternatively, she can consume a soul imprisoned with Soul-Drinking Blade instead of paying this cost. Usually, this permanently destroys the soul, but it might survive at the Storyteller's discretion, giving the deceased's friends another chance to free his soul — and the Abyssal another chance to exploit it.

Occult

HOWLING SILENCE MEDITATION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The tormented cries of the Neverborn echo endlessly in the Abyssal's soul, whispering of the world's inevitable end.

Howling Silence Meditation enhances the Abyssal's Whispers (p. 129), which is required to learn it. Upon purchasing it, her player chooses two of the following powers. She may purchase additional powers for three experience points or one bonus point each.

Apostle of the End: When the Abyssal upholds death's chivalry, she may forgo regaining Willpower to reset her use of Whispers.

Dark Hearts Beat As One: When the Abyssal comes within close range of another character with Whispers, she intuitively senses this. If his player wishes to conceal this from her, she reflexively makes a read intentions roll against him to detect this, adding (Essence) automatic successes.

Dead Gods' Hatred: The Abyssal can invoke Whispers to add +2 non-Charm Resolve against any influence that opposes one of her negative Intimacies.

Death-Appeasing Wickedness: When the Abyssal undergoes Bleak Expiation (p. 145), she may invoke her Whispers to either add or subtract (Whispers/2) successes on the roll to lose Limit.

Embracing Damnation: When the Abyssal invokes Whispers, she gains (higher of Essence or Whispers) motes.

Nightmares Yet To Come: The Abyssal can invoke Whispers to gain a glimpse of the future. This works like the Reading the Tea Leaves ritual (**Exalted**, p. 490).

Single Will Binding: The Abyssal can invoke Whispers to add (higher of Essence or 3) non-Charm dice on an influence roll against creatures of darkness or characters with Whispers. If all her targets have Whispers, she converts these to non-Charm successes.

Void Prophet's Mantle: The Abyssal can make her Whispers obvious to all other characters with Whispers who can perceive her.

Whispering Secrets: The Abyssal can invoke Whispers to add (higher of Essence or 3) non-Charm dice on a read intentions roll against a creature of darkness or character with Whispers. If her target has Whispers, she converts these to non-Charm successes.

The Abyssal's player may work with the Storyteller to create new powers.

SCREAMING IN SILENCE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Occult 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's thoughts echo through death's darkness, whispers of her own that are heard from afar.

The Abyssal sends a telepathic message of no more than a few sentences to a chosen target within (Essence x10) miles. Messages sent with this Charm cannot be overheard or intercepted without magic. Even then, such magic must overcome a difficulty of (Abyssal's Essence + Occult), with 1s subtracting successes.

The Abyssal may conceal her identity from the recipient. He may attempt a read intentions roll against her to discern her identity, but it fails automatically unless enhanced by magic. Even then, his 1s subtract successes.

With Occult 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to use this Charm with unlimited range.

Whispers: If the Abyssal sends a message to another character with Whispers, they may respond as above. She can also invoke Whispers instead of paying Willpower for this Charm's Essence 3 effect.

SPIRIT-SENSING MEDITATION

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Occult 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal bears witness to the deeds of ghost and god, her senses unimpeded by the limits of the flesh.

The Abyssal can perceive dematerialized characters.

CORPUS-RENDING BLOW

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Occult 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Sensing Meditation

The deathknight wreathes her blow in annihilating Essence, rending the flesh of immortal gods.

The Abyssal can strike a dematerialized enemy with an attack. She still suffers the usual -3 penalty if she can't see her enemy.

GOD-SLAYING TORMENT

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Aggravated, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Corpus-Rending Blow

The Abyssal delivers a gospel of annihilation to those who think themselves beyond death.

The Abyssal's **decisive** attack deals aggravated damage to a spirit, and destroys it permanently if it incapacitates him.

If the Abyssal uses God-Slaying Torment with an Archery, Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee, or Thrown Charm that steals motes, she reduces that Charm's cost by two Initiative and steals an additional mote. This increases to (spirit's Essence) additional motes if she destroys it. These don't count toward the maximum motes those Charms can steal.

CORPSE-TOMB IMPRISONMENT

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: God-Slaying Torment

The deathknight subjects spirits to the travails of the flesh, a harsh lesson in mortal suffering.

The Abyssal can activate this Charm after hitting a dematerialized enemy with an attack before the damage roll. If she deals any damage, her enemy is forcibly materialized and can't dematerialize again until he's taken two turns. Once he's finished his second turn, he immediately dematerializes if that's his natural state.

THROUGH DEAD EYES

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 2, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Sensing Meditation

Her eyes opened by death's caress, the Abyssal knows well the signs that herald the dead.

The Abyssal can sense when one of the undead or a creature of darkness is within range of her senses, even if he's dematerialized. This manifests through eerie visions and omens: disjointed flashes of a ghost's dying memories, the smell of blood and grave dirt clinging to a hungry ghost, a spectral choir chanting to herald a fellow Abyssal's presence.

Guided by these visions, the Abyssal adds (Occult) dice on Perception-based rolls involving the undead, except for attack rolls and extended actions.

An Occult 3 repurchase extends this Charm's effects to all spirits and fae.

Whispers: Against characters with Whispers, the Abyssal adds successes instead of dice.

SHADOW-BINDING INVOCATION

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Occult 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Death's Lawgiver bids the Underworld's shades attend her with a word that can only be whispered, beckoning them even into the sunlit realm of the living.

The Abyssal causes a spirit she's bound with a spell or claimed as her familiar to materialize indefinitely as long as it can hear her invocation. He pays no cost to do so.

UTTERANCE OF DOOMS UNTOLD

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal speaks the Old Laws anew, asserting spiritual dominion over death itself.

The Abyssal speaks in an eerie discordance that is not a language but is understood instinctively by the undead and other creatures of darkness. She adds (Essence/2, rounded up) automatic successes on Occult rolls as long as she uses this bleak tongue in her stunt. However, she can't comprehend any other languages except when listening to creatures of darkness.

With an Occult 5, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to enhance this Charm. Any roll that receives its bonus dice also rolls an additional non-Charm die for each 10, maximum (Essence).

ESSENCE-REAPING SPIRIT

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Utterance of Dooms Untold

The Abyssal dredges power from the bones of the world, drawing Essence from every death that has ever taken place around her.

The Abyssal invokes a free full Occult Excellency.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset when a character with a mote pool who's present in the scene is incapacitated, bleeding out more power to reap.

ECHOING IN EMPTINESS

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Screaming in Silence

The deathknight's voice spans the emptiness between life and death, speaking in a susurrus of maddening whispers.

When the Abyssal uses Screaming in Silence, she may send her message to up to (higher of Essence or 3) different characters. Her Circlemates don't count against this limit, nor do undead that she's created or summoned.

If a character has a positive Major or Defining Tie toward the Abyssal, the range at which she can contact them is multiplied by (Intimacy). The same is true for her Lunar mate, who counts as having a Defining Tie for this purpose.

Whispers: Characters with Whispers don't count against the maximum the Abyssal can contact and treat their Whispers rating as a Tie to the Abyssal to determine the message's range. If they choose to respond, they may direct it either to the deathknight alone or to all other characters with Whispers who received the message.

BLEAK TRUTHS LAID BARE

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Sensing Meditation

Refining her sense for the subtle and sublime, the Abyssal sees the world in an austere black and white, colored only by the flow of Essence.

The Abyssal can perceive dematerialized characters and the boundaries between Creation and other worlds, like the edge of a shadowland or the entrance to a spirit's sanctum. She can roll (Intelligence + Occult) to identify a spell being shaped or an Evocation in use at a difficulty of that effect's minimum Essence. She can detect the presence of ongoing spells and workings and identify their function without a roll.

With an Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal adds (Essence) successes on Awareness rolls to see through magical disguises, shapeshifting, or any other form of magical that conceals a character's true appearance and always roll (Perception + Awareness) to see through such deceptions. If an effect doesn't provide a difficulty to contest it, the Abyssal treats it as difficulty 5.

SOUL-WARPING WHISPERS

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Howling Silence Meditation, Screaming in Silence

The Abyssal speaks with a voice like a dead god, infecting her victims with the whispers of her own soul's darkness.

The Abyssal makes a special ([Charisma, Manipulation, or Wits] + Occult) influence roll against a single character she can perceive to infect his mind with Whispers. This influence is conveyed mentally, as with Screaming in Silence. If successful, her victim suffers a penalty of (Abyssal's Whispers) on all rolls for the rest of the scene and a penalty of (Whispers/2, rounded up) to Resolve and Guile. Any positive Principles he has are treated as one step weaker for the scene's duration. This costs one Willpower to resist for a scene and (Abyssal's Whispers) Initiative in combat. The Abyssal gains any Initiative spent resisting it.

Alternatively, the Abyssal may use this Charm to grant another character Whispers, letting them incur experience debt (p. 224). She can't grant Whispers at a rating higher than her own. These Whispers aren't those of the Neverborn — they're born of the Abyssal's own unconscious darkness.

SPIRIT-DEVOURING APPETITE

Cost: 3m per Charm, 1m per mutation dot; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: God-Slaying Torment

The Abyssal may seize knowledge and power from the fragments of a destroyed spirit.

When the Abyssal lethally incapacitates a spirit with God-Slaying Torment, she can absorb its Essence instead of destroying it. She temporarily gains up to (Essence) of the spirit's Eclipse Charms for three motes each, as long as she meets their Essence minimums. She can also gain up to (Essence x3) dots of mutations based on the spirit's appearance and power, committing one mote per dot.

The Abyssal can incur experience debt (p. 224) to permanently gain these Charms or mutations. She waives the experience cost of the first Charm she learns.

DIVINITY-BANISHING CONTEMPT

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Devouring Appetite

Possession merely traps a spirit at the deathknight's thin mercy.

The Abyssal rolls (Wits + Occult) against a possessing being's Resolve to exorcise it, leaving it incapable of possessing the same victim again for a season.

Exorcising a spirit with lesser or equal Essence lets the Abyssal use Spirit-Devouring Appetite reflexively to devour him. She reduces that Charm's total cost by five motes, minimum one.

THE DEATH OF MIRACLES

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bleak Truths Laid Bare (x2)

Through ritual, the Abyssal may sunder the miracles of sorcery, withering blessed fields and slaughtering generational curses.

After encountering the ongoing effects of a spirit Charm or a spell, the Abyssal rolls (Intelligence or Wits + Occult) to introduce a method by which that magic may be undone. This roll is opposed by the character who created the effect, using an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) combination. If successful, the Abyssal's player and the Storyteller should work together to determine a way that she can end the magic. The effort required to do so should be commensurate with the effect's strength. This can't reverse Instant-duration effects or magic used by Essence 10 beings. If the Abyssal breaks a magical effect with this Charm, the opposing character becomes aware of it, sensing the affront to his primacy.

An Essence 4 repurchase lets the Abyssal pay a one-Willpower surcharge to introduce a way to permanently undo a Terrestrial sorcerous working or temporarily suppress a Celestial or Solar working long enough for her to accomplish a significant task.

GOD-SCOURGING WAIL

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Echoing in Emptiness, Soul-Warping Whispers

The Abyssal unleashes a psychic howl, giving voice to the Neverborn's mad wrath against the gods who betrayed them and the kin who abandoned them.

The Abyssal rolls a single **decisive** attack with (Charisma + Occult) against all enemies within long

range, adding (higher of Essence or Whispers) automatic successes. This attack is unblockable and undodgeable but is resisted by the targets' Resolve. This ignores all cover and can affect dematerialized enemies.

The attack has a base damage of (Essence + Whispers) against each hit enemy, and the Abyssal divides her Initiative evenly among them, rounded up. This deals aggravated damage and ignores Hardness. Damaged characters suffer the effects of Soul-Warping Whispers. Trivial characters don't count toward the Initiative division — they either die on the spot, collapse in writhing agony, or flee at the Abyssal's choice.

This psychic onslaught can't be perceived by those who aren't targeted by it, as with Screaming in Silence.

Reset: Once per scene.

SOUL DOMINATION METHOD

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Divinity-Banishing Contempt

Casting her spirit outward, Death's Lawgiver invades another's soul, sifting through his mind and warping his spirit to her will.

The Abyssal rolls (Wits + Occult) against the Resolve of a willing, unconscious, or restrained target to invade his mindscape. If successful, she can invoke one of the following effects:

- Roll against a target's Guile to sift through his memories, seeking a specific piece of information or to look for signs of spiritual or mental maladies, like possession. She may suffer a penalty if the memories she seeks out are old or somehow obscured. She can make Perception-based rolls and use Charms to examine these memories for information her target missed.
- Inflict a Minor Derangement (**Exalted**, p. 168). If the Derangement relates to one of her target's Major or Defining Intimacies, he gains it at Major intensity instead. Alternatively, the Abyssal can strengthen an existing Derangement by one step. She can't use this effect against a character more than once per story.
- Feed on a character's higher or lower soul, stealing one Willpower from him. Feeding on the

higher soul weakens all of a character's emotion-based Intimacies by one step, while feeding on the lower soul weakens all of his unemotional Intimacies by one step. He can pay one Willpower to preserve his Defining Intimacies. A character without any such Intimacies loses an additional Willpower to the Abyssal.

- Devour a spirit of equal or lesser Essence, either destroying it permanently or absorbing it with Spirit-Devouring Appetite. If she uses Spirit-Devouring Appetite, its total cost is reduced by (Abyssal's Essence + spirit's Essence) motes, minimum one.
- Unleash a possessing entity devoured with Divinity-Banishing Contempt to take control of the target.

At the Storyteller's discretion, this Charm can be used for other esoteric interactions with someone's mind or soul, though it's not capable of repairing damage to either or otherwise alleviating mental or spiritual conditions.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, the Abyssal can use this Charm to heal minds as well as harm them, like subverting a Psyche effect afflicting her Lunar mate, entering a raksha's spiritual maw to rescue shards of a victim's psyche, or perform similar feats. The Abyssal's player should work out the specific effects of this with the Storyteller.

LIFE-ANNIHILATING SUSURRUS

Cost: —(+10m, 1wp); **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: God-Scourging Wail

The Abyssal makes herself a vessel for the agonizing death-wail of the Neverborn, which emerges from her lips as a radiating broadcast of psychic agony that grinds life into dust.

The Abyssal can pay a ten-mote, one-Willpower surcharge when she uses God-Scourging Wail to unleash an apocalyptic howl, extending the Charm's duration to one scene. On each subsequent turn, she can repeat the attack, using her initial attack roll rather than making a new one. This can't be flurried. Her Initiative isn't included in the damage of these subsequent attacks, nor do they reset her to base. Once an enemy is damaged by one of these attacks, he can't use his Resolve to defend against subsequent attacks unless he pays one Willpower per attack.

Once the Abyssal has made two consecutive attacks, the range of subsequent attacks increases by one band each time she makes one, extending into extreme range. This can't extend beyond (Essence) miles, though by this point, the devastation wrought by the Abyssal's power is largely a narrative matter left to the storyteller's discretion.

The susurrus ends if the Abyssal goes a turn without repeating the attack or if she's incapacitated.

Reset: Once per story.

Necromancy and Sorcery

IVORY CIRCLE NECROMANCY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Glimpsing the cracks in reality left by the Neverborn's fall, the Abyssal learns how this broken world might be bent to her will.

The Abyssal may use Ivory Circle necromancy. She learns one Ivory Circle spell — her control spell — and one shaping ritual for free.

SHADOW CIRCLE NECROMANCY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Ivory Circle Necromancy

The Abyssal has stained her soul with dread magics and forbidden rites, a price gladly paid in pursuit of power.

The Abyssal may use Shadow Circle necromancy. She learns one Shadow Circle spell — an additional control spell — and one shaping ritual for free.

VOID CIRCLE NECROMANCY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Shadow Circle Necromancy

The greatest secrets of the Neverborn are revealed to Death's Lawgiver, shattering the seals on the apocalyptic forces she commands.

ABYSSALS AND SORCERY

The Abyssal Charms for initiating into Terrestrial and Celestial sorcery are identical to their Charms for Ivory and Shadow Circle necromancy. Note that Charms that enhance necromancy also enhance sorcery unless they state otherwise, and vice versa.

The Abyssal may use Void Circle necromancy. She learns one Void Circle spell — an additional control spell — and one shaping ritual for free.

SHROUD OF SHINING DARK

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Ivory Circle Necromancy or Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

The Abyssal's anima shrouds her in radiant darkness as the taint of necromancy seeps through it.

While shaping spells, the Abyssal doesn't lose necromantic motes for going a turn without gathering them. At glowing anima or higher, taking grants +1 Defense and +(Anima) soak until her next turn.

LOWER SOUL INVOCATION

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One turn

Prerequisite Charms: Shroud of Shining Dark

Withered spectral limbs manifest around the Abyssal as she rouses her voracious lower soul, bidding it weave her dark magics.

The Abyssal flurries a Shape Necromancy action with a non-attack action, ignoring all penalties from flurrying.

An Occult 5, Essence 3 repurchase lets the Abyssal pay a four-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to extend this Charm's duration to one scene.

NECROMANCER-TYRANT PUISSANCE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One turn

Prerequisite Charms: Ivory Circle Necromancy

Death's Lawgiver works dark wonders and bleak miracles, invoking ancient pacts and forbidden terrors of the sunless realm.

Whenever the Abyssal shapes a spell to create or command the undead, inflict curses, or harm the living, she gains three necromantic motes each round she spends shaping it. Once per day, she may lower the Willpower cost of such a spell by one.

This Charm is incompatible with sorcery.

Performance

Abyssal Performance Charms are divided into universal Charms, which can be used with any kind of performance, and specialized Charms that can only be used with specific performances.

Universal

MORBID FASCINATION STYLE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Performance 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: One performance

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's performance captivates her audience with an irresistible, if sickening, splendor.

Characters who witness the Abyssal's performance must listen or watch respectfully until she's done. They must pay one Willpower to leave before then or two Willpower to interrupt the performance or initiate hostilities. Even if they resist, enemies find themselves drawn into the performance: their base dice pools cannot exceed their (Charisma + Performance) or their highest social pool for Quick Characters.

This Charm can't be activated while in combat, but it remains active if hostilities break out in the midst of the deathknight's performance.

With a Performance 4 repurchase, the Abyssal can use this Charm on a performance that she watches. Doing so lets the performer use the deathknight's Appearance instead of his own if the rest of the audience can see the Abyssal.

SANGUINE REVEL CELEBRANT

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Morbid Fascination Style

ABYSSAL PERFORMANCE VS. MULTIPLE TARGETS

Influence rolls enhanced by non-Excellency Abyssal Performance Charms ignore multiple target penalties.

The Abyssal's impassioned vivacity seems strange for one already dead, a dangerously tantalizing mystery.

The Abyssal gains a bonus dot of Appearance, which can raise it above 5. If she interacts with someone who's participating in a social event, recreation, or sensual pleasure, he counts as having a Minor Tie of amiability toward her.

UNDYING VIRTUOSO SPIRIT

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal performer's skill is honed by brooding passion and expressive Essence.

The Abyssal adds an automatic success on a Performance roll and rerolls 1s until they cease to appear.

HEART-PIERCING (PERFORMANCE)

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Undying Virtuoso Spirit

Contemplating death's beauty, the deathknight draws bleak inspiration for her art.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal's player chooses one of oratory, music, dance, or a similar kind of performance. She doubles 9s on a roll using that type of performance. She can repurchase this Charm to add additional forms of performance.

CULTURE-REINFORCING OVERTURE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Undying Virtuoso Spirit

Death's Lawgiver subtly weaves appreciation for the proper forms of society into her performance.

When the Abyssal makes an inspire or instill roll, it also counts as a roll to instill a positive Tie toward a culture or society or a Principle involving a tradition, cultural practice, philosophical movement, or the like. Her performance must reflect the Intimacy instilled. This fails if the target has a Major or Defining Intimacy that directly opposes the instilled Intimacy.

If the Abyssal instills a Tie to a culture that's now dead or that consists primarily of the undead, her target is immune only if he has an opposed Defining Tie. She also gains this benefit when instilling a Principle involving a custom or belief related to death or from a culture that's either dead or undead.

HAUNTING APPARITION TRICK

Cost: —(+1m); **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Morbid Fascination Style, Undying Virtuoso Spirit

The Abyssal accentuates her performance with eerie apparitions — phantasmal imagery, blood that seems to drip down walls, inexplicable chills, shadows moving strangely, and the like.

The Abyssal can pay a one-mote surcharge when she uses Morbid Fascination Style or Undying Virtuoso Spirit to enhance it with illusory apparitions. They can extend out to short range from her, and individual apparitions can be up to the size of a person. With Performance 5, Essence 3, they can be up to Legendary Size.

These apparitions are obviously illusory and won't block lines of sight or otherwise impede senses, but they expand the type and amount of information the Abyssal's influence can convey. This can be used to circumvent language barriers, time pressure, or other impediments to communicating complex ideas.

With a Performance 5 repurchase, the Abyssal can instead pay a three-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to create convincing illusions. She uses the result of her influence roll to determine her illusions' quality, or rolls (Manipulation + Performance) if she didn't use influence. Onlookers can only roll (Perception + Awareness) to see through this if they have specific reason to question the apparition's reality or if they have magically enhanced or superhuman senses that

are relevant to recognizing it. Even then, they suffer a -4 penalty, and their 1s subtract successes.

GROTESQUE PHANTASMAGORIA

Cost: 3m, 4i; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Haunting Apparition Trick

The Abyssal's exquisite performance shapes the world into her weapon.

The Abyssal unleashes terrifying apparitions: heart-stopping screams, razor-sharp dancing shadows, swarming wraiths, and the like. This is a one-time environmental hazard, centered on a point within medium range and extending out to short range from it. It has difficulty (highest social Attribute) and Damage (higher of Essence or 3)L.

If the Abyssal uses Grotesque Phantasmagoria in multiple consecutive rounds, she adds +1 to its Damage each time, maximum (Essence + 4).

Special activation rules: This Charm can be flurried with a Performance roll or an action to continue a performance.

SINISTER PATRON APPLAUSE

Cost: —(1wp); **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Culture-Reinforcing Overture, Morbid Fascination Style (x2)

Think wisely before accepting the Abyssal's patronage.

While using Morbid Fascination Style on another character's performance, the Abyssal can spend one Willpower to add (her Appearance) non-Charm dice on that character's roll and grant it the effect of Culture-Reinforcing Overture. The performer automatically gains the Intimacy instilled by it unless he spends one Willpower to resist, but doing so denies him this Charm's benefits.

This Charm's Willpower cost is waived if its target is performing the Abyssal's own work — playing music composed by her, putting on one of her plays, etc.

With an Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal may use her own Reflexive and Supplemental Charms to enhance a performer's roll. However, she can't combine them

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Characters can continue a performance in combat, requiring an unrolled action on each of their turns. It can be flurried unless a specific effect specifies otherwise. Charms that require a character to spend a minute or more performing can't be used in combat.

with any magic he uses — his player must pick one or the other. If she spends any Willpower doing so, each point spent increases the Willpower cost to resist by one, maximum (higher of Essence or 3).

MIDNIGHT ENCORE OBSESSION

Cost: 1m, 2wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Piercing (Performance), Haunting Apparition Trick

Though the Abyssal's performance must die, her audience relives it again and again.

When the Abyssal makes an influence roll, she adds (Essence) non-Charm successes. She adds an additional two non-Charm successes for every point of Willpower spent on other Charms or other effects that enhance the roll. Resisting it requires entering a Decision Point and citing a Major or Defining Intimacy, and costs three Willpower.

Even if a character does resist, he dreams of the Abyssal the next time he sleeps, entering the Decision Point again. Unless he cites the requisite Intimacy and spends Willpower, the influence's effects resume or reoccur, as appropriate. For instance, if the Abyssal instilled a Tie of fascination toward the dead, the target could erode it but would regain it or strengthen it each night — though not above whatever intensity the deathknight's influence raised it to.

Once a character has spent Willpower to resist in (Abyssal's Essence) separate Decision Points, this Psyche effect ends.

LIES THAT TELL THEMSELVES

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Midnight Encore Obsession

The greatest lie ever told is that life has meaning. Next to this, the Abyssal's deceptions might as well be the sincerest truths.

The Abyssal makes a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Performance) influence roll, presenting a narrative or an explanation of how something happened. Any penalties she suffers for making implausible claims subtract successes instead of dice. This takes at least a minute, while complex narratives may take longer. The Abyssal can target herself, though doing so causes her to lose one Willpower if the narrative opposes one of her Intimacies.

Affected characters believe the Abyssal's narrative or version of events. They can be dissuaded from them with social influence but gain a Resolve bonus equal to half the deathknight's extra successes against them, rounded up against it. Additionally, such influence fails automatically unless supported by direct evidence. If a victim's Resolve is beaten by such influence, this Psyche effect ends. If a roll fails, the victim's Resolve bonus is lowered by two, but is immune to further such influence for the rest of the day.

With Essence 4, the Abyssal can stack up to (Essence) uses of this Charm on a single character.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, the Abyssal may use this Charm for five motes, one Willpower, instantly making a roll against a single target.

INCOMPARABLE SORROW INSPIRATION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 4

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Piercing (Performance), Morbid Fascination Style

Drawing from a thousand heartbreaks, the Abyssal brings forth beauty beyond hope.

The Abyssal invokes a free full Performance Excellency.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by upholding a Defining Intimacy with a performance.

MUSE OF DEATH'S RAPTURE

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 5

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Incomparable Sorrow Inspiration

Inspired by death's exquisite beauty, the Abyssal shares her bleak vision with the world.

The Abyssal waives the cost of all Performance Charms used for a single influence roll or performance.

Reset: Once per day, unless reset by upholding a negative Defining Intimacy or a Defining Principle related to death with a performance.

ECHO OF ETERNAL DESPAIR

Cost: 1wp, 1lhl; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 5

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Muse of Death's Rapture

Bleeding from her throat, fingers, or soles, the Abyssal plays on until the bloody end of her performance.

The Abyssal resets Incomparable Sorrow Inspiration and Muse of Death's Rapture.

Reset: Once per day

TORMENTED ARTIST PROPAGANDA

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Sinister Patron Applause (x2)

Symphonies and dramas authored by Death's Lawgiver turn those who perform them into unwitting mouthpieces of the end.

The Abyssal can sense whenever someone is about to perform a work composed by her and may reflexively use Morbid Fascination Style from afar. She gets a general impression of the performer, the audience, and the context, and may use Sinister Patron Applause if she wishes. She can use a Simple Charm, though any such Charms must make sense for the nature and context of the performance.

Dance

DANCE WITH DEATH

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Performance 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The battlefield or the ballroom — what difference does it make?

The Abyssal ignores all penalties for flurrying an action with any Ability with a Performance roll or an action to continue a performance. She adds (Performance) dice if it's a movement action or an unexpected attack against a dance partner.

MACABRE DANCER'S RHYTHM

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Dance With Death

Few can keep pace with the Abyssal's deadly pavane.

The Abyssal gains one Initiative when she beats a nontrivial enemy's Resolve with a dance-based influence roll or spends her entire turn to continue a dance performance without flurrying.

DEBAUCHED CARNIVAL GAMBOL

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Piercing Dance

The Abyssal's wild dance stirs her audience to a frenzy, for they all might die before dawn.

The Abyssal makes an (Appearance + Performance) inspire roll over the course of a few minutes, adding (Essence) bonus dice. Affected characters suffer a -3 penalty on Perception rolls and Join Battle rolls and treat any Intimacies related to discipline, fear, or self-restraint as one step weaker for the rest of the scene.

With Performance 5, Essence 3, if the Abyssal uses this Charm on characters engaged in a social event, like a gala, festival, or wedding, she may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to have the inspired emotions last for the duration of that event, rather than just one scene. She can only do so once per event.

THOUSAND CORPSES WALTZ

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: One performance

Prerequisite Charms: Debauched Carnival Gambol, Macabre Dancer's Rhythm, Sanguine Revel Celebrant

The Abyssal leaves ballrooms strewn with the severed limbs and moldering remains of her dance partners.

As long as the Abyssal dances while in battle, she gains the following benefits:

- If she makes a reflexive move action, rush, or disengage action on her turn, she doesn't need a separate action to continue her performance.
- She gains +1 Evasion against enemies whose Resolve is lower than her Appearance.
- If she attacks an enemy whose Resolve is lower than her Appearance, she adds non-Charm dice equal to the difference on the attack roll and damage roll, maximum (Essence).
- If she beats an enemy's Resolve with an influence roll, any attacks she makes against him become surprise attacks until the end of her next turn.
- When she gains Initiative from Macabre Dancer's Rhythm, her enemy loses that much Initiative.

Music and Singing

PASSION-STIRRING MELODY

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One performance

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Piercing Song

The Abyssal songstress intoxicates her audience, subtly influencing the scene.

The Abyssal performs a song that supports a certain mood, like outrage, grief, or romantic desire. Influence rolls that align with the chosen emotion add (Essence) dice, while those that oppose suffer a penalty of – (Essence). Ghosts crave the passion stirred by this song, and count as having a Minor Principle of desire for the performance to continue.

SOUL-CRUSHING DIRGE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Piercing Song

The deathknight's songs quicken death-touched hearts into action, drawing grief out of even perfect joy.

The Abyssal makes a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Performance) inspire roll over the course of at least a minute. For each target, the influence is supported by their strongest Intimacy relevant to the inspired emotion. The deathknight need not know of these Intimacies, nor are they revealed to her.

If the emotion is positive, the chosen Intimacy will typically be one that involves other, negative emotions or that relates to death somehow. A song of longing would exploit a god's Tie of grief for his dead lover, even if his Tie of love for their children is stronger.

Affected characters must act on the inspired emotion (**Exalted**, p. 217) in a way that supports the targeted Intimacy. The Storyteller should choose actions that support the Abyssal player's intent in using this Charm, but the deathknight's targets may still act unpredictably, especially if she hasn't used read intentions actions in advance.

DIRGE OF DEATH'S LAWGIVER

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One performance

Prerequisite Charms: Passion-Stirring Melody

The Abyssal's mournful song laments the impending death of her foes.

The Abyssal's performance grants allies who can hear it the following benefits:

- They gain one Initiative at the end of each of the deathknight's turns.
- They gain an additional point of Initiative for hitting with a **withering** attack.
- Undead allies add (Essence) dice on attack rolls. This doesn't benefit undead Exalted.

While performing, the Abyssal can't take non-reflexive actions.

If the Abyssal uses Muse of Death's Rapture (p. 251) to enhance this performance, it increases the Initiative gained by allies at the end of her turn to two and converts the dice added on undead allies' attacks to automatic successes.

ENDLESS SORROW THRENODY

Cost: —(+5m); **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 4
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Incomparable Sorrow
 Inspiration, Soul-Crushing Dirge

The Abyssal's heart-rending melody revives long-ago griefs and sorrows, shattering the tombs in which they lie buried.

The Abyssal can pay a five-mote surcharge when she uses Soul-Crushing Dirge to let it target Intimacies that a target once held but no longer has, treating their intensity as whatever it was at its highest. She can choose to exclusively target such Intimacies or simply add them to the range of options. If the Storyteller hasn't kept track of a character's Intimacies, he should assign one that fits a character's backstory.

Similarly, if this influence exploits an existing Intimacy that a target once held at a higher intensity, it's raised to that intensity against the Abyssal's roll and for role-playing purposes in determining how the character acts on the inspired emotion.

Oratory

INCENDIARY DEMAGOGUE BELLOW

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2
Type: Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Piercing Oratory

Death's Lawgiver whips her audience into a frenzy with tales of wickedness and corruption, then aims them in the proper direction.

The Abyssal rolls ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Performance) to inspire anger in an audience of minor characters (**Exalted**, p. 223) speaking against an organization or cause over the course of a few minutes. If successful, her audience will act on their anger in a way that opposes the subject of the deathknight's invective.

If the Abyssal rolls 3+ extra successes, she can focus her audience's ire on a specific objective — e.g., a Guild merchant prince, rather than the Guild as a whole. Every three additional successes lets her choose an additional objective.

FUNERAL PYRE HOMILY

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Incendiary Demagogue
 Bellow

The Abyssal preacher's words spread through the community, each congregant another spark.

When the Abyssal makes an inspire roll to spread negative emotions, affected characters gain a pool of bonus dice equal to the Abyssal's extra successes against them. She can also use this Charm on instill rolls to create or strengthen negative Principles or Principles related to death.

Bonus dice granted by this Charm can be spent on rolls to repeat the Abyssal's influence. If a roll enhanced by these dice succeeds, its targets are affected as above. They're lost if not used within (Abyssal's Essence) days.

This Charm's Willpower cost is waived if it's used with another Charm that costs Willpower.

SOUL-SEARING INVECTIVE

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Incendiary Demagogue
 Bellow

Death's Lawgiver reveals the folly of honeyed words and appeals to the heart, rebuking those who defy her doctrine.

The Abyssal opposes another character's influence roll with a counterargument or critique, making a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Performance) instill roll with (Essence) automatic successes. If she succeeds, his influence fails against all targets.

The target can resist this influence by citing a Defining Intimacy to spend three Willpower. Doing so lets him make the influence roll normally or resets the failed action if he resists after the roll. It also renders him immune to further uses of this Charm against the same influence.

Reset: Once per scene.



WITNESS THE END

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Funeral Pyre Homily, Haunting Apparition Trick, Soul-Searing Invective

Chanting ecstatic litanies that disturb her broken patrons' slumber, the Abyssal reveals an apocalyptic vision that shatters the world around her.

The Abyssal makes a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Performance) inspire roll, ignoring multiple target penalties. Affected characters witness terrifying visions, seeing the world as if it had already ended. Each affected character loses Initiative equal to the Abyssal's extra successes over their Resolve and suffers the following effects for the rest of the scene:

- They're overcome with sorrow, as per a standard inspire roll. If the Abyssal leverages their despair with social influence, the Willpower cost to resist is increased by one.

- They treat their positive Intimacies' intensity as one step lower and can't regain Willpower from upholding them.

- They suffer a -3 penalty on all rolls. This penalty subtracts successes instead of dice on Perception and Awareness rolls and on influence rolls to express positive emotions.

- At the Storyteller's discretion, a difficulty 3 (Perception + Awareness) roll may be required to notice positive or uplifting details — like the fact that an ally survived a conflagration of pyre flame — when doing so would normally be unrolled.

- Seeing the world as a blighted, shattered wasteland, they treat all movement as being through difficult terrain.

Resisting this influence costs three Willpower, but it can't be resisted by crashed enemies or trivial opponents. Characters using magic to see through illusion can resist for one Willpower instead.

Whispers: The Abyssal may invoke her Whispers to add (Whispers) non-Charms dice on the roll.

Special activation rules: The Abyssal can flurry this Charm with Grotesque Phantasmagoria (p. 250), ignoring all penalties for doing so. Doing so adds +1 to the difficulty of that Charm's hazard.

Acting

DONNING THE DEATH-MASK

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 1, Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal thespian has no identity but what she chooses to show her audience.

The Abyssal can use Performance instead of Socialize when calculating Guile. She gains +1 non-Charm Guile while acting in a performance. Likewise, if she disguises herself, feigns death, or uses Wicked Stagecraft Expertise, she gains this bonus against effects that would reveal the truth.

NEMISSARY'S STOLEN WHISPER

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Undying Virtuoso Spirit

The Abyssal's vocal mimicry is uncanny, mocking her victims with the words of their loved ones.

The Abyssal perfectly mimics the voice of anyone she's spent at least an hour observing or interacting with. Each use of this Charm covers a single influence roll or up to ten seconds of speech.

With a Performance 5 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a two-mote surcharge to extend this Charm's duration to one scene, letting her flawlessly mimic a single person's voice.

WICKED STAGECRAFT EXPERTISE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Simple
Keywords: Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Donning the Death-Mask, Heart-Piercing Acting

The consummate Abyssal actress studies her role in such depth that she vanishes within it.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal creates a persona or role, designing a separate set of Intimacies for it. It must have at least four Intimacies, including one Major and one Defining Intimacy. Her role can be wholly fictional or an impersonation of a specific individual, in which case it has all of his Intimacies that the Abyssal knows of.

Using this Charm lets the deathknight assume this role after a few hours spent playing the part, studying the role, attending to costuming, or the like. The role's Intimacies fully replace her own, which are suppressed and treated as if she didn't have them.

While in a role, its Intimacies can be changed as usual, though the Abyssal gains +1 non-Charm Resolve against instill rolls that fundamentally contradict its character concept. Likewise, the Abyssal can't voluntarily form such Intimacies. Any Intimacies gained by the role aren't carried over to the Abyssal's true Intimacies.

Leaving the role requires another use of this Charm, which requires the deathknight to spend at least a few minutes mentally separating herself from the role.

This Charm can be purchased up to (Essence) times to create multiple roles.

EGO VOID PERSONA

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 3
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Wicked Stagecraft Expertise (x2)

The Abyssal finds it easy to cast off the burden of her identity — after all, that woman is dead.

The Abyssal can enter and exit roles instantly with Wicked Stagecraft Expertise.

With Essence 5, the Abyssal can invent a new role on the spot once per story. Rather than inventing new Intimacies, she must use Intimacies drawn from her own or those of her other roles.

Presence

DEATH'S UNHOLY VISAGE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Presence 1, Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal sloughs off the face she wore in life, revealing what has risen from her grave.

The Abyssal's appearance changes as death's Essence permeates her body. The nature of this transformation depends on whether she has the Hideous Merit (**Exalted**, p. 162), which she may gain for free as part of learning this Charm.

An Abyssal without Hideous is suffused with deathly beauty: her skin turns deathly pale or colors with rich vitality; her hair darkens or pales; her lips and cheeks flush with blood.

An Abyssal with Hideous decays into a grotesque horror: her eyes sink deeper into her skull; her skin withers, desiccates, or rots away entirely; blood or bile drips from her eyes, mouth, or skin; the scent of death clings to her.

The Abyssal's altered appearance adds (Essence) non-Charm dice on certain influence rolls. If she doesn't have Hideous, she does so on persuade and bargain rolls to seduce others and instill rolls to create or strengthen Ties based on desire for the Abyssal. If she has Hideous, she does so on threaten rolls and instill rolls to create or strengthen Ties of fear toward herself.

Whether beautiful or hideous, the Abyssal's distinctive appearance betrays her nature. She suffers a -(Appearance) penalty on disguise rolls.

With Presence 3, the Abyssal adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice.

DARK-EYED ABYSS

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death's Unholy Visage

The Abyssal's mere glance entraps onlookers, the endless void of eternity behind her gaze inescapably compelling.

The Abyssal rerolls 6s until they cease to appear on an influence roll against a single character to seduce him or instill a Tie towards herself that's based on desire. She need not speak, denying her target the Resolve bonus for her using body language. If successful, she adds (Essence) to her Guile against anything that would provide information about her attempt or the motive behind it for the rest of the scene.

IT'S TIME TO PAY THE PRICE

When **Elegant Tyrant Majesty** or a similar effect that provides a mote discount on ongoing effects ends, a character must commit additional motes to cover the full cost of each discounted effect. Otherwise, those effects end.

With a Presence 4, Essence 2 repurchase, it becomes impossible for others to recognize that the Abyssal attempted this seduction.

ELEGANT TYRANT MAJESTY

Cost: 5m or 7m; **Mins:** Presence 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene or Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal affects inhuman magnetism and composure, an unmistakable presence even in the dark courts of the Deathlords.

The Abyssal adds three dice on influence rolls made with any Ability other than Stealth, and discounts the cost of any Charms that create or enhance such rolls by one mote each, minimum one.

This Charm lasts one scene for five motes or indefinitely for seven motes.

SUCCINCT KILLER'S DISCOURSE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: **Elegant Tyrant Majesty**

Death's Lawgiver cannot be silenced, not even with a blade at her throat.

The Abyssal reflexively makes an influence roll on her turn. She can only make one influence roll per turn.

BARROW-KING'S AUTHORITY

Cost: —(1m); **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

When Death's Lawgiver speaks, even the emptiest of the dead must obey.

The Abyssal's social influence is capable of affecting mindless undead. Essence 1 mindless undead count as having a Major Tie of loyalty to her if they don't already serve another.

For one mote, the Abyssal can reanimate a touched corpse as a zombie (**Exalted**, p. 502). It has a Defining Tie of obedience towards her that can't be weakened.

VOICE OF BLEAK TRUTHS

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's words shatter bonds of love and poison the faith of saints.

When the Abyssal makes an instill or persuade roll, any Intimacies her targets use to bolster their Resolve count as one step lower to determine their bonus. This doesn't affect Ties of fear towards her, negative Ties to the living, or Principles that reflect a positive outlook on death.

DARK SAINT MANTLE

Cost: 3m (1m); **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Barrow-King's Authority, Voice of Bleak Truths

The deathknight anoints an apostle of death, conferring her dread authority upon him.

The Abyssal confers her blessing on a willing character. Characters with Major or Defining Ties of loyalty, respect, or fear toward the Abyssal apply those Intimacies to the subordinate at Minor Intensity, and instinctively recognize he serves the deathknight's will.

This Charm's cost is reduced by two motes when used on characters with Whispers, apostles blessed with Soul-Consuming Pyre flame Baptism, or the Abyssal's Lunar mate.

With Presence 5, Essence 2, the Abyssal may pay a four-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to extend this Charm's effect to characters who only have Minor Ties of loyalty, respect, or fear.

SERMON ABOVE THE PIT

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Voice of Bleak Truths

To hear the Abyssal's words is to hear the distant howl of the end, the soft crumbling of bones into dust — and dust into nothing at all.

When the Abyssal makes an instill or persuade roll that leverages a negative Tie or a Principle that reflects a positive outlook on death, it also counts as an instill roll to create a related Intimacy. This fails if the target has a Major or Defining Intimacy that directly opposes the instilled Intimacy.

With a Presence 5 repurchase, this Charm can enhance rolls that are opposed by positive Ties or Principles that reflect a negative outlook on death, letting the Abyssal create Minor Tie opposed to that Intimacy. The target is immune to this only if he has a Major or Defining Intimacy *other* than the one used to oppose the influence that opposes the instilled Intimacy.

DREAD LORD Demeanor

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Tyrant Majesty

The deathknight's bearing and composure embody inevitability, staying the hands and tongues of all but her bravest foes.

Other characters cannot attack the Abyssal or speak against her with any form of social influence. A character can pay one Willpower to resist this for the scene, but still suffers a penalty of (Abyssal's Essence) on any threaten rolls he makes against her.

NO GREATER TERROR

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Lord Demeanor

Wreathed in the primeval fear of death, the Abyssal surpasses her victim's worst nightmares.

When the Abyssal makes a threaten roll, she can leverage her target's strongest Tie of fear as though

she were its object. She doesn't have to know what this Intimacy is, nor does she learn it.

If she's already the object of her target's strongest Intimacy of fear (or tied for it), she instead adds non-Charm dice equal to the intensity of the target's next-strongest Intimacy of fear, and the cost to resist increases by one Willpower.

If the Abyssal's target has no Ties of fear, she's refunded this Charm's Willpower cost.

HEARTLESS FIEND INSINUATION

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Sermon Above the Pit

The Abyssal's words drip with insidious venom, silencing love, compassion, and loyalty.

When the Abyssal makes an instill or persuade roll, she momentarily suppresses her targets' positive Ties toward mortals and Principles based on compassion. They can't use such Intimacies to bolster their Resolve or in a Decision Point against the deathknight's influence. If any nontrivial character has a Defining Intimacy suppressed that would have been applicable against her influence, the Abyssal gains one Willpower.

With a Presence 5, Essence 4 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a five-mote surcharge to suppress all positive Ties.

BEAUTY IN BLEAK DESPAIR

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Dark-Eyed Abyss, Elegant Tyrant Majesty

Death's Lawgiver carries herself with the haughty confidence of one who knows her image will endure past death.

The Abyssal gains a bonus dot of Appearance that can raise her Appearance above 5 after a scene spent contemplating her own image, donning the trappings of death, or receiving praise for her good looks. If she makes an influence roll to seduce someone, he suffers -1 Resolve against it.

CEASELESS LITANY OF DAMNATION

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Sermon Above the Pit

The deathknight's grim persistence grinds down even the strongest of wills.

The Abyssal resets a failed instill, persuade, or threaten roll. If she succeeds on the renewed roll, she gains one Willpower. A character targeted by her renewed influence can't bolster his Resolve with an Intimacy he used against the original roll, nor can he cite that Intimacy in a Decision Point.

Reset: Once per scene.

HEART-STOPPING MIEN

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Lord Demeanor

Shrouded in the terrifying darkness of her anima, the Abyssal's spiritual pressure scatters heroes and armies alike.

To use this Charm, the Abyssal must be at bonfire anima. She makes a reflexive threaten roll against all characters within long range who can see her, ignoring multiple target penalties and the Resolve bonus for using body language (**Exalted**, p. 221). Affected characters must flee from her, and affected battle groups also suffer a -3 penalty on rout checks. Trivial opponents and mundane animals normally can't assert their Resolve against this influence or spend Willpower to resist it, although the Storyteller may allow certain such characters to do so under extraordinary circumstances. This costs one Willpower to resist for a scene, plus an additional five Initiative in combat.

In combat, the Abyssal repeats this roll on each of her turns.

APOCALYPTIC TERROR ICON

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Stopping Mien

To look upon Death's Lawgiver is to witness the inevitable end of all things.

The Abyssal makes a (Appearance + Presence) instill roll against any number of characters who can perceive her to instill a Principle related to death or a Tie of awe, fear, or obedience towards the Abyssal. She converts dice added by her Appearance to non-Charm successes. This costs two Willpower to resist; doing so renders a character immune to this Charm for the rest of the scene.

For this Charm's duration, instilled Intimacies count as one step stronger to determine what tasks they'll support for the Abyssal's persuade rolls (**Exalted**, p. 216) and increase the cost to resist persuade rolls that leverage them by one Willpower.

KILLING WORDS TECHNIQUE

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dark-Eyed Abyss or Sermon Above the Pit

Defying the Abyssal is an ordeal of the flesh as much as the will, leaving those who will not submit to her reeling and bloodied.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after beating a character's Resolve with a bargain, threaten, or persuade roll, increasing the cost to resist by one Willpower and one level of lethal damage. This damage is always obvious to onlookers: the victim might bleed from his ears, manifest gruesome stigmata, cough up blood, or the like. If the Abyssal's influence has multiple targets, she must use this Charm separately against each of them.

SOUL-CONSUMING PYREFLAME BAPTISM

Cost: 4m, 1wp, 2xp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable, Whispers

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dark Saint Mantle

Death's Lawgiver fills her apostles' hearts with sickly green pyreflame, granting them unholy power even as it burns away their souls.

The Abyssal anoints a willing mortal or Essence 1 ghost as a pyreflame apostle. They gain dark blessings, described below, but at a steep cost. Each time they use a blessing, they must pay one level of aggravated

damage. If they have any positive Intimacies, they must also weaken one of them by one step.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal's player chooses two of the following blessings to grant her apostles. She can purchase additional blessings for three experience or one bonus point each.

Blazing Martyr Conviction (Reflexive; One scene):

The apostle ignores wound penalties and heat- or flame-based environmental penalties. He adds (higher of Abyssal's Essence or 3) soak. The soak bonus is doubled against flame-based attacks, and he gains that much Hardness against them.

Immolating Hatred Halo (Simple; Instant):

The apostle is wreathed in a corona of pyreflame that extends out to close range, a one-time environmental hazard with difficulty of (Abyssal's Charisma) and Damage 4L.

Kindled in Darkness (Reflexive; Instant):

The apostle can use this Charm after a roll that aligns with death's chivalry, a negative Defining Intimacy or one of the Abyssal's negative Defining Intimacies, the apostle can use this blessing after a roll. She rerolls 5s and 6s until they cease to appear. This blessing can also be used after a roll against one of his static values, adding the successes from these dice to that value.

Prophet of Despair (Supplemental; Instant):

The apostle doubles 8s and ignores multiple target penalties on an influence roll to instill or leverage a negative Intimacy.

Soul-Scorching Wrath (Reflexive; One scene):

The apostle can unleash pyreflame on her foes, treating it as a medium artifact weapon with the Archery (Long), Lethal, Flame, and One-Handed tags. He doubles 10s on **decisive** damage rolls.

The Abyssal's player can work with the Storyteller to design new blessings.

An apostle who damages his last -4 health level using a blessing is consumed utterly at the end of their scene. His soul is burnt away, preventing the living from leaving ghosts and destroying ghosts utterly. An apostle who damages his Incapacitated level using a blessing can complete his actions for that tick, after which he suffers the same fate. This Charm's experience point is refunded if the apostle dies or ceases to be narratively relevant.

An Abyssal may have up to (Essence x2) apostles at a time.

Whispers: The Abyssal may purchase the **Whispering Nightmare Flame** blessing, permanently granting her apostles two-dot Whispers. This doesn't have the usual cost of this Charm's blessings.

INSIDIOUS FORBIDDING COMMAND

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Heartless Fiend Insinuation

The Abyssal's forbidding glance leaves pleas and demands alike stillborn upon unwary tongues.

When the Exalt perceives a character who is about to make an influence roll, she first makes a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Presence) persuade or threaten roll against him to snuff out his intentions. If successful, he doesn't make the influence roll and forgets the objective he was trying to achieve with it for the rest of the scene. If someone tries to remind him of it, he may pay one Willpower to resist.

Reset: This Charm can't be used against a character more than once per scene.

LURKING MALICE INSINUATION

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Insidious Forbidding Command, Killing Words Technique

With words as subtle as shadow, the deathknight inscribes secret orders upon her victim's heart.

The Abyssal makes a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Presence) influence roll against one character, manifesting her Caste Mark as she does. The target's Intimacies don't modify his Resolve against this roll. If successful, the target is briefly entranced. During this time, the Abyssal can embed instructions in his subconscious, consisting of up to (1 + extra successes) short, clear statements.

Once the Abyssal's finished, the target's trance ends, and he immediately begins following them unless the deathknight included an instruction to wait. He doesn't understand why he does these things, nor does he consciously remember what his orders are.

Resisting this influence costs three Willpower. However, a character who does so forgets that the Abyssal

attempted to use this Charm. A character who successfully asserts her Resolve against this influence or resists it is rendered immune for (his base Resolve) days.

ENTHRONED IN DEATH

Cost: —; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 4

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Stopping Mien, Killing Words Technique

Death's Lawgiver holds dominion over all things dead or doomed to die, drawing cries of awe and holy dread.

The Abyssal invokes a free full Performance, Presence, or Socialize Excellency.

Reset: Once per scene.

HEARTSTRING-SEVERING ADORATION

Cost: 5m, 2wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Beauty in Bleak Despair, Killing Words Technique

The Abyssal's terrible beauty eclipses all others, poisoning those who yearn for her.

The Abyssal makes an instill roll against a single target to create or strengthen a Tie of romantic or sexual desire towards herself. If successful, her target suffers the following effects for this Charm's duration:

- The instilled Intimacy counts as one level higher against the Abyssal's influence rolls if it's advantageous for her. If the Tie is already Defining, her influence costs an additional Willpower for him to resist.
- Against influence that leverages the instilled Intimacy, he must weaken another of his positive Ties to resist with Willpower, if he has any. Ties based on romantic or sexual desire must be weakened first.
- If he voluntarily weakens a positive Tie, it can't be strengthened by any means unless he pays two Willpower per level of intensity.
- Once per day, when he voluntarily weakens another positive Tie in the Abyssal's presence, she gains one Willpower.

With an Essence 5 repurchase, the Abyssal may target multiple characters with this roll, paying a three-mote surcharge for each additional target.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a character once per story.

LOOMING SPECTER OF EXTINCTION

Cost: 6m, 3a; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Stopping Mien

All courage dies in the presence of Death's Chosen.

The Abyssal can only use this Charm while Heart-Stopping Mien is active, and doing so ends that Charm. She adds (Essence) dice on threaten rolls with a single target and can use fear-based influence against characters who are normally immune to it. In combat, enemies lose one Initiative at the end of each round in which they didn't attack her.

This Charm's mote cost can't be muted.

With Essence 5, if the Abyssal reaches bonfire anima while this Charm is active, she may use Heart-Stopping Mien for free. Enemies who've previously resisted it lose their immunity, though they regain it if they resist a second time.

SOUL-FLAYING GAZE

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Killing Words Technique

The cost of defying Death's Lawgiver forces her enemy to the precipice, then offers her the choice of the velvet-gloved hand of aid, or a push into the abyss.

When the Abyssal uses Killing Word Technique against a single target, she may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to inflict a mind-warping assault. Instead of taking damage to resist, the target must accept a Madness, Obsession, or Paranoia Derangement (**Exalted**, p. 168) at Major Intensity that's thematically appropriate to the Abyssal's influence or the Intimacies cited against it. Characters with a Defining Intimacy opposed to the influence are immune to this, suffering Killing Words Technique's base effect instead.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a character once per story.

BROKEN HEART TRIUMPH

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lurking Malice Insinuation, Soul-Flaying Gaze

The Abyssal's words corrode her victim's convictions, distorting passions and beliefs into warped mockeries of themselves.

The Abyssal makes a special instill roll against a single character, assailing one of his positive Minor or Major Ties. She must leverage an Intimacy of at least the same intensity as the one targeted. If successful, the targeted Tie's emotional context is inverted into a negative one. The Abyssal chooses the Tie's new context, though it must be a fitting thematic opposite of the original context: turning love to hatred or respect to disdain. This costs three Willpower to resist.

This Charm can affect Defining Ties towards mortals or towards those to whom the Abyssal has a negative Defining Tie.

Reset: This Charm can't be used against a character more than once per story.

Resistance

ARMOR-CALLING PHANTASMS

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Resistance 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Screaming phantoms emerge to gather up the Abyssal's scattered armor, girding her for bloody slaughter.

The Abyssal can don or remove armor (**Exalted**, p. 591) in (its mobility penalty + 1) rounds, aided by spectral apparitions. She can draw her armor to her from within short range, though she can't steal other character's armor.

With a Resistance 3, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a three-mote surcharge to use this Charm reflexively on her turn, donning armor instantly. The surcharge is reduced to one mote for light armor. If she knows Wraith-Forged Plate (p. 267), she can use it reflexively, without needing to pay a surcharge.

IRON TOMB IMPRISONMENT**Cost:** 4m (6m); **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Indefinite**Prerequisite Charms:** Armor-Calling Phantasms

Ghostly nails rivet the Abyssal's armor to her flesh while chains of spectral Essence coil around it, binding her in steel.

The Abyssal seals herself in her armor. Its mobility penalty is reduced to zero as if it was an extension of her body. Light armor gains +1 soak, reinforced by spectral chains and rivets. Regardless of weight, artifact armor also gains +2 Hardness. When used with heavy armor, this Charm costs an additional two motes.

The Abyssal's armor can't be removed by any means while this Charm is active — not even her own efforts. Mundane armor becomes as durable as an artifact. Artifact armor's attunement can't be broken by magic.

To end this Charm, the Abyssal must rip herself free of her armor, using the normal rules for removing it (**Exalted**, p. 591). This increases her wound penalty by -1 for the rest of the day. This isn't necessary for armor created by magic like Wraith-Forged Plate once that armor fades away.

CORPSE-BODY RESILIENCE**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Resistance 1, Essence 1**Type:** Permanent**Keywords:** Stackable**Duration:** Permanent**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Abyssal's flesh is sustained by the Essence of death, lending her an uncanny vigor.

She gains additional health levels based on her Stamina rating:

Stamina 1–2: One -1 level and one -2 level.**Stamina 3–4:** One -1 level and two -2 levels.**Stamina 5:** One -0 level, one -1 level, and one -2 level.

This Charm may be purchased (Resistance) times. If the Abyssal's Stamina increases, her health levels change to reflect her new rating.

WOUND-ABSORBING DISCIPLINE**Cost:** 10m; **Mins:** Resistance 2, Essence 1**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** Mute**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Corpse-Body Resilience

The Abyssal draws her wounds inwards, casting them into the void at the heart of her Essence.

The Abyssal speeds her natural healing (**Exalted**, p. 173). After an hour spent resting or meditating, she rolls (Stamina + Resistance). For the rest of the day, her healing's rate is multiplied by (Essence x successes).

Alternatively, when a character rolls to use Flesh-Mending Discipline (p. 229) or similar magic to heal the Abyssal's damage, she can add her successes to his roll.

DEATHLESS VIGOR RENEWAL**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Decisive-only, Perilous**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Corpse-Body Resilience

Though her enemies rend her flesh, such injuries only fuel the deathknight's fury.

When the Abyssal takes **decisive** damage, she can use this Charm to roll one die for every health level she has, damaged or undamaged. She gains one Initiative for every two successes, rounded up.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to use this Charm while crashed.

Reset: Once per day.**CADAVEROUS TORPOR TECHNIQUE****Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 1, Essence 1**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** Mute**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Abyssal suspends all signs of life, becoming as a corpse.

The Abyssal rolls (Stamina + [Larceny, Resistance, or Stealth]) to feign death, doubling 9s. Her wound penalties add non-Charm dice instead of subtracting. Only characters with superhuman or magically enhanced senses can see through this, opposing it with a (Perception + [Awareness, Investigation, or Medicine]) roll. Their 1s and 2s subtract successes. Moving, speaking, and other overt actions spoil this deception.

CORPSE NEEDS NOTHING

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 1, Essence 1
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal kills that in herself, which requires mortal sustenance.

The Abyssal no longer needs food or water to survive, and never suffers penalties from hunger or thirst. However, she no longer finds pleasure in the taste of anything she does consume, imposing a -1 penalty on taste-based Perception rolls.

With a Resistance 3 repurchase, the Abyssal no longer needs to sleep and never suffers fatigue penalties. Instead of regaining Willpower from sleep, she gains one Willpower at the stroke of midnight.

With a Resistance 4, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal no longer needs to breathe, though she must still do so to speak. By stopping her breathing, she can avoid exposure to inhaled poisons and similar dangers entirely.

SPIRIT-HARDENED FRAME

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Resistance 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Dual
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Having died once, Abyssals quickly shrug off lesser wounds as inconsequential.

The Abyssal reduces **withering** attacks' raw damage and **decisive** attacks' damage dice by two.

Against **decisive** attacks, the Abyssal also gains Hardness 4. If she already has Hardness from Flesh Like Marble (p. 266) she can instead add +2 to that Hardness.

IMPLACABLE DOOM ENDURANCE

Cost: 1m per point of soak; **Mins:** Resistance 2, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Hardened Frame

Scorning her enemies' steel, the Abyssal is unfazed by even the most telling blows.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after being hit by a **withering** attack but before the damage roll. She can add up to (Stamina) to her soak, paying one mote per point.

With Resistance 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal can pay a two-Initiative, one-Willpower surcharge to use this Charm after a **withering** damage roll, subtracting up to (Stamina) levels of damage for two motes each. Such uses are Perilous.

DEATH TWICE DENIED

Cost: 2m or 6m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Dual
Duration: Instant or Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Implacable Doom Endurance

Through the Bleak Exaltation, Death's Lawgiver once denied death — she does so again with naught but raw endurance.

Against a **withering** attack, the Abyssal can use this Charm for two motes to soak unsoakable damage with her base Stamina, not including armor or any other soak bonuses.

Against a **decisive** attack, the Abyssal can use this Charm for six motes after the damage roll to gain (Stamina) temporary -0 health levels indefinitely. Unlike most temporary health levels, they don't vanish when damaged. Once the scene ends, they become -1 health levels, vanishing only when the damage is healed. Healing applies to them before the Abyssal's normal health levels. If she engages in vigorous activity like combat while she still has damaged levels remaining, their wound penalty increases by -1 each day. She can't voluntarily end the Charm until all temporary levels have been healed.

With Resistance 5, Essence 3, this Charm's cost is reduced to five motes against **decisive** attacks. The Abyssal can gain up to (Essence) additional temporary levels, committing an additional mote per level.

AGONY-SAVORING SPIRIT

Cost: 1i; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Perilous, Decisive-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight savors the exquisite pleasure of agony, drawing power from pain.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after being hit by a **decisive** attack but before the damage roll. She gains one mote for every die on the damage roll that rolls a success. This includes dice that are rerolled into failures with Far Beyond Ruin or similar defensive magic, but she doesn't gain additional motes if rerolled dice succeed again.

The Abyssal can't gain more than (Stamina) motes per round from this Charm. With Resistance 5, Essence 3, this increases to (Stamina x2).

With a Resistance 4, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal can use this Charm for a cost of two Initiative to exchange four motes granted by it for one Willpower. (Exchanged motes still count toward the maximum).

A third purchase at Resistance 5, Essence 3 lets the Abyssal use this Charm for a cost of one Willpower to exchange motes for Initiative.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by being hit by a **decisive** attack with 10+ damage dice without being damaged.

UNBEATING HEART STILLNESS

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

No malady can lay low one who already mastered death.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal's player chooses one of this Charm's two defenses: **Venom-Drinking Thirst**, against poison, or **Plague Knows Its Master**, against disease. She can use this Charm after a roll against the chosen ailment, rerolling (Stamina) dice that show failures. If this reroll lets her succeed, she gains one Willpower.

The Abyssal can repurchase this Charm to learn the second defense.

UNASSAILABLE ENTROPY STANCE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Hardened Frame

The Abyssal draws the force of her enemy's blow into the infinite void of her Essence, erasing its killing power.

The Abyssal adds +2 to her armor's Hardness if she's wearing any or the Hardness granted by Flesh like Marble. When determining if her Hardness prevents damage from a **decisive** attack, her attacker compares only his Initiative to her Hardness, not any damage dice from other sources. If the damage roll doesn't include his Initiative due to magic, he uses the lower of his damage dice or his actual Initiative.

VOID-BANISHED MAIL

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Armor-Calling Phantasm

The Abyssal's armor bursts into countless wisps of fox-fire, vanishing until she has need of it.

The Abyssal banishes either or both of her armor or a shield Elsewhere. If she has both armor and shield, a single use affects both.

A second use of this Charm recalls the banished equipment. Recalled armor must be donned normally (**Exalted**, p. 591).

CHAIN-AND-ARMOR MORTIFICATION

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Iron Tomb Imprisonment

Murderous chains coil around the Abyssal's armor like a den of steel vipers, moving to her will alone.

The Abyssal can use this Charm while bound with Iron Tomb Imprisonment to animate her armor's chains, gaining the following benefits.

- She may extend her chains out to short range to attack, retrieve objects, make feats of strength, or take similar physical actions that don't involve fine manipulation. She uses her normal die pools for these actions. They're medium weapons (+2 ACC, +9 DMG, +1 DEF, OVW 1) with the Bashing, Brawl, Melee, Disarming, Flexible, Grappling, and Reaching tags. They can't make grapple gambits beyond close range.
- She reduces the cost of grapple and disarm gambits with the chains by one Initiative, or two Initiative with heavy armor.

- Dragging an enemy grappled with the chains only costs one round of control.

- The chains harry enemies that try to disengage from her, letting her oppose their rolls with (Stamina + Resistance) and inflicting her armor's base mobility penalty on their disengage rolls.

If the Abyssal uses this Charm to enhance Wraith-Forged Plate (p. 267), the chains of darkness that emerge from her armor gain artifact traits (+3 ACC, +12 DMG, +1 DEF, OVW 4).

A Resistance 5 repurchase extends the chains' range to medium.

WRITHING TORMENT CHAINS

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Chain-and-Armor Mortification

Viciously barbed chains erupt from the Abyssal's armor, dragging victims to their dooms.

While using Chain-and-Armor Mortification, the Abyssal doesn't suffer any of the usual penalties for grappling and can grapple using the chains' full range. A successful grapple drags an enemy into close range.

FLESH LIKE MARBLE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Death Twice Denied

The Abyssal's flesh fades bloodlessly pale as she suffuses her body with death's Essence.

The Abyssal rolls (Stamina + Resistance) with (higher of Essence or 3) automatic successes, which can't be enhanced by other magic. While unarmored, she adds her successes to her soak and gains (Stamina) Hardness. She's immune to environmental hazards with Damage 4 or less unless their nature makes physical resilience irrelevant.

THOUSAND AGONIES ENDURED

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Death Twice Denied

The Abyssal ends her enemies' dreams of defeating her, shrugging off their every attack.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after being hit by a **withering** attack before its damage roll. All **withering** damage she suffers for this Charm's duration is halved, rounded up.

With Essence 3, enemies who hit the Abyssal with a **withering** attack lose Initiative equal to the 1s on their attack rolls, maximum (Abyssal's Stamina/2, rounded up). With Essence 4, the Abyssal gains this Initiative.

UNYIELDING LEADEN AEGIS

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Iron Tomb Imprisonment

Metal screams out against metal as the deathknight's foes strike, but she remains unmoved behind her dreaded mail.

The Abyssal can use this Charm against a **withering** damage roll against her, reducing the amount of Initiative she loses by (higher of Essence or 3). This is increased by +1 while wearing medium armor or +2 with heavy armor. Her attacker still gains Initiative as usual.

While using Iron Tomb Imprisonment, the bonus from the Abyssal's armor increases by +1.

VAULT OF UNDYING TRIUMPHS

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unassailable Entropy Stance, Unyielding Leaden Aegis

Caged within a tomb of iron, the Abyssal finds no freedom, even in death itself.

The Abyssal rolls her armor's soak and adds it to her Hardness against a **decisive** attack. If the attack overcomes her Hardness, each success on her roll subtracts one success from the damage roll.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can perfectly defend against uncountable damage. Against recurring sources, the

Abyssal becomes immune for the rest of the scene. If she's wearing mundane armor, it's destroyed once the uncountable damage subsides.

This Charm is incompatible with Wounds Mean Nothing.

DEATH-DRINKING RAPACITY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Corpse Needs Nothing, Wound-Absorbing Discipline

The Abyssal is sustained by slaughter, reaping vitality from those dead by her hand.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she incapacitates a nontrivial enemy with a **decisive** attack. She rolls dice equal to the levels of damage she dealt, maximum (Stamina), and heals one level of non-aggravated damage for each success. She can only feed on the living and ghosts — animated corpses, automatons, and their ilk offer no sustenance.

If the enemy was within close range of the Abyssal, she can reflexively drink the blood from his wounds, letting her reroll 1s until they cease to appear.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack with 20+ Initiative.

WOUNDS MEAN NOTHING

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death-Drinking Rapacity, Deathless Vigor Renewal

The Abyssal may seem to be injured, even slain, but her wounds are a lie. An instant later, even the most grotesque of injuries are healed.

When the Abyssal takes **decisive** damage, she immediately heals one level of damage, plus an additional level for each 1 and 2 on the damage roll. This can't heal more damage than she was dealt. (She must declare this Charm before an attack roll, as usual).

Against environmental hazards, traps, and the like, she heals all damage — even uncountable damage. Against recurring uncountable damage, she's rendered immune for the rest of the scene.

The Abyssal can heal with this Charm even if she's incapacitated. However, doing so is more strenuous, increasing her wound penalty by three for the next (7 – Stamina) rounds.

This Charm is incompatible with Vault of Undying Triumphs.

WRAITH-FORGED PLATE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Iron Tomb Imprisonment

Screams and ringing iron echo from within the Abyssal's anima as her she hammers Essence and nightmares into void-black armor.

The Abyssal creates artifact armor from Essence and dons it instantly. The type of armor created and its appearance are the same each time she uses this Charm. Additionally, the Abyssal steals one Initiative from her attacker whenever her soak reduces a **withering** attack to the minimum damage or her Hardness negates a **decisive** attack. If this crashes her attacker, he loses one Willpower.

The deathknight may fuse the Wraith-Forged Plate with any artifact armor she's currently wearing, enjoying the best of both armors' traits and applying this Charm's benefits to her armor. Artifact armor's attunement cost is waived for this Charm's duration, releasing the committed notes.

This Charm may be repurchased any number of times, each repurchase adding an Evocation to the armor. These Evocations' themes and functions derive from the Abyssal's personality, Caste, and iconic anima banner.

With Essence 3, this Charm's duration becomes Indefinite.

CHAIN-BOUND SACRIFICE

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Writhing Torment Chains

Those caught in the Abyssal's chains make for excellent, if unwilling, bodyguards.

While grappling an enemy with Chain-and-Armor Mortification, the Abyssal can use him as a shield to

clash a **decisive** attack. She rolls (Stamina + Resistance), doubling 9s and adding automatic successes equal to her rounds of control. If she wins the clash, the attack is redirected to the grappled enemy and automatically hits him.

FAR BEYOND RUIN

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Vault of Undying Triumphs or Wounds Mean Nothing

Embodying the inexhaustible abyss, the deathknight withers away her enemy's strength.

This Charm can be used after a **decisive** damage roll, forcing the attacker to reroll all dice that show successes. This occurs after any other rerolls. The total successes on the rerolled damage can't exceed those on the original roll.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by being hit by three attacks that deal no damage to the Abyssal.

INCORRUPTIBLE CORPSE PERFECTION

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Agony-Savoring Spirit, Death-Drinking Rapacity

The Abyssal embodies death's eternal perfection, unmarred by anything less than annihilation.

When the Abyssal is hit by an attack, she can use this Charm before the damage roll to diminish any crippling effects the attack inflicts. Any penalties she suffers from it are halved, rounded down, and it heals completely in (7 – Stamina) rounds.

This Charm doesn't apply when the Abyssal's player chooses to take a crippling injury unless the choice was forced by magic like Artful Maiming Onslaught (p. 238).

IRON LABYRINTH OF SUFFERING

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Until the grapple ends

Prerequisite Charms: Writhing Torment Chains

Countless chains twist and coil around the deathknight's victims, imprisoning them in the Abyssal's iron grasp.

While using Chain-and-Armor Mortification, the Abyssal makes a grapple gambit against all enemies within close range or up to (Stamina) enemies within her chains' full range. She makes only one attack roll and Initiative roll against all enemies but rolls (Strength + Brawl) separately to establish control against each enemy.

While clinching multiple enemies, the Abyssal's grapple actions are expanded:

Savage: The Abyssal makes a single savaging attack roll against any number of grappled enemies. **Withering** attacks roll damage separately against each grappled foe. Only the single highest **withering** damage roll awards Initiative to the Abyssal, although she can receive Initiative Breaks for crashing multiple foes. **Decisive** savaging attacks divide her Initiative evenly among all foes (rounded up) to determine the damage rolled against them, ignoring Hardness.

Restrain/Drag: The Abyssal can restrain any number of grappled enemies or drag them in the same direction. This costs two rounds of control for each enemy.

Throw/Slam: The Abyssal can throw or slam any number of grappled enemies in the same direction. This follows the same rules as savaging attacks.

UNTOUCHED BY MORTAL FRAILTY

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Unbeating Heart Stillness (x2)

Having cast her mortality aside, Death's Lawgiver scoffs at plague and poison.

The Abyssal rerolls 1s until they cease to appear on rolls against disease and poison. She's immune to any such ailment that she's previously been exposed to.

With Stamina 3, the morbidity of a disease the Abyssal is exposed to can't exceed 5 – even for diseases that wouldn't normally allow a morbidity roll.

MERCIFUL GUILLOTINE MOTION

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple



Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Iron Labyrinth of Suffering

The Abyssal's grasping chains twist and wind together to form a wicked guillotine-blade, falling in thunderbolt-quick descent to grant the absolution of a quick death.

The Abyssal makes a **decisive** savaging attack with (Stamina + Resistance) against an enemy grappled with Chain-and-Armor Mortification. She adds her attack roll extra successes as damage dice and also adds two damage dice for each round of grapple control she has. If this incapacitates her enemy, her Initiative doesn't reset.

While using Iron Labyrinth of Suffering, the Abyssal can bring the blade down on multiple grappled foes, as long as they're all within close range of each other. She makes a single attack against all of them, as above. She divides her Initiative evenly among all hit foes, but her extra successes and rounds of control add dice to the damage rolls against each enemy.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by successfully grappling a crashed enemy using Chain-and-Armor Mortification or crashing a foe who's grappled with her chains.

TRANSCENDING WORTHLESS FLESH

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Flesh Like Marble, Thousand Agonies Endured, Unassailable Entropy Stance

A deathly rigor takes hold of the Abyssal, tempering her flesh with lifeless perfection.

While unarmored, the Abyssal adds (Essence) soak and gains (Essence/2, rounded up) Hardness. This stacks with Hardness from Flesh Like Marble.

IRON MAIDEN'S KISS

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Merciful Guillotine Motion

The Abyssal's coiling chains form two halves of an iron casket lined with flesh-piercing spikes that slams shut around her victim like a gruesome maw.

To use this Charm, the Abyssal must have Chain-and-Armor Mortification active. She makes a difficulty 6 (Stamina + Resistance) gambit against a foe within close range to trap him in an iron maiden. If successful, the iron maiden closes around him, dealing (Abyssal's Essence + Initiative roll extra success) levels of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. Against an enemy grappled with her chains, each round of control adds an automatic success on the Initiative roll, and the grapple ends if she succeeds.

If the victim survives, he's imprisoned within the iron maiden. He suffers the drawbacks of being grappled and takes (Abyssal's Essence) dice of lethal damage at the start of each of his turns, ignoring Hardness.

While trapped, the victim can't take actions that affect anything outside of the iron maiden, even with magic that would let him attack through full cover or perform similar feats. As a dubious consolation, he receives full cover while trapped. He and his allies can attempt to free him with appropriate actions, like feats of demolition or lock-picking, but such actions have a minimum difficulty of 7 and can't be flurried. Feats of demolition require Strength 3+ from within the maiden or Strength 5+ from outside.

An enemy slain by the iron maiden is reanimated as a war ghost (**Exalted**, p. 504) with a Defining Tie of terrified obedience to the Abyssal. It's permanently merged with the iron maiden, as per its Forge-Born Form Charm. The iron maiden has the same base traits as the Abyssal's armor, but is always mundane.

Reset: Once per scene. Using this Charm against a grappled enemy doesn't count against this limit.

WORLD-DENYING INVINCIBILITY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Vault of Undying Triumphs or Wounds Mean Nothing

Embodying the principle of annihilation, the Abyssal is untouched by lesser destruction.

When the Abyssal uses either of this Charm's prerequisites, she gains (Stamina + Resistance) soak and

Hardness 20. **Withering** attacks against her subtract (Essence) dice of post-soak damage.

This protection ends if the Abyssal is crashed or if she goes a round without either making a **decisive** attack or spending 8+ motes on offensive Charms.

Ride

SOUL REINS

Cost: 1m (1m); **Mins:** Ride 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

Bending a beast to her will, the deathknight empowers her steed with dark Essence.

The Abyssal imposes a mental bond on a touched animal she intends to ride as a mount, giving the steed -1 Resolve against her persuade and threaten rolls, and reducing any penalties she suffers on Survival rolls to train it by one. The mount counts as a creature of darkness for this Charm's duration.

This bond also empowers the deathknight's steed. Upon purchasing this Charm, her player picks two of the boons below. Additional boons can be purchased for three experience points or one bonus point.

Fear-Killing Exercise: The mount can only be spooked or frightened by the deliberate actions of other characters, inuring it to terrors such as the presence of the undead and being in the Underworld. The Abyssal can pay one mote to render her mount immune to fear-based influence for (Abyssal's Essence) rounds.

Forceful Spirit Spur: The Abyssal can call the mount to her side with a brief sensation of phantom spurs digging into its flanks. If willing, the mount makes its way to her as circumstances best allow, adding (Ride) dice on any rolls necessary to do so.

Ghoul-Steed's Hunger: As long as the mount's diet consists primarily of raw meat, it gains Exalted Healing (**Exalted**, pp. 165–166). Even normally herbivorous animals are both able and willing to do so.

Ride Beyond Death: If a living mount dies, it's reanimated as a zombie animal (p. 299). The Abyssal may spend one mote to reduce an undead mount's wound penalty by one for a tick.

Tireless Charger Technique: While riding the mount, the Abyssal can spend one mote reflexively to suffuse it with deathless vitality for (higher of Essence or 3) hours. Any fatigue penalties it suffers are reduced by one, and exertion during that time won't cause it to tire or accrue further fatigue penalties.

Unfaltering Deathknight's Steed: The Abyssal is sure in her saddle and will never fall off the mount unless another character actively intervenes, even if asleep or unconscious. She gains +1 Defense against attacks that might knock her from her mount. Even if such an attack succeeds, she can spend one mote reflexively after the damage roll to stop herself from falling off.

The Abyssal's player may work with the Storyteller to create new boons.

RIDDEN TO THE BONE

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ride 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One hour

Prerequisite Charms: Soul Reins

The Abyssal wrings every ounce of speed she can from her mount's hard-ridden flesh, urging it tirelessly onwards.

The Abyssal adds an automatic success on all mounted movement rolls or rolls for her mount to maintain its balance, and her mount doesn't accrue fatigue penalties from exertion (though preexisting penalties remain). Additionally, the deathknight can use Raiton's Nimble Perch (p. 158) and Spider Pounce Technique (p. 158) to enhance her mount's movement.

PRIMAL TERROR SPURS

Cost: 4m, 1wp (2m, 1wp); **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ridden to the Bone

The Abyssal's steed surges forward as if pursued by all the horrors of the Underworld.

The deathknight gains the following benefits for one hour:

- She adds (higher of Essence or 3) successes on mounted movement rolls.
- When she succeeds on a mounted rush, she gains two Initiative. If her mount is rolled into combat, it also gains two Initiative.

- Outside of combat, her mount can carry her at incredible speed: she can cover a distance that would normally take an hour to cross in ten minutes, a distance that would take a day to cross in a handful of hours, or a distance that would take a week to cross in a day.

This Charm's cost is reduced to two motes, one Willpower while Ridden to the Bone is active. If the Abyssal reactivates this Charm when its effect runs out, she waives its Willpower cost.

VANISHING WRAITH-STEED WAYS

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ridden to the Bone

The deathknight's mount effortlessly outpaces her pursuers.

The Abyssal reflexively disengages while mounted. This still counts as her movement action.

FLESH-EATING STEED FRENZY

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal rouses bloodthirst in even the meekest of beasts, horse and rider moving as one to kill.

When she Joins Battle, her mount also gains an amount of Initiative equal to her own and acts on its own Initiative for the duration of the combat. It can attack on its own turn without using up the Abyssal's attack for the round (**Exalted**, p. 203).

Using this Charm grants the mount a Minor Tie of hunger towards the living or increases a preexisting Tie's intensity by one step. If it's already at Defining intensity, the Abyssal can gain one Willpower when her mount gains Willpower for upholding the Tie in the scene she used this Charm, maximum once per scene.

UNHOLY MOUNT WARDING

Cost: —(1i from mount); **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Flesh-Eating Steed Frenzy

The deathknight's steed draws strength from its bond with her.

While the Abyssal is riding or within close range of her mount, it adds (her Essence) dice to the raw damage of its **withering** and **decisive** attacks, and can pay one Initiative to reflexively protect the deathknight with a defend other action. Doing so grants it +1 Defense, maximum 5, until its next turn.

SOUL-BARDED STEED

Cost: 1hl per three levels; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unholy Mount Warding

The Abyssal armors her mount with the pulsing Essence of her lifeblood.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a **decisive** damage roll against her mount while riding it, letting her negate damage by taking one level of bashing damage for every three levels negated.

FELL RIDER'S ADVANTAGE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flesh-Eating Steed Frenzy

The deathknight and her pale steed fight as one, riding down their foes with murderous focus.

When the Abyssal or her mount makes a **decisive** attack while she's mounted, the other character can transfer up to half her Initiative, rounded up, to the attacker. This Charm can also be used when either of them would be crashed and can be used after a **withering** damage roll.

WRETCHED RIDDEN NIGHTMARE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Fell Rider's Advantage

The deathknight's steed transforms into a warped mockery of itself, a horror born from the Neverborn's nightmares.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal's player chooses up to six dots of mutations: bony spines,

skeletal wings, razor-sharp fangs, or other grotesque transformations.

Using this Charm transforms a mount ridden by the Abyssal, granting it any or all of these mutations. It adds an automatic success on attack rolls and gains +1 Defense.

The Abyssal can purchase this Charm up to (Essence + 1) times. Each repurchase lets her pick an alternative set of mutations she can use with it.

GHOST-RIDDEN COURSER

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Primal Terror Spurs

Channeling the spirits of slain steeds, the Abyssal suffuses her mount with swiftness born of sorrow.

The deathknight converts her mount's Speed Bonus to non-Charm successes on a mounted movement roll. If her mount's Speed Bonus is negative, she instead sets it to 0.

A Ride 5 repurchase lets the Abyssal pay a two-mote surcharge to add her mount's Speed Bonus to a Join Battle roll, along with this Charm's other benefits.

LAST RIDE GLORY

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Ghost-Ridden Courser

So merciless is the deathknight that she will willingly ride her steed to death in pursuit of victory.

The Abyssal doubles her mount's Speed Bonus. Mundane animals almost always perish from such exertion at the end of the scene unless the deathknight uses Ridden to the Bone with this Charm, in which case the steed is merely exhausted instead, requiring immediate rest.

This Charm ends if the Abyssal is crashed. However, ending it prematurely doesn't spare her mount.

INEXORABLE WRAITH RIDER

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ridden to the Bone

Moving like a ghost in the night, the Abyssal rider pursues her prey with the inevitability of death itself.

The Abyssal ignores difficult terrain, environmental penalties, and similar penalties caused by external conditions on a mounted movement action. If she rides through a mundane environmental hazard without stopping, she and her mount are unaffected and don't need to roll.

NIGHTFALL RIDER ESCAPE

Cost: 3m, 2i, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Vanishing Wraith-Steed Ways

The Abyssal rider escapes her foes' grasp like a shadow eludes the light.

The Abyssal automatically succeeds on a disengage roll as long as there's no more than one enemy within close range.

STALLION DEFIES THE SCYTHE

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unholy Mount Warding

The deathknight's mount weathers all peril in its unceasing labors, unbowed even by fatal blows.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a damage roll against her mount, sparing it from brunt of the blow. If a **withering** attack would crash it, it's left with one Initiative instead. If a **decisive** attack would incapacitate it, any damage to its Incapacitated level is negated.

The deathknight can't save her mount from being crashed if it already has one Initiative or fewer, nor can she protect it from incapacitation if it only has its last health level left.

RIMEBOUND PHANTOM RIDER

Cost: 3m (+1m, 1a); **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Primal Terror Spurs

Death's Lawgiver calls icy mist to encircle her steed, leaving the chill of the grave in her wake.

The Abyssal adds an automatic success on a mounted rush, disengage, or withdraw, while the bitter chill she exudes forces enemies to reroll a successful die for each 1 they roll, starting with their 7s and moving up. This Charm can also be used in mounted races and other opposed rolls representing contests of speed.

The Abyssal can pay a one-mote, one-anima surcharge to leave a trail of freezing mist in her wake. Characters who fail their roll opposing her movement are exposed to this environmental hazard, which has difficulty 5, Damage 4L/round. The mist takes one hour to dissipate, even in the strongest wind. Anything killed by it is frozen solid.

WRATHFUL STEED REVENGE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unholy Mount Warding

Slavering for the flesh of the fallen, the deathknight's mount turns its hunger on those who would strike its rider.

While riding a mount rolled into battle with Flesh-Eating Steed Frenzy, the Abyssal may have it make a **decisive** counterattack against an enemy who attacks either it or the deathknight.

With an Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to have her mount make a clash attack instead.

BONE-SHATTERING FIMBULWINTER STRIKE

Cost: (+2m, 2i); **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Rimebound Phantom Rider, Wrathful Steed Revenge

The deathly chill of Creation's end falls upon those who stir the deathknight's steed to wrath.

The Abyssal can pay a two-mote, two-Initiative surcharge when she uses Wrathful Steed Revenge to suffuse her mount's attack with unnatural cold. Its target is exposed to a one-time environmental hazard with difficulty (Abyssal's Wits) and Damage (Abyssal's Essence, maximum 5)L, even if the attack misses.

MOUNT-AND-MURDERER UNITY

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Wrathful Steed Revenge

The Abyssal and her steed are united in their bloodthirsty instinct.

When the Abyssal or her mount makes a distract gambit to benefit the other, a successful gambit lets its beneficiary reflexively make a **decisive** attack against the gambit's target, adding dice on the attack roll equal to the Initiative granted.

Reset: Once per round.

DREAD VALKYRIE'S CHARGE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Inexorable Wraith Rider

The deathknight's steed finds sure footing on even the most ephemeral paths, racing over mist and dark water.

The Abyssal's mount can traverse any surface, even non-solid ones: water, clouds, and even open gaps across chasms or shattered bridges. This doesn't let it move vertically through the air. If this Charm's duration ends while the Abyssal's mount is somewhere it couldn't normally stand, the deathknight must either use this Charm again or let the usual consequences of this ensue.

With a repurchase, the Abyssal may pay a four-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to let her mount fly as if on unseen wings, up to a maximum of long range above the ground. If she uses this Charm while on the ground, she can rise two range bands, rather than one, with a reflexive move action. Once airborne, this Charm's base effect is sufficient to maintain her elevation — she need only pay the surcharge if she wishes to make further vertical movement. If she's already airborne, the Willpower cost is waived.

EPHEMERAL SPECTER STEED

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Nightfall Rider Escape

The deathknight's steed withdraws on phantom hooves, swift as the scream after a nightmare.

On a successful mounted disengage, the Abyssal and her mount can move up to two range bands away instead of one if pursued.

INESCAPABLE HEADSMAN PURSUIT

Cost: —; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Ghost-Ridden Courser

Death's Lawgiver rides down her foes, brooking no escape or evasion.

When the Abyssal makes a mounted rush or disengage, she gains one mote for each 1 on her enemy's opposed rolls. They can only be spent on Ride Charms and are lost if they aren't used before her next turn ends.

This Charm can also be used in mounted races and other opposed rolls representing contests of speed. The Abyssal must use the motes before the end of the extended roll's next interval or lose them.

RAVENING BERSERKER STEED

Cost: —; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Fell Rider's Advantage

When a deathknight rides to the slaughter, her mount seethes with a hunger only blood can quell.

While Flesh-Eating Steed Frenzy is active, the deathknight's mount gains one Initiative at the start of each of its turns. Success on a mounted move action grants her mount (Abyssal's Essence) Initiative.

With Essence 4, the mount adds +1 to its base Initiative, maximum 6. This increases to +2 for mounts equivalent to two-dot familiars or +3 for those equivalent to three-dot familiars (**Exalted**, p. 161).

VORACIOUS BLOOD-FED MONSTER

Cost: 2m, 2i; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ravening Berserker Steed

Glutted on blood and fear, the deathknight's mount finds renewed vigor in slaughter.

The Abyssal's mount ignores its wound penalty on a **decisive** attack roll, adding its base wound penalty in bonus dice instead. If it deals damage to a living enemy, it heals one level of non-aggravated damage or two if the attack incapacitates a nontrivial living enemy. This Charm can be used against spirits and the undead, but not automatons or similar unliving entities.

UNSTOPPABLE BESTIAL JUGGERNAUT

Cost: —; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Fell Rider's Advantage

Riding into the jaws of death, the Abyssal suffuses her mount with her own fell immortality.

While riding, the deathknight can activate her Resistance Charms that help defend against attacks on behalf of her steed.

APOCALYPSE BEAST STAMPEDE

Cost: 5m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ravening Berserker Steed, Wrathful Steed Revenge

The world trembles as Death's Lawgiver rides to battle, quaking beneath the hoof beats of catastrophe made flesh.

The Abyssal's mount makes a **decisive** attack against all enemies within close range, which also counts as a threaten roll against enemies who witness it. The attack is unblockable and undodgeable but can be opposed with a (Dexterity + Athletics) or (Stamina + Resistance) roll. It makes a separate damage roll against each hit enemy with its full Initiative, maximum 10 dice. Even if a character successfully defends, he falls prone unless he rolled 3+ extra successes on his opposed roll. This counts as both the Abyssal's and the steed's attack for the round.

The attack also counts as a feat of demolition against objects and structures within range, doubling the attack roll's successes to determine its effect. The mount adds (Abyssal's Essence) to its Strength to determine what feats it can achieve and can complete lengthy demolitions instantly.



If the Abyssal's mount has Legendary Size, this Charm's range increases to short. If she uses Saddled in Epic Monstrosity to increase a Legendary Size mount further, the attack extends to medium range.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal wins Join Battle, she can use this Charm reflexively. If her opposition includes battle groups, she automatically enacts a Demoralized stratagem (**Exalted**, p. 212).

Reset: Once per scene

SADDLED IN EPIC MONSTROSITY

Cost: (+10m, 1wp); **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Apocalypse Beast Stampede, Last Ride Glory, Wretched Ridden Nightmare

Finally, a steed worthy of Death's Lawgiver.

The Abyssal can pay a ten-mote, one-Willpower surcharge when she uses Wretched Ridden Nightmare to grant her steed additional benefits:

- It gains Legendary Size. Mounts that already have Legendary Size grow even larger, extending their natural attacks' range to short and requiring enemies within short range of them to disengage to move away.

- It adds five dice on feats of strength and can attempt Strength 10 feats. If it could already do so, the added dice are converted to automatic successes, and it adds +5 to its effective Strength for feats.

- It gains (higher of Abyssal's Essence or 3) temporary-4 health levels, which fade along with any damage they have taken when the transformation ends.

- It adds (higher of Abyssal's Essence or 3) to its **withering** attacks' raw damage and Overwhelming.

- It adds (higher of Abyssal's Essence or 3) to its soak and Hardness. This stacks with other magic that grants Hardness.

- If the Abyssal has multiple purchases of Wretched Ridden Nightmare, she can grant it up to six more dots of mutations chosen from those selected for them, letting her combine mutations from different purchases.

LEGENDARY SIZE

Legendary Size has the following benefits:

- Smaller enemies' attacks don't inflict on-slaught penalties. (Magically inflicted on-slaught penalties still apply.)
- The character can't be reduced below Initiative 1 by smaller enemies' withering attacks unless they have 10+ post-soak damage dice. Such attacks still award the full amount of Initiative damage rolled.
- The character can't take more than (attacker's Strength + 3) levels of damage from smaller enemies' decisive attacks. Levels of damage added by magic don't count against this limit.
- The character can't be grappled by smaller enemies unless they use magic like Titan-Murdering Grasp. Such magic is also necessary for them to resist her grapple control rolls.
- The character can't be knocked back by smaller foes' smash attacks and is more difficult to knock back with magic (**Exalted**, p. 274).

Sail

BLEAK OCEAN VETERAN

Cost: —; **Mins:** Sail 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Baptized in the Underworld's dark waters, the Abyssal mariner is a dread terror of the waves.

The Abyssal gains the following benefits:

- She rerolls 6s on Sail rolls until 6s no longer appear.

- She can reflexively assume the attitude of a master seafarer, making her skill obvious to all who interact with her. She can leverage this with social influence as though it were a Minor Tie.

- She can intuit the exact distance and route to any location she's previously visited, whether by land or sea.

- She adds (Sail/2, rounded up) dice on bargain, persuade, or threaten rolls against supernatural beings associated with bodies of water — ocean spirits, the ghosts of the drowned, Fair Folk pirates, aquatic behemoths, etc.

LEGEND OF DARK WATERS

Cost: —(2m); **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Bleak Ocean Veteran

The deathknight garbs herself in the dark glamor of the sea.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal's player chooses two of the attitudes below. The deathknight can commit two motes to embody one of those attitudes with Bleak Ocean Veteran rather than that of a seafarer. In addition to counting as an Intimacy, the chosen attitude adds (Sail/2, rounded up) dice on certain influence rolls.

Alluring: The Abyssal is seen as a glamorous stranger, a traveler from far-off vistas, or a romantic hero of the sea. She's a source of interest and gossip for all, drawing attention wherever she goes. This attitude enhances instill rolls to create or strengthen Ties of curiosity, desire, or obsession to the Abyssal.

Eminent: The Abyssal is seen as a wealthy merchant, foreign dignitary, or nobility in exile. She draws the eye of those who think they might gain political power, wealth, or prestige with her assistance. This attitude enhances bargain rolls to offer these things or to tempt people with decadent luxury.

Hallowed: The Abyssal is seen as an Underworldly ferryman, an envoy between the living and the dead. Ghosts, occultists, and the bereaved seek out her wisdom and guidance, but her presence disquiets the living. This attitude enhances all influence rolls made to facilitate relations and mediate disputes between the living and the dead, whether between individuals or communities.

Vicious: The Abyssal is seen as a storied pirate, seasoned criminal, or fearsome raider. She receives a wide berth from the meek and is sought after by scoundrels for patronage. This attitude enhances threaten rolls.

Additional attitudes can be purchased for three experience points or one bonus point.

TREACHEROUS FLAG BETRAYAL

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Bleak Ocean Veteran

The Abyssal corsair flies beneath a false flag, running blockades or raiding unwary ships.

The deathknight rolls (Manipulation + Sail) to disguise her ship over the course of an hour, setting her crew to work altering the ship's appearance or calling up waterlogged phantoms to serve. She can work drastic changes, even making it look like another kind of ship altogether, as long as it's of roughly similar size.

This deception is usually perfect, but a character within medium range of the ship can see through it he has reason to be suspicious, rolling (Perception + [Lore or Sail]) opposing the Abyssal's roll.

BENTHIC DEPTHS WISDOM

Cost: —; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The seas have surrendered their secrets to the deathknight, ripped from their depths over many journeys.

The Abyssal can introduce facts about waterways she's familiar with and travel along them with ([Intelligence or Wits] + Sail), adding (Essence) automatic successes. She doesn't need an applicable Lore background, but if she has one, the successes are non-Charm. This includes facts about weather, currents, trade routes and the commerce conducted along them, aquatic plants and animals, nearby islands and ports, and similar.

When the Abyssal introduces a fact about the Underworld's waterways, she's not limited to those she's familiar with. Knowledge of unfamiliar shores comes to her in feverish visions and eerie auguries.

SEABORNE PARIAH CURSE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Benthic Depths Wisdom

With mocking laughter, the Abyssal proclaims a curse upon her foe to deny him full sails and kind tides.

The Abyssal lays a curse on an enemy who can hear her, rolling (Wits + Sail) roll against her target's Resolve. If she has a negative Tie to her target, she adds (Intimacy) non-Charms dice. Success stirs the sea's wrath against him:

- He suffers a -1 penalty on all rolls he makes while traveling by water. This increases to -3 on Sail rolls, Survival rolls, and swimming-based Athletics rolls, and his 1s subtract successes on them.

- Any ship he travels on halves its Speed and Maneuverability, rounded down. If it has either of them at 0 or less, it's reduced by one instead or decreases them by one if they're already at zero or below.

- Sailors recognize the victim as cursed through their superstitions after a day of interaction with him. Once they do, they count as having a Minor Tie of fear, mistrust, or hatred towards him.

- If he dies at sea or while stranded on an island, he's doomed to linger as a ghost. The Abyssal senses the moment of his last breath regardless of distance.

This Charm counts as a sorcerous curse for magic capable of detecting and breaking them.

Whispers: The Abyssal can invoke Whispers to add (Whispers) non-Charms dice on the roll instead of adding dice from a negative Tie.

DREAD CAPTAIN'S COMMAND

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Those aboard the Abyssal's dread flagship can feel her eerie presence in every creaking timber and flickering shadow.

The Abyssal claims the ship she's aboard as her own, permanently bonding to it. She can't claim a ship that belongs to another Exalt. Other characters aboard the ship count as having a Minor Tie of fear towards her. If the Abyssal formally welcomes someone aboard the ship, she may change this to a Tie of respect or choose not to impose a Tie — but she can rescind this and revert to a Tie of fear at any time.

Additionally, anyone aboard the ship with such a Tie increases its Resolve penalty by -1 and suffers a -1 penalty on rolls that go against that Intimacy. (This includes genuine Ties as well as the Intimacies imposed by this Charm.) If the Intimacy is Major or Defining, the penalty on rolls increases to -2. Those welcomed aboard ship by the Abyssal don't suffer this penalty, but she can freely revoke this permission.

WAVE-SLICING KEEL

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Pilot

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Captain's Command

The Abyssal's ship slashes through the sea, wounding the very waves.

The Abyssal grants a ship +1 Speed. Sharks, piranhas, and similar aquatic predators are drawn to its wake. In the Underworld, stranger creatures trail behind it, hidden beneath the waters.

UNHALLOWED GHOST SHIP

Cost: —; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Whispers

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Captain's Command

Death's Lawgiver commands the lost and the damned to crew her dreaded vessel.

Ships claimed with Dread Captain's Command become vessels of the dead. Ghostly sailors can perform any duties involving the ship even while dematerialized, although they can't attack material characters or take other physical actions to interact with the material world. While performing these duties, such ghosts can be seen and heard by material characters, making exchanges of social influence possible. In the Underworld, the Abyssal adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice on Sail rolls while aboard a ship crewed by the undead.

With Sail 5, Essence 2, mortals who die aboard the claimed ship are reanimated as zombies (**Exalted**, p. 502) that obey the Abyssal unthinkingly. If a mortal had a Seafaring dice pool or similar, his zombie keeps it, up to a maximum of eight dice. Otherwise, such zombies gain a Seafaring pool of three dice. However, such zombies fall apart if they step foot off ship as if they'd suffered years of decay at the ocean's depth in a matter of seconds.

Whispers: While piloting the ship, the Abyssal may invoke her Whispers to materialize her ghostly crew for one scene. They pay no cost to do so.

POLE THE BLACK DEPTHS

Cost: 1m or 2m; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal plies the waterways of Creation and the Underworld alike with unmatched expertise.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a Sail roll. For one mote, she may either double 9s or reroll 1s until they cease to appear. For two motes, she may do both.

CHRISTENED IN BLOOD

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 1lhl; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Wave-Slicing Keel

Anointing her ship's deck with blood, the Abyssal empowers both ship and crew with deathly Essence, infusing them with unnatural resilience.

The Abyssal empowers a ship by shedding her own blood, granting it the following benefits:

- +1 Speed.
- It gains (Essence/2, rounded up) temporary -4 Hull levels. They're the first -4 levels to be lost and vanish when damaged.
- Crew members aboard it who have a Major or Defining Intimacy of loyalty, fear, obedience, or love for the Abyssal add (Intimacy) to their Stamina to determine how long they can go without food, water, or air (**Exalted**, p. 230). Undead crew instead gain an additional -4 health level aboard ship. Abyssals gain both benefits.

This Charm's health level cost is waived if the Abyssal executes someone aboard ship as she uses it, using the sacrifice's blood instead of her own.

MASSACRE THE WIND AND TIDE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Seaborne Pariah Curse

The deathknight rips at sea and sky alike, staining sails with blood and choking the water with gore.

The Abyssal rolls (Wits + Sail) to curse a ship she can perceive, opposed by its captain's (Wits + Sail) roll. Success deprives it of wind and tides for (1 + extra successes) days:

- Its Maneuverability is halved, rounded down. If it has Maneuverability +1 or lower, it's reduced by one instead.
- Any Speed bonuses it receives from currents or winds are reduced by (Abyssal's Essence), minimum +1.
- If the ship's Speed is reduced to +1 or lower, it's assailed by the ghosts of the drowned. They stalk the decks by night at night, preventing those aboard the ship from recovering Willpower from sleep.

Spirits of air or water aboard the ship when the Abyssal curses it or within long range of it suffer (Abyssal's Essence) dice of aggravated damage, bleeding all-too-mortal blood as they're torn apart by deathly Essence. If this kills them, they're destroyed permanently.

The Abyssal can use this Charm in naval combat as a special stratagem that costs no Momentum. The opposing captain's 1s subtract successes from his roll. If the Abyssal's roll beats the enemy captain's roll, she steals Momentum from its captain equal to the 1s on his roll, maximum (Abyssal's Essence), in addition to cursing his ship.

Reset: This Charm can't be used against the same ship more than once per story.

SCANDALOUS SEAFARER DEBUT

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Legend of Dark Waters

Wrapped in brine and myth, the deathknight's arrival is presaged by stories of her exploits.

After a scene spent spreading stories or rumors about herself, her ship, or her crew, the Abyssal rolls (Social

Attribute + Sail), banking a pool of non-Charms dice. Over the next few hours or days, the rumor spreads throughout the community she's in, repeated by superstitious mariners, sung in eerie children's rhymes, and whispered by unseen phantoms.

While acting in a way that fits the rumors, the Abyssal can add these banked non-Charms dice to Sail rolls, Larceny rolls, and influence rolls with any Ability, up to a maximum of (higher of Essence or 3) dice. She can likewise expend two dice to add +1 non-Charms Guile or Resolve, maximum +2.

At the Storyteller's discretion, this Charm may end if the Abyssal spends significant amounts of time away from the community she used it in.

Special activation rules: When the Abyssal sails into a port, she can use this Charm without needing to spend time spreading rumors, preceded by disquieting omens of her arrival. She adds a free full Excellency on the roll.

Reset: Once per session.

MIST-VEILED GALLEON

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Pilot

Duration: Until the Abyssal disembarks

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Captain's Command

With a deathly exhalation, the Abyssal shrouds her ship in Underworldly fog.

The Abyssal shrouds her ship in fog, which extends out to medium range from the ship. It inflicts a -3 penalty on vision-based Perception rolls and a -1 penalty on other actions that depend on vision, including attacks. This subtracts successes instead of dice on rolls to identify or track the ship. This mist can't be dispersed by mundane wind or weather, though magic is capable of doing so.

In naval combat, the mist inflicts a -3 penalty on rolls opposing the Abyssal's concealment maneuvers (**Exalted**, p. 245). If the maneuver succeeds, she converts the bonus dice from it to non-Charms successes. Additionally, enemy boarding actions against her ship increase their cost by +1 Momentum.

With a Sail 5 repurchase, the Abyssal can use this Charm even while not aboard a ship, creating a cloud of mist that extends out to medium range. She may reflexively roll Stealth to establish concealment within the mist.

Special activation rules: The Abyssal can use this Charm reflexively at the beginning of naval combat.

SEA-WEATHERED SPECTER

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pole the Black Depths

The sea has soaked into the Abyssal's spirit, giving her an uncanny sense for its caprice and perils.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a Sail roll to reroll dice that show failures. She can use additional Supplemental and Reflexive Charms to enhance the roll.

UNSINKING DERELICT PRESERVATION

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One tick

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Captain's Command

Filling her ship with a measure of her own unholy resilience, the deathknight preserves it against damage.

The Abyssal negates all Hull damage that would be dealt to a ship by an attack, naval hazard, or similar peril. This protection extends out to short range from the Abyssal — if a threat specifically targets a portion of the ship outside of the area, this Charm can't be used against it. If an area-of-effect attack or similar threat extends beyond the protected zone, this Charm offers diminished protection, halving the Hull damage dealt to the ship, rounded up.

If the Abyssal uses this Charm multiple times in the same scene against a single peril that causes recurring damage, she waives the Willpower cost of uses past the first.

With Essence 3, this Charm's range extends to medium.

BLACK WATER ODYSSEY

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Pilot

Duration: One journey

Prerequisite Charms: Mist-Veiled Galleon, Unhallowed Ghost Ship

Attuned to the Underworld's strange tides, the deathknight charts courses unknown to mortal mariners.



The Abyssal sails from Creation to a location in the Underworld or vice versa, rolling ([Intelligence or Wits] + Sail) after an hour spent charting a course.

Rather than traveling based on distance, she travels to a locale similar in nature to her starting point: a ship sailing the Scavenger Lands' rivers may emerge on a distant eastern tributary of the Styx; a galleon fleeing a bone-kraken in the scattered island chains of the Underworld's Western seas could escape to the Wavecrest Archipelago in Creation.

The difficulty of the roll depends on the approximate distance between the two points: difficulty 3 for what would be a journey of a few days, difficulty 5 for a journey of months, or difficulty 10+ for a journey between Directions. The Storyteller can also modify the difficulty based on the thematic similarity between the deathknight's starting point and destination. For instance, the difficulty might be halved for a journey from an island in Creation to its inhabitants' ritual afterlife.

If the Abyssal succeeds, strange mists materialize as she sails through the veil between worlds. She appears at her destination no more than five days later.

GASPING SARGASSO GALLOWS

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Massacre the Wind and Tide

Death's Lawgiver condemns her foes to the depths of mortal despair, filling them with a drowning dread.

The Abyssal makes a special ([Appearance, Charisma, or Manipulation] + Sail) inspire roll to spread sorrow, despair, or fear among any number of targets within medium range. Affected characters also begin drowning (**Exalted**, p. 232), even if they don't normally need to breathe, coughing up putrid brine and seaweed. Drowning characters suffer a -3 penalty on all rolls and must pay two Initiative to take a movement action. Characters with Exalted Healing fall unconscious rather than dying if they run out of breath. Mortals killed by this always return as ghosts who have Defining Ties of fear towards the Abyssal.

Affected characters purge the water from their lungs by making a difficulty 7 (Stamina + Resistance) roll as a miscellaneous action. The difficulty falls by one each

round, minimum (higher of Essence or 3). This action can't be flurried with an attack and can't be used while crashed. Alternatively, they can pay (Abyssal's highest Social Attribute) Willpower to resist, causing the water to fade with their emotions. This cost falls by one each round, minimum (Essence).

Reset: Once per scene unless reset when a nontrivial enemy affected by this Charm is incapacitated.

MYSTERIOUS EMISSARY MYTHOS

Cost: —(+4m [+3a]); **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Pilot

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Scandalous Seafarer Debut

Death's Lawgiver unfurls her anima banner like a tapestry of her bloody deeds, blazing from the mast of her flagship or wreathing her in darkness as she walks the courts of the mighty.

While the Abyssal is at bonfire anima, she may pay a four-mote surcharge to use Scandalous Seafarer Debut instantly. Her legend radiates from her anima banner, spreading through strange signs and misty phantasmagoria wherever its dark light touches. This is visible for miles, as usual for bonfire anima. If the Abyssal uses this Charm aboard her ship, she may also expend her anima banner to wreath the ship's sails in it, making her anima visible for out to (Essence x5) miles.

While using Legend of Dark Waters, the Abyssal gains an additional benefit if her attitude fits the story she spreads with Scandalous Seafarer Debut. Normally, this only affects characters within long range and lasts as long as the Abyssal remains at bonfire anima, maximum one per scene. If used aboard a ship, it affects anyone who can see the Abyssal's anima and lasts one scene.

Alluring: Characters treat this as an instill roll to gain or strengthen an Intimacy of awe, fascination, or obsession with the Abyssal.

Eminent: Characters treat this as an influence roll to convince them not to interfere with the Abyssal, showing her the deference due to a diplomat's vessel.

Hallowed: Characters treat this as an inspire roll to create feelings of grief, regret, or horror at the Abyssal's choice.

Vicious: Characters treat this as a threaten roll to cow them into submission.

OCEAN'S MAW MALEDICTION

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Massacre the Wind and Tide, Mist-Veiled Galleon (x2)

The Abyssal's haunting song beckons horrors from the deep to harrow the living and dead alike.

The Abyssal draws forth one of the oceanic perils below. If she uses it outside of combat, she rolls (Wits + Sail) against a vessel she perceives, opposed by its captain's (Wits + Sail) roll. If she doesn't target a ship, the Storyteller can set a difficulty or let another character make an opposed roll, as appropriate. In naval combat, she can use this Charm as a special stratagem by paying an additional Momentum cost.

As a special naval combat stratagem, the Abyssal captain attempts to trap her opponents' vessel in one of the following hazards:

Wailing Reef (3 Momentum): Jagged coral spires emerge, wreathed in moaning corpses. This can block harbors, prevent escapes, and so on. In naval combat, it deals two Hull damage and inflicts a –3 penalty on the opposing vessel's next Naval Maneuver roll.

Foul Tide (4 Momentum): The sea curdles into thick black blood. Ships caught in it suffer –1 Mobility, and all liquids aboard the ship are befouled, turning to blood. In naval combat, success also forces the opposing ship to succeed on a special positioning stratagem to escape the morass before they may attempt any stratagems that require movement. This doesn't generate any Momentum.

Mists of Despair (2 Momentum): Phantasmagoric mist enshrouds the ship or area, causing those who breathe it to suffer haunting hallucinations. Those exposed to it must roll (Stamina + Resistance) or (Wits + Integrity) at difficulty 5 or suffer the effects of Major Madness (**Exalted**, p. 168) for as long as they remain in the mist. They must immediately make a Willpower roll against it and do so again at the start of each subsequent scene. This costs one Willpower to resist for a scene. In naval combat, success afflicts the opposing captain with Madness, as above, without receiving another roll to resist. He suffers a –3 penalty on Naval Maneuver rolls for the rest of the scene.

Hazards created with this Charm crumble or dissipate within a day, though they may leave traces for up to a

season, such as blood clots washing ashore from a Foul Tide. In the Underworld, hazards may remain permanently at the Storyteller's discretion.

SUNKEN LEVIATHAN MANEUVER

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Pilot

Duration: One hour

Prerequisite Charms: Christened in Blood, Unsinking Derelict Preservation

The deathknight's flagship descends even to the ocean's darkest depths, sinking beneath the waves like a predator in wait.

The Abyssal's ship can descend into water and sail while immersed, traveling beneath the waves as easily as sailing the open sea. It loses Speed bonuses from wind but can benefit from currents as the water fills its sails. While going straight down, the speed at which it travels is halved, rounded up.

Those aboard the ship are immune to drowning, oceanic pressure, and similar dangers from submersion, as is the ship itself. However, they can still suffer circumstantial penalties from acting underwater, poor visibility in lightless depths, and the like.

In naval combat, the Abyssal reduces the Momentum cost of concealment and escape stratagems by two when her stunt incorporates this Charm's effect. If she succeeds on a concealment stratagem and uses her next turn to ram an enemy, she deals an additional level of damage.

When this Charm ends, the Abyssal's vessel surfaces harmlessly after no more than a few minutes unless she renews it with another use.

MIST-SWALLOWED HARBOR DOOM

Cost: 30m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ocean's Maw Malediction

Eerie mists herald the coming of Death's Lawgiver, swallowing ports and cities in a shroud of accursed fog.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she sails into a port and disembarks, creating a cloud of mist that fills the entire port city or similar region. The mist is the same as that created by Mist-Veiled Galleon (p. 280), but it's harder to disperse, requiring an Ambition

2 Celestial Circle working to do so. Otherwise, the mist lingers until the end of the story — and potentially weeks or months thereafter, at the Storyteller's discretion.

Those within the mist-shrouded city suffer the effects of Dread Captain's Command (p. 278), and the Abyssal treats the city as a ship claimed by that Charm for any applicable Sail Charms, like Unhallowed Ghost Ship. The Tie imposed by it is Major for mortals unless their Willpower exceeds the Abyssal's Essence and they have reason to act against the Intimacy.

Any bureaucratic projects or similar tasks being carried out in the cursed city are delayed by the mist, halving the rate at which progress is made and inflicting one automatic botch on a roll for each such project per story.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134) within the cursed city or aboard a ship claimed with Dread Captain's Command.

FALLEN TITAN'S DEATH-BARQUE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Black Water Odyssey, Ocean's Maw Malediction

The deathknight's fleet is wreathed in dark glories and bound to her iron will; what better accolade could an admiral have?

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Abyssal chooses a ship she's claimed with Dread Captain's Command to be her flagship. The flagship counts as a shadowland. The undead are immune to the deleterious effects of the sun while aboard it, as are grave goods. It can't be used to travel between Creation and the Underworld, though the ghosts of the drowned may emerge from the waters around it by night.

The Abyssal gains the following benefits while aboard her flagship:

- She may activate Ocean's Maw Malediction to wreath her ship in the Foul Tide or Mists of Despair with a duration of one day. This is harmless to her vessel or other vessels claimed by her with Dread Captain's Command, but subjects anyone within a mile to the chosen peril.

- While aboard her flagship, she counts as having used Dread Captain's Command to claim all ships within (Essence x10) miles that she owns or whose captain has a Major or Defining Tie of loyalty, obedience, fear, or love toward her.

- While aboard the flagship, she can use Mist-Wreathed Galleon on any ship claimed with Dread Captain's Command that's within (Essence x10) miles, waiving the Willpower cost for each additional ship shrouded at the same time.

If the Abyssal's flagship is destroyed or she wishes to change ships, she can choose a new flagship at the end of the story. The Storyteller may let her do so sooner in a suitably dramatic moment while commanding a ship claimed with Dread Captain's Command.

Socialize

HEART-HARDENING TECHNIQUE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Socialize 2, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

*The deathknight turns mothers against daughters, vi-
 ziers against princes, and gods against Heaven.*

The Abyssal doubles 9s on an instill roll to erode an Intimacy. If it's a positive Tie, she adds a non-Charms success.

HATE-SOWING BITTERNESS

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Hardening Technique

*A fathomless wellspring of malevolence, the Abyssal
 corrodes the heart with hatred.*

When the Abyssal makes an instill roll to create or strengthen a negative Tie that she possesses, her targets suffer -1 Resolve, or -2 if they already have such a Tie.

The deathknight also gains this benefit when weakening positive Ties toward someone or something she has a negative Tie toward. The Resolve penalty increases to -2 for targets whose Tie is weaker than the Abyssal's.

EXQUISITE ETIQUETTE STYLE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: None
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

*Death's Lawgiver is welcome at the peasant's hearth and
 the prince's court alike.*

The Abyssal intuitively understands the customs of whatever culture or society she finds herself in, negating penalties from unfamiliarity with them and ensuring she won't inadvertently commit any major faux pas.

Characters with positive Ties toward the culture count as having a Minor Tie of respect or admiration towards the Abyssal. Characters with negative Ties towards foreigners or outsiders treat them as one step weaker with respect to the deathknight.

ALLURING ELOQUENCE METHOD

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Exquisite Etiquette Style

*Those who hear Death's Lawgiver speak are enthralled
 by her eloquence, their suspicions withering like dying
 leaves.*

When the Abyssal makes a bargain, persuade, or instill roll, it also counts as a roll to instill her target with a Tie or respect or admiration to herself or weaken a negative Tie toward herself. Characters with negative Major or Defining Ties to the deathknight aren't affected.

VOID MASK FACADE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mute
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

*Inscrutable as the mysteries beyond death's door, the
 Abyssal defies comprehension.*

The Abyssal gains +1 Guile.

With Essence 2, the Abyssal can pay a one-mote sur-charge to gain +2 Guile.

OMINOUS STRANGER'S SHADOW**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Void Mask Facade

The deathknight preys upon the fear of the unknown, cultivating anticipatory dread among those who know her not.

The Abyssal adds a non-Charm die on a threaten roll or other fear-based influence roll for each of the following criteria that applies to her target, maximum (higher of Essence or 3). If her influence roll has multiple targets, she only adds dice for criteria that apply to all of them.

- They don't know her title or her former name.
- They don't know she's an Abyssal.
- They don't know any of her Major or Defining Intimacies.
- They aren't aware of her presence.
- They've failed a roll against her Guile this session.

If the Abyssal meets all five criteria, this Charm's cost is waived.

MERCILESS DISSECTING STARE**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Mute**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Subjecting society to her withering scrutiny, the Abyssal sees others as they truly are.

The Abyssal doubles 9 on a read intentions roll and can use Wits instead of Perception.

With a Socialize 4 repurchase, if the Abyssal's roll uncovers one of a character's Intimacies, her player may speculate about another, related Intimacy the target may have. The Storyteller informs her if her guess is correct.

With a Socialize 5 repurchase, if the Abyssal's player guesses incorrectly about a target's related Intimacies, she may make a second guess.

PASSION-AND-OBSESSION PUPPET**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Indefinite**Prerequisite Charms:** Merciless Dissecting Stare, Void Mask Facade

Hungry for the dreams and passions of the living, the Abyssal obsesses over those unfortunate enough to catch her interest.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a successful read intentions roll, gaining a Minor Tie of fascination toward her target if she doesn't already have one. She can't voluntarily erode this Intimacy, and it can't be weakened below Minor.

The Abyssal gains temporary specialties for that character in Awareness, Larceny, Presence, Stealth, and Socialize. If she acts against her Intimacy, she loses these specialties, though she can regain them by upholding her Tie.

UNSPOKEN ENMITY UNDERSTANDING**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Merciless Dissecting Stare

The deathknight unerringly senses spite, fear, and disdain.

When the Abyssal makes a read intentions roll to uncover a negative Intimacy, that Intimacy penalizes the target's Guile as with Resolve. She also gains this benefit on rolls to discern motivations driven by such Intimacies.

Additionally, if the target's intentions in the current scene are driven by a persuade roll that leveraged that Intimacy or by similar influence, the deathknight also learns what his intentions are.

BETRAYAL'S FRAGRANT BOUQUET**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Unspoken Enmity Understanding

The Abyssal knows well the stench of treachery and deceit.

The deathknight makes a special read intentions roll. Success lets her player ask the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes.

- Does he intend to deceive or betray me?
- Does he think I intend to deceive or betray him?
- Has he betrayed someone who trusts him in the past?
- Who here does he most distrust?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind, the Abyssal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

COILING ADDER SPITE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hate-Sowing Bitterness

The Abyssal's spite nurtures grudges silently, filling her words and actions with venomated potency.

When the Abyssal cites a negative Tie in a Decision Point, she treats its intensity as one step higher. If it's already Defining, the Willpower cost to resist the influence is reduced by (Essence).

The deathknight can also increase a negative Tie's rating when she uses an instant-duration Abyssal Charm that specifically relies on negative Ties. If her Tie is already Defining, add (Essence) non-Charms dice on any roll made as part of that Charm.

The Abyssal can't use this Charm with a negative Tie if its object is aware she has that Intimacy or if anyone present in the scene other than her allies knows of the Tie.

Reset: Once per story unless reset when the Abyssal suffers significant harm or defeat at the hands of someone she has a Major or Defining Tie toward. It's also reset if she suffers a wrong so egregious that she immediately forms a negative Defining Tie toward the perpetrator.

ETERNAL WATCHER INQUISITION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Merciless Dissecting Stare

Patient as the grave, the Abyssal comes to understand those around her.

After failing a read intentions roll, the Abyssal resets that action against her target. If she stunts this Charm with a description of her interacting with that character, she reduces its mote cost by the stunt's level.

CRIMSON CHALICE LIBATION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Eternal Watcher Inquisition

The Abyssal sips greedily of intrigue's spoils, reveling in her web of deceptions.

When the Abyssal succeeds on a Socialize roll or successfully asserts her Guile, she's refunded up to two motes spent on that action.

HONEY-TONGUED SERPENT ATTACK

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Alluring Eloquence Method

The deathknight's dark grace makes even the most untoward remarks seem like charming eccentricities, daring jests, or, at worst, necessary evils.

When the Abyssal makes an instill, persuade, or bargain roll, those who hear her can't take offense at her remarks or respond with hostility. They can't form or strengthen negative Ties to her because of it, nor can they weaken positive Ties towards the Abyssal as a result. This costs one Willpower to resist, separate from the deathknight's influence roll.

HEARTLESS REVENANT MIEN

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Void Mask Facade

The deathknight's visage is as impassive as a corpse, betraying nothing.

The Abyssal gains +3 Guile.

HOLLOW HEART MASQUERADE**Cost:** 3m per Intimacy; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** Stackable**Duration:** Indefinite**Prerequisite Charms:** Heartless Revenant Mien

The Abyssal shrouds her soul in shadow, dead to the world — and to herself.

After meditating for an hour, the Abyssal conceals one of her Intimacies. It cannot be detected by read intentions actions or similar effects, though her behavior may still reveal it.

This Charm can be stacked to conceal multiple Intimacies.

FATHOMLESS INNER NIGHT**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Mute**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Hollow Heart Masquerade, Ominous Stranger's Shadow

Those who would understand the Abyssal risk uncovering terrifying truths.

When a character rolls against the Abyssal's Guile, his 1s subtract successes from the roll. If he fails, he's instilled with the Abyssal's choice of a Tie of fear toward her or a Principle related to despair or death. For the rest of the scene, he suffers a -(Intimacy) penalty on all rolls against her.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal gains any Willpower her target spends to resist this influence.

HIDDEN BARB INTENTION**Cost:** 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Hollow Heart Masquerade

With a false twitch or sly smile, the Abyssal conceals her wicked ways from would-be inquisitors.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a read intentions roll beats her Guile, distorting the result. If the opposing character sought to discern her intentions, she chooses what they appear to be. If the opposing character sought to uncover an Intimacy, she may reveal a warped version of it, changing a Tie's context or the wording of a Principle to mislead him.

SPIDER IN SOCIETY'S WEB**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Eternal Watcher Inquisition

The Abyssal's discerning focus unravels the labyrinth of social interactions, intuiting infinite nuances from the slightest hint.

The Abyssal rolls read intentions with (Essence) automatic successes against all characters she can perceive. Success reveals a character's current emotional state, any Ties he has to others in the scene, and his current intentions toward others in the scene.

Failing to read a character's intentions with this Charm doesn't require the Abyssal to reset her read intentions before she can attempt it against him again in the same scene.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by a significant change to the scene's context.

ALL SALONS ARE ABATTOIRS**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3**Type:** Simple**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Indefinite**Prerequisite Charms:** Coiling Adder Spite, Unspoken Enmity Understanding

Her heart poisoned by bitter hatred, the Abyssal exerts a magnetic allure over those who share in her malevolence.

The Abyssal fixates on a negative Major or Defining Tie to an individual, gaining the following benefits:

- When she encounters someone with a negative Tie toward the same character, she automatically senses this, though she doesn't learn the Tie's context or intensity.
- She adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice on rolls to instill that Tie, weaken positive Ties to its object, or leverage negative Ties toward him with a persuade roll. If she knows a character has a negative Tie with the same object, she may grant them this bonus while in their presence.
- Against characters who share her Tie, it supports the deathknight's rolls to instill positive Ties towards herself or weaken negative Ties to her or the undead in general.

- She can use Coiling Adder Spite with the Tie even if others know she possesses it, as long as the Tie's object doesn't.

With Essence 5, the Abyssal can use this Charm on negative Ties towards groups, places, and the like.

CHERISHED VICTIM ADORATION

Cost: —; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Hate-Sowing Bitterness, Passion-and-Obsession Puppet

Giving herself over to obsession, the deathknight scorns those who would distract her from her poor, wretched favorites.

The Abyssal gains +2 non-Charms Resolve against influence that opposes the Tie from Passion-and-Obsession Puppet. She can treat it as a negative Tie for Abyssal Charms if that's advantageous to her.

While using Shadow Behind the Mirror, the Abyssal also gains +1 non-Charms Resolve against influence that opposes one of her victim's Major or Defining Intimacies. This doesn't stack with the bonus above.

DAMNATION'S PRICE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Betrayal's Fragrant Bouquet, Merciless Dissecting Stare (x3), Spider in Society's Web

Few know the price of a soul like those who've sold their own.

The Abyssal makes a special read intentions roll to discern what it would take to convince someone to perform a specific task. She adds (Essence) automatic successes on the roll and rerolls 5s and 6s until they cease to appear. If she's able to provide this to him, no further roll is needed to persuade him to perform the task.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal uses Merciless Dissecting Stare on the roll, success gives her an additional (Essence) guesses at the target's Intimacies related to his price.

IMPRECATION OF ILL MANNERS

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Alluring Eloquence Method

The Abyssal's etiquette is without flaw or indiscretion — and those who claim otherwise suffer for their temerity.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a Socialize roll to reroll 1s and 2s until they cease to appear. If this causes her to succeed, she does so at the expense of someone else in the scene, whether by openly mocking him or simply upstaging him. He suffers a penalty on his next social roll this scene equal to the number of 1s and 2s the Abyssal rerolled into successful dice, maximum (her Essence).

ARCHON OF THE SUNLESS REALM

Cost: —; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hidden Barb Intention, Imprecation of Ill Manners, Spider in Society's Web

Drawing from her memories of the living and forbidden wisdoms of the dead, Death's Lawgiver speaks a new order unto the world.

The Abyssal invokes a free full Socialize Excellency.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by causing a significant setback to a character the Abyssal has a negative Major or Defining Tie towards through social influence or devious cunning.

PERFUMED PRINCE Demeanor

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Honey-Tongued Serpent Attack, Imprecation of Ill Manners

Attuned to the society of both the living and the dead, Death's Lawgiver embodies a sublime ideal.

After spending at least an hour tending to her personal appearance or grooming, the Abyssal gains a bonus dot of Appearance, which can raise her Appearance above 5. She adds a non-Charms die on read intentions rolls against characters whose base Resolve is lower than her Appearance.

RAVENOUS HEART OF LIGHTLESS FLAME**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Aggravated, Psyche**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Fathomless Inner Night

The Abyssal reveals her inner nature, consuming the minds of those who can't accept this revelation.

The deathknight causes a read intentions action against her to fail automatically unless the opposing character accepts (higher of Abyssal's Essence or Anima) dice of aggravated **decisive** damage to look upon the unbearable truth she embodies. This damage can't be prevented by any means.

If the Abyssal successfully asserts her Guile against a character who chose to accept the damage, that character believes he succeeded...only to discover a truth terrible beyond words. He gains a Major Principle related to death, the dead, or the Underworld to represent this revelation's impact, chosen by the deathknight's player. Her victim can't spend Willpower to resist this.

For the rest of the scene, any of the Abyssal's influence that leverages the inflicted Intimacy costs an additional Willpower to resist.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal uses this Charm together with Fathomless Inner Night, she can choose to threaten her target if he fails rather than instilling an Intimacy.

SHADOW BEHIND THE MIRROR**Cost:** —(+1m, 1wp); **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Indefinite**Prerequisite Charms:** Passion-and-Obsession Puppet

Captivated by an exquisite soul, the Abyssal becomes her victim's shadow.

The Abyssal can pay a one-mote, one-Willpower surcharge when she uses Passion-and-Obsession Puppet to warp her personality into a reflection of her target. She gains a Major Tie of fascination, not a Minor one, but all of her other Intimacies are suppressed as if she didn't have them.

In place of her own Intimacies, the Abyssal gains all of her target's Intimacies of which she is aware, and the

Storyteller informs her player of how many unknown Intimacies the target has. She may guess at them a number of times equal to the total number of unknown Intimacies, as if using Merciless Dissecting Stare's repurchase.

The deathknight adds (Essence) automatic successes on Larceny rolls to disguise herself as her target and influence rolls with any Ability to pass herself off as him or keep up the pretense. She also gains +(Essence) Guile against effects that would contradict such impersonation.

DEATH-GRACED PERFECTION**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 4**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Archon of the Sunless Realm

The ways of the living and the Old Laws that bind the dead are revealed to the Abyssal, honing her insight and eloquence beyond mortal limits.

The Abyssal doubles 8s on a Socialize roll.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by succeeding on an influence roll against a nontrivial character that leverages one of his Defining Intimacies.

FATAL OBSESSION FINALE**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 5**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Dual, Mute**Duration:** One scene**Prerequisite Charms:** Cherished Victim Adoration, Shadow Behind the Mirror

No matter how fascinating the deathknight may find her prey, all things must someday end in blood.

When the Abyssal rolls Join Battle against a character she's used Passion-and-Obsession Puppet on, she gains the following advantages:

- She adds a free full Excellency and (Intimacy) non-Charm dice on the Join Battle roll.
- If her Join Battle rolls beats his and she uses her first turn to attack him, it becomes an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203). If she makes the attack while hidden, it doesn't break her concealment.
- She adds (Intimacy) to her base Initiative when she resets after landing a **decisive** attack against him.

- His **withering** attacks can't reduce her below Initiative 1 unless her Initiative was lower than his when he attacked. He still gains all Initiative from **withering** damage rolls against her.

- If her target's base Guile is lower than his base Defense, her attack rolls against him add dice equal to the difference.

Reset: The Abyssal can only use this Charm against a character once per story unless reset when he believes he's safe from her as a result of her social influence or underhanded trickery.

PARAGON OF DEATH'S PEACE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 5

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Perfumed Prince Demeanor

Death's Lawgiver speaks with the authority of eternity, her every proclamation as unassailable as the grave.

The Abyssal gains the following benefits:

- Characters can't use negative Ties toward her, her allies, or a group she's part of to bolster their Resolve against her influence or resist it in Decision Points.

- Against mortals and Essence 1 ghosts, the level of Intimacy needed to justify her persuade rolls is lowered by one step (**Exalted**, p. 216). Against trivial characters, it's lowered by two steps.

- She adds (Essence) to her Defense, Guile, and Resolve.

- If an enemy initiates hostilities, she and her allies add (her Essence) automatic successes on the Join Battle roll.

- Any **decisive** damage that would fill her Incapacitated health level is negated. She loses this protection while crashed.

This Charm ends if the Abyssal or any of her allies take hostile action, even in self-defense. She can't reuse it for the rest of the session. Even if she ends the Charm, any such hostile action during the same scene will prevent her from reusing it.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by achieving a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134).

Stealth

HIDDEN EYE SURVEILLANCE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Stealth 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight patiently observes her prey, unseen and unsuspected.

The Abyssal adds (Stealth) dice on a Perception roll with any Ability against someone who's unaware of her presence. Alternatively, she can use this Charm against characters with positive Ties to her, but only if she intends to betray their trust with the information gathered.

If the Abyssal's target has an Intimacy that supports keeping whatever her roll would reveal a secret, that Intimacy *penalizes* his Guile against the Abyssal's roll, as with Resolve. If he suffers from Paranoia, it likewise penalizes his Guile.

MIDNIGHT VIGIL INQUISITION

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant or Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Hidden Eye Surveillance

Lurking in darkness, the Abyssal bears witness to unspeakable secrets and forbidden shames.

The Abyssal makes a special (Perception + Stealth) profile character roll. If successful, the Storyteller reveals whether or not there's anything advantageous the deathknight might learn from covertly observing him and approximately how long it might take. For every three extra successes, the Abyssal's player can ask the Storyteller a yes-or-no question about the nature of that information.

If the Abyssal uncovers a potential lead, she can commit this Charm's cost indefinitely to add an automatic success on Perception rolls with any Ability and Stealth rolls against her target. Once her surveillance uncovers a piece of useful information, this Charm ends and she gains one Willpower, to a maximum of one Willpower per day.

MOONLESS NIGHT ABSENCE

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal vanishes like a dimly remembered nightmare.

After making a Stealth roll, the Abyssal can activate this Charm to reroll all dice other than 10s.

With Stealth 5, the Abyssal gains one Willpower if she beats at least one enemy's opposing roll with her reroll.

GRAVEYARD STILLNESS MEDITATION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Moonless Night Absence

Such is the Abyssal's deathlike stillness that she seems to fade from the world.

As long as the Abyssal remains still, she can't be perceived by sight. This Charm ends if she takes a movement action, makes an attack, or takes similar overt action.

FLAWLESS ASSASSINATION STYLE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The deathknight does not permit her victims the privilege of seeing her before they die.

The Abyssal's rolls Join Battle with (Dexterity + Stealth), which also counts as a roll to enter concealment, opposed by her enemy's Join Battle rolls. Enemies who use magic to roll Join Battle with a different dice pool must instead roll (Wits + Awareness) separately, with 1s subtracting successes. If the Abyssal's Join Battle roll beat theirs, 2s also subtract successes on the Awareness roll.

LURKING THREAT APPROACH

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal sows terror from the shadows, her voice echoing from everywhere and nowhere.

When the Abyssal makes a threaten roll from concealment, enemies who can't perceive her suffer -2 Resolve. Doing so doesn't break concealment. If she uses this while holding an enemy at bay (**Exalted**, p. 204), she also increases the Willpower cost to resist by one.

HORROR BEYOND COMPREHENSION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Lurking Threat Approach

The Abyssal radiates such overwhelming menace that her witnesses remember her only as a shapeless, looming terror.

The Abyssal embodies terror, adding (Essence) dice on threaten rolls. Those who see her can't recognize any details of her appearance, or even what kind of being she is, only that she's something to be feared.

Characters with Ties to the Abyssal or who have superhuman or magically enhanced senses reflexively roll (Perception + Awareness) roll, which she opposes with (Manipulation + Stealth). If they succeed, they can recognize she's an Abyssal but can't make out anything more specific.

A Day Caste Abyssal who's at bonfire anima can use this Charm reflexively and waives its cost. While she remains at bonfire, the added dice are non-Charm.

SHADOW CLOAK TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Death's Lawgiver veils herself in darkness, vanishing into the night.

While the Abyssal is in darkness or dim light, other characters whose visibility is impeded by it can't notice her unless they specifically have reason to search for intruders in the dark or if she takes overt action, like Joining Battle or displaying superhuman prowess. Even then, the visibility penalty subtracts successes instead of dice from Perception rolls against her.

Magic that lets characters see unimpeded in darkness doesn't negate this Charm's concealment unless they have a relevant Intimacy toward the Abyssal or a Major

or Defining Intimacy that her presence threatens.

SILENCE COSTS DEARLY

Cost: —(1wp); **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Hidden Eye Surveillance, Lurking Threat Approach

Dredging up hidden sins and buried secrets, the Abyssal blackmailer controls her victims with chains of shame and fear.

When the Abyssal succeeds on a roll with Hidden Eye Surveillance, Midnight Vigil Inquisition, or Witness of Unspoken Shame, she can pay one Willpower to bank her extra successes. She can add up to (higher of Essence or 3) banked successes as a non-Charms bonus when she takes the following actions against the victim of her surveillance:

- Influence rolls that leverage an Intimacy revealed by the roll that triggered this Charm.
- Threaten rolls to blackmail him with information gathered through surveillance.
- Read intentions, profile character, or Awareness rolls to uncover additional information related to what her surveillance has uncovered.
- Lore rolls relevant to what her surveillance has uncovered.
- Raising her Resolve or Guile against him, gaining +1 per success.

If the Abyssal uses this Charm against, any previously banked successes are lost.

WITNESS OF UNSPOKEN SHAME

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Midnight Vigil Inquisition, Silence Costs Dearly

Death's Lawgiver wields secrets like a weapon, demanding obedience from the wayward lest she reveal their misdeeds.

The Abyssal makes a special (Perception + Stealth) read intention roll with (Essence) automatic successes. Success

reveals whatever Intimacy her target most desires to keep hidden. If there's something relevant that he's hiding but he doesn't have a related Intimacy, the Storyteller can reveal a piece of information about it instead.

If the Abyssal successfully uses this Charm against someone who's unaware of her and then breaks concealment to reveal herself, she steals one Willpower from him.

Special activation rules: Hidden Eye Surveillance's cost is waived when used with this Charm.

MASSACRE-PROLONGING CRUELTY

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flawless Assassination Style

Having claimed one victim, the Abyssal assassin returns to the shadows to savor the taste of blood.

To use this Charm, the Abyssal must be in concealment and must have landed at least one **decisive** attack this scene. She rolls Join Battle. Any motes spent to enhance the roll are muted.

With a Stealth 5 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay two motes whenever she incapacitates an enemy to reset this Charm.

Reset: Once per scene.

QUIET AS THE GRAVE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Stealth 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Graveyard Stillness Meditation

Where the Abyssal treads, even sound dies.

The Abyssal becomes perfectly silent for a single Stealth roll, causing opposed rolls to fail automatically if they're solely based on hearing. Alternatively, she can silence a physical action using any Ability, making it impossible to detect with hearing. This doesn't silence indirect consequences of the action, like a rotten timber collapsing under the Abyssal's weight.

While using Imperceptible Phantom Embodiment (p. 294) to render herself imperceptible to hearing, the Abyssal can also use this Charm to add (Essence,

maximum 5) non-Charm dice on a Stealth roll, as long as her stunt involves her eerie silence.

UNSEEN WISP METHOD

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Graveyard Stillness
Meditation

The Abyssal's form blurs and fades, eerily translucent and featureless when visible at all.

The Abyssal adds (Essence) successes on Stealth rolls. She doesn't need a hiding place to roll Stealth for concealment.

Attacking or moving between range bands suppresses this Charm's benefits until the end of the Abyssal's next turn. This Charm ends if she's hit by an attack.

ATROCITY WITHOUT WITNESS

Cost: 1wp or 2i; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flawless Assassination Style,
Lurking Threat Approach

The Abyssal killer strikes between eyeblinks, vanishing before the first drop of blood falls to the ground.

The Abyssal can use this Charm when she incapacitates an enemy, letting her reflexively roll Stealth to enter concealment. She adds her attack roll extra successes and any excess levels of damage beyond her foe's Incapacitated level to the Stealth roll as automatic successes.

With a Stealth 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal can use this Charm after a **decisive** attack that deals 3+ damage even if she doesn't incapacitate her enemy but must forgo two levels of damage to do so.

SHADOW-PINNING STRIKE

Cost: 2m, 2i, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flawless Assassination Style,
Shadow Cloak Technique

Stepping on her prey's shadow or piercing it with her weapon, the Abyssal assassin pieces him as surely as if she'd struck flesh and bone.

The Abyssal makes a special grapple gambit with any combat Ability to pin a foe's shadow, rolling (Wits + Stealth) opposing her target's (Dexterity + [Athletics or Dodge]) for the control roll. If the attack is unexpected, she adds her attack roll extra successes to the control roll, and it doesn't break concealment. She can extend her weapon's range for this gambit by one band with stunts that make clever use of light and shadow.

If successful, the Abyssal can either remain directly atop her victim's shadow or leave her weapon embedded in it to maintain the clinch. Unarmed attacks and natural weapons can't be embedded, while ranged attacks can only be embedded.

If the Abyssal pins her victim's shadow directly, the grapple proceeds as usual, but the only grapple action she can take is to restrain or release her enemy. She doesn't lose rounds of grapple control when she's attacked, although she still loses control when damaged. Additionally, the grapple can be broken if she's forcibly moved from her target's shadow.

If the Abyssal embeds her weapon, she can't take any grapple actions but doesn't suffer any penalties for grappling. She doesn't lose rounds of control when attacked or grappled. However, removing the embedded weapon frees the victim entirely. Pulling it free all at once is a difficulty 5 feat that requires Strength 5. A character can also spend his entire turn trying to dislodge the embedded weapon as an unrolled action to subtract two rounds of control.

ASSASSIN'S FATAL STUDY

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Atrocity Without Witness,
Silence Costs Dearly

So thorough is the Abyssal's study of her victim that she knows his every blind spot, leaving him little hope of seeing her final strike.

To use this Charm, the Abyssal must be in combat against a nontrivial enemy she's used Silence Costs Dearly to bank successes against. She reflexively rolls (Dexterity + Stealth) to enter concealment, expending all banked successes and adding them to the roll as a non-Charm bonus. Enemies other than her target add +3 non-Charm dice on their rolls against this.

IMPERCEPTIBLE PHANTOM EMBODIMENT

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Stackable

Duration: One hour

Prerequisite Charms: Horror Beyond Comprehension, Quiet as the Grave, Unseen Wisp Method

The Abyssal scours away every sign of her presence, leaving nothing to be perceived.

The Abyssal chooses one of hearing, smell, touch, or taste and renders herself imperceptible to that sense. If she stunts this Charm with a description of how she accomplishes this, its cost is reduced by two motes.

This Charm can be stacked twice to negate two different senses.

SOUL-HAUNTING INFILTRATION

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Shadow-Pinning Strike

The deathknight sinks into her victim's shadow with a wicked grin, making him nothing more than a shadow puppet dancing on her strings.

The Abyssal can use Shadow-Pinning Strike to hide in an enemy's shadow instead of pinning it. When she successfully grapples an enemy within close range, if her (Wits + Stealth) roll also beats his Resolve, she can use this Charm, entering his shadow.

Infiltrating an enemy's shadow gives the Abyssal control of his motor functions and senses, letting her act through him. His actions still use his own traits, and the Abyssal can't use her magic to enhance them or force him to use his own magic. The Abyssal can't compel him to act against his Major or Defining Intimacies, requiring her to use bargain, persuade, or threaten rolls as usual against him.

The Abyssal's influence can convince her host to take actions that will cause life-threatening harm, ignoring the usual rules for unacceptable influence, but she suffers any damage that he does. If he successfully asserts his Resolve against such influence or spends Willpower to resist it, this Charm ends.

While the Abyssal is within her victim's shadow, she counts as being in concealment. Other characters can't

perceive or interact with her unless they have magic applicable to possessing spirits and similar beings. She can be exorcised by magic like Burning Exorcism Technique (**Exalted**, p. 356), though she's not subject to any other effects such magic imposes on exorcised spirits.

SHADOW-STRIDING WRAITH

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Soul-Haunting Infiltration

Darkness is an eager accomplice to the Abyssal's wickedness, bearing her unseen through the night.

The Abyssal can use this Charm while in concealment, vanishing and reappearing somewhere within close range without needing to make a new Stealth roll. She doesn't cross the space between, but her movement can't go through solid obstructions. This uses the Abyssal's movement action.

The new location must still provide an adequate hiding spot for concealment. This can't be waived by magic like Unseen Wisp Method.

With Essence 4, the Abyssal's movement can pass through obstructions that are transparent or only partially opaque, like a window or portcullis.

With Essence 5, the Abyssal can pay a five-mote surcharge to extend this Charm's range in dark conditions. As long as there's any visibility penalty, it increases to short range or to medium range in total darkness.

VOID-SWALLOWED DARKNESS

Cost: 2m per anima level; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Unseen Wisp Method

The Abyssal sloughs off her anima banner, consigning it to the swirling void of her dark heart.

The Abyssal can suppress her anima banner, committing two motes for each level of anima. Once this Charm ends, the suppressed levels return to her anima banner, increasing its level. She can stack multiple uses of this Charm, concealing her anima as it builds up.

With Essence 5, if the Abyssal ends this Charm while she has at least four levels of anima suppressed, she

can unleash it in a wave of darkness, visible for miles away, rather than restoring it to her anima banner. For the rest of the round, characters within long range of her suffer a penalty of (3 + levels of anima expelled) on all Awareness rolls.

WHISPER OF SUDDEN DEMISE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Massacre-Prolonging Cruelty (x2)

The deathknight vanishes even as she strikes, leaving her remaining victims to guess at which of them is next.

When the Abyssal uses Massacre-Prolonging Cruelty (p. 292), she vanishes into a blind spot in her enemies' defense, causing the next unexpected attack she makes to become an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203). She loses this benefit if she doesn't make an unexpected attack in the next (Essence) rounds.

PRESENCE-MURDERING ENLIGHTENMENT

Cost: —; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Imperceptible Phantom Embodiment

The Abyssal has mastered the art of absence, allowing the world to fill the space where she once stood.

When a character makes an Awareness or Perception roll to detect the Abyssal, each 1 on his roll subtracts two successes.

DARK WINGS SCATTER

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous, Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Atrocity Without Witness, Unseen Wisp Method

Triumph turns to despair as the Abyssal is struck, only to dissolve into mist, black feathers, and fluttering raitons.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a **decisive** damage roll against her before her attacker's Initiative resets. She rolls (Dexterity + Stealth) opposing her attacker's (Perception + Awareness) roll, with each of them adding non-Charm successes equal to their Initiative.

If the Abyssal succeeds, it's revealed that the attack never struck her — only an illusion. She isn't harmed by the attack and counts as having dodged it, while her attacker is reset to base Initiative. She enters concealment against her attacker, while other enemies must make their own (Perception + Awareness) rolls against her. The successes added by the Abyssal's Initiative don't apply against them.

If the Abyssal fails this roll, she resets to base Initiative.

With Essence 5, if the Abyssal uses this Charm to evade damage that would have incapacitated her, she steals one Willpower from her attacker.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by using Atrocity Without Witness to establish concealment against all enemies in the scene.

DREAD EYE SEES ALL

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 5

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Assassin's Fatal Study, Unseen Wisp Method, Witness of Unspoken Shame

Stepping forward from the shadows, the Abyssal infiltrator reveals herself at the worst possible moment for her foes.

In a scene where the Abyssal isn't present, her player can use this Charm to reveal that she's been there all along, watching unseen. She rolls (Dexterity + Stealth) with a free full Excellency to establish concealment and can only be opposed by enemies with magically enhanced senses. Her player must explain how she was able to accomplish this.

Depending on the circumstances, the Storyteller can set a difficulty that the Abyssal's roll must meet for her to accomplish this infiltration at all, in addition to her enemy's opposed rolls: for example, difficulty 2–4 for a well-guarded military camp, difficulty 5–7 for a magically warded manse, or difficulty 10 for a rival Deathlord's inner sanctum.

If the Abyssal uses this Charm to catch a character in potentially compromising or embarrassing circumstances, she can reflexively use Witness of Unspoken Shame, adding a free full Excellency and doubling 7s. She waives its Willpower cost, as well as the Willpower cost to use Silence Costs Dearly if she succeeds.

Reset: Once per story. It can be reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal through espionage,

infiltration, or blackmail, but it can't be used more than once per session even then.

SEVEN EDGES OF THE RAITON

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Atrocity Without Witness (x2), Shadow-Pinning Strike, Whisper of Sudden Demise

Invoking seven torments forbidden by the Old Laws, the Abyssal conjures seven black-feathered blades from her shadow, which drift and circle around her in anticipation of violence to come.

The deathknight manifests seven blades, each with a unique effect and cost. Once per round, when she makes an attack, she may reflexively make a second attack with one of the Seven Edges by paying its cost. The Seven Edges have artifact knife traits (ACC +5; +10 DMG; +0 DEF; OVW 3; Lethal, Melee, Thrown [Short]). Attacks with them are always surprise attacks. After making the attack, the blade that she used vanishes.

The Abyssal doesn't gain Initiative from **withering** damage rolls with the blades. **Decisive** attacks with them have (Essence + attack roll 10s) dice of damage and ignore Hardness. They don't use or reset the Abyssal's Initiative.

Additionally, the attack gains an effect based on the blade used. Some effects only enhance certain kinds of attacks, but the deathknight can still use any of the Seven Edges with both **withering** and **decisive** attacks.

The Eager Accomplice (3m; Withering-only): If either attack crashes the target, the deathknight may reflexively make an additional attack with another one of the Seven Edges, waiving its cost.

Fathomless Gluttony (3m, 1wp; Decisive-only): The Abyssal heals one level of non-aggravated damage for each level of **decisive** damage dealt by Fathomless Gluttony, maximum (Essence).

Heartache's Needle (3m, 1wp; Withering-only) An enemy's soak is halved against a **withering** attack with Heartache's Needle. If it crashes him, his soak is halved until he recovers from crash.



Perdition's Chains (3m, 1wp; Decisive-only): The attack receives the benefits of Shadow-Pinning Strike (p. 293), embedding Perdition's Chains in the victim's shadow. It doesn't vanish until the clinch ends. This isn't compatible with Soul-Haunting Infiltration.

River of Tears (5m; Uniform): This blade flows around obstructions. Its attacks are unblockable and ignore cover, even full cover. If River of Tears is the last remaining blade, its attack becomes undodgeable as well.

Thorn of Regret (4m; Decisive-only): On a successful **decisive** attack, this blade's barbs bite deep into the wound, calling out to its kin. On her next attack against that target, the Abyssal may choose to strike with two of the Seven Edges instead of one. She loses this benefit if she doesn't attack him by the end of her next turn.

The Weeping Mother (4m; Decisive-only): On a successful **decisive** attack, the Weeping Mother inflicts a poison of the eyes that inflicts Damage 4i/round, Duration (Essence + 3) rounds, and a -3 penalty. The venom drips from the victim's eyes like black ichor, causing its penalty to subtract successes instead of dice from vision-based Perception and Awareness rolls.

If the deathknight successfully establishes concealment against all enemies, she may call back one of her expended blades.

Reset: Once per scene.

Survival

POMEGRANATES FULL AND FINE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Survival 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Death's Lawgiver knows the wilderness, procuring nourishing viands even amidst the Underworld's most barren reaches.

The Abyssal rolls ([Perception or Wits] + Survival) to forage for food. The difficulty is set by the Storyteller based on the terrain the deathknight forages in. Success lets her find enough to feed herself for a day, plus an additional person for each extra success. Even on a failed roll, or if the Storyteller determines there is no sustenance available, she is able to somehow find enough food for one person.

Characters who are unfamiliar with the Abyssal gain a Minor Tie toward her if they partake in these provisions, unless they resist for one Willpower. The affected character's player chooses whether the Tie is one of awe, fear, or respect. If the Abyssal uses this Charm within shadowlands or the Underworld, she may choose to have the living gain a Minor Principle representing fascination with the Underworld instead.

OLD CROW'S WISDOM

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Survival 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Death's Lawgiver savors the cries of night-beasts and the fragrance of blooming nightshade, wise in the ways of red-toothed nature.

The Abyssal can use Survival specialties as Lore backgrounds to challenge or introduce facts, substituting Survival for Lore when she does. She doesn't need a specialty for facts closely related to her backstory or experiences, like the flora and fauna of the city she lives in.

The Abyssal doubles 9s if the fact involves predatory animals, poisonous plants, or other morbid aspects of nature or if it involves shadowlands, the Underworld, or the undead. She doubles 8s if it involves both.

INEXORABLE HUNTRESS MIEN

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Old Crow's Wisdom

No matter how desperately her prey runs, he cannot elude the looming shadow of terror that is an Abyssal hunter.

The Abyssal rerolls 6s until they cease to appear on a tracking roll and adds (quarry's wound penalty + 1) bonus dice. This Charm can contest magic that perfectly conceals tracks.

With a Survival 5, Essence 2 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a two-mote surcharge to reroll 5s as well as 6s and convert the added dice to automatic successes. If she succeeds, her quarry experiences a chilling premonition of her approach that inflicts a -2 penalty on his Survival and Stealth rolls for the rest of the day.

DARK ROADS OF THE DEAD

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Old Crow's Wisdom, Pomegranates Full and Fine

The secret roads of the Underworld reveal themselves to Death's Lawgiver.

The Abyssal rolls ([Perception or Intelligence] + Survival) with double 9s to discover or recall the presence of a pathway between Creation and the Underworld. She doubles 8s if she uses this Charm in the Underworld or on a moonless night in Creation. The difficulty is 3 by default, but the Storyteller may adjust it based on the deathknight's familiarity with the local area on both sides of the veil.

If successful, the Storyteller reveals a path that will take a few days' travel on foot. The Abyssal's extra successes may shorten this journey:

EXTRA SUCCESSES	DISTANCE
1–2	One day
3–4	A few hours
5–6	A few minutes
7+	None — the path is at the Abyssal's current location

The Storyteller determines the exact form the pathway between worlds takes. While it can be a shadowland, there are many secret paths the Abyssals might walk. These roads are fleeting, rarely allowing for repeat or return use, unlike shadowlands. While traveling along them, the Abyssal may encounter ghosts of the newly dead, who may be confused, lost, or afraid on their path to the Underworld. The Storyteller also determines exactly where in the Underworld or Creation it leads to, though it's typically in approximately the same geographic location as the corresponding point on the other side.

With Survival 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal can seek a path unconstrained by any semblance of geography, tracing the symbolic resonances of the Underworld: she might travel from a city in the far North to an ancestral abode in Stygia or from the slums of Nexus to a debtor's afterlife. She halves her successes when determining how long such a journey takes.

Reset: Once per session, unless reset by the death of a character to whom the Abyssal has a Defining Tie or her Lunar mate.

SMILING PREY FEINT

Cost: —(3m); **Mins:** Survival 2, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Familiar with death's gaze, the Abyssal knows when she's being followed by a lesser hunter.

The Abyssal can tell when someone is watching her, even if she can't perceive her observer, and senses whenever someone makes a roll to track her. After an enemy's tracking roll, the Abyssal can commit three motes to attune her senses to him. This cost is reduced by one mote for each 1 on his tracking roll.

As long as the Abyssal maintains this commitment, the tracker's 1s subtract successes on Perception rolls against the deathknight. If she attempts to ambush him, this penalty also applies to his Join Battle roll. Each midnight, she senses approximately how far away he is from her and can tell if he's given up the chase. If she directly interacts with the tracker, this Charm ends once the scene is done.

The Abyssal can stack this Charm to stymie the efforts of up to (Essence) trackers.

GHOST LEAVES NO TRAIL

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Old Crow's Wisdom, Smiling Prey Feint

The Abyssal passes without trace, a phantom traveling a land that has already forgotten her.

The Abyssal doubles 9s and adds (Essence) dice on a roll to conceal her tracks.

With a Survival 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to convert the added dice to automatic successes and let up to (Essence x2) allies share her roll's result. Opposed tracking rolls fail automatically unless enhanced by magic. An enemy who fails his roll loses one Willpower.

UNDEAD ANIMALS

Undead animals include both the ghosts of animals and the reanimated corpses of animals. They count as animals for these Charms and other magic but count as being magically enhanced animals.

SUPERIOR PREDATOR STYLE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Survival 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's otherworldly nature is made obvious to the beasts of Creation, evoking their most primal fears.

Animals count as having a Minor Tie of fear toward the Abyssals, and she adds two automatic successes on threat-roll rolls against them. Any social influence she uses against animals doesn't face the Resolve bonuses for lacking a shared language. Most animals will give her a wide berth, refusing to approach unless forced by a handler or rider.

Familiars and other magically enhanced animals don't suffer the Tie inflicted by this Charm, though its other effects apply against them. The same is true for animals trained for battle or that are driven to aggression by pain, hunger, or disease.

With Survival 4, the Abyssal extends this Charm's effects to hungry ghosts as if they were normal animals.

MAELSTROM-WEATHERING INDIFFERENCE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: None

Across scorching sands and numbing tundra, the Abyssal traveler walks without fear.

The Abyssal ignores environmental penalties on Survival rolls, and doubles 9s on rolls to resist mundane environmental hazards. She also gains this benefit against supernatural hazards that are similar to perils found in nature, like a wall of sorcerous flame.

With a Survival 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal also subtracts (Stamina) dice from the damage of such

environmental hazards. She can breathe in any environment, including underwater.

SHELTERING INTERMENT SLUMBER

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Maelstrom-Weathering Indifference

The deathknight sinks into the earth to taste the peace denied her by her duty.

While lying on a soft natural surface like soil, sand, or peat moss, the Abyssal sinks into it, entering a torpor in which she has no need for sustenance or air.

The Abyssal can choose to remain in this torpor until a set amount of time has passed or she's fully healed from all damage. She can still make Perception rolls to observe her surroundings in this state, though she suffers a -4 penalty and can't use Charms other than Excellencies and Permanent Charms. She can end this Charm and wake prematurely in response to external stimuli. Upon waking, she immediately bursts from her resting place, fully alert.

Rolls to detect the Abyssal while she's entombed suffer a -4 penalty. A dedicated work team with shovels can find her after a day of search or several days in poor circumstances — though they'll still have to face the enraged Abyssal once they do. If a deathknight habitually uses this Charm in her travels, any tracking rolls suffer a -1 penalty from the gaps in her trail.

Special activation rules: The Abyssal can use Wound-Absorbing Discipline (p. 263) reflexively when she uses Sheltering Internment Slumber, reducing that Charms cost by five motes.

WEeping SKY LAMENTATION

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Maelstrom-Weathering Indifference, Old Crow's Wisdom

Death's Lawgiver pours out her sorrows to the world until even Creation weeps with her.

The Abyssal rolls ([Charisma or Wits] + Survival) to alter the weather. She can create or intensify harsh weather like storms or eerie ambiances like rolling

mist banks. She can't create fair weather — though she can dissipate it — nor can she improve foul weather. She also can't create extreme natural disasters like hurricanes. She doubles 9s if she uses this Charm in a shadowland or the Underworld, or if she has a Survival specialty relevant to either the weather or the terrain. If both are true, she doubles 8s.

The roll's difficulty depends on how drastic a change she wishes to make and how seasonally appropriate it is: creating a gloomy drizzle or turning a sunny day overcast would be difficulty 1; intensifying a heavy rain to a thunderstorm would be difficulty 2–3; calling a storm out of the blue would be difficulty 5+.

If the Abyssal succeeds, her desired changes take place over a matter of minutes or hours, depending on how extensive they are.

The weather can extend up to (Survival + extra successes) miles from where she used this Charm. It lasts until at least the end of this Charm's duration. The Abyssal adds (Survival) dice on inspire rolls that benefit from the ambiance provided by the weather. With a suitable stunt, she can apply this bonus on other rolls.

If other magic would alter the Abyssal's weather, the character responsible must make an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll opposed by the Abyssal's ([Charisma or Wits] + Survival). If he fails, his magic is negated, and he can't change the weather again for the rest of this Charm's duration.

FETTER THE BEAST

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 1xp; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Superior Predator Style

The deathknight binds a familiar to her, forging a bond of service to endure eternity.

The Abyssal confers the following benefits on one of her animal familiars:

Barghest's Feast Hunger: When the familiar deals **decisive** damage to an enemy with a mote pool, the Abyssal steals one mote from him. She can't gain more than (higher of Essence or 3) motes this way per round, even if she has multiple enhanced familiars. She may choose whether to drain personal or peripheral motes, adding them to the same pool she steals from.

EXPERIENCE POINT REFUNDS

Experience points spent on Charms that enhance a specific familiar are refunded if that familiar dies or is otherwise permanently removed from the game.

Dread Companion Bond: Once per day, the Abyssal can gain one Willpower from interacting with the familiar. If their interaction serves death's chivalry, she may lose one Limit instead. Even if the Abyssal has multiple familiars enhanced with this Charm, she can only use this power once each day.

Ghost-Ridden Beast: When the Abyssal shares her familiar's senses (**Exalted**, p. 161), she ignores the range limit, and she can do so even while asleep. With Survival 5, she can control her familiar's actions while sharing senses.

Undying Loyalty: The familiar gains a Defining Tie of loyalty to the deathknight. Any influence that would make it act against this tie is unacceptable unless it's the Abyssal's own influence.

This Charm's experience point cost is waived the first time the Abyssal uses it.

DEATHKNIGHT'S FAITHFUL BEAST

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fetter the Beast

The Abyssal's familiar heeds her commands as if they were its own primal instincts.

The Abyssal orders a familiar to attempt a task and rolls (Charisma + Survival). The familiar adds her successes as bonus dice on its roll to follow her command.

Special activation rules: This Charm can be flurried. With Essence 3, it becomes Reflexive.

BELOVED HORROR BOON

Cost: —; **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Fetter the Beast

The deathknight's familiar partakes of its master's deathly Essence, the better to serve her dark desires.

Each purchase of this Charm lets the deathknight grant one of the boons below a familiar she's enhanced with Fetter the Beast, which she must spend this Charm's training time working with. Some boons have Survival or Essence minimums or require the familiar to have one or more other boons. Boons that increase a familiar's traits can't raise dice pools above 14 dice or static values above 7.

Cadaver-Beast Thews: The familiar adds two dice on feats of strength and rolls against poison and disease. It gains +1 soak and adds +1 to the base damage of its **withering** attacks.

Dread Predator Alacrity: The familiar adds two dice on attack rolls and movement actions, and gains +1 Parry.

Lurking Horror Refinement: The familiar adds two dice on Perception rolls and Stealth rolls, and gains +1 Evasion.

Carrion-Eater's Wisdom (Survival 5; One boon): The familiar gains human-level intelligence and learns all languages the Abyssal knows, though it can only speak them if its anatomy allows. It gains +1 permanent Willpower, Guile, and Resolve, and gains dix-die pools for Diagnosing Ailments, Investigation, Read Intentions, and Strategy.

Corpse-Hide Resilience (Survival 5; One boon): The familiar gains +3 soak and +1 Hardness. The Abyssal can purchase this benefit up to (Essence) times for each familiar.

Endurance Beyond Extinction (Survival 5; One boon): The familiar gains an additional -1 health level and two -2 levels. The Abyssal can purchase this benefit up to (Essence) times for each familiar.

Wretched Abomination Form (Survival 5; One boon): The familiar gains five dots of mutations. The Abyssal can purchase this benefit up to (Essence) times for each familiar.

Unholy Beast of Slaughter (Survival 5, Essence 3; Two boons): Whenever the Abyssal gains Initiative from a **withering** damage roll, the familiar gains half that much Initiative, rounded up, maximum (Abyssal's Essence). To receive this benefit, the familiar must already have at least two others.

GHOST-STALKING BEAST

Cost: —(+1m per familiar); **Mins:** Survival 4, Occult 1, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Fetter the Beast, Spirit-Sensing Meditation

The deathknight's hunting hounds bay for the souls of the damned.

When the Abyssal uses Spirit-Sensing Meditation (p. 244), she can extend its benefits to any familiars present in the scene for one mote each.

If the Abyssal knows Corpus-Rending Blow or God-Slaying Torment, she may use them to enhance her familiar's attacks.

MONSTROSITY-TAMING TERROR

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fetter the Beast

Death's Lawgiver brings even the fiercest beasts to heel with her terrifying presence and eternal tenacity.

The Abyssal adds (Essence) automatic successes on a roll to train an animal (**Exalted**, p. 554) and shortens the interval to one week. She waives the usual specialty requirements. While using Superior Predator Style, she ignores penalties for working with wild or hostile animals.

With Survival 5, Essence 3, the Abyssal can train a familiar that she's enhanced with Fetter the Beast to teach it a magical ability for two experience points.

SHADOWED PATHS UNVEILED

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Maelstrom-Weathering Indifference

Tracing the passage of ghosts long past, the Abyssal finds safe routes through the most treacherous terrain.

The Abyssal and up to (Essence x2) companions double the speed at which they travel and can always travel at least ten miles a day no matter how harsh the terrain.

She automatically succeeds at any Survival roll to find an oasis, shelter, or other landmark along the route.

BLEAK MARCHES WISDOM

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Shadowed Paths Unveiled

Stalking through shade-darkened wilderness, Death's Lawgiver discovers its secrets in the entrails of moldering carrion and the scent of decay carried on the wind.

After a scene spent scouting or examining a wilderness locale, the Abyssal rolls ([Intelligence or Perception] + Survival) and banks scouting points equal to her successes. Within the scouted area, the deathknight can spend scouting points reflexively to use the following effects:

1 point: Use Pomegranates Full and Fine retroactively, revealing provisions gathered by the Abyssal while scouting.

1, 3, or 5 points: Declare the presence of an animal suitable to the region nearby. The cost depends on the animal's familiar rating (**Exalted**, p. 161): one point for a one-dot familiar, three points for a two-dot familiar, or five for a three-dot familiar.

3 points: Declare the existence of a small terrain feature suitable to the region somewhere nearby, like a quicksand trap, a mountain stream, or the entrance to an underground cave.

5 points: Add (Essence/2, rounded up) successes on Awareness, Sail, Stealth, Survival, and War rolls within the region for one scene, or grant this benefit to an ally.

5 points: Use Weeping Sky Lamentation retroactively, causing the weather change to take place immediately if successful.

7 points: Use Dark Roads of the Dead reflexively and without needing to roll, revealing that the Abyssal's already found a way into (or out of) the Underworld within the area.

The Abyssal must know any Charms enhanced with scouting points. Options that let her declare facts are subject to the same Storyteller discretion as facts introduced with Lore (**Exalted**, p. 237).

Reset: The Abyssal can only scout a locale once per session.

BLOOD-CHILLING CARESS

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Maelstrom-Weathering Indifference (x2), Weeping Sky Lamentation

Crimson ice is the Abyssal's blood, and snowflakes are her tears.

The Abyssal's body becomes unnaturally cold, granting the following benefits:

- Her touch is cold enough to kill, adding (Essence) to the raw damage of unarmed **withering** attacks and (Essence/2) damage dice on **decisive** attacks. An enemy who takes 5+ **withering** damage or any **decisive** damage suffers a -1 environmental penalty on Dexterity rolls from the cold until the end of his next turn.

- Characters who hit the Abyssal with an unarmed attack suffer (Essence) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. This damage inflicts the same penalty as above. Enemies who grapple her suffer this damage again at the start of each turn.

- She adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice on rolls to resist cold-based environmental hazards. While using Maelstrom-Weathering Indifference, she doubles 8s against such hazards.

- She can freeze water with a touch, enabling stunts like running along a body of water by freezing it beneath her feet.

WINTER-QUEEN'S COUNTENANCE

Cost: -(+5m, 4i); **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Blood-Chilling Caress

Where the Abyssal walks, winter follows like a train of lace and frost.

The Abyssal can pay a five-mote, four-Initiative surcharge when she uses Blood-Chilling Caress to manifest an aura of killing cold. This is an environmental hazard that extends out to short range from her, with difficulty (Wits + 1) and Damage (Essence, maximum 5)L/round. Enemies damaged by it suffer a -1 environmental penalty on Dexterity rolls from the cold until the end of their next turn.

This aura freezes water and extinguishes mundane flames. Such is its chill that Blood-Chilling Caress' protection now extends to hazards based on fire or heat, as well as cold-based hazards.

UNSLAKABLE HUNGER UNLEASHED

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Deathknight's Faithful Beast, Monstrosity-Taming Terror

The Abyssal shares a taste of the void within her with her familiar, waking a hunger that can only be slaked with blood.

When one of the Abyssal's familiars with Initiative 10+ make a **decisive** attack, it adds its attack roll extra successes as dice of **decisive** damage.

NUMINOUS SHADOW-BEAST

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Beloved Horror Boon, Unslakable Hunger Unleashed

Death's Lawgiver bestows the Neverborn's dark blessings upon her familiar, creating a monstrosity worthy of her awful glory.

The Abyssal's familiar rolls Join Battle as it undergoes a monstrous transformation. It adds (Abyssal's Essence) automatic successes on attack rolls and threaten rolls, and adds (Abyssal's Essence) to the raw damage of its attack. It's immune to fear-based influence. If it has Tiny Creature or Minuscule Size, she may have it grow beyond them, losing those Merits.

The Abyssal's familiar also gains additional benefits based of Beloved Horror Boon's effects she's granted it:

Cadaver-Beast Thews: The familiar adds (Abyssal's Essence) automatic successes on feats of strength and adds her Essence to its effective Strength to determine what feats it can attempt. If it has Legendary Size, it adds (Essence x2) to its effective Strength instead.

Carrion-Eater's Wisdom: The deathknight may have her familiar's transformation give it a form in which it's capable of speech and fine manual dexterity.

Corpse-Hide Resilience: The familiar gains +1 soak for each purchase of this boon it has.

Dread Predator Alacrity: The familiar adds (Abyssal's Essence) automatic successes on movement actions.

Endurance Beyond Extinction: Each purchase of this boon subtracts one success from **decisive** damage rolls against the familiar.

Lurking Horror Refinement: The familiar adds (Abyssal's Essence) automatic successes on Stealth rolls.

Unholy Beast of Slaughter: The familiar adds (Abyssal's Essence) to its base Initiative.

Wretched Abomination Form: The Abyssal may grant the familiar an additional dot of mutations for each purchase of this boon. She chooses which mutations are granted each time she uses this Charm.

With an Essence 4 repurchase, the Abyssal may grant her familiar Legendary Size (p. 276), unless it had the Tiny Creature or Minuscule Size merits. If it already had Legendary Size, it grows even larger, letting it attack with its natural weapons out to short range and requiring enemies within short range to disengage to move away from it.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset when a familiar incapacitates a nontrivial enemy with Unslakable Hunger Unleashed.

BLIZZARD OF TEARS

Cost: —(+10m, 2wp); **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Winter-Queen's Countenance

Reciting a litany of life's heartbreaks, the Abyssal makes the clouds to weep tears of deadly ice.

When the Abyssal uses Weeping Sky Lamentation, she may pay a ten-mote, two-Willpower surcharge to call down disastrous blizzards, deadly hailstorms, and similar natural disasters borne of ice and cold. This increases the roll's difficulty by 5. Such perils have the following effects, in addition to any others the Storyteller deems appropriate:

- The storm is an environmental hazard with difficulty 3, Damage 2L/minute. Trivial characters without protection from the elements may die instantly at the Storyteller's discretion. If the hazard forces a battle group to make a rout check, it's made at +3 difficulty.

- Mundane objects left unattended in the storm are severely damaged or destroyed in a matter of minutes at the Storyteller's discretion. Similarly, the frozen downpour may destroy small structures made of wood or similar materials, while even the largest and sturdiest structures are badly damaged.

- Those caught in the storm suffer a -3 penalty on movement actions and on all vision- and hearing-based rolls. This penalty subtracts successes instead of dice from Perception rolls.

- Exposed crops are destroyed and soil is rimed with permafrost, making it impossible to sow new crops for the rest of the story, barring magical intervention.

- Bodies of water freeze solid. They won't thaw until the end of the story, though significant efforts or powerful magic can break up or melt the ice.

- If a character uses weather-altering magic against the storm, 1s and 2s on his opposed roll subtract successes.

The Abyssal, her Circlemates, and anyone she guides with Shadowed Paths Unveiled are immune to these effects.

Reset: Once per story.

DREAD WITCH DOMAIN

Cost: 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Bleak Marches Wisdom, Dark Roads of the Dead

Death's Lawgiver claims the shadowed places of the world for the dead, a dominion forsaken by the sun.

The Abyssal desecrates a wilderness region, claiming it for the dead. It must be a single contiguous locale, like a forest, a bayou, or a mountain, but there's no hard limit on how large a domain she can claim, save for the Storyteller's discretion. She must spend at least a day traveling the entirety of the region, sowing teeth, bone-shards, and blighted seeds in the land.

If the chosen region is inhabited, any mortal or ghostly communities in the area must be made to either accept her presence or recognize that they cannot drive her

away. If any supernatural beings occupy the region and don't consent to her claiming it, the Abyssal must force them to submit by defeating them in combat or a similar challenge. However, ghosts only count for this if their Essence equals or exceeds the Abyssal's.

Claiming a domain imposes the following effects:

- The undead add (Abyssal's Essence/2, rounded up) automatic successes on Survival rolls and rolls to resist the domain's mundane environmental hazards. They count as having a Minor Tie of obedience to the Abyssal.

- The living can't regain Willpower from sleep within the domain. They subtract (Abyssal's Essence/2, rounded up) successes from Survival rolls and rolls to resist mundane environmental hazards as the land rejects them. They count as having a Minor Tie of fear to the Abyssal. Wild animals don't suffer these effects and count as having a Minor Tie of obedience to the Abyssal.

- Sunlight has no deleterious effects on the undead or things of the Underworld. It is always considered night for purposes of shadowlands and similar phenomena associated with death, except for the moment the sun rises.

- Wild animals that die within the domain are re-animated as bestial ghosts or undead horrors (p. 299).

- Over the course of the story, a shadowland forms in the domain's heart — the part of it that's furthest from any towns, habitations, or similar developed areas. It spreads up to (Essence x10) miles outward from the heart, assuming no developed areas impede its spread. The shadowland opens into the nearest equivalent locale within the Underworld or Creation, often a primal afterlife related to death by wild animals, poisonous plants, or the like. The Abyssal can use Dark Roads of the Dead to travel to this shadowland without needing a roll.

- If she uses Bleak Marches Wisdom for her domain, she doubles 7s on the roll and completes it instantly without needing to scout in advance.

An Abyssal can only have one such domain at a time. If she dies, it endures beyond her death, though it may then be possible to break it with curse-breaking magic or a sorcerous working at the Storyteller's discretion.

Special activation rules: When the Abyssal uses Nightmare-Carving Murmur (p. 226) to reshape land into a wilderness, she can use this Charm reflexively to claim that territory as her domain.

Thrown

FATAL PRECISION TECHNIQUE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Thrown 1, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal deals out death with unerring accuracy.

The Abyssal calculates the accuracy of a **withering** attack as though she were attacking from close range (**Exalted**, pp. 587, 597). When attacking from close range, she instead inflicts a -1 Defense penalty.

When used with Crypt Bolt Attack (p. 221), the Abyssal calculates its accuracy as if attacking at short range. She inflicts the Defense penalty against enemies at short range, but not close range.

FIRST BLOOD IMPULSE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Thrown 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fatal Precision Technique

Seizing upon the slightest moment of hesitation, the Abyssal strikes down unwary foes.

If the Abyssal wins Join Battle and makes a **decisive** attack on her first turn, she adds dice equal to the difference between her Initiative and her target's Initiative on the attack roll.

With Thrown 5, Essence 3, the enhanced attack doesn't reset the deathknight's Initiative.

FROZEN PRAYER ENTOMBMENT

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Stackable

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fatal Precision Technique

The deathknight infuses her weapons with a terrible cold that gradually freezes her victims in place.

If the Abyssal deals 3+ **decisive** damage, her enemy suffers a -3 crippling penalty from the cold. This lasts until at least the end of the scene; after that, she must receive adequate medical treatment for hypothermia or rest until he's healed all damage in his health track to remove the penalty.

Multiple uses of this Charm stack their penalties.

TALON-POINT PARLEY

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fatal Precision Technique

The Abyssal's arguments are all the more compelling to those who've witnessed her deadly prowess firsthand.

When the Abyssal makes a bargain, threaten, persuade, or read intentions roll against an enemy she's hit with an attack this scene, he suffers -1 Resolve or Guile against it, or -2 if the attack was unexpected. If it was an ambush, she also adds a free full Excellency. If the Abyssal's influence succeeds, her target loses (Abyssal's Essence) Initiative, even if he spends Willpower to resist.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal gains the Initiative lost by her target.

BLADE OF ILL WIND

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fatal Precision Technique

The Abyssal aims not toward her target but toward his doom, where he will meet her blade.

The Abyssal makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack that ignores cover. It can even strike through full cover as long as an opening exists, but she's treated as if attacking from long range.

IMPROVISED ASSASSIN'S TRICK

Cost: -(2m); **Mins:** Thrown 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Even the most innocuous of objects are deadly in the Abyssal's hands.

The Abyssal waives the Initiative cost of attack with improvised weapons and can wield small objects as improvised weapons even if they're unsuited to that purpose: a playing card, a plucked rose, a silken scarf.

If the first attack the Abyssal makes in a scene uses an improvised weapon, she may pay two motes to make a surprise attack, inflicting -2 Defense against it.

DRIPPING WITH STEEL

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal adorns herself with blades, dazzling her soon-to-be victims.

The Abyssal conceals a Thrown weapon on her person, wearing it as an accessory, incorporating it into her outfit. If she knows Improvised Assassin's Trick, this can be used on any object she could throw. Onlookers won't recognize it as a weapon, even if it's still freshly bloodied. This Charm ends if she readies the weapon or takes other overtly hostile action.

The Abyssal can stack this Charm to conceal multiple weapons.

ELEGANT MURDER CHARADE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dripping With Steel

The deathknight shifts gracefully between murder and light conversation.

The Abyssal passes off violence or combat as a prank, tryst, or harmless mishap. For instance, after slitting her target's throat at a party, she might make him look as if he simply spilled his wine or explain away his listlessness as mere intoxication. She reflexively makes a special (Manipulation + [Larceny, Presence, or Socialize]) instill roll against all bystanders not directly involved in it, adding (Essence) non-Charm successes. Targets who are participating in a social event, recreation, or sensual pleasure count as having a Minor Intimacy that supports this influence.

A character can spend one Willpower to resist this if circumstances change dramatically in a way that undermines the Abyssal's lie or if his ignorance poses a threat to a Major or Defining Intimacy.

Special activation rules: If the Abyssal uses this Charm immediately after an attack enhanced with Stifled Cry Pantomime, she reduces this Charm's cost by one mote for each round of silence inflicted.

FAR-RANGING DOOM

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Abyssal's arm swings with the force of an onager, hurling her weapon to meet its mark across the battlefield.

The Abyssal extends an attack's range to long range.

With Thrown 5, Essence 3, she instead extends its range by an additional band, into extreme range.

THOUSAND NEEDLE TORRENT

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Far-Ranging Doom

The Abyssal's weapon splits off countless spectral copies as it flies toward her victim, surrounding him in an inescapable rain of falling steel.

The Abyssal adds a free full Excellency on a **decisive** attack and renders it undodgeable. Trivial foes within short range of the victim suffer damage equal to twice the amount dealt to him, and scenery and inanimate objects within this range suffer damage at the Storyteller's discretion.

If the Abyssal wins Join Battle and uses this Charm on her first turn, she doesn't need to aim to attack an enemy at medium or long range.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by landing a **withering** attack against an enemy with higher Initiative landing a **withering** attack against a nontrivial enemy that raises the deathknight's Initiative above that of all her foes.

HUNGRY MISSILE TECHNIQUE

Cost: 2i; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

As blood spills from her victim's wounds, the Abyssal reaps a scarlet harvest of Essence and pain.

When the Abyssal deals damage with a **decisive** attack, she steals one mote for each 10 on the damage roll. If her attack was unexpected or her target hasn't taken a turn this round, the deathknight also steals motes for 9s — and 8s if both conditions are met. She can't gain more than (Dexterity, Strength, or Wits) motes per round with this Charm.

GAIT-HOBBLING ICICLE

Cost: 4m, 2i; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Frozen Prayer Entombment

The Abyssal's weapon is rimed with deadly ice, freezing muscle and blood.

If the Abyssal deals damage with a **decisive** attack, her target can't take a reflexive move action on his next turn and increases his mobility penalty by one until the end of that turn. He can still move as a non-reflexive action, requiring a to take another action. If the target has successfully rushed or disengaged an enemy, he loses the reflexive movement from it if he takes 3+ damage. This is a crippling effect.

If the Abyssal deals 3+ damage to an airborne target, he also falls to the ground, landing prone. This doesn't affect forms of flight that aren't dependent on wings or similar physical features.

KNIVES BETWEEN FRIENDS

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Talon-Point Parley

Striking unseen from unexpected angles, the Abyssal sows suspicion and paranoia.

The Abyssal misdirects her foes with an attack, requiring them to roll (Wits + Awareness) at difficulty (Essence + 10s on attack roll). 1s on their opposed rolls subtract successes. A character who fails their roll believes the attack came from a completely different angle or direction, rather than from the deathknight.

With Thrown 5, Essence 3, if the Abyssal uses this Charm while concealed, she doesn't lose her concealment against enemies who failed their rolls.

LIGHTNING-CLUTCHING TALON

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fatal Precision Technique

With incredible deftness, the deathknight snatches death from the air and returns it to its rightful place.

The Abyssal clashes a ranged attack by catching its projectile in a free hand, rolling a special (Dexterity + Thrown) **decisive** attack. If successful, she catches the incoming projectile and may reflexively ready it but doesn't roll damage or reset her Initiative.

With a Thrown 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Abyssal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to fling the weapon back at her attacker if she wins the clash, reflexively making a **decisive** attack that automatically hits and adds the extra level of damage from winning the clash. The Abyssal can retain any Charms or other effects used to enhance the original attack, but doing so prevents her from using her own magic to enhance it.

SLAUGHTER-SWIFT ACUITY

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: First Blood Impulse

Eager for bloodshed, the Abyssal cuts down her prey before they can even draw their blades.

When the Abyssal rolls Join Battle, she rolls an additional non-Charm die for each 10. If she wins Join Battle, she may reflexively make a **withering** or **decisive** attack against each of up to (Dexterity) enemies.

Slaughter-Swift Acuity is incompatible with Charms from other combat Abilities that enhance Join Battle rolls.

With a Thrown 5, Essence 3 repurchase, when the Abyssal makes a **decisive** attack with this Charm, each 9 or 10 on the damage roll adds +1 to her base Initiative upon resetting.

STIFLED CRY PANTOMIME

Cost: 2m per round; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Frozen Prayer Entombment

The Abyssal cuts all sound from her victim, bleeding him in utter silence.

If the Abyssal hits with a **decisive** attack, she silences him for up to (her Essence) rounds, paying two motes per round. He can't speak or make sound, directly or indirectly, and can't be detected with hearing-based rolls. Whether he screams, rings an alarm bell, or crashes through a window, he does so in utter silence. If his actions have secondary consequences (e.g., setting an ongoing fire or startling an observer), those secondary consequences make sound normally.

If the target dies, no one notices his death until this Charm's effect ends. He might stay standing upright, avoid bleeding, or slip silently into a nearby body of water.

BLOOD-SPILLING ARTISTRY

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Talon-Point Parley

The deathknight's blades paint the battlefield crimson as she conducts a symphony of screams. What other artist could compare?

The Abyssal adds up to (Appearance, Charisma, or Manipulation) 10s on her attack roll as dice of **decisive** damage. On a surprise attack, each 10 adds two damage dice.

If the Abyssal's attack incapacitates a nontrivial foe, enemies and bystanders who witnessed it are instilled with a Tie of fear toward her if their Resolve is lower than the total damage dealt. With an appropriate stunt, the deathknight can instill positive Ties with contexts like awe, respect, or infatuation.

COURTIER'S MURDEROUS CONTEMPLATION

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Blood-Spilling Artistry

The Abyssal's charming words and winsome demeanor lure her enemies into a false sense of security, like unwary fish drawn to the shade of a heron's wings.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a successful inspire, instill, persuade, or read intentions roll,

fixing her victim's image in her mind. She can end this Charm, to reflexively make a **withering** or **decisive** attack against him.

The Abyssal can stack up to (Essence) uses of this Charm, whether against one character or many. She can only make one attack with it per round.

RAITONS CALLED TO ROOST

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Blade of Ill Wind, Hungry Missile Technique, Lightning-Clutching Talon

Fallen weapons seek out the deathknight's hand, recognizing her as the superior killer.

When the Abyssal succeeds on a disarm gambit against an enemy within short range, she summons the disarmed weapon to her hand. If she doesn't have a free hand, it falls at her feet.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal may pay a two-Initiative surcharge to use this Charm after a disarm gambit's Initiative roll.

SOUL-SEIZING LACERATION

Cost: 4m, 3i; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Talon-Point Parley

The deathknight's foes inch ever closer to despair with each blade that strikes true.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after crashing an enemy with a **withering** attack. He loses one Willpower and suffers -2 Resolve for the rest of the scene. While crashed, he increases the cost to resist the deathknight's influence by one Willpower.

WICKED DARTS OF SUFFERING

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Thousand Needle Torrent

Countless blades fly from the deathknight's hands, sending bloody shrapnel through all those unfortunate enough to stand against her.

The deathknight makes a **withering** attack against one enemy — her primary target — and all other enemies within short range of him. She only rolls damage against her primary target. Other enemies take the same amount of damage, maximum (Abyssal's Essence), which doesn't award Initiative to the deathknight.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by dealing 3+ **decisive** damage to a crashed enemy.

DEFIANT STEEL REBUKED

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Raitons Called to Roost

The deathknight offers a sharp rebuke to those who dare take up arms against her a second time.

When an enemy disarmed by the Abyssal retrieves the disarmed weapon while within short range of her, she reflexively makes an unblockable, undodgeable **withering** attack against him.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by disarming a crashed enemy.

PITLESS SCYTHING RAZOR

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Knives Between Friends

As the deathknight's foes succumb to doubt and paranoia, she delivers a killing blow that seems to come from nowhere.

When an enemy fails his roll opposing Knives Between Friends, the Abyssal can use this Charm to reflexively make a **decisive** ambush against him (**Exalted**, p. 203). She can only attack once, even if multiple enemies fail. This doesn't break her concealment if she attacks from stealth.

SCARLET ICE SHATTERS

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Gait-Hobbling Icicle

Razor-edged shards of ice splinter from the deathknight's weapon as it cuts through her foe's innards, exploding outward in a gory mist.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after landing a **decisive** attack against an enemy afflicted with Frozen Prayer Entombment. She can end that Charm's penalty to add an automatic success on the damage roll and can add up to (higher of Essence or 3) successes total by canceling stacked penalties from multiple uses. If the attack was an ambush, she doesn't have to end the penalty to add damage.

FIVE BIRDS, ONE STONE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: First Blood Impulse, Wicked Darts of Suffering

The Abyssal's weapon arcs from one target to the next in a single bloody swath.

The Abyssal makes **withering** attacks against each of up to (Dexterity) targets, rolling a separate attack for each foe, followed by a **decisive** attack against a different enemy. However, if one of her **withering** attacks misses or deals less damage than the last attack, she skips over the rest and immediately makes the final **decisive** attack.

RED-WINGED RAITON MURMURATION

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Five Birds, One Stone

Blood trickles from the wounds of the deathknight's victims, taking wing as a murder of crimson raitons.

The Abyssal may use this Charm after damaging multiple nontrivial enemies in a single tick, drawing a raiton of blood from each enemy, maximum (Dexterity). She can draw raitons from undead who once had blood and from spirits, but not from automatons or similar beings.

The blood raitons circle the Abyssal, granting the following benefits:

- Ranged attacks against her suffer a -1 penalty for each raiton.
- Enemies who attack her from close range are harried by the raitons, letting her make a **decisive** counterattack with (Wits + Thrown). It deals one die of damage per raiton, ignoring Hardness, and doesn't reset the Abyssal's Initiative.

- She may expend a raiton when she attacks, unleashing it to guide her weapon. This adds (Essence) dice on the attack and damage rolls. She can unleash a single raiton to enhance all attacks made with Five Birds, One Stone.

The Abyssal can use this Charm again while it's still active to replenish her flock up to the usual maximum. She doesn't commit the cost of subsequent activations. Once she runs out of raitons, the Charm ends.

CRIMSON GALA MASSACRE

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 5

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Courtier's Murderous Contemplation, Elegant Murder Charade, Pitiless Scything Razor

Like a heron spreading its wings wide, the Abyssal unleashes a fan of blades, painting galas crimson with atrocity while she remains serene at the center.

The Abyssal adds a free full Excellency when she Joins Battle against at least one nontrivial enemy whom she has interacted with socially within the last day. Before any character takes a turn, she may make a **decisive** attack against each enemy who satisfies one of the following conditions:

- She's succeeded on an inspire, instill, persuade, or read intentions roll against him in the current scene or previously during an ongoing social event.
- He's failed on a roll against her Resolve or Guile in the current scene, or previously during an ongoing social event.
- He has a positive Major or Defining Tie toward the Abyssal.
- He's a trivial enemy.

The Abyssal doesn't need to aim to attack enemies at medium range or beyond. Against enemies with Initiative lower than the Abyssal's and trivial enemies, these attacks are ambushes (**Exalted**, p. 203). Otherwise, they're surprise attacks.

The deathknight divides her Initiative evenly, rounded up, among all hit opponents to determine the damage rolled against them, ignoring Hardness. Trivial

opponents suffer her full Initiative in damage and aren't included in the division. Once the attacks are completed, as long as any of them hit a nontrivial opponent, the Abyssal's Initiative resets.

Enemies who witness the attacks must roll (Wits + Awareness) at a difficulty of (Abyssal's Essence + base Guile), similar to Knives Between Friends (p. 307). Ambushed enemies automatically fail without receiving a roll. This is capable of triggering Pitiless Scything Razor, but only against an enemy the Abyssal already ambushed in the initial barrage.

If the Abyssal has any attacks banked with Courtier's Murderous Contemplation, she can unleash them as part of this onslaught, ignoring that Charm's once-per-round limit and applying the above benefits to each attack she makes.

This Charm is incompatible with Charms from other combat Abilities that enhance Join Battle.

War

ATROCITY-DIRECTING GESTURE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** War 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Drawing from the bloodstained memories of countless wars that echo across the Underworld, the Abyssal perfects her tactical genius.

The Abyssal doubles 9s on an order roll.

With War 5, Essence 3, the deathknight can pay a three-mote, three-Initiative surcharge to double 8s.

FEAR-KILLING ASSURANCE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Atrocity-Directing Gesture

The Abyssal's soldiers have learned to fear her more than their own death, fighting to the bloody end.

The Abyssal reflexively makes a rally action, adding (Essence) successes.

CALLED TO CARNAGE**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** One scene**Prerequisite Charms:** Atrocity-Directing Gesture

Death's Lawgiver is at home on the battlefield, emboldened by the clash of steel and the cries of soldiers.

When the Abyssal makes a command action, both she and the targeted battle group gain +1 Defense and Resolve until her next turn.

IRONCLAD LOYALTY'S REWARD**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Uniform**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Called to Carnage

The Abyssal enfolds herself in ranks of protective steel, armored in her soldiers' willingness to lay down their lives for her.

The Abyssal directs an allied battle group to protect her with a reflexive defend other action. It must still be within close range of her to protect her but can move up to one range band toward her without using its movement action if necessary.

If the Abyssal uses this Charm in response to an attack against her, the battle group adds (Abyssal's Essence) Parry against that attack.

Reset: Once per round.**FORSAKEN LEGION'S GENERAL****Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** War 2, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The deathknight marshals the armies of the dead to lay siege to the realm of the living.

When the Abyssal makes a Strategic Maneuver roll, she adds non-Charms dice equal to the highest Might among her forces. If she successfully enacts a stratagem, then at the battle's start, she may grant a bonus dot of Size to an allied battle group, which lasts for the rest of the scene. This can't raise its Size above 5.

DREAD WARLORD STRATAGEM**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** War 2, Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Forsaken Legion's General

The Abyssal's audacious leadership unnerves enemy commanders, making them second guess time-tested strategies.

When the Abyssal makes a Strategic Maneuver roll, opposing characters suffer a -1 penalty, daunted by her terrifying tactics. This subtracts a success instead if an opposing general has a Tie of fear to the Abyssal or already suffers a penalty on his roll from unfamiliarity with her or her forces (**Exalted**, p. 211).

LOYAL UNTO DEATH**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 1**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisite Charms:** Forsaken Legion's General

Standing over a cowering recruit as her Deathlord once stood before her, the Abyssal accepts another's vow of damnation.

When the Abyssal receives a promise of loyalty from someone or admits a willing recruit into her army or other fighting force, she binds them to her service. He gains a Minor Tie of loyalty to the deathknight, potentially converting would-be infiltrators and double agents, or strengthens an existing Tie by one step. The pledge need not be sincere, but it must be made willingly, and the Abyssal must be present in person to accept it.

A battle group made up entirely of characters with such Ties gains +1 permanent Willpower, maximum 10, while fighting under the deathknight's command. Living characters with such Ties always linger as ghosts if slain in the Abyssal's service, always retaining the Tie.

This power is more effective against both mortals and Essence 1 ghosts if their Willpower is less than or equal to the Abyssal's Essence, as well as trivial characters. Such characters gain a Major Tie instead. If they attempt to betray the Abyssal while still under her service, they die instantly. Ghosts instead suffer permanent destruction, consumed by malefic Essence. If a group of such characters makes a pledge to the Abyssal simultaneously, she can bind them all with a single use of this Charm.

If a Moonshadow Caste uses Loyal Unto Death together with her oath-binding anima power, she waives this Charm's cost.

DEATH IS NO RESPITE

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Called to Carnage, Forsaken Legion's General

Slaughtering the living, the Abyssal replenishes the ranks of the damned.

The Abyssal adds one die of **decisive** damage on attacks against the living. Mortals slain by the Abyssal will rise at the end of the scene, reanimated as zombies (**Exalted**, p. 502) with Defining Ties of obedience to her that can't be weakened.

With War 5, mortals slain by battle groups led by the Abyssal are also reanimated.

JANISSARY-WRAITH CONSCRIPTION

Cost: —(3m per ghost, 1wp); **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Death Is No Respite

Binding the souls of slaughtered champions, the Abyssal damns them to glory in her service.

After a scene in which the Abyssal used Death Is No Respite, she gives a speech to the corpses littering the battlefield, condemning or praising them as she sees fit. She can raise nontrivial mortals as war ghosts (**Exalted**, p. 504) instead of zombies, paying three motes per ghost and one Willpower. Alternatively, she can raise their hungry ghosts (**Exalted**, p. 503) if her speech appeals to primal passion. They're still bound by that Charm's Tie of loyalty.

DOOMED STRATEGY'S DOWNFALL

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 2

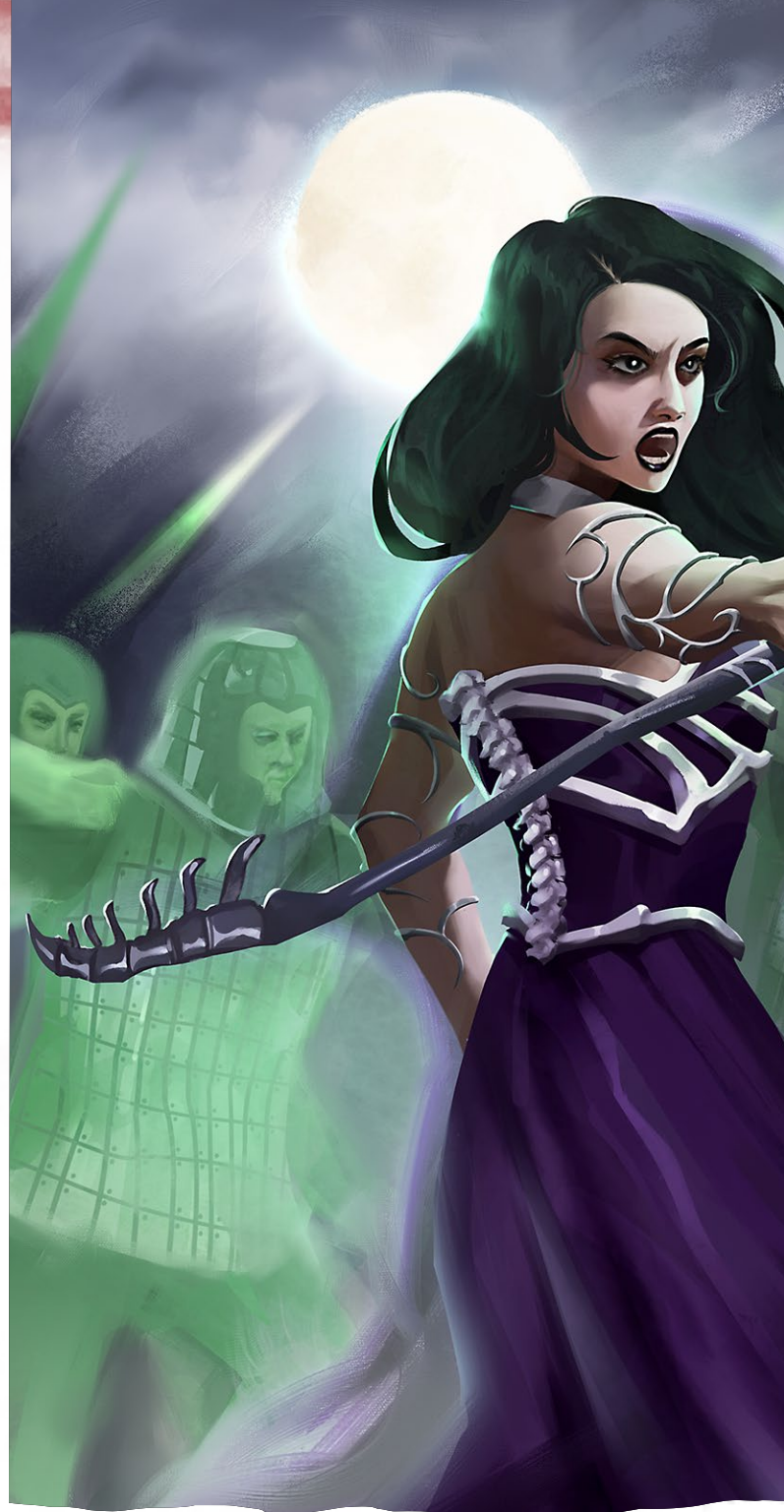
Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Warlord Stratagem

Seizing on all-too-predictable flaws in her enemy's tactics, the Abyssal general devises a counterstrategy that preys on her foe's failure.



When the Abyssal makes a Strategic Maneuver roll, up to (Essence) of the opposing general's 1s subtract successes.

PEERLESS IMMORTAL STRATEGIST

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Doomed Strategy's Downfall



The deathknight's commands direct her forces with brilliance and precision denied mortal generals.

When the Abyssal makes a Strategic Maneuver roll, she adds an automatic success and (Essence) dice and chooses up to (Essence) stratagems that she might potentially enact. She may allocate her extra successes among these stratagems however she wishes and can use multiple stratagems if she rolls enough successes.

MORALE-SHATTERING CRY

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dread Warlord Stratagem

The Abyssal's war cry is joined by the wails of the dead, breaking the will of her foes.

The Abyssal imposes a -3 penalty on a rout check made by an enemy battle group within long range. For living battle groups, 1s on the rout check subtract successes. Rally rolls to avoid dissolution suffer the same penalties.

Alternatively, the Abyssal can enhance a threaten roll or other fear-based influence roll, inflicting -1 Resolve against living targets, or -2 for mortals. She ignores multiple target penalties.

With War 5, Essence 4, the Abyssal gains one Willpower if the battle group suffers dissolution, maximum once per scene.

ALL-CONSUMING ENCIRCLEMENT

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Atrocity-Directing Gesture

The deathknight's forces surround her foes, eager to feed upon suffering and death.

The Abyssal can enact the Pincer Attack stratagem (**Exalted**, p. 212) when she or one of her allies empties an enemy battle group's Magnitude track, or when an allied battle group crashes or incapacitates a nontrivial enemy. The stratagem's onslaught penalty is doubled against the enemy targeted by the attack that triggered this Charm.

If the Abyssal is already fighting under a Pincer Attack stratagem she's enacted, this Charm instead doubles its onslaught penalty against all enemies.

Reset: Once per scene.

BLOOD-SOAKED BATTLEFIELD HUNGER

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Atrocity-Directing Gesture

The deathknight draws sustenance from the anguished cries of the dying and the rich aroma of shed blood scent.

When a battle group under the Abyssal's command deals enough damage to empty an enemy battle group's Magnitude track, she can use this Charm to roll Join Battle.

While using Called to Carnage, the Abyssal can also use this Charm when her own attacks empty an enemy battle group's Magnitude track. She must fight alongside an allied battle group to gain this benefit.

HARDENED KILLER TRAINING STYLE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Loyal Unto Death

The Abyssal tempers raw recruits in a crucible of brutality, refining them into living — and unliving — weapons.

The Abyssal spends a week training a battle group to grant its members the traits of battle-ready troops (**Exalted**, p. 496), where better than their own, and increase its Drill to average. Alternatively, she can spend a month training a battle group with average Drill to grants its members elite troop traits (**Exalted**, p. 497) and raise its Drill to elite.

With Essence 3, the Abyssal can spend a month training a battle group with elite Drill to grant one of the following benefits. Any experience points spent on these benefits are refunded if the enhanced battle group is slain.

Legion of Life's End: For three experience points, the Abyssal grants a battle group +1 Might when facing opposition from mortals or battle groups made up of the living. If it has Might 0, the bonus increases to +2.

Soul-Numbing Prowess: For three experience points, the Abyssal grants the battle group perfect morale (**Exalted**, p. 210), breaking their fear by confronting them with death's inevitability.

Warlord of Death's Dominion: For three experience points, the Abyssal grants a battle group +1 Might while in shadowlands and the Underworld. If it has Might 0, the bonus increases to +2.

ACCLAIMED COMPANY OF SINNERS

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Hardened Killer Training Style

The deathknight recognizes the worthy among her ranks, marshalling a terrible force of elite killers.

The Abyssal spends a scene commending a battle group whose members all have Ties from Loyal Unto Death, praising their martial prowess, faithful service, or red-handed deeds. (Mindless battle groups can't benefit from such praise.)

As long as the battle group's members maintain their Ties, it gains the following benefits in combat:

- +1 base Initiative.

- +1 Resolve. This increases to +2 Resolve against fear-based influence or influence opposed by their Ties of loyalty.

- The Abyssal's command actions treat the battle group's Drill as one step higher to determine how it affects the roll (**Exalted**, p. 207). If it already has elite Drill, the dice added are converted to non-Charm successes.

- It's immune to penalties from fatigue and deprivation.

- Its rout checks don't suffer increased difficulty from allied battle groups or leaders being defeated.

The Abyssal may stack the Charm to enhance up to (Essence) battle groups.

Special activation rules: This Charm's Willpower cost is waived if the Abyssal uses it to conclude Hardened Killer Training Style's regimen.

HIVE-MIND HORROR TACTICS

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Called to Carnage

The Abyssal need not speak to be obeyed, impressing her wrath upon her soldiers' minds.

The Abyssal extends tendrils of thought to any number of allied battle groups within long range, mentally linking herself to her forces. She gains the following benefits:

- She can communicate with her forces and make command actions mentally, potentially negating penalties due to her forces being unable to hear her commands. Her communications can't be

intercepted without magic specifically suited to this purpose.

- She can include a command action targeting a linked battle group in a flurry. This won't let her flurry an order action with an attack.

- Linked battle groups are unaffected by the Demoralized stratagem or magic that would cause them to betray the Abyssal in mid-battle, like First-in-School Assumption (**Lunars**, p. 225).

If the Abyssal is incapacitated, all linked battle groups must make a difficulty 1 rout check as this connection is severed.

This Charm's cost is reduced by two motes if the Abyssal only assumes control of undead battle groups and battle groups that benefit from Acclaimed Company of Sinners.

ARISE AND SLAUGHTER

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death Is No Respite

Speaking with calm and unquestionable authority, Death's Lawgiver stirs the corpses of the battlefield to take up arms in her name.

The Abyssal can use a rally for numbers action to restore Magnitude to a mindless undead battle group, adding (Essence) successes and ignoring the once-per-scene limitation on that action.

If there aren't any allied zombie battle groups, the Abyssal can instead make this roll at difficulty 1 to animate a Size 1 battle group of zombies (**Exalted**, p. 502) with poor Drill and Might 1. There must be sufficient corpses on the battlefield for her to animate. With 5+ successes, the battle group has Size 2.

If the Abyssal has Horror-in-Parallel Assembly, she can instead create corpse-soldiers (p. 230) as long as her stunt incorporates her medical prowess.

SHADOWS OF FORETOLD SLAUGHTER

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Arise and Slaughter

Creation itself weeps for the bloodshed to come at the deathknight's hand, ripping open a shadowland as her dreaded legion takes the field.

The Abyssal makes a Strategic Maneuver roll with double 7s to make a special Demoralize stratagem with threshold 4. Success also causes a shadowland to open across the battlefield as combat begins. This shadowland doesn't always linger after the battle's end, but it's far more likely than usual.

If the battlefield is already a shadowland or the in Underworld, this stratagem instead enhances allied undead battle groups. Their Might's bonus dice on attack rolls are converted to automatic successes and add their Might to their Magnitude.

Special activation rules: When the Abyssal uses Peerless Immortal Strategist, she may use this Charm reflexively, waiving its Willpower cost, to add its stratagem to her options.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal through warfare.

DISTINGUISHED SINNER'S REWARD

Cost: 5m, 1wp (1m, 1wp); **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Acclaimed Company of Sinners

The Abyssal elevates a loyal killer to her honor guard of grim lieutenants, rewarding his service with a sign of her favor.

The deathknight spends a scene commending a favored soldier, giving him a symbol or token of her favor: the insignia of his new rank, a ceremonial sword, one of the Company of Martial Sinners' masks. He must have a Defining Tie from Loyal Unto Death. So long as he keeps that Defining Tie and bears the Abyssal's gift, he gains the following:

- +1 Resolve. This increases to +2 Resolve against fear-based influence or influence opposed by his Tie of loyalty.
- Other characters with Ties to the Abyssal from Loyal Unto Death apply those Ties to him as well.
- Once per day, he can add (Abyssal's Essence/2, rounded up) successes on a War roll or threaten roll.

- The Abyssal's gift is as durable as an artifact.

The Abyssal can stack this Charm for up to (Essence x2) characters. Uses past the first cost one mote, one Willpower.

With War 5, Essence 4, the Abyssal can act through these favored lieutenants for Acclaimed Company of Sinners and Hardened Killer Training Style. She can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to use those Charms from afar when her lieutenants commend or train troops.

GRIM CHEVALIER ASCENDANT

Cost: —(+1m); **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Blood-Soaked Battlefield Hunger

Thrilling in bloodshed, the deathknight is inspired with strategies for further slaughter.

The Abyssal can pay a one-mote surcharge when she uses Blood-Soaked Battlefield Hunger to reflexively enact a stratagem with a threshold of up to half her successes on the Join Battle roll, rounded up. The stratagem must be contextually appropriate, potentially requiring a stunt to explain how she achieves it.

UNFETTERED ATROCITY MEDITATION

Cost: —; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Peerless Immortal Strategist

The most ardent disciples of death reap the greatest rewards, honing violence into a thing beyond art.

The Abyssal rerolls 6s on War rolls until they cease to appear.

ECHOES OF THE FIRST WAR

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Stackable, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unfettered Atrocity Meditation

Prehistoric memories roll through the deathknight's mind, insights gleaned from the nightmares of slain titans. Each memory of defeat urges her onward.

The Abyssal can use this Charm after a battle group acting on her order action successfully hits an enemy battle group with an attack. The attack deals no damage, but the Abyssal can either enact a stratagem or negate an enemy general's stratagem as long as its threshold is less than or equal to the attack roll's extra successes. She can stack up to (Essence) stratagems.

OMNIPRESENT OVERLORD TECHNIQUE

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Hive-Mind Horror Tactics, Unfettered Atrocity Meditation

The Abyssal is become war itself. She watches with ten thousand eyes, marches on ten thousand feet, and kills with ten thousand terrible hands.

The Abyssal opens a mental link with an allied battle group within long range. All of its members have a Tie of loyalty to her. This has the effects of Hive-Mind Horror Tactics (p. 315), as well as the following:

- The battle group's members cannot disobey the Abyssal, subject only to the limits of unacceptable influence.

- The battle group gains perfect morale (**Exalted**, p. 210). If it already had it, it gains +1 Might.

- The Abyssal can reflexively tap into the senses of the battle group's members. She can make rolls with Awareness, Investigation, and Survival through their perspective instead of her own, adding (Size) dice, and can enhance them with magic as usual. While sharing their senses, the Abyssal can't use her own.

- When the battle group enters combat, the death-knight Joins Battle even if she isn't present, rolling (Wits + War) with (Essence) successes. The battle group uses her successes if they're higher than its own. The only actions she can take while she isn't present are command actions targeting the linked group and using War Charms.

This link remains open regardless of the distance between the Abyssal and controlled battle group.

This Charm's cost is reduced by two motes on undead battle groups and battle groups enhanced by Acclaimed Company of Sinners.

Reset: Once per story.

Queen Askaté greeted the Mariner with dangerous familiarity. The queen had known them for years, and though she had been warned before, she made to speak the Mariner's lost name. With more forcefulness than was a guest's right, the Mariner gestured for silence, the mark of their Exaltation flaring on their brow in warning. Askaté soured, but complied, withdrawing back to her broken throne of driftwood and sea-glass.

She could have motioned for Mariner to take a plush seat arrayed beside her throne but kept them standing as recompense for her injured pride. She was old, and powerful, and well-learned in the ways of the Underworld. But she didn't truly comprehend what the Mariner was or what the Abyssals would mean for the future of the dead. There was a day when she would look back upon this snub and rue it. The Mariner didn't relish that. They pitied it.

"You return to us with a Deathlord's favor," she said, adjusting the dozen silver rings that weighted down her willowy fingers.

"The Walker in Darkness sends his greetings to you, Queen Askaté, and offers his recognition for your friendship — three grand gowns of vespersilk from his finest tailors, a coronet of bronze and obsidian, and wine enough to fill my hold, which your servants are already transporting to your banquet halls, my lady."

"*Your* lady," she said, wounded afresh. "*Your* queen. You were my student before you were his servant."

Proud as ever, the Mariner thought. It was the way of the dead, who were born of ritual — they had trouble accepting change. They would see to that, in time, but the Mariner felt great affection for Askaté, haughty as she was. She had been their patron and tutor in necromancy for a decade before their Exaltation.

"Your instruction has been my guiding star," the Mariner said. "But there are other matters I would discuss, your majesty."

"Yes, your missives said as much," the queen replied. "And they are accurate, are they, in your choice of quarry? The Ravenous Maw of Uxet is a grotesquerie; a profanity upon the seas of the dead. So many ships have been crushed within its toothy maw, fishing boats and war-galleons alike. For the love I bear you still, I do not wish to see you throw your life away so fruitlessly."

"For the work I have in mind, no lesser creature's fangs would do, your majesty, and my life... it has already been spent. You know that, even if you don't wish to recognize what stands before you."

"Choose some other quest," she said, and the Mariner watched her hands twist into blasphemous gestures and mudras. A trickle of incense wreathed the Abyssal's head and attempted to ensnare their senses. It was an unworthy trick, prideful and ignorant. When they had studied necromancy under her tutelage, this had been the way of things: When she couldn't convince them of her wisdom, she attempted to change their mind by gross force.

Things were not as they were, though, and the Mariner swept the spell away with a casual gesture. The mark of Daybreak burned once more upon their brow, and their anima swelled like a hurricane. The Mariner stood at the center of phantasmagorical winds, and the world smelled not of incense but blood and salt. They approached Queen Askaté, and she flinched, feeling the necromantic power gathering around her former pupil.

"I heard once that an excellent teacher hopes to be surpassed by their students," the Mariner said. "Allow me to show you what I have learned."



Chapter Seven

Martial Arts and Necromancy

While their Charms are mighty and myriad, the Abyssals have access to many powers and techniques beyond them — including both deadly martial arts and the deepest circles of necromancy.

Martial Arts

The Abyssals are canny students of the martial arts and find ready instruction in countless styles from their Deathlord lieges, ghostly masters, and their fragmented memories of lives long past.

Hungry Ghost Style

Most stories of this style's origins tell of a village, city, or temple overrun by the walking dead. Without weapons or training in battle, the few survivors learned from the only teacher they had, drilling in techniques devised by watching the ravenous ghosts at their hunt. While the truth of such tales is disputed, the style's schools can be found in many places throughout Creation where the living must fear the dead, like the shadowland-haunted streets of Chiaroscuro, the outlying settlements around Whitewall, or the tide-flooded lower neighborhoods of Wu-Jian.

The style's intense physical discipline, emphasizing forceful blows driven by bursts of speed, belies the spiritual facets equally important to practitioners. Students cultivate power within their lower soul by embracing their most intense and primal passions, at times attaining an almost ecstatic frenzy in battle. Those unfamiliar with the style who see its techniques in use may believe practitioners to be monsters themselves.

Hungry Ghost Weapons: This style's unarmed attacks emphasize clawing and knifehand strikes to strike at vulnerable areas. They can always be stunted to deal lethal damage. This style is also compatible with axes, kamas, and tiger claws, which are traditionally wielded paired.

Armor: This style is incompatible with armor.

Complementary Abilities: Athletics is key to this style's emphasis on speed and pursuing foes.

CHARM CONCEPT: PRIMAL EMOTIONS

Some Hungry Ghost Charms reference Intimacies of **primal emotions**: simple, straightforward passions like anger, fear, and hunger, the kind experienced by both people and animals.

Such Intimacies are considered “relevant” in battle if they're directly applicable to the stylist's current action or to the fight as a whole or if they relate to her motivation for fighting.

BLOOD-SCENTING HUNGER

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

KAMA/SICKLE

A kama is similar to a farmer's sickle. Its curved blade's edge is kept sharpened, while its point can be used to stab.

Light (Accuracy +4, Damage +7, Defense +0, Overwhelming 1)

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Disarming, Piercing

Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mastery
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Tasting her prey on the air, the stylist is driven onward by slavering hunger.

The stylist adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice on a Join Battle roll or an Awareness roll opposing an enemy's Stealth in combat. If she wins Join Battle, she may reflexively move one range band toward an enemy. Beating an enemy's Stealth likewise lets her move one range band toward him. This doesn't use her movement action, but she can only do so once per round.

Mastery: When the stylist advances toward an enemy, he loses one Initiative.

LUNGING PHANTOM METHOD

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Perilous, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blood-Scenting Hunger

The stylist surges toward and around her foe with uncanny speed, striking from odd directions before he realizes where she's gone.

When the stylist rushes an enemy with lower Initiative or opposes his disengage roll, she adds dice equal to the difference between their Initiative, maximum (Athletics). If she has a relevant Intimacy of primal emotion, she adds (Intimacy) to her effective Initiative for this Charm's bonus.

If the stylist's roll also beats her enemy's Defense, she creates an opening. The next time she attacks him before the end of the next round, if his Initiative is still lower than hers, she makes a surprise attack, inflicting -2 Defense.

SHROUDED CLAW ATTACK

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Mastery, Withering-only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Blood-Scenting Hunger

Wreathed in entropic Essence, the stylist's strike corrodes her enemy's defenses.

The stylist's **withering** attack inflicts a -1 penalty on her target's Defense and soak against it. If she has a

relevant Intimacy of primal emotion, the soak penalty increases to -(Intimacy).

Mastery: If the stylist crashes the target, he suffers this Charm's penalty until he recovers from crash.

HUNGRY GHOST FORM

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 1
Type: Simple
Keywords: Form
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Lunging Phantom Method, Shrouded Claw Attack

The martial artist howls with bestial fury, muscles twisting and eyes shining with baleful light as she embodies the hungry ghost she will one day become.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- Her lower soul swells with monstrous power. Intimacies based on primal emotions count as one step higher. Defining Intimacies instead add +1 to their Resolve bonus and to their effective value in calculations for Hungry Ghost Charms like Shrouded Claw Attack.
- She gains the Hideous Merit. If she already has it, she adds (Essence) non-Charm dice on threaten rolls.
- She doubles up to (Essence) 10s on **decisive** damage rolls. If she flurried the attack with a rush, this can double 9s as well.
- She adds (higher of Essence or 3) soak.

Special activation rules: Upon dealing enough **decisive** damage to a nontrivial enemy to increase his wound penalty, the stylist may reflexively enter this Form.

SCUTTling APPARITION DEFENSE

Cost: 4m, 2i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Mastery, Perilous, Terrestrial, Uniform
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Hungry Ghost Form

Moving in grotesque contortions, the stylist weaves beyond her foe's reach.

The stylist can use this Charm after being hit by an attack but before the damage roll. She rolls (Dexterity + Athletics) opposing the attack roll. This also counts

as a threaten roll. If the stylist has Hideous, her Appearance adds bonus dice on the roll.

If the stylist beats the attack roll, she reflexively moves one range band away from her attacker after the attack. This doesn't use her movement action. If she beats the attacker's Resolve, he can't move toward her until his next turn ends unless he resists her influence. As long as the stylist beats either, up to (Essence), 1s on the damage roll subtract successes. If she beats both, 2s also subtract successes.

Mastery: The stylist can use this Charm after the damage roll.

Terrestrial: This counts as the stylist's movement action for the round — or the next round, if she's already taken one.

UNNATURAL SHAMBLING DEFTNESS

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Terrestrial

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Scuttling Apparition Defense

The stylist lurches across the battlefield, flickering between bursts of inhuman speed and the marionette gait of the hungry dead as she strikes.

When the stylist beats an enemy's disengage roll or when an enemy provokes her reflexive movement from a rush, she can use this Charm to make a **decisive** attack against him. If she deals 3+ damage, he can't take movement actions until after his next turn.

Terrestrial: This counts as the stylist's attack for the round — or the next round, if she's already attacked.

LEAPING HORROR APPROACH

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Terrestrial

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unnatural Shambling Deftness

Implacable fury suffuses the stylist's body with monstrous strength, sending her flying from quarry to quarry in a blur of carnage.

The stylist leaps up to one range band horizontally or two bands vertically at an enemy, then makes (Essence) **decisive** attacks against him, or (Essence + 1) if he was at close range. If she has a relevant Intimacy of primal

MULTI-ATTACKS VS. AIRBORNE ENEMIES

When a character uses a Charm like Leaping Horror Approach or Iron Whirlwind Attack in mid-air, she completes all attacks from that Charm before falling.

emotion, she can substitute (Intimacy) for her Essence if it's higher. She can increase the jump's range by sacrificing attacks, adding one range band per attack, maximum three bands.

The stylist's Initiative is divided evenly among all attacks, rounded up. It doesn't reset until the final attack is completed, assuming at least one hits. She doesn't lose Initiative for missed attacks unless all of them miss.

If the stylist incapacitates her target and has any attacks remaining, she may leap up to one range band in any direction and make any remaining attacks against a new enemy. She can expand this jump's range as above.

This Charm uses the stylist's movement action for the round. If she falls after completing her attacks, she treats it as one range band shorter to determine how much falling damage she suffers (**Exalted**, p. 232).

Mastery: With Essence 3, the stylist can change targets between attacks even if she doesn't incapacitate her current enemy.

Terrestrial: The stylist subtracts one from the total number of attacks she can make and rounds down when dividing Initiative among attacks.

BLOOD-FREEZING TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mastery, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hungry Ghost Form

The stylist inflicts the chill of the grave, sending it racing through her victim's veins.

The stylist can use this Charm when a **withering** attack deals enough damage to reduce an enemy's Initiative from being higher than hers to lower, afflicting him with an eerie chill for the rest of the scene. He suffers a -1 penalty on physical rolls, which increases to -3

on movement actions and other rolls where speed is vital. The chill grows strongest when her victim tries to move away from her, forcing him to disengage regardless of the distance between them.

Terrestrial: The stylist can only use this Charm when she crashes an enemy.

SOUL-CONSUMING TRANSCENDENCE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Mastery, Terrestrial

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Blood-Freezing Technique, Leaping Horror Approach

Arcs of deathly white Essence swirl around the Hungry Ghost master as she opens her lower soul's spiritual maw to consume her foes.

To use this Charm, the stylist must have Initiative 12+. She makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy with lower Initiative, adding dice of damage equal to the difference between their Initiative ratings, up to a maximum of the stylist's Initiative. If she has a relevant Intimacy of primal emotion, she adds (Essence + Intimacy) to her effective Initiative to determine both the bonus and the maximum damage she can add.

This soul-destroying attack is especially potent against living enemies and ghosts, dealing aggravated damage. If such an enemy is incapacitated, the stylist devours his higher soul, gaining (his Essence) motes. If she slays one of the living, his lower soul will always rise as a hungry ghost (**Exalted**, p. 503) the next time the sun sets unless he's put to rest with magic like the Zenith Caste anima. These revenants have a Defining Tie of terrified obedience toward the martial artist.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by crashing an enemy whose Initiative was higher than the stylist's.

Mastery: When the stylist consumes an enemy's soul, she may incur experience debt (p. 224) to instantly learn up to (Essence) dots of Martial Arts styles that her victim knew. She can also learn one of his Martial Arts Charms, Eclipse Charms, or necromantic spells whose prerequisites she meets. She can't learn sorcerous spells. She can't learn Sidereal Martial Arts unless she devours a Sidereal's soul.

Terrestrial: This Charm can only be used against crashed enemies.

Albican Sepulcher of Extinction Style

This is the forbidden art of the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible, a gospel of death preached through violence. Nonexistence is not to be feared — the ghost who would become the Bishop understood this as he looked upon the Neverborn, forever denied the succor of oblivion.

Violence, then, is the truest act of compassion. People cling to their transient existence, mistaking the suffering and the sorrow of life for something meaningful. They fear death, dreading the arrival of that which is inevitable. It is a kindness to free them from such fetters. The nothingness that follows their death will be no more intolerable than that which preceded their birth.

Few save the Bishop have studied this style. Even among the Deathlords, the power to practice Sidereal Martial Arts is rare, while only a scarce handful of Abyssals have yet attained the spiritual mastery needed to learn them. Many of his fellow Deathlords covet this power and would grudgingly bear whatever steep cost the Bishop would extract to train a promising deathknight.

Albican Sepulcher Weapons: With sweeping movements displaying minimal effort, the stylist directs her foes into nonexistence. It's also compatible with staffs and scythes.

Armor: This style is incompatible with armor.

Nature: Still.

Prerequisites: Learning Sidereal Martial Arts requires all Charms of a single Martial Arts style or any ten Martial Arts Charms. Ordinarily, a Sidereal teacher is also required, but the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible is also capable of teaching this style.

Special: Abyssals who've learned all of this style's Charms gain access to the benefits of the Enlightenment keyword benefits for them.

LET EVERY CHAIN BE BROKEN

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 1, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment, Shaping (Mind)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

THE SCRIPTURE OF OBLIVION

Once, there was a maiden, weeping...
for she was traveling to a funeral in a far and
sunless land.
Her clothes grew ragged on the road, and her
hair grew gray.
but when she finally arrived, the door was
locked.
So she shrugged off her skin for a raiment,
fashioned a harp from her bones,
poured out the wine of her veins,
and made feast of the meat of herself.
Finally unburdened, she went through the door,
for she was tired.
and the grave before her looked restful.
"I knew it couldn't last forever," she said.

*Few can see the chains that bind them to their suffering,
but the bleak saint's parables open their eyes.*

The stylist makes a difficulty 2 gambit to bind an enemy with a fetter of spectral Essence, manifesting the strongest Intimacy her victim has that gives him a reason to go on living. If multiple Intimacies are tied, his player chooses.

If successful, the gambit chains the victim with the affected Intimacy:

- He increases his mobility penalty by -1, or -2 for a Major or Defining Intimacy.
- He must always roll to rise from prone (**Exalted**, p. 197), and his mobility penalty subtracts successes instead of dice when he does.
- At the end of each of his turns, he loses one Initiative unless he took a full defense. If he's prone, he loses two Initiative.
- While the Intimacy remains manifested, it's vulnerable to physical harm. The stylist and her allies can strike it as a gambit against the

fettered enemy, with difficulty (Intimacy + 2). If successful, the Intimacy is weakened by one step unless the victim pays one Willpower and five Initiative to resist. The enemy remains bound even if the Intimacy is fully eroded.

If the stylist rolls 2+ extra successes on the gambit's Initiative roll, the weight of her victim's fetters also drops him prone.

Enlightenment: The stylist may make a damaging decisive attack instead of a gambit, binding her foe if she deals 2+ levels of damage and knocking him prone with 4+ damage.

THE GIFT ALL LIFE IS GIVEN

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Let Every Chain Be Broken

Each thing is born with the seed of its death within it. With a gesture of benediction, the bleak saint bids them flower into oblivion.

The stylist radiates entropic Essence, rolling (Strength + Martial Arts) as a gambit against all enemies within medium range, opposed by their (Stamina + Resistance) rolls. Instead of making separate Initiative rolls for each enemy, the stylist makes a single roll at difficulty 1 and pays the gambit's cost once.

Affected characters suffer a -1 penalty on both **withering** and **decisive** damage rolls and -3 soak and Hardness for the rest of the scene from diminished vitality and corroded gear. The stylist can spend her Initiative roll extra successes to increase the damage penalty by one for two successes, maximum -3, and increase the soak and Hardness penalty by one point for one success, maximum -5.

If the stylist's Initiative roll successes exceed an affected enemy's own Initiative, she can also spend extra successes to destroy his equipment. Destroying mundane objects costs one success each. Against artifacts, she can spend (Artifact rating - 1) successes to break their attunement,

This entropic aura also damages unattended objects and portions of structures within the Charm's range. If the stylist's successes equal the difficulty of a feat of demolition to destroy something, it decays or corrodes instantly as long as she meets the feat's strength minimum. Things made of organic materials are most susceptible to this, reducing the effective difficulty and Strength minimum by

(Essence/2, rounded up) to determine this Charm's effect on them. Even if she doesn't meet a feat's Strength minimum, beating the difficulty still weakens the targeting, reducing the difficulty and effective Strength minimum of further feats to destroy it by (Essence/2, rounded up).

Enlightenment: When the stylist breaks an artifact's attunement, she can pay three additional successes to damage it so badly that it's rendered nonfunctional until repaired (**Exalted**, p. 242).

Reset: Once per scene.

RAITONS FEAST ON MARTYRED CORPSES

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Let Every Chain Be Broken

The bleak saint embraces all who come to her, even if she must impale herself upon the blades they bear against her. This, too, is a lesson.

The stylist can use this Charm after being hit by a **decisive** attack, but before the damage roll. As long as her attacker rolls at least one success on the damage roll, she gains (his Essence) Initiative. If she takes enough damage to increase her wound penalty, she gains additional Initiative equal to her new base penalty. If the damage increases her wound penalty by multiple steps, she gains Initiative for each. She can't be incapacitated by the attack, negating any excess damage.

Additionally, the stylist's attacker treats the damage roll as a special instill roll against himself. He subtracts the stylist's new base wound penalty from his Resolve against it. If his attack would have incapacitated her, he can't assert his Resolve against it. If successful, this influence creates or strengthens a Principle representing a reason the attacker believed harming the stylist was justified, chosen by his player. At the end of each turn, if he didn't make an attack, he loses (Intimacy) Initiative. However, if he makes a **decisive** attack and misses, he also adds (Intimacy) to the amount of Initiative he loses. He must pay one Willpower to end hostilities before all opposition is dead or fled.

A character can pay one Willpower, five Initiative to resist this Psyche effect for one scene. The stylist can still use this Charm to gain Initiative from his attacks.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by going two consecutive rounds without taking a movement action. Being forcibly moved or knocked prone by an enemy also disrupts this reset.

REJOICE! THE ABATTOIR AWAITS

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Let Every Chain Be Broken

Weeping for the ignorance of youths and immortals, the bleak saint reveals the salvation that awaits them.

The stylist forces an enemy to confront his inevitable end with a **decisive** attack, adding (Essence, maximum 5) dice of damage. If the attack's damage equals or exceeds the target's Resolve, the stylist inflicts a Psyche effect. Nothing can modify the target's base Resolve against this except magic that specifically resists Derangements, as well as Intimacies that reflect his view of death: positive attitudes increase it, while negative perspectives penalize it.

If successful, the victim gains a Minor Obsession (**Exalted**, p. 169) with his own mortality. The Obsession's intensity increases to Major for the Exalted and those with similar supernatural longevity and Defining for spirits and other immortals, but they can weaken it to a minimum of Minor by paying one Willpower per level of intensity. They must do so immediately after their Resolve is beaten.

For the rest of the scene, the victim must pay (Obsession) Initiative to take any non-reflexive action that doesn't take him out of harm's way or help protect him against harm. Even then, he suffers a -(Obsession) penalty on the roll.

Resisting this requires a Decision Point. The victim must cite an Intimacy of equal or greater intensity than his Obsession, explaining how it supports accepting his mortality, and pay one Willpower. The Exalted and others with similar longevity must pay two Willpower, while spirits and other immortals must pay three. This frees him from the above effects and renders him immune to further uses for the rest of the scene but doesn't remove the Obsession.

Enlightenment: The stylist may activate this Charm reflexively after rolling damage for a decisive attack, forgoing the bonus damage but rolling (Essence, maximum 5) dice to add successes to the Psyche effect.

ALBICANT SEPULCHER OF EXTINCTION FORM

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Counterattack, Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: The Gift All Life Is Given, Raitons Feast on Martyred Corpses, Rejoice! The Abattoir Awaits

The bleak saint entombs herself in enlightenment.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- While she stands still, slabs of funereal marble rise up from the earth to surround her as if entombing her alive. At the end of each of her turns, she gains light cover from these or upgrades existing cover to heavy. She doesn't gain this benefit if she's taken a movement action that round, and the cover shatters if she takes a movement action or is forcibly moved or knocked prone. If the stylist is incapacitated, she is interred within this sepulcher, granting her unconscious form full cover for the rest of the scene.

- When she incapacitates a nontrivial enemy or empties a battle group's Magnitude track, the world itself is wounded. For the rest of the scene, blood rains down out to medium range from where she made the attack. The rain inflicts a -1 penalty on rolls when its interference with a character's senses disadvantages him or -3 for scent-based rolls. Those within the rain also suffer -1 Resolve against fear-based influence. She can only have one blood storm at a time.

- When she successfully defends against an attack, she can reflexively use Let Every Chain Be Broken or Rejoice! The Abattoir Awaits to make a counterattack.

Special activation rules: Upon successfully defending against an attack that misses by at least two successes, the stylist may reflexively enter this Form, letting her counterattack as above.

CEREMENTS OF FORSAKEN FLESH

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Albicant Sepulcher of Extinction Form

The bleak saint has transcended the lies of embodiment. She knows that she is not her flesh, but a wisp of oblivion imprisoned within it.

The stylist severs her self-identification with her body, drawing from one of her Intimacies representing a

positive outlook on death. She can use this Charm on her turn to gain the following benefits:

- Clad in an aegis of her own flesh, she gains (Intimacy) armored soak and (Intimacy + Stamina) Hardness. This doesn't count as wearing armor.

- She reduces the total penalty she suffers from wounds, poison, crippling effects deprivation, or similar causes by (Intimacy/2, rounded up).

- She's immune to threaten rolls and other fear-based influence that rely on the threat of causing bodily harm, as well as bargain rolls or any other influence that appeals to pleasures of the flesh.

- Any Intimacies incompatible with her alienation from her body are suppressed completely for this Charm's duration. They return when this Charm ends but are weakened by one step. Examples of subjects covered by such Intimacies include fear of death or injury, feelings about one's appearance or body, or desire for food, drink, drugs, sex, or other bodily pleasures.

This Charm can't be used outside of the stylist's turn.

KEENING NETHERWORLD WAIL

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Albicant Sepulcher of Extinction Form

Looking on a world of endless suffering, the bleak saint cries out with sorrow to shatter the heavens.

The stylist unleashes an eerie wail, making a (Charisma + [Martial Arts or Performance]) inspire roll to spread despair among all enemies within long range, capable of being heard over even the loudest tumult or magical silence. If a nontrivial enemy has an Intimacy reflecting a negative outlook on death that the stylist's aware of, her grief at his ignorance adds (Intimacy) non-Charm successes on the roll.

In addition to the influence's usual effects, inspired enemies lose Initiative equal to the stylist's extra successes over their Resolve, maximum (stylist's Essence). The Resolve penalty inflicted by their despair also penalizes their Defense against the stylist's attacks, as part of them seeks their end at her hands.



The inspired sorrow's Resolve penalty also applies against Rejoice! The Abattoir Awaits. It likewise subtracts from the difficulty of gambits to damage an Intimacy manifested with Let Every Chain Be Broken.

Resisting this influence costs three Willpower. Affected characters still lose Initiative even if they resist.

Special activation rules: The stylist can use The Gift All Life Is Given reflexively with this Charm, using her inspire roll for it rather than making a separate roll.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by defeating a non-trivial opponent in a way that upholds an Intimacy related to death.

THE PIT THAT NONE ESCAPE

Cost: 8m, 1wp (1i per round); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Albicant Sepulcher of Extinction Form

The bleak saint knows all things fall towards nonexistence. She merely hastens that drop.

The stylist emanates a vortex of all-devouring Essence, extending out to medium range. Within this vortex, enemies face the following effects:

- The vortex devours light, inflicting a -3 penalty on rolls when the lack of visibility disadvantages someone. The radiance of anima banners and similar magical displays can shine through the dark, but characters treat their anima as one step lower to determine its visibility (**Exalted**, p. 175).
- At the start of each of her turns, they must roll (Strength + Athletics) roll at a difficulty of her (Essence). On a failed roll, they're knocked prone and dragged one range band toward her.
- Any movement away from the stylist counts as difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199).
- When an enemy within the vortex spends 10+ motes on an attack against the stylist, she gains one mote.
- The stylist gains any Initiative sapped from them by Let Every Chain Be Broken

The stylist must pay one Initiative at the start of each subsequent turn to maintain this Charm. It ends if the stylist takes a movement action or is forcibly moved or knocked prone.

Special activation rules: The stylist can use this Charm reflexively when she enters this style's Form.

GENTLE EMBRACE OF THE GRAVE

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: The Pit That None Escape

All things yield to their end.

The stylist makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy as long as he meets at least one of the following conditions:

- He has a Major or Defining Intimacy that reflects a positive outlook on death.
- He has a Major or Defining Intimacy that reflects a motive to cause harm or death.
- He has no Major or Defining Intimacies that give him a reason to continue living or existing.
- He suffers from despair caused by an inspire roll or has a Major or Defining Intimacy based on despair.
- He has an Obsession inflicted by Rejoice! The Abattoir Awaits or another Derangement related to mortality or death.

The attack succeeds if it beats either the target's Defense or his Resolve and adds attack roll extra successes as dice of damage. She doubles the amount of damage dice added if at least two conditions are met or triples them if three or more are met.

If an enemy is incapacitated by this attack, a tomb of spectral Essence forms around his corpse. His soul withers and decays into nothingness within, which permanently destroys spirits.

THE GATES OF PARADISE OPEN

Cost: —(+15m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Cerements of Forsaken Flesh, Gentle Embrace of the Grave, Keening Netherworld Veil

The bleak saint unleashes eight blasphemous palms that shatter the cycle of Lethe, darkening the sky overhead as a storm of souls fills the battlefield.

The stylist may pay a fifteen-mote, one-Willpower surcharges when she uses this style's Form, filling the battleground with swirling souls wrenched free from Lethe as she reveals the apex of this style's forbidden power. This soulstorm extends five range bands from the stylist. It has the following effects:

- Within the soulstorm, the battlefield counts as a shadowland.
- The stylist gains an additional mote at the end of each round from devouring the souls that drift around her.
- When a nontrivial enemy is lethally incapacitated within the soulstorm, the stylist gains (his Essence) motes as she devours his soul, permanently destroying spirits. Likewise, when a battle group loses Size, she gains one mote. She can't gain more than (Essence x2) motes per round this way.
- While using Cerements of Forsaken Flesh, she can continue to fight on even after she's been incapacitated, letting her act normally and rendering her immune to further **decisive** damage. This ends if she's crashed.
- When she uses The Gift All Life Is Given, Keening Netherworld Wail, or The Pit That None Escape, she can pay a five-mote surcharge to extend their range to encompass the entire soulstorm. When used with The Pit That None Escape, she must pay this cost again at the start of each turn, but the motes aren't committed.

Necromancy

Like the Underworld itself, necromancy is a fractured power built from broken pieces. It emerges from the crypt-bodies of the Neverborn and the cracks in reality caused by their fall; from the enigmatic structure of the Old Laws that existed before there was an Underworld; from the memory and rites of the living, which have shaped the Underworld over millennia. From these disparate fragments comes the art of necromancy, of warping Essence by sheer will to create bleak, beautiful, and horrifying miracles. Those who initiate into its mysteries are often transformed by the experience, developing insight into nonexistence, death, memory, and ritual — the strata of the Underworld itself.

Necromancy has been practiced since the First Age's dawn, but the necromancers of the past never truly mastered them. Its deepest circle eluded Solar genius and Lunar witchery even at the height of the First Age.

But no more.

The Deathlords, swollen with the Neverborn's power, shattered the gates of necromancy's Void Circle. Their Abyssals, though still young, are equals in necromantic power, the true masters of the bleak art. By its dread magic, Creation and the Underworld alike will bend to their design.

Learning Necromancy

Necromancy is a rare gift, requiring both a certain spark of enlightenment and a deathly nature. Some are born with this affinity, drawn to the mysteries of the grave; others twist themselves in body and soul to cultivate their potential.

Necromancy's most numerous practitioners are specters and nephwracks — mad kings of Labyrinth-kingdoms, the beings that other ghosts fear in their nightmares. Some ghosts are foolish enough to seek out this cursed existence for necromantic power, only to find themselves too warped to wield it for their original purposes.

The Exalted have long practiced necromancy as a path to morbid power. Lunars have been counted among the greatest of necromancers, like the No Moon Niesha Kiss-of-Hemlock, a student of the Black Nadir Concordat who taught a dozen Lunar apprentices in the First Age and the Silver Pact's early days. Sidereal necromancers are rare but valued assets, especially in the Divisions of Secrets and Endings. The rare Dragon-Blooded born with a talent for necromancy often embraces that gift, knowing that if they are already set apart from their kin, it is best to do so on their own terms.

On rare occasions, mortals and ghosts untouched by the Neverborn initiate into necromancy. Mortal necromancers use the same rules as mortal sorcerers (**Exalted**, p. 470). Mortal necromancers rarely leave ghosts, and even then, those shades do not necessarily retain their mastery of necromancy in death. Savants suggest that something in necromancy itself hungers to be used by the living, feasting on their vitality even as it empowers them to rule over the dead.

Shaping and Casting

Casting necromantic spells follows the same general rules as sorcery (**Exalted**, p. 465): The necromancer chooses a spell, pays its Willpower cost upfront, and takes a **Shape Necromancy** action, rolling (Intelligence + Occult). Each success contributes one **necromantic mote** toward the chosen spell. If she meets the spell's cost, it is cast immediately and reflexively; otherwise, she must continue to take Shape Necromancy actions on future turns until she has enough.

Shape Necromancy actions can't be flurried. A necromancer loses three necromantic motes at the end of every round where no necromantic motes were gathered, whether from shape necromancy actions or shaping rituals. If she stops shaping a spell, she loses all accumulated necromantic motes.

Ritual spells require an extended period of shaping necromantic Essence rather than using Shape Necromancy actions.

Like sorcery, successfully casting a necromantic spell doesn't commit any motes and refunds one Willpower spent on the casting. Necromancers don't gain this refund while crashed.

The Three Circles

Necromancy is divided into three circles, each a dramatic increase in power and rarity from the one before.

The First Circle of necromancy — poetically, the Ivory Circle — reshapes reality in limited, localized ways. Its spells lay potent curses on single foes, bind and enchant lesser ghosts, and conjure perils like pyreflake and prayer-ash. Its most common practitioners are ghosts with necromantic talent; for them, initiation is a road to power and status. A few other spirits likewise have the talent, usually because their nature is touched with death.

The Second Circle, known as the Shadow Circle, is far mightier and orders of magnitude more uncommon. Its spells reshape battlefields, curse families and towns, and bring all but the greatest ghosts to heel. Those rare ghosts with such talent become true powerbrokers of the Underworld, matched for millennia only by Solar and Lunar necromancers and a handful of Exigents and exceptional spirits.

The Third Circle, the Void Circle, is the prerogative of the Deathlords and Abyssals. It has the power to topple

ADAPTING SPELLS

Players and Storytellers can create necromantic equivalents of sorcerous spells for their games, using the original spell as a starting point and twisting its themes and mechanics. A necromantic version of Cirrus Skiff might summon a cloud of pyre-smoke that can be enlarged by feeding dead matter to the blazing fire at its core, while Wood Dragon's Claw might transform the necromancer's arm into a bare skeleton whose life-draining touch destroys organic matter — useful, but inconvenient.

This is a game-level adaptation rather than an in-setting one. Sorcery and necromancy are separate powers that may inspire but never truly emulate one another.

citadels, blight city-states, and endow the dead with terrible might. With only a scant few masters throughout history, its true limits remain enigmatic.

PURCHASING NECROMANCY

Other Exalted types can access necromancy by purchasing necromantic initiation Charms with the same prerequisites as their sorcerous equivalents. Like sorcery, these Charms provide a free spell and necromantic shaping ritual.

The Solar and Lunar Exalted can both learn Ivory Circle and Shadow Circle necromancy. Sidereals can only learn Ivory Circle. The Dragon-Blooded and most Exigents are limited to learning only *either* Ivory Circle necromancy or Emerald Circle sorcery.

NECROMANCY AND SORCERY

The mechanics for necromancy and sorcery are largely the same. The most notable difference is that necromancy can't summon elementals or demons; the former are anathema to the Essence of the Underworld, and the latter swore their oaths of submission to the Exalted, not the dead. Necromancy is also unable to replicate spells of true healing or growth, like Benediction of Archgenesis (**Exalted**, p. 480), though it can siphon and transfer vitality from the living.

In return, necromancy grants access to spells that excel in creating, summoning, and manipulating the dead, exploiting the nature of the Underworld and shadowlands, laying deathly curses, and other bleak magics. It lacks sorcery's conceptual breadth but offers

a path to unique spells that would be more difficult or even impossible for sorcerers to match.

Some pursue both sorcery and necromancy. Such characters may have only a single control spell at the First, Second, and Third Circles of both magics. A character who initiates into a Circle for which she already has a control spell may choose a new control spell, but this replaces her older choice.

Sorcerous and necromantic motes are tracked separately and cannot be spent interchangeably. In all other respects, sorcery and necromancy interact as if they were parallel. Charms that enhance Shape Sorcery actions apply their effects to Shape Necromancy actions and vice versa. Likewise, necromancy can be used instead of sorcery for First Age Artifice.

Necromantic Initiations

Like sorcerers, necromancers must seek out initiation into the bleak arts. Each initiation provides **shaping rituals**, special ways to gather necromantic motes.

Barrow-Sage Rites

The barrow-sage's path winds through ancient tombs, burial pits, and ancestor shrines, those boundary-places where life and death meet. These necromancers draw power from the geomancy of graveyards and the rites of the dead. They seek out forbidden truths and portents in the arrangement of ossuary bones, inauspicious placements of tombs, and chance events that occur during funeral rites. While other necromancers often make their lairs in the shadowlands, the barrow-sages seek out those stark and hallowed places where the Old Laws seep up into Creation like metaphysical groundwater.

SHAPING RITUALS

Ancestral Offering: Once per night, the necromancer may perform a ceremonial sacrifice to a powerful ancestor or group of ghosts, rolling (Charisma + Performance) at difficulty (5 – Resources value of her sacrifice). She may instead offer up to a maximum of five lethal health levels worth of blood freshly drawn from herself or another in place of material sacrifice, using the number of health levels in place of a Resources value. She gains (Essence + extra successes) necromantic motes, which last until the story ends or she makes another offering.

Death in Effigy: The necromancer can draw power from a funeral effigy or monument she's created, like an

ornate sarcophagus, a sculpted marble cadaver monument, or an effigy of a criminal sentenced to death in absentia. Once per day, when the necromancer completes a craft project to create an effigy, she gains necromantic motes equal to her extra successes, maximum 10, which last until she next uses this ritual. Once per scene, she may draw (Essence) necromantic motes from an effigy within medium range. Effigies created with basic projects are destroyed. Those made with major projects are undamaged but can only be tapped once per scene.

Student of the Grave: The necromancer gains (Essence) necromantic motes when she enters a place of death, like a graveyard, corpse-strewn battlefield, or shadowland, or when she begins a scene in such a place. These motes last until the end of the scene. She gains an additional two motes in the Underworld or in an Abyssal demesne or manse she's attuned to. (These bonuses stack). She gains an additional necromantic mote when she takes a Shape Necromancy action in such a place.

OTHER BENEFITS

Death's Sense (••): In the thrum of her bones, the necromancer senses whenever she comes within ten miles of a place touched by death — the site of necromantic spells or workings, places of death, shadowlands, and entrances to the Labyrinth. Rolls to locate these places gain double 9s.

Architect of Death's Houses (•••): As a major Craft (Geomancy) project, the necromancer may transform an area of (Essence x100) square yards into a place touched by death. It attracts deathly spirits and is more susceptible to becoming a shadowland.

Sanguinary Gift (••••): The necromancer's blood is a potent ritual tool. The dead crave it, and it can be leveraged as if it were a Major Intimacy in bargains. A single health level counts as two levels for the purpose of paying costs when using necromancy, and she treats her wound penalty as one lower than it is for the benefit of magic that requires her to spill her blood (e.g., a -1 penalty would count as -2).

Blood-soaked Pilgrim

The necromancer has learned necromancy through ritual sojourns along the primal River of Blood and its forty-four daughter-streams, which drain into shadowlands across Creation. These holy waterways are guarded by blood-stained saints who instruct postulants in the mysteries of blood as nourishment and sacrament. This order counts many exiled gondoliers

among its number, shepherding the dead towards wisdom and sacrifice. Necromancers who walk this path find themselves marked as holy personages by the Incarnadine Path's faithful (p. 88).

SHAPING RITUALS

Baptized in Royal Crimson: Once per story, the necromancer may ritually bathe herself in blood, gaining ([Appearance or Stamina] + Essence) necromantic motes that last for the rest of the story.

Blood-Quickened Sacrifice: Once per scene, the sorcerer may connect her veins to the River of Blood, flooding its banks with her life force. She takes one level of aggravated damage and gains (Stamina + wound penalty) necromantic motes. They last for the rest of the scene.

Incarnadine Omen Anointment: Once per scene, the necromancer may gain (Appearance or Charisma) necromantic motes when she succeeds on an instill or inspire roll against a crowd or narratively significant character that involves her spiritual and philosophical beliefs. They last for the rest of the scene. She gains (Essence) necromantic motes at the start of a scene if she's proudly presenting herself to an audience while clad in bloodied clothes and smeared markings.

MERITS

Blood Vintage Intuition (••): The necromancer may recognize characters by the smell or taste of their blood, adding a non-Charm successes on appropriate rolls, like a tracking roll or roll to case scene roll to identify a bloodstain's source. She also adds this bonus on rolls opposing the disguises of characters whose blood she's tasted.

Predatory Visage (••; requires Hideous): The necromancer has the ineffable air of a predator, adding +1 to her effective Appearance when determining bonuses for threaten rolls and fear-based instill rolls.

Red Draught Delight (•••): Once per session, the necromancer may consume a minor sacrifice of blood (above) to heal (Essence/2, rounded up) non-aggravated levels of damage, or add (higher of Essence or 3) non-Charm successes on a roll to overcome poison or disease.

Collector of the Skull Diary

Looted from the manse of a necromancer-recluse slaughtered in the Usurpation, the Skull Diary was a collection of a thousand blackened skulls. Decorated

in ciphered Old Realm inscriptions, they run the gamut from the skulls of delicate youths to wizened elders. A few even bear prehuman features. Each skull murmurs of its final moments, sharing harrowing tales of gruesome sacrifice and necromantic experiments when pressed to the ear. Sympathetic and curious listeners are rewarded with necromantic secrets.

Bound together in death yet scattered across Creation and the Underworld in the centuries since the Usurpation, each skull possesses a limited intelligence, growing wiser and more cunning when reunited with other skulls. As a necromancer's collection grows larger, the wisdom it offers grows more esoteric, delving into depths of little-known necromantic theory. Collectors of the Skull Diary hunt them obsessively, often coming to blows with their rivals. Some skulls have been sealed in mortal or heavenly vaults, while others are guarded by necromantic abominations and ghostly horrors in the recesses of the Underworld.

SHAPING RITUALS

Collector of Dead Secrets: The necromancer gains one necromantic mote when she uncovers information about another portion of the Skull Diary or similar necromantic relic, learns of a necromantic working or similar phenomena to study, or succeeds on an Occult roll to uncover more about such subjects. They last until the story ends, up to ten maximum. Once per story, when she acquires another skull, she gains (Essence) necromantic motes, which last for the rest of her story. Each skull she already has on her person grants an additional mote, maximum fifteen.

Rattling Bone-Voice Counsel: The necromancer can gain (Intelligence or Wits) necromantic motes by retreating to seclusion, taking counsel with the Skull Diary for a full day without sleep, food, drink, or other comforts. She must have one of her skulls at hand to use these motes. They last until she next uses this ritual.

Skull's Dread Utterance: Once per scene, the necromancer gains an additional (Essence) motes when she stunts a Shape Necromancy action with a description of how she casts the spell through the Skull Diary and the screaming of the skulls she possesses. Using this ritual for her control spell doesn't count against the once-per-scene limit when casting her control spell.

OTHER BENEFITS

Evocations: Necromancers may awaken Evocations from the Skull Diary as a four-dot artifact (**Arms of the Chosen**, p. 18). These may allow her to glean wisdom

SKULL PAGE

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 4; **Join Battle:** N/A (see Page)

Health Levels: -0x4/Incap.

Actions: **Necromantic Lore:** 8 dice; **Read Intentions:** 5 dice; **Senses:** 7 dice; **Social Influence:** 5 dice

Appearance 1 (Hideous), **Resolve** 3, **Guile** 5

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: We must be made whole.

Defining Tie: Its owner (Loyalty)

MERITS

Scribed into Eternity: If destroyed, the skull page reconstitutes itself from its fragments and returns to its master's side the next night.

Page: The page is incapable of fighting, floating at its master's side whenever combat begins. If targeted by an attack, it possesses an **Evasion** of 6.

from the Skull Diary, draw on themes of ritual sacrifice and necromantic secrets, or enhance necromancy by amassing more of the skulls.

Dead Insights (••): Once per story, the necromancer may consult her skulls as she introduces a fact, adding (the number of skulls she possesses, maximum 5) non-Charms successes. She can use the Skull Diary as a Lore background in necromancy, the Underworld, the First Age's Black Nadir Concordat of necromancers, or similar mysteries. The range of Lore topics expands as the necromancer amasses more skulls, completing the Diary's knowledge.

Skull Page (••): A rare few skulls in the Diary belonged to necromancers who were themselves betrayed and sacrificed by the Diary's maker. Cursed with greater awareness of their fallen state, the skull pages serve as familiars to necromancers who claim their power. These blackened skulls levitate in the air, their eye sockets glowing with unearthly light.

Embodiment of the Μαω

In the nightmares of the ever-dying Neverborn, something hungers. Known to specters by many names

— the Hunger of the Void, the All-Devourer, the Grand Maw — it exists at the periphery of their consciousness, a parasitic existence that offers power to those who nurture it within themselves. Once embodied, this nameless voracity will become the perfect principle of consumption — perhaps one that can devour even the Neverborn and grant them their final ending. Devotees channel this nascent principle through ritual consumption of specters, austerities performed in the Labyrinth, and lucid night terrors. The All-Devourer's influence grows among nephwrack adherents who evangelize its coming in holy wars with their specter brethren. The esoteric shadowlands cult of Saturn-in-Starvation worships the Maw as an avatar of the Maiden of Endings, praying for an end to the predations of their Labyrinth-twisted ancestors when they rise from their catacombs.

SHAPING RITUALS

Banquet of Broken Hope: The necromancer gorges on other's emotions, drawing necromantic motes from Ties of fear toward her and Intimacies based on despair. When she takes a Shape Necromancy action, she gains an additional necromantic mote toward that spell for each nontrivial target within medium range who has such an Intimacy, maximum (Essence). Alternatively, she can feed on a single character within medium range who has such an Intimacy, gaining (Intimacy) necromantic motes instead. She can't feed on that Intimacy again for the rest of the day. When casting her control spell, the necromancer can draw necromantic motes from trivial characters and feed on the same Intimacy multiple times a day.

Consumed by Whispers: The necromancer may invoke her Whispers (p. 129) to add (Whispers x2) non-Charms dice on a Shape Necromancy roll. When shaping her control spell, she converts them to automatic successes. Either during the same scene or in the scene that follows, she suffers the consequences of a failed Willpower roll against the Madness Derangement (*Exalted*, p. 168).

Savor the Final Gasp: When the necromancer kills a nontrivial opponent, she gains (higher of his Essence or 3) necromantic motes, maximum ten motes per scene. They last for the rest of the scene. Killing a trivial opponent grants one necromantic mote instead, as does dealing damage to a battle group if she stunts with descriptions of slaughtering her enemies.

OTHER BENEFITS

Marked by the Abyss (•): Ghosts instinctively recognize the ceaseless hunger behind the necromancer's

eyes. Typical ghosts count as having a Minor Tie of fear towards her, while specters count as having a Tie of respect or a similar positive emotion.

Distance-Devouring Nightmare Speech (••):

The necromancer may communicate telepathically with characters within medium range who have the Whispers merit or a Major or Defining Tie of fear towards her. This doesn't require a shared language. Abyssals with Infinite Blasphemy Glossolalia or Screaming in Silence (pp. 218, 243) no longer need to invoke their Whispers for those Charms' Whispers effect.

Shadow-Eaten Soul (•••••): Faced with the ravening dreams of dead gods, the necromancer consigns her mortal weakness to the Maw. She gains a Minor Principle of enmity for all life, which cannot be removed or have its context altered by any means. She can add its Resolve bonus against any Psyche effect. If she has it at Defining intensity, she treats all Psyche effects as unacceptable, as long as she doesn't have any positive Ties toward the living or Principles that express a positive outlook on life. Doing so prevents her from voluntarily forming such Intimacies for the rest of the session.

Hollow Envoy Wisdom

Many of Creation's cultures fear ghostly possession as a subversion of the natural order, the dead clawing their way into the hearts and minds of the living. The necromancer-mediums and spirit channelers who walk the hollow envoy's path are few but storied, gaining necromantic power by opening themselves to possession as a form of communion with the departed. Whether channeling the wisdom of favored ancestors or imprisoning an abhorrent wraith within their souls, these mediums cannot help but be changed over the course of years of possession. The memories of the dead they make their own, learning the taste of death and the secrets of necromancy long before their own end.

SHAPING RITUALS

Advocate of the Fallen: When the necromancer makes a promise, negotiates a deal, or otherwise mediates with an undead being, she may hallow her word, gaining (3 + his Essence) necromantic motes that she may use on spells that further that promise or which resonate with his nature and passions. These motes refresh at midnight until she fulfills her promise. She may keep only one such hallowed promise at a time.

Bound Soul Wellspring: Once per scene, the necromancer may drain power from a bound or willing ghost at up to short range or a hostile ghost that's possessing her. She rolls (Charisma + Occult) with (ghost's Essence) bonus dice, banking one necromantic mote for each success. They last for the rest of the scene. The ghost is left weakened: For seven days, it suffers a -3 penalty on all rolls and can't be drained again with this ritual.

Ecstatic Service Enlightenment: Once per day, when the necromancer undertakes a significant or dangerous action to commemorate or appease a ghost, she rolls (Intelligence + Occult) and gains necromantic motes equal to her successes. If she has a positive Tie toward the ghost, she adds (Intimacy) non-Charisma dice. These remain until the end of the day.

MERITS

Gravetongue (•): The necromancer may communicate with all intelligent ghosts as if she shared a language with them.

Phantom Heart Insight (••): The necromancer adds three non-Charisma dice on read intentions, and Investigation rolls against the undead. With 3+ extra successes, she intuitively gains an additional clue about the target's Intimacies, motives, or desires.

Mantle of the Old Laws (•••): Ghosts perceive the character as a keeper of the Old Laws, which she may leverage as a Minor Tie of trust and respect. Once per session, she may invoke her title or deeds in the stunt for an influence roll to treat this as a Major Tie instead. If she willingly betrays an undead being, she loses the benefits of this Merit until she undertakes a life-changing task (*Exalted*, p. 216) to demonstrate her contrition or renewed dedication.

Umaza's Hymns

The enigmatic Umaza wanders the Sea of Shadows, a leviathan of rotting flesh and grasping tendrils. She beaches herself upon the shore from time to time, revealing three mouths with which she sings bleak hymns in a glossolalia of prayerful regret. Those who learn her hymns are forever changed, minds blasted open to dark truths. Umaza infrequently visits Creation by night through mist-wreathed portals only she knows, luring unwary mortals to drown themselves for her sustenance or imparting her wisdom to the fortunate and willful.

THAUMATURGY

Most so-called "necromancers" in Creation aren't initiates of necromancy proper, but thaumaturgists versed in rites that conjure, animate, bind, and banish the dead (*Exalted*, p. 490).

Such rituals include:

Final Testament (•): With an hour-long ceremony, reveal the last nine words a corpse spoke before its death.

Tear-Stained Talisman (•): Cause a willing (or bound) ghost to inhabit a talisman, even if they lack the Charms to do so. Talismans are specific to the ritual, granting minor magical benefits. Specialties based on the ghost's expertise, and so on.

Breath of Unlife (••): With an eight-hour ritual requiring a minor sacrifice, animate an undead servant bound with a Major Tie of loyalty. Each ritual creates a specific kind of servitor — zombies (*Exalted*, p. 502) are the most common; variations grant between two and four dots of Innate Merits or Mutations. Rituals are highly specific, often requiring either a certain time, place, or rare material.

Other rituals might pierce a corpse's eye to see through them at a distance until the corpse rots, conjure a family member's ghost for a brief, enigmatic conversation, or enchant an effigy to be supernaturally alluring or repulsive to a particular ghost.

SHAPING RITUALS

Hymn of the Horror: Once per scene, when the necromancer conveys fear-based influence through her singing, success grants (Performance) necromantic motes, which last for the rest of the scene. If she successfully influenced at least one character with a total Resolve of 6+, she gains an additional mote for each point of Resolve over 5. This can't grant more than (Essence + Performance) motes total.

Hymn of the Siren: Once per scene, when the necromancer succeeds on an influence roll to convince others to follow her or side with her or to instill a Tie toward her, she gains (Manipulation) necromantic

motes. She gains additional necromantic motes equal to the number of bonus dice added by her Appearance.

Hymn of the Weeper: Once per story, when the necromancer commemorates the dead, speaks about tragedy, or leaves an audience in tears, she gains (Essence + Performance) necromantic motes, which last for the rest of the story. If she addresses multiple characters, she gains additional motes equal to her audience's effective Size (**Exalted**, p. 206).

MERITS

Note of Singular Horror (•): While singing, the necromancer counts as having the Hideous Merit if it's advantageous, reflecting an insidious terror hidden in her vibrato.

Bleak Tide Voice (••): The necromancer can breathe and sing underwater without difficulty, her music carrying through water as clearly as if through air.

Deathly Siren Allure (•••): The necromancer treats her Appearance as one higher for determining bonus dice on persuade rolls to draw someone towards her. Once per session, she may declare that an un-Exalted undead with Essence lower than (her Appearance/2, rounded up) is automatically enchanted by her without needing an influence roll, instilling a Tie toward her with a context of fascination, attraction, or awe, chosen by the target's player.

Ivory Circle Spells

ABHORRENCE OF BREATH

Cost: 10nm, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

With a keen and shattering screech, the necromancer cracks the shell of the world to create a void that draws in air, sound, and hope.

A pin-sized void opens at a point within medium range of the necromancer, drawing in all air and loose matter within medium range. At the start of each character's turn, they must make a reflexive (Strength + Athletics) roll with a difficulty of (higher of necromancer's Essence or 3) to avoid being dragged one range band towards it. Battle groups also suffer (Essence + 2) dice of Magnitude damage as poor unfortunates are dragged out of formation. The void is too small for most things to pass through, but liquid — especially shed blood — is greedily drawn in.

A vacuum forms within short range of the void, silencing all mundane sound and causing characters to suffocate (**Exalted**, p. 232). The necromancer is immune to the void's pull but is still silenced and breathless.

Control: The necromancer moves with unearthly quiet, inflicting a -2 penalty on rolls to detect her by hearing. Spirits of air and sky — and the ghosts of all who died by suffocation or drowning — count as having a Minor Tie of enmity toward her.

Distortion (10): The necromancer is no longer immune to the void's pull. The difficulty to resist being drawn in is reduced by one, except for the necromancer — whatever exists beyond the void, it delights in treachery.

BLESSED DEAD FOOLS

Cost: Ritual, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One night

In search of lovely and gentle music, the necromancer croons a prayerful melody to the Seven Sighs Requiem, borrowing sublime performers from its soul-menagerie for a night of revels.

The necromancer must begin her song after nightfall, singing for a few minutes to call forth a band of ancient shades to perform during the night's revels. Eccentrically dressed, each musician's mouth is sown shut with strings of sinew, and each carries an instrument of the necromancer's choice. They raise a black metal flagpole with a banner of pale blue flame where they set up, visible and enticing to the dead for miles around. The musicians are noncombatants (**Exalted**, p. 208) and dematerialized, though visible and audible. Their music has the following effects:

- Listeners count as having a Minor Principle of joie de vivre and will join in the night's revels unless they have a specific reason not to.
- The sublime music makes ghosts feel as if they were alive again and allows them to interact with the living as if they were material.
- Listeners suffer -2 Guile against the necromancer's guests. The necromancer isn't affected.
- Those who join in the celebration treat any negative Ties they have towards the necromancer or the undead as one step weaker.

When the next morning comes, trivial revelers can no longer recall the night's events, as if they were a dream. Nontrivial characters may roll ([Stamina or Wits] + Integrity) against a difficulty of 3 to recall what happened.

Control: The sublime performers float on a stage of mist as they play, led by a standard-bearer holding their flag aloft. They become mobile, traveling as a night-parade at the necromancer's beckoning. The spell's effects extend out to medium range around the stage.

Distortion (10): Distortion causes the performers to become material, rendering them vulnerable to attack. Should they or their banner be struck, the spell's effects come to an end.

BLESSURE OF BLOODY RESPITE

Cost: Ritual, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One week

In profane mockery of the gods, the necromancer rips open the flesh of reality, shaping this wound into a temporary shelter.

The necromancer opens an extradimensional wound in the air with a ritual that takes at least a few minutes. Those with her permission may pass through it into a sanctum like a god's, but with walls of polished bone and fountains of spiritual gore. This space has room to hold (Essence x5) guests comfortably, though it has no amenities. It counts as a shadowland, rendering ghosts material, though it doesn't open into the Underworld. It persists for up to a week; after that, the wound knits itself closed. Characters and objects left within are deposited safely outside.

A necromancer who chooses her location carefully can conceal the wound's entry, rolling (Wits + Occult) when casting the spell to establish the difficulty to notice it. This roll suffers a -2 penalty from the blessure's ever-weeping blood.

Control: As a ritual, the necromancer may cast this spell upon a coffin, casket, or similar vessel meant for the dead, creating a blessure within that travels with her. If she stays in one place too long, such as when sleeping, the air begins to bleed, lightly scoured by her sheer presence.

Distortion (8): A rival necromancer may force open the portal to the hidden refuge for up to (his Essence) minutes.

BONE PUPPET DANCE

Cost: 13nm, 1wp



Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

With a dire syllable of command, the necromancer's brand blooms on her victim's ribcage, calling his skeleton to free itself from his flesh.

The necromancer rolls (Intelligence + Occult) against a target at up to medium range, opposed by a (Stamina + Resistance) roll. If successful, she takes control of his bones for (1 + threshold successes) rounds. At the start of each of the victim's turns he rolls (Stamina + Resistance) against a difficulty of the necromancer's (Intelligence). On failure, the necromancer may select one of the following effects:

- The victim suffers three dice of unsoakable **withering** damage as his skeleton twists and dances within his flesh. The necromancer doesn't gain Initiative from this. Crashed enemies suffer dice of lethal damage instead, ignoring Hardness.
- The victim falls prone, staggers one range band in any direction, drops a weapon or object, or takes a similar action as a result of the necromancer's control. This doesn't count against his actions for the round.
- The necromancer makes a **decisive** attack as the skeleton attempts to tear the victim apart. It automatically hits, adding one die of damage for each remaining round of the spell's duration. This automatically ends the spell.

Alternatively, this spell can animate a corpse as a bonesider (**Exalted**, p. 506) with a Defining Tie of obedience to the necromancer that cannot be altered. This Intimacy doesn't spread to other bonesiders created by the necromancer's servitor.

Control: Skeletons that kill their host tear themselves free of the victim to become bonesiders, as above. Whenever the necromancer experiences intense emotion, such as anger or sadness, her own skeleton twists in odd ways, contorting her like a gruesome marionette.

Distortion (8): Distorting Bone Puppet Dance lets a contesting necromancer take control of the victim's skeleton.

CURSE OF CREEPING CALCIFICATION

Cost: 13nm, 1wp

Keywords: Decisive-only, Shaping (Body)

Duration: One week

The necromancer exhales a wisp of undulating white dust that darts forth to infect her victim, slowly transforming his flesh to ivory.

The necromancer rolls (Intelligence + Occult) against a target within short range as a special, unblockable **decisive** attack that doesn't deal damage or reset her Initiative. Success infects her target with the supernatural disease known as ivory flesh affliction. It has virulence (necromancer's Intelligence), morbidity (Essence + 2), and a one-day interval. Mundane medical treatment is useless. The necromancer's victim doesn't receive a roll against the disease's virulence unless he uses magic that specifically defends against disease.

Minor Symptom: The victim's flesh is partially transformed to ivory, inflicting a -1 mobility penalty.

Major Symptom: The mobility penalty increases to -3 as the transformation spreads.

Defining Symptom: The mobility penalty subtracts successes rather than dice and causes the victim to treat all movement as if through difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199).

Death: Mortals die, transformed entirely into ivory, while others are rendered immobile, able to move nothing but their eyes. Spirits can be freed by destroying their calcified form, letting them reform as usual.

This spell can be used on dematerialized characters, forcibly materializing them upon infection and preventing them from dematerializing while they're afflicted. If their Essence is greater than the necromancer's, they may pay one Willpower to ignore this for one scene.

Control: The sorcerer grows patches of scaly bone across her body, granting her one dot of the Unusual Hide Merit (**Exalted**, p. 166). She can slow the curse's interval to weeks, months, or even years and may touch a character to relieve them of its effects for a period she chooses, after which the symptoms come back in full. This cannot revive those who've died to the spell.

Distortion (10): The target reduces the mobility penalty by one and can't reach the death stage of the disease's progression. The distorting spellcaster may use Occult instead of Medicine to treat the disease.

DOOR OF THE DEAD

Cost: Ritual, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

The necromancer caresses a mirrored surface, looking through the reflection to the dark vistas of the Underworld beyond it.

In a minute-long ritual, the necromancer transforms a reflective surface at least as large as she is into a passageway to the Underworld. It remains open for up to (Essence) minutes, allowing passage to and from the Underworld. The doorway opens to a safe Underworld location chosen by the Storyteller, based on where the necromancer cast the spell:

- Near a shadowland, the doorway leads to an area close to the shadowland's Underworld environs.
- Further afield in Creation, it leads to a nearby relevant afterlife — the cultural afterlife of a local people, a primal afterlife of bloody combat if cast on a battlefield, and so on.
- In other realms of existence, the location is entirely at the Storyteller's discretion, often arriving on unfamiliar shores along the Sea of Shadows.

Once the portal closes, the reflective surface cannot be used again. Mirrors crack, water boils, and silver tarnishes irrevocably.

Alternatively, the necromancer may open a portal to a random destination within the Labyrinth without needing a mirror. She murmurs a discordant incantation to perform the ritual, slashing the air with a prepared blade. The fabric of Creation tears open to reveal a portal of shining darkness to a place of power within the Labyrinth's confines. This portal only goes one way; she must leave the Labyrinth through her own power once she passes through.

Control: Those who interact with the necromancer may sometimes experience disturbing visions or nightmares of their own burial thereafter. Additionally, by performing a funeral rite with the appropriate trappings, the necromancer may use this spell to cross into an afterlife she's familiar with, disappearing to the Underworld from her tomb or pyre. Injuries sustained in this ritual, like being burned on a pyre, heal upon her arrival, though this doesn't make the process any less painful.

Distortion (5): Distortion allows only a single subject to pass through the gateway before the spell ends. If one has already passed through, the spell terminates.

FIELD OF FELL DREAMS

Cost: 10nm, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

The necromancer channels the heat of a thousand decaying dead into the ground, burning a brand into the earth to call forth countless grasping skeletal hands.

The area out to medium range around the necromancer becomes a field of grasping skeletal hands for the rest of the scene. This is both difficult terrain and an environmental hazard with difficulty (Intelligence), Damage 1B/round. Damaged enemies fall prone. Prone characters within the field must always roll to rise as the frenzied hands grasp at them and suffer a -3 penalty on rolls to do so.

The necromancer and her allies aren't affected by the field.

Control: The necromancer may raise a field that lasts until the next sunrise. She can also delay the field's manifestation, branding her handprint into the earth. It can be unleashed reflexively if she's within medium range of the brand and can also be set to trigger if one of the living enters the area. At times, skeletal hands emerge from nearby surfaces or within the necromancer's attire to aid in simple tasks.

Distortion (10): The distorting spellcaster is immune to the field's effects. Its grasp momentarily weakens, suppressing its effect on prone characters until the start of the distorting character's next turn.

FLESH AND BONE WINDS

Cost: 10nm, 1wp

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: One scene

Following the utterance of impossible syllables, the earth ruptures around the necromancer into a whirlwind of shattered bones and ribbons of rotten flesh.

The necromancer creates a gruesome whirlwind, providing light cover to her and to any allies within close range. Enemies who attack the necromancer from close range are assailed by whirling fragments of flesh and bone, a onetime environmental hazard with difficulty 3, Damage 2L.

The storm gathers dead flesh and bone in the necromancer's path, tearing apart any corpses within close range of her to pieces and adding to its mass. Once the

effective Size of the consumed corpses reach 1 (**Exalted**, p. 206), the cover increases to heavy. This also inflicts a -3 penalty on vision-based Awareness rolls against anything within close range of her. The consumed corpse's Size is also added to the hazard's difficulty and damage, maximum difficulty 5, Damage 7L.

This spell ends if the necromancer is crashed or incapacitated.

Control: Gore carries an unusual appeal to the necromancer, drawing her to inspect viscera whenever she chances upon it. As a miscellaneous action, the necromancer may mutilate and compress corpses within short range with a wave of her hand, compacting them into crude structures of rotting flesh in a burst of gore. These corpse-barriers provide light cover. They can be destroyed with a Strength 3+ feat of demolition at difficulty 3.

Distortion (10): Distortion strips away the flesh from any corpses the storm's absorbed, removing their benefits and preventing the storm from absorbing any further corpses.

FLESH-SLOUGHING WAVE

Cost: 13nm, 1wp

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

The necromancer shapes a singing sphere of ivory Essence in hand and hurls it down to shatter at her feet, unleashing a wave of shrieking light to cleave flesh from bone.

The necromancer unleashes a wave of Essence, rolling (Perception + Occult) as an unblockable **decisive** attack against all living characters — including allies — within short range. This ignores cover. The attack deals (Intelligence + extra successes) dice of lethal damage to each hit character or (Intelligence + Essence + extra successes) against mortals. Corpses within range are stripped of any trace of flesh, leaving only clean bone behind.

Damaged characters suffer an additional die of lethal damage at the start of each of their turns as their flesh falls away. This ignores Hardness. This effect ends if a roll doesn't deal any damage.

Control: The living suffer even greater agony as their flesh is ripped free, increasing their wound penalty by -1 for as long as they suffer this spell's effects. The necromancer may call forth a sphere of ivory light whose eerie radiance makes skin crawl and flesh twitch.

GROTESQUE MASQUE OF THE INEVITABLE

Cost: 10nm, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One week

The necromancer draws forth the shadow of death that exists in all living things, transforming her foe into a foreshadowing of his own corpse.

The necromancer rolls ([Intelligence or Manipulation] + Occult) against the Resolve of a living character within medium range. Success transforms his appearance into an illusion of his own corpse, with the necromancer choosing the means of his apparent death — withered by age, covered in stab wounds, marked by deadly poxes, and so on. Other characters perceive him as being one of the undead, reacting to him accordingly, and he becomes Hideous (**Exalted**, p. 162). Characters with a relevant Intimacy or with reason to doubt the illusion can see through it with a difficulty 5 (Perception + [Awareness, Investigation, or Occult]) roll.

When the victim has the opportunity to look upon his hideous reflection, the necromancer's player rolls (Manipulation + Occult) against his Resolve. This can't be enhanced with Charms or other effects. She doubles 9s if it would be especially easy for her victim to see his reflection, like in a manse of mirror-polished marble or on the shore of a glassy lake. Success leaves him transfixed by his own grim visage until he spends one Willpower to resist. In combat, he must take a miscellaneous action each round to observe his reflection. Once he's spent (necromancer's Essence, maximum 3) Willpower this way, he's freed from this fixation, though the illusion remains.

Against mortals, the transformation is permanent, though the necromancer may proclaim a circumstance under which it breaks: when her victim slays one of her foes, swears his fealty to her, stands atop Mount Namas, etc.

This spell can also be cast on ghosts to shape their corpus, changing the apparent cause of their death and similar cosmetic supernatural features. These transformations are permanent if the ghost is willing or has Essence 1.

Control: The necromancer may cast this spell on herself to change her apparent age, add cosmetic wounds and afflictions, or conceal their nature as one of the dead — or alternatively, as one of the living. If used for disguise, the necromancer adds (Occult) dice. This transformation lasts until she chooses to end it.

Distortion (9): While the victim still appears to be undead, he's not forced to be Hideous and can see his reflection without incident. This lasts one scene.

MALEDICTION OF THE INFESTED HEART

Cost: 13nm, 1wp

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

With a wretched cooing, the necromancer calls forth a clutch of creeping, writhing pyreworms — passion-eating centipedes of congealed pyreflame.

The necromancer touches a character, rolling (Manipulation + Occult) opposing his (Stamina + Resistance). On success, pyreworms mass and burrow harmlessly into his skin, tunneling inward to wrap themselves around his heart. When he uses an Intimacy based on passionate emotions to bolster his Resolve or in a Decision Point, he must either pay one Willpower or suffer (necromancer's Essence/2, rounded up) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. He must also do so when his Resolve is beaten by influence to inspire such emotions. Acting out the lack of passion caused by the pyreworms' predations counts as dramatizing a Flaw for earning Expression Bonus (**Exalted**, p. 167).

The spell ends once the victim's spent (higher of necromancer's Essence or 3) total Willpower. It can also be cured by magic that can treat supernatural diseases. In theory, the pyreworms can be removed through radical surgeries, though few in Creation could perform them nonfatally.

Control: The hot glow of a symbiotic pyreworm is visible beneath the necromancer's unclothed chest. She may spend five motes or one Willpower to reflexively weaken one of her Intimacies based on passionate emotion by one step or resist a successful inspire roll to spread such feelings.

Distortion (9): A rival necromancer may loosen the pyreworms from their host's heart, waiving the Willpower cost the next time this Charm's damage is triggered. This still counts toward the total Willpower cost to end this spell.

RAISE THE SKELETAL HORDE

Cost: 13nm, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

The necromancer unleashes a cascade of purple lightning from her palm, striking nearby corpses. With an unearthly spasm, the moaning dead rise to their feet.

The necromancer rolls (Intelligence + Occult) against difficulty 1. Success animates a Size 1 battle group of zombies with poor Drill and Might 1. The zombies have a Defining Tie of obedience toward her that can't be weakened.

The necromancer may improve the battle group's Size by spending three extra successes per additional dot of Size, maximum (Essence), as long as she has sufficient corpses. Nearly a dozen are required for Size 1 battle groups, while larger numbers might require reanimated the corpses strewn across a battlefield or interred within a graveyard.

Control: The necromancer may raise a Size 1 battle group of zombies without nearby corpses, calling ancient dead from the ground beneath her feet. Battle groups of reanimated zombies under her command possess average Drill. Wherever she goes, corpses groan and shift where they lie, their final rest disturbed by her passing.

Distortion (15): Distortion weakens the necromancer's bindings. She rolls (Intelligence + Occult) against difficulty (battle group's Size + 1). Failure causes the battle group to lose a point of Size. If the battle group is Size 1, it instead suffers levels of damage equal to the distorting spellcaster's (Essence), plus an additional level for each success the necromancer failed by.

SEAT OF DEADLY SPLENDOR

Cost: 10nm, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Until the necromancer rises

A great fist of ancient bone bursts from the ground, arranging itself into a dolorous throne fit for a lord of the dead.

While seated on it, the necromancer gains the following benefits against characters who can perceive her:

- She gains a bonus dot of Appearance and may choose to gain or suppress the Hideous Merit (**Exalted**, p. 162).

- She adds (Essence/2, rounded up) non-Charm dice on influence rolls based on awe, fear, or envy.

- Characters who wish to approach within short range of her must spend one Willpower to do so.

- In combat, characters with Ties of awe, fear, or envy treat the pressure of her majesty as an environmental hazard extending out to short range. It has difficulty (Appearance), Damage

WHY BIND GHOSTS?

While necromancers often bind ghosts for their deathly magic and to use them as unseen spies and servants, most summon the restless dead for their knowledge. Necromancers seek the names and burial grounds of dead princes for their secrets, summon the shades of vengeful courtiers to uncover blackmail on their confidantes or rivals, and the ghosts of savants for their wisdom. While death and ghostly passions often distort memories of life, bound ghosts typically possess enough knowledge to be of use to the necromancer. Specific ghosts summoned for their knowledge possess an action pool of 6–8 dice in a relevant subject.

(Essence)i/round. This **withering** damage is unsoakable but doesn't award the necromancer Initiative. Crashed enemies fall prone, bowing before their master.

The throne cracks and crumbles if the necromancer rises. It can also be destroyed with a difficulty 5 feat of demolition requiring Strength 3. At the end of the scene, if the necromancer remains seated, her throne fossilizes, becoming non-magical but permanent.

Control: Any mundane chair the necromancer is seated in transforms to befit her majesty, ossifying into elegant bone over the course of a minute. The transformed throne provides this spell's bonus on influence rolls of awe, fear, and envy.

Distortion (9): The throne tightens around the seated necromancer like a fist, holding her in place until the start of the distorting necromancer's next turn. She can't take movement actions and suffers a -3 penalty to all physical actions.

SUMMON GHOST

Cost: Ritual, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Under the veil of night, the necromancer calls forth one of the restless dead to bind them in her service.

At night or in the Underworld, the necromancer performs an hour-long ritual to summon an Essence 1–3 human ghost. A black portal forms above the ritual site, drawing the summoned ghost through,

accompanied by a wordless susurrus. The necromancer rolls (Intelligence + Occult) roll against the ghost's Resolve to bind it.

Success lets the necromancer impose a Defining Tie of loyalty to her for a year and a day that cannot be weakened or altered by any means. Alternatively, she may assign a task and a Defining Principle of "I must complete my task." If the necromancer fails, the ghost escapes back through the portal and cannot be bound for the rest of the story.

By default, the summoned ghost is a typical member of the "type" of undead to which it belongs (e.g., honored ancestor, mortwright, war ghost). To summon a specific ghost, the necromancer must know his name or identity and possess a symbolic link to him, like a piece of his corpse, a treasured keepsake, or grave goods.

Reset: Once per night.

VISIONS OF THE BONFIRE

Cost: Ritual, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

The necromancer gazes into a blue-white bonfire to spy through the eyes of the restless dead.

The necromancer tosses bone dust upon a flame in a ritual to scry on an undead character no matter how far away he is. The undead must have a Defining Tie of loyalty or obedience to the necromancer unless she possesses a symbolic link to him, like a fingerbone or a lock of a deathknight's hair. She rolls (Perception + Occult) against the target's Resolve. Success lets the necromancer see through the target's eyes by peering into the fire, allowing her to make her own Perception rolls and use magic to enhance them. She must remain within close range of the fire, and the level of focus required leaves her completely unaware of her surroundings.

While the necromancer spies, her target's eyes glow with blue flames that betray her presence. This spell ends if her vessel is destroyed or if magic capable of exorcising spirits is used to drive her out of it. If the target is part of a battle group, it can be singled out as an elected target (**Exalted**, p. 416).

Control: The necromancer's eyes glow with the eerie blue flame of the bonfire. She can scry through up to (higher of Essence or 3) undead, making a single roll against all of them. She can only view one undead's perspective in the flames at a time but can switch between

them reflexively. Alternatively, she can conceal her presence while spying through a single undead, muting the fire in its eyes. A (Perception + Occult) roll at difficulty 3 is required to notice the flame.

Distortion (7): A spellcaster within short range of the necromancer's spy can distort this spell, fraying the necromancer's connection to it. The spell ends if the undead takes any **decisive** damage.

WRATH OF RAVENOUS HUNGER

Cost: 13nm, 1wp

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: One week

Calling to her foe's lower soul as one might lure a hungry dog with bloody meat, the necromancer grants it greater sway.

The necromancer makes a special ([Manipulation or Intelligence] + Occult) influence roll against a living character within medium range. Success rouses his lower soul, filling him with violent urges and insatiable hunger. He suffers a -(higher of necromancer's Essence or 3) penalty to all rolls requiring a level head or careful foresight. The amount of food he must consume to avoid starvation is multiplied by (necromancer's Essence + 2), and he can only sustain himself on meat. Others may exploit these urges and hunger as if they were a Major Intimacy. If such an influence roll fails, the cursed character automatically gains a negative Minor Tie toward the influencing character. Characters who die while cursed always leave a hungry ghost if able.

Alternatively, the necromancer can use this spell against the undead, even when they lack a lower soul, strengthening the vestigial echo of their hunger. Her target may use the traits of a hungry ghost (**Exalted**, p. 503) if they're superior to their own and gains the Blood Scent and Earthbound Merits — though not the increased damage from sunlight. Such undead thirst for living blood, suffering deprivation penalties if they go more than (their Essence + 2) days without it (**Exalted**, p. 232).

Control: Starving characters double their deprivation penalty while in medium range of the necromancer. Hungry ghosts count as having a Major Tie of respect for her. Whenever she passes by an unburied corpse, it groans uncontrollably with an echo of hunger.

Distortion (10): So long as the target can satisfy their increased appetite, he reduces the penalty on rolls by two, and his hunger only counts as a Minor Intimacy.

Shadow Circle Spells

BANISHED FROM THE SUNLIT REALM

Cost: 15nm, 2wp

Keywords: Shaping (Soul)

Duration: Instant

The necromancer taints her victim's soul with a resonance that violently clashes with the spiritual timbre of Creation. His appearance grows shadowed, his eyes white and wide, his flesh burning under the sun's light. Only darkness offers relief.

The necromancer twists the soul of a target within short range, rolling (Intelligence + Occult) against the victim's Resolve. Success renders him a creature of darkness and causes him to suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls while in Creation from the disharmony in his soul. In direct sunlight, this penalty worsens to -3, and the victim's flesh begins to burn, inflicting a die of aggravated damage for each minute of exposure, ignoring Hardness. If his skin is concealed completely, he takes damage each hour instead. Damage caused by sunlight doesn't heal naturally. These effects are suppressed in the Underworld and in shadowlands.

The necromancer may end this curse by reaching into the target's chest, drawing it out as a squirming organ of shadow, and crushing it. It also ends if she's slain.

Control: The necromancer may sense the direction and distance to her victim, adding (his Essence) non-Charm dice on rolls to track him. She may also reflexively suppress the curse's effects at will, allowing her to use it as leverage when threatening her target. The sun's light feels unpleasant on the necromancer's skin. If she isn't already a creature of darkness, she becomes one.

Distortion (15): Distortion must occur within short range of the target. Success relieves the effect for (distorting necromancer's Essence) days.

CAGING THE BROKEN SOUL

Cost: Ritual, 2wp

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

The necromancer invokes the laws of the Labyrinth's Howling Obsidian Oubliette, binding the dead to a soul cage with chains of spectral Essence.

The necromancer binds a willing or restrained ghost or Underworld spirit of up to Essence 6 in a soul cage

— a specially prepared bone amulet, cinerary jar, or similar ritual vessel. If the spirit's unwilling, the necromancer rolls (Intelligence + Occult) against (higher of target's Resolve or current temporary Willpower). Success binds him to it for a year and a day, imposing the following effects:

- He gains a Defining Tie of obedience to the soul cage's bearer, which cannot be removed or altered by any means.
- The soul cage's bearer may concentrate to see through his senses as if he were her familiar (**Exalted**, p. 161), regardless of the distance between them. She may communicate telepathically with the target while doing so, speaking directly into his mind.
- Unless destroyed with magic capable of permanently slaying spirits, he will always return from destruction, emerging from his soul cage during the next midnight. He cannot pass into Lethe even if he desires to, and oblivion cannot take him unless the bearer allows it.
- The bound gain access to the Hurry Home Charm (**Exalted**, p. 509), able to use it to return to the bearer's side or his soul cage. The necromancer may spend one Willpower to force him to use this Charm.

The necromancer need not keep the soul cage on her person, but if stolen, the thief may spend a Willpower to become the soul cage's new bearer. The necromancer may also willingly gift the soul cage to a subordinate. If the soul cage is destroyed, this spell's effects end.

If made to act against a Defining Intimacy, the bound spirit may spend a Willpower to roll (Wits + Integrity) against (the necromancer's Essence). Success allows him to disobey the order and lowers his Tie to the soul cage's bearer from Defining to Major for the scene.

Control: The necromancer is aware of the location and general direction of all soul cages she's made at all times, doubling 8s on rolls to track or find them.

Distortion (20): Distortion must occur within short range of the target. Success imposes the effects of successfully resisting an order to act against a Defining Intimacy and disables the bound spirit's access to the Hurry Home Charm for the scene.

CORPSE-ENGINE OF ANNIHILATION

Cost: Ritual, 3wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

The necromancer sews a corpse-monstrosity together to send into war, stitched together or bonded through rivets and grafts of soulsteel and dark iron.

This spell requires sufficient materials: animal or human corpses, significant quantities of bone, soulsteel, or other metals often mined in shadowlands or the Underworld, and similar necromantic wonders. After at least a week of work, the necromancer rolls (Intelligence + [Craft or Medicine]) against difficulty 7. The difficulty is reduced by one for each of the following criteria she meets:

- She has a workforce of skilled assistants.
- She has ample materials and resources.
- She spends at least a month preparing her creation.
- The corpse-engine lacks Legendary Size.

Success allows the necromancer to animate a titanic corpse-engine of the walking dead: centipedal siege ladders known as spine chains; hundred-handed brachial sapping arrays, able to dig tunnels beneath the earth and tear mortals apart with their many grasping limbs; and towering thousand-corpse goliaths, giants composed of armor and moaning corpses able to shatter city walls and wrestle warstriders to the earth. The corpse-engine possesses a Defining Tie of obedience to the necromancer, which cannot be altered by any means.

On a failure, the necromancer is still able to reanimate her corpse-engine, but with one of the following drawbacks:

- It may go berserk in battle, causing greater destruction than intended or disobeying orders at inconvenient times. An unrolled Shape Necromancy action at short range may be required to regain control over it.
- It needs regular maintenance as its corpse-parts rot or weaken. These require weekly (Intelligence + Medicine) rolls against difficulty 7, with the difficulty reduced by one each for a workforce of skilled assistants or ample materials and resources. Failure increases its wound penalty by one until the next time the necromancer succeeds on this roll.

- It lacks an animating intelligence, requiring a ghost with Nemissary's Ride or a similar effect to possess and direct it.

- Other quirks requiring maintenance or supervision of the Storyteller's devising.

Treat any such quirks as a Flaw (**Exalted**, p. 167) if the necromancer is meaningfully inconvenienced by them.

If the necromancer has dots in a Craft that involves preparing or using dead flesh, like embalming, taxidermy, tanning, or cooking, she receives craft points for meeting objectives as per a major project or a basic project if she failed (**Exalted**, pp. 240–241).

Control: The necromancer may assemble her corpse-engine through will alone, tendrils of darkness assembling the monstrosity from its constituent parts. She always counts as having sufficient assistants to reduce the difficulty of rolls and can make them with Occult. She may reestablish control over berserk corpse-engines at medium range and may have similar benefits in mitigating other quirks.

Distortion (15): The distorting necromancer must be standing within short range of the corpse-engine. Success inflicts a flaw as if the necromancer had failed on her roll to animate it.

FOREST OF IVORY RAZORS

Cost: 20nm, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

The necromancer draws a pair of gruesome bone-knives from her own hands. Where she casts them, they sprout into thickets of jagged ivory.

The necromancer creates a pair of bone-knives, which have artifact traits (**Exalted**, p. 594). They can be thrown out to long range. The necromancer may reflexively throw one of the knives into the ground on her turn, causing a thicket of razor-sharp bones to erupt upward. This doesn't count as her attack for the round, but she can only do so once per turn. The thicket of bones extends out to short range from where the bone knife fell. It's difficult terrain and provides heavy cover to those within it or on the other side of it. Characters caught in the thicket when it erupts or who subsequently enter it suffer an environmental hazard with difficulty 5, Damage 4L/round. They don't need to roll against the hazard in subsequent rounds unless they move through the bone thicket. The ivory razors are sharper than reality, affecting dematerialized creatures normally. The necromancer is unaffected; the bones bend and blunt around her to grant safe passage.

THOUSAND-CORPSE GOLIATH

Nearly forty feet in height, a thousand-corpse goliath is a skeletal nightmare of soulsteel and bone, covered in thousands of handholds and spikes. When directed, zombies climb onto the body, impaling themselves on spikes and grasping handholds to act as the construct's corpse-muscle, strapped onto its body to maintain its integrity. Its massive metal fists break fortifications, it can crush a company of soldiers beneath its ironclad feet.

Essence: 1; **Willpower:** 1; **Join Battle:** 10 dice

Health Levels: –0x10/–1x10/–2x10/–4x10/Incap.

Actions: Feats of Strength: 14 dice (may attempt Strength 10 feats; see Corpse-Body Thews); Terrifying Moaning: 10 dice; **Senses:** 8 dice

Appearance (Hideous) 7, **Resolve** 1, **Guile** 1

Combat

Attack (Colossal Fist/Stomp): 12 dice (Damage 15L/5)

Attack (Grapple): 12 dice (12 dice to control). Makes unopposed grapple rolls against smaller opponents unless they use magic like Dragon Coil Technique (**Exalted**, p. 280).

Combat Movement: 12 dice

Evasion: 1; **Parry:** 7

Soak/Hardness: 12/5 (see Corpse-Body Thews)

Merits

Corpse-Body Thews: The construct must be equipped with zombies before battle, taking about an hour to fully load the corpse-engine. Once loaded, the zom-

THOUSAND-CORPSE GOLIATH (CONTINUED)

bies cannot act independently, but they reinforce the goliath's might, adding the loaded battle group's (Size) to attack rolls, grapple rolls, feats of strength, soak, and Hardness. With Size 3+ zombies loaded on, the goliath doubles 8s on Feats of Strength. Once the goliath has arrived on the field of battle, it may spend two rounds disgorging all the zombies on its frame, but once this is done, they cannot be loaded back on quickly.

Blood of Writhing Corpses: The goliath may sacrifice dots of Size from its loaded zombies to take a crippling injury (Exalted, p. 201), shedding zombies to deflect a lethal blow to its inner components. This negates two levels of damage per dot of Size. Area of effect attacks that inflict 5+ levels of decisive damage destroy enough zombies to lower the Size of the loaded zombies by one. Once per battle, while loaded with a Size 2+ group of zombies, the goliath may reflexively shed a Size 1 battle group of zombies with poor Drill and Might 1 at its feet whenever it takes 3+ levels of decisive damage.

Dead Passenger Reprisal: While loaded with a Size 3+ group of zombies, the goliath's outer layer of corpses attacks any enemies attempting to grapple it, climb it, or attack it from close range with a weap-

on without the Reaching tag. They inflict one die of unsoakable withering damage at the start of each of the goliath's turns. The goliath doesn't gain Initiative from this. Crashed enemies suffer one die of lethal damage instead, ignoring Hardness.

Legendary Size: The construct suffers no onslaught penalties from attacks from smaller opponents unless they're magically inflicted. Withering attacks from smaller enemies cannot crash it unless they have at least 10 post-soak damage dice, although attackers still gain the full amount of Initiative damage dealt. Decisive attacks from smaller enemies cannot deal more than (3 + attacker's Strength) levels of damage to it, not counting levels added by Charms or other magic.

Mindless: The construct treats all social influence as unacceptable.

Special Abilities

Legion-Crushing Stomp: The goliath gains Initiative equal to the (Size) of its loaded zombies, then makes a decisive stomp attack against all enemies within close range. It splits Initiative evenly between them for damage, rounded up. Once per scene

If a thicket causes at least three levels of damage to living characters, the blood nourishes them to take root, making them a permanent feature of the landscape; otherwise, they crumble after a day.

Control: Bones begin to grow in the necromancer's presence, budding off into skeletal trees and vines of hanging tarsals. Her bone thickets are always permanent. She can reflexively draw another bone-knife from a thicket within close range on her turn, though it won't burst into another thicket when thrown.

Distortion (10): A thicket within medium range begins to shrink back into the soil, reducing its difficulty and Damage by two each and its cover to light. While it's distorted, the necromancer isn't immune to it.

HALLS OF LABYRINTHINE HORROR

Cost: 20nm, 2wp

Keywords: Shaping (Terrain)

Duration: One day

The necromancer's voice echoes with an invitation to the Vagrant Precincts, a fragment of the Labyrinth that takes special delight in its own twisting infinities.

The necromancer enchants a building she can perceive within (Essence + 3) range bands, twisting its architecture into grotesquery and turning its interiors into a perilous maze. Other characters attempting to navigate or escape the structure must make an extended roll, with difficulty (necromancer's Essence) and goal number (necromancer's Willpower x2). Each interval requires a few minutes of trial and error, usually with (Wits + [Awareness, Investigation, or Survival]). Storytellers may allow other Abilities with a stunt, such as Brawl to punch through walls with brute force or Lore to reason out the maze's impossible geometry. The necromancer and anyone who travels with her are immune.

Failed rolls deliver characters into difficult or dangerous circumstances, blocking their way forward with walls of pyreflame, groups of war ghosts, or similar

perils. Characters must make individual rolls to escape as the halls seek to separate groups; leading others by hand levies a -2 penalty that may be waived by magic that allows a character to lead others through dangerous terrain such as Trackless Region Navigation (**Exalted**, p. 409).

This spell always leaves unpredictable aftereffects on a building once enchanted by it — a door that never leads where it should, wandering floors, and so on.

Control: Rolls to escape without magic suffer a -2 penalty. While the necromancer is within (Essence) miles, she can automatically intuit who is trapped inside and how close they are to escape. For five motes, she may project her senses and appearance to any point within the maze to observe, taunt, or bargain with her victims. Doors, paths, and stairs seem to momentarily warp and skew as she passes.

Distortion (9): A rival necromancer can bend the Vagrant Precincts to take pity on him. He reduces the difficulty of each roll by (his Essence/2, rounded up) and can lead others without any penalty.

HARROWING SCYTHE OF AZET-ITHEY

Cost: 20nm, 2wp

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant or One scene

With a sharp, keening paeon to the obsidian-eyed prophet Azet-Ithey, the necromancer conjures a shadow of his wretched scythe, cutting down hope and joy like dry grass.

The necromancer rolls (Wits + Occult) against the Resolve of all enemies within close range as she swings a spectral scythe. Victims find their minds torn to gore and ribbons. Each affected character must weaken one of their positive Intimacies (necromancer's Essence) times. The weakened Intimacies cannot be strengthened for the rest of the story. If a character has no positive Minor Intimacies remaining, he can pay one Willpower instead of weakening a Major or Defining Intimacy. Victims also suffer a deep depression, adding (necromancer's Essence/2) non-Charm Resolve against influence to instill positive Intimacies or inspire positive feelings.

The necromancer may choose to crystallize the scythe after her swing, wielding it as a grimscythe (**Exalted**, p. 597) for the rest of the scene. Against characters affected by its initial summoning, she adds (Essence) dice of post-soak damage to **withering** attacks. Once per scene, she can use her Initiative in place of the normal dice pool for an instill roll to weaken an Intimacy or an inspire roll

to spread feelings of despair against targets within close range, momentarily changing the scythe into a reaping shadow that cuts the heart instead of the body.

Control: The sorcerer may retain the scythe indefinitely, but while she sleeps, she doesn't regain Willpower — her dreams are torn to ribbons by its cruel edge. She may awaken Evocations for the scythe, drawing on its power to cleave hopes, its partially immaterial nature, and the mythos of itinerant Azet-Ithey, who wanders the Underworld enforcing his edict against the blasphemy of joy.

Distortion (15): The victim reduces the penalty imposed by this spell by two and can regain lost Intimacies, though never beyond Minor intensity. If directed against a necromancer wielding the grimscythe itself, distortion instead reduces its attributes to a mundane scythe (**Exalted**, p. 584) until dismissed.

HAUNTING THE DYING BREATH

Cost: Ritual, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Before a brazier of grave ash, the necromancer meditates to send her soul to haunt another or make pronouncements through the dying.

The necromancer casts a scrap of clothing, lock of hair, or similar symbolic link to another character into the brazier's flames, rolling (Perception + Occult) against his Resolve. If successful, she may scry on the target, observing him remotely as a shade hovering behind him. She can be perceived by characters capable of seeing dematerialized spirits. While using this spell, she can't sense anything through her own body or take actions with it unless she chooses to end it prematurely. Taking damage automatically ends this spell.

The necromancer may choose to possess either the target or any trivial mortal or ghost within close range of him. While doing so, she may perceive through her chosen host's senses and speak through his mouth, her voice emerging with an unearthly tenor. She may socially influence those able to hear her speaker as normal but possesses no other control over her speaker's body.

Communicating through the chosen speaker causes injury and distress: the speaker's eyes burn with black power and weep bloody tears; his skin grows pale and jaundiced; he begins to shudder with chills and even sweat blood. A ghost's corpus begins to fray, melting and flowing like cooked fat before boiling away. After

an hour of communication or at the scene's end, the speaker suffers either five levels of lethal damage or gains a mundane disease of the Storyteller's choice at Major intensity. Exalted targets instead suffer one level of lethal damage. Though still incredibly painful, the effect may be averted if the necromancer communicates for less than a minute.

Targets may force the caster out by entering a Decision Point and citing a Defining Intimacy to spend three Willpower. This renders them immune to further uses of this spell by that necromancer for (their Essence) years. Magic capable of exorcising spirits can also cast her out.

Control: If the necromancer has met the target previously and he is near death, she may cast this spell on him without requiring a sympathetic link. Valid targets include a character with a disease at Major or Defining Intensity, with his Incapacitated health level filled, in the final years of his life, or similar. Should she speak through him, he will pass away at the scene's end unless he resists with Willpower. Once per story, she may use this spell on a ghost without a sympathetic link.

Distortion (10): To distort this spell, the necromancer must be within short range of the target or a possessed speaker. If distorted, the necromancer can't use Charms to enhance her senses or social influence while this spell is in effect, and her chosen speaker only suffers a single die of lethal damage at the scene's end.

HUNDRED SHADE BREATH

Cost: 7nm, 1lhl, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

The necromancer bites her cheek until blood flows thick in her mouth, enticing her lower soul to leap forth from her body with a hundredfold strength.

The necromancer exhales a cloud of blue fog and tendrils that takes the form of a battle group of hungry ghosts (**Exalted**, p. 503) that resemble her. The battle group appears within close range of the necromancer. It has Size (1 + the necromancer's wound penalty, maximum 3), elite Drill, and Might 2, and gains the necromancer's permanent Willpower. Slain hungry ghosts dissolve into a blue mist that floats about the battlefield. At the scene's end, they all disperse into the mist and flow back into the necromancer's mouth.

The necromancer can use the following powers while this spell is active:

Devouring Entrails Formation (5m; Reflexive; Until the engage action ends): When the battle group makes an engage action (**Exalted**, p. 209), its Initiative cost is waived, and it doubles 10s on the damage rolls of **decisive** attacks. It can also take restrain actions. Once per scene.

Infinite Hunger Reconstitution (8m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): The necromancer may restore her swarm of hungry ghosts from the blue fog, making a special (Stamina + Occult) rally for numbers roll. Each success restores one Magnitude. If this fills the battle group's Magnitude track, it gains a dot of Size, up to the Size it possessed when first summoned. Once per scene, unless reset when the battle group kills a nontrivial opponent.

Soul-Horde Synchronicity (5m; Reflexive; Instant): The necromancer guides her lower soul's manifold actions with her mind, rolling a command action with (Wits + Occult). She can flurry it with other actions, including attacks, and ignores flurry penalties.

Reset: Once per scene.

Control: The necromancer's blood possesses an uncanny blue tint when spilled, tendrils writhing beneath its surface. She has a unique rapport with hungry ghosts, who count as having a Minor Tie of kinship to the necromancer. Hungry ghosts with a lower Essence won't attack her unless compelled through magic. Those with equal or greater Essence must spend one Willpower to initiate hostilities against her.

Distortion (8): Distortion reduces the battle group's Drill to average and Might to 1, weakening the strength of the horde's coordination.

JACKAL WHO FEASTS UPON LIES

Cost: 20nm, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Speaking the first half of a truth abhorrent to the Gaoler of Uqad, the necromancer lures and binds one of that tyrant's enormous jackals, trained in the Gaoler's sand-drenched holdfast to feast on the meat of deceivers.

The necromancer conjures one of the Jackals Who Feast Upon Lies. It has a Defining Tie of loyalty to the necromancer which can't be broken or degraded. It serves faithfully for seven days, after which it returns to the Gaoler with news of the world and its secrets.

Control: The necromancer's laugh is loud, hollow, and unsettling, especially when she laughs at others'

misfortune. When she successfully piercing a deception, like seeing through a disguise or unraveling a lie, she may make a reflexive inspire roll against the deceiver to create feelings of fear or despair, adding (Occult). Success also inflicts a -1 penalty on all rolls the target makes for the rest of the scene, even if he resists the influence with Willpower.

Distortion (15): The jackal's tie to the necromancer becomes Minor, and it loses the Scent of Falsehood Merit. While it still won't attack its summoner, it can be distracted or convinced to attack one of her allies who's demonstrated falsehood recently.

MORTIFICATION OF THE HALLOWED SELF

Cost: 15nm, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

In an act of self-flagellation, the necromancer partially fuses with her higher and lower souls, suffusing her anima or corpus with pulsing spiritual gore.

The necromancer's spiritually charged flesh allows her to perceive and interact with dematerialized characters. Magic that would already allow her to do so instead adds one non-Charms success on rolls to detect or attack them. She may spend five motes to partially dematerialize until the start of her next turn, inflicting a -(Essence) penalty on physical actions taken against her unless they're enhanced by appropriate magic and allowing her to pass through porous surfaces like grated gates or barred windows.

She gains further benefits depending on which half of her soul is currently in prominence and may switch between them reflexively at the start of her turn:

- While her higher soul dominates, she increases the Resolve bonus of Intimacies that aren't based on emotion by 1. When she successfully applies her Resolve against influence that leverages one of her emotion-based Intimacies, the character who attempted it falls prone to his knees, cowed by the spiritual pressure of her rebuke. Ghosts of her Essence or lower are forced into a full kowtow and can't rise from prone until the end of her next turn.
- While her lower soul dominates, she increases the Resolve bonus from Intimacies of primal emotion (p. 320) by one. She ignores up to (Stamina) points of penalties from wounds, poison, sickness, and other bodily afflictions and converts them to non-Charms bonus dice on influence rolls involving fear, hunger, or reckless passion.

Control: The necromancer's scarred soul twitches inside of her, warning her when she perceives a character with Shaping magic that could reshape her body or soul. She rolls (Perception + Occult) against his Guile, learning the power's general nature if she succeeds. She may suffer penalties if the target is purposefully disguising or veiling his powers.

Distortion (10): The necromancer's souls are goaded into warring with one another. She cannot benefit from either until she centers herself with a (Wits + Integrity) roll against (distorting necromancer's Essence), and even then suffers a -2 penalty on her next turn from sheer spiritual disequilibrium.

Special: This spell can only be cast by a necromancer with both higher and lower souls, leaving it the provenance of the Exalted.

SLUMBER OF THE WANDERING SHADE

Cost: 20nm, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

With a short memorial to herself, the necromancer exhales a fragment of her soul as a wandering shade, even as she collapses into catatonia.

The necromancer's shade is treated as a ghost with all her traits, but only (Essence + 1) -0 health levels. She is naturally dematerialized and may render herself invisible by committing five motes. Her shade travels at (Essence) times her normal speed out of combat and can float up to short range above any surface, including razor-thin wires, water, etc. She can't be harmed by mundane hazards and doesn't need to breathe. She may pay four motes to materialize long enough to perform a single action.

The necromancer's puissance is diminished when mustered for her shade, inflicting a two-mote surcharge on her Charms. She is also vulnerable to effects that target dematerialized spirits or the undead. She may end the spell reflexively on her own turn in combat. If her shade is slain, she awakens in her own body, suffering five dice of unpreventable **decisive** damage. Magic like Ghost-Eating Technique (**Exalted**, p. 354) instead fills her levels to Incapacitated and renders her unconscious for at least a day unless she receives magical healing.

Control: The necromancer's shade is forever half-awake, allowing her to perceive dematerialized spirits. If she has magic that lets her do so, she gains one non-Charms success to detect such spirits while hidden, pierce their disguises, or track them.

THE JACKAL WHO FEASTS UPON LIES

Each of the Gaoler of Uqad's jackals is a sinewy, undead canine six feet tall with long, sleek limbs, jagged yellow fangs, and griseous fur wrapped in blood-blackened bandages. They can speak in stilted Old Realm, punctuated by cruel laughter. The jackals abhor deception and are employed by the Gaoler (and necromancers) to detect and punish liars.

Essence: 5; Willpower: 5; Join Battle: 11 dice

Personal Motes: 100

Health Levels: -0x4/-1x4/-2x4/-4x2/Incap.

Speed Bonus: +3

Actions: Feats of Strength: 8 dice (can attempt Strength 3 feats); Intimidation: 10 dice; Read Intentions: 12 dice (see Scent of Falsehood); Resist Poison/Disease: 8 dice; Senses: 12 dice (see Scent of Falsehood); Tracking 12 dice.

Appearance 2 (Hideous), Resolve 5, Guile 5

Combat

Attack (Bite): 14 dice (Damage 14L/3)

Attack (Grapple): 8 dice (8 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 12 dice

Evasion: 6; Parry: 3

Soak/Hardness: 8/8

Intimacies

Defining Principle: Liars are the tastiest prey.

Defining Tie: The Gaoler of Uqad (Loyalty)

Major Tie: Raw meat, red and bloody (Desire)

Merits

Scent of Falsehood: Double 8s on rolls to detect lies, pierce illusions, or spot disguises.

Offensive Charms

Razored Confession Smile (8m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Decisive-only): After a successful decisive attack roll, the target must either confess a significant deception they've made or else suffer five additional dice of decisive damage. The confession should be what is most relevant to the scene or necromancer; if the Storyteller doesn't have one in mind, they should ask players for suggestions. Once per scene.

Shadow-Seizing Jaws (10m; Supplemental; Instant): The jackal attacks a known but unseen enemy within close range, whether invisible, in concealment, etc. Any penalty it suffers from this is halved, rounded down, and it adds (necromancer's Essence) dice on the attack roll. It can strike dematerialized targets.

Defensive Charms

Dancing Among Serpents (6m [+1wp]; Reflexive; Instant; Uniform): The jackal adds (necromancer's Essence) Evasion and reduces penalties to Defense by three, including surprise attack penalties. For a one-Willpower surcharge, it may defend against an ambush normally, though it doesn't receive this Charm's other benefits.

Swift-Shadowed Guardian (5m; Reflexive; Instant): The jackal reflexively takes a defend other action to protect its rider, using Evasion instead of Parry.

Mobility Charms

Loyal Predator Saddle (10m, 1wp; Simple; Indefinite): The jackal grows and elongates to bear up to (necromancer's Essence + 3) riders. It adds one automatic success on movement actions.

Social Charms

Laughing at Calumny (10m; Reflexive; Instant): Against social influence meant to deceive, gain +(necromancer's Essence) Resolve and ignore Resolve penalties, except those from Intimacies. If the influence roll doesn't beat the jackal's Resolve, its hideous laughter grants all other characters +2 Resolve against it.

Weight-of-Sin Excoriation (15m; Reflexive; Instant): After successfully resisting influence meant to deceive the hound or its master, the jackal makes an Intimidation roll, penalizing the liar's Resolve by -1 for each success he failed by. On success, the target must flee the scene or admit their crime and beg forgiveness. Resisting requires entering a Decision Point and citing a Major or Defining Intimacy to pay two Willpower. Once per scene.

Distortion (13): A rival sorcerer may contort the shade's Essence, forcing them to materialize and inflicting a -1 penalty to their physical actions.

Void Circle Spells

BIRTH OF SANITY'S SORROW

Cost: 30nm, 3wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Drowning in shadow of utmost black, the necromancer emerges transformed into a monstrosity that reflects her darkest impulses — strong as sorrow, fleet as fear, armored in tragedy and abhorrence.

The necromancer undergoes a grotesque transformation, marking her as an avatar of death. She gains four of the following powers or traits, chosen when she first learns this spell.

Banquet of Blood: Blood is drawn to the necromancer, knitting her wounds and quickening her fury. She gains two temporary -0 health levels, which are the first to be damaged and which heal at the start of each turn. Once per round, when a living character within medium range suffers **decisive** damage, she can heal one level of non-aggravated damage or gain (2 + target's base wound penalty) Initiative.

Blood-Forged Body: The necromancer's form swells with meaty sinew. She gains two bonus dots of Strength, which can raise her above 5. She can make a reflexive feat of strength with a free full Excellency once on each of her turns.

Cataclysm Mantle: The necromancer is wreathed in balefire and void-stuff. This is an environmental hazard that extends out to short range, with difficulty 5 and Damage 5L/round. Trivial characters are always slain instantly.

Fivefold Slaughter Harbinger: The necromancer can reflexively make an attack against an enemy battle group or all trivial enemies within range of her weapon once on each of her turns. She can reflexively activate a Simple Charm that creates an attack for this attack.

Hundred-Armed Horror: The necromancer grows multiple appendages of flesh, shadow, or Essence. She rolls (Wits + Occult) to Join Battle, establishing a new Initiative track. She still takes only one turn per round but can use either track interchangeably when determining her turn, taking damage, paying costs, or

gaining Initiative. If she lands a **decisive** attack, she resets the track she made the attack with.

Legendary Size: The necromancer gains the Legendary Size Merit (p. 276).

Monstrous Mien: The necromancer gains 2 bonus dots of Appearance, which can raise her above 5, and gains the Hideous Merit. She doesn't suffer penalties for flurrying attacks with influence rolls. If she hits an enemy with an attack, he suffers -2 Resolve against her next influence roll against him that scene. Likewise, successful influence rolls penalize Defense against her attacks.

Singularity of Purpose: The silence of the void quiets the necromancer's mind. She treats any influence that would cause her to stand down, lessen her attack, or hesitate as unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220). Once per scene, she may reduce the Willpower cost of resisting influence or using a Charm or similar effect by one.

Once per story, when the necromancer's Incapacitated health level is filled with damage, she may reflexively cast this spell, rolling (current temporary Willpower + Essence) to gather necromantic motes. She can spend her own motes as if they were necromantic motes toward the spell's cost. If she gathers enough to cast the spell, she also heals her Incapacitated level and gains (Essence) additional -0 health levels. These levels are the first to be damaged and are lost when filled. If she survives the scene, she cannot regain Willpower through sleep for seven days, wracked by nightmares of her own near-destruction.

Control: The necromancer may choose an additional feature for her transformation. Spirits of Creation automatically sense her potential for annihilation, and count as having a Minor Tie of hatred towards her.

Distortion (15): A rival may siphon away some of the necromancer's terrible power, deactivating one of this spell's special abilities of their choice. This spell may be distorted multiple times, deactivating a different ability each time.

DOLOROUS MIST OF DOMINATION

Cost: Ritual, 3wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

The necromancer wreathes a kingdom in shadow and vapor, transforming the land itself as either terrible curse or the darkest of blessings.

The spell unfurls over the course of five hours as mist encircles a region extending up to (Essence) miles from the necromancer. Recognizing the spell's work in progress requires a difficulty 6 (Intelligence + Occult) roll; success reveals that the spell may be stopped by breaking the necromancer's concentration.

Once the ritual is complete, the mist-robed region is reshaped in the necromancer's image. She may choose three region properties to impose upon it, whether physical changes ("walls of thorns and razors"), emotional tenors ("mournful regret"), or laws ("none here dare lie"). These properties must draw from the themes of death, the Underworld, the Neverborn, or the Old Laws.

- Physical properties may create difficult terrain or mundane environmental hazards throughout the region, with the exact distribution determined by the Storyteller according to the necromancer's intent.
- Emotional properties inflict a -2 penalty to Resolve when leveraged through influence, and anyone who's spent at least a night and a day within treats the feeling as a Minor Intimacy.
- Laws are metaphysically enforced, inflicting a -3 penalty on rolls to break them or to conceal evidence of having broken them.

Although the region doesn't become a true shadow-land, it is cast into a perpetual gloam. Sunlight doesn't harm the dead or their grave goods, and roving bands of wild hungry ghosts and zombies rise unbidden every night. They have a Major Tie of loyalty to the necromancer and intuit the purpose of the spell — a kingdom plunged into this nightmare as punishment is haunted by these restless dead, but loyal citizens of a death-touched land may pass undaunted.

The spell always creates a fulcrum at the point of its original casting — a whirlpool of churning dust, an ivory tree with knotted limbs, a throne of grave-cold ice. It can be destroyed as a difficulty 7 feat of demolition, requiring Strength 5+, which breaks this spell.

Control: The necromancer may shape the spell's fulcrum into a crown, ring, or other personal trinket that she carries with her for safekeeping. When she sleeps, her nightmares wreath the world in mist, enforcing one of the properties of her choice from a cursed land whose fulcrum she carries. These changes extend out to long range of her and remain until the location is cleansed as a difficulty 5 (Intelligence + Occult) ritual.

Distortion (25): One of the region's properties is suppressed, falling into abeyance. The distorting necromancer intuits the distance, direction, and general path toward the spell's fulcrum and lowers the difficulty of feats to break it by two.

DROWNING IN THE ENDLESS DARK

Cost: 40nm, 3wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

With a single note that resonates as if from beneath the skin of the world, the necromancer sings of the Sea of Shadows as it once was and draws it forth to drown the land.

Omens of a terrible flood surge at a point within (Essence) miles over the course of an hour before a torrent of tenebrous water erupts from the ground. This flood is a one-time environmental hazard with difficulty 5 and Damage 4L. Characters who fail to resist are swept into the riptide or drawn under and will drown unless rescued. Structures suffer far more damage at the Storyteller's discretion, up to uncountable damage.

The waters extend for (Essence) miles in all directions, granting those farthest from the necromancer up to a few minutes to prepare for the deluge. Characters who fall beneath the surface find it magically bottomless, sinking two range bands deeper per turn unless they succeed at a difficulty 4 (Strength + Athletics) roll to tread water. When cast at sea, the dark waters extend down a full mile. Anyone beneath the water for more than (their Essence) rounds is lost, reappearing at a point in the Underworld of the Storyteller's choosing — if they reappear at all.

The necromancer knows whenever a character drowns as a result and may send their soul to Lethe directly or raise them as a ghost under her control, imposing a Defining Tie of obedience. At the spell's end, the waters recede at last, and anything that was submerged is lost forever. Structures beneath the water line are stripped bare — houses become blasted skeletons of sea-logged driftwood, bottom floors of great towers become precarious frameworks of scoured stone, and the ground is left clear of anything other than smooth pebbles and withering scrubgrass.

Control: If she is within range of the flood, the necromancer may raise a vessel of bone and bloody silk to carry her safely upon the waves, scooping up (Essence x 20) other characters of her choice. This vessel uses the attributes for a blue-water merchant ship (**Exalted**,

p. 246). If she knows Black Water Odyssey (p. 280), she may instead summon a ship she's claimed from the Underworld. She is forever sodden by the tides of the Underworld; ghosts and spirits associated with water count as having a Minor Tie of fear, hopelessness, or respect to her, based on their temperament, but she also suffers a -2 penalty to disguise herself or cover her tracks on dry land.

Distortion (15): A rival caster may create a hollow within the spell's effects out to long range, diverting the dark waters around and depositing any characters drowning within that range, no matter how deep they are.

INVOCATION OF THE HEKATONKHIRES

Cost: Ritual, 4wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Forging the Old Laws into unbreakable chains, the necromancer draws forth one of the ancient horrors of the Underworld to pact with her and serve her will.

This spell conjures forth one of the Underworld's behemoths after a grueling twelve-hour ritual conducted in a place touched by death, anchoring the behemoth to the necromancer's soul. It cannot harm her or her allies and gains an inviolate Major Tie of deference to the necromancer, serving for (necromancer's Essence) weeks before returning to the Underworld. It performs inconvenient tasks at her request but may demand a suitable prize or pact for serious or life-changing tasks (**Exalted**, p. 216). Promises that either party makes under the auspices of this spell are sanctified by the same power as a Moonshadow Caste's Keeper of the Old Laws power (p. 143). Common boons they request include:

- A minor sacrifice in its honor, especially one befitting their nature.
- A Major Stigmata (p. 147), which it inflicts on the necromancer, marking her with a bit of its mien and nature.
- Promises to support it in pursuing its ghostly passions.

The necromancer may seize hold of the bindings created by this spell to compel the behemoth to act on her commands without making a bargain, but doing so is difficult. While meditating, she rolls (Intelligence + Occult) against the higher of the behemoth's Essence or Resolve. Success lets her pay one Willpower to

ROLL OF THE UNHALLOWED MYTHOS

The Underworld's behemoths take many forms and rival the strength of Third Circle Demons. Elnuet-that-Was (p. 397) is provided as a ready-made example of a behemoth that a necromancer may bind with this spell.

Storytellers and players wishing to develop their own behemoths might consider the following seeds:

Lamvinult, Whose Mien Is Meat, infects the skin of all they touch so it sloughs off to reveal the still-living muscle beneath and can transform into anyone their plague has afflicted.

Mourning Scour is the vague outline of a maiden in a crystal casket; she knows the regrets of anyone she looks upon and can cry tears of saltwater, arsenic, or blood sufficient to befoul almost any body of standing water.

Umaza (p. 334) is a vast leviathan whose hymns lure the living to certain death or necromantic enlightenment.

possess the behemoth from any distance, commanding it as she might her own body. Compelling actions that would violate one of the behemoth's Minor or Major Intimacies requires another roll against its Resolve. The necromancer can't force it to take actions that would violate a Defining Intimacy, though negative Ties toward her don't prevent her from controlling it altogether. She may control the behemoth for as long as she meditates. The behemoth cannot form or strengthen negative Ties towards the necromancer until it is released from the spell.

A necromancer cannot summon more than one behemoth at a time through this spell.

Control: The necromancer may commune with her behemoth as long as they are both within the same realm of existence, meditating to share its senses without needing to roll or spend Willpower to possess it. She senses the presence of Underworld behemoths within (Essence x10) miles, contesting stealth with (Perception + Occult), and gains (Essence) non-Charisma dice to read intentions and profile character actions against them. When she binds a behemoth with this spell, she always takes a Major Stigmata, reflecting its nature as she opens her soul to it more fully than other necromancers.

MOUTH OF THE ABYSS**Cost:** 40nm, 3wp**Keywords:** None**Duration:** Instant

The necromancer claws and wrenches, causing the earth to fall inward into the open maw of the earth. A vortex of cold wind draws cities and armies near the opening into the darkness below, their cries swallowed by the depths.

The necromancer creates a great sinkhole in the earth at a point within long range, which is (Essence) range bands deep. Out to close range around the target point, the ground immediately gives way, and the howling winds draw anyone present downward. Trivial characters and battle groups caught in the collapse fall to their deaths immediately, while others must succeed on a difficulty 7 (Dexterity + Dodge) roll or falls into the depths, suffering extreme range fall damage (**Exalted**, p. 232).

At the end of the round, the remaining ground on the surface out to medium range around the target point collapses inward in the same manner, exposing characters standing there to the same hazard. Even after the collapse, the mouth remains dangerous: For (necromancer's Essence) rounds, the winds continue to howl and drag anything within close range of its edges into the depths, as above. Structures above the hollow or at its edges collapse into the depths by the round's end, causing great destruction and potentially burying any who survive the fall in debris. Few buildings in the Age of Sorrows are built to withstand a sinkhole of this size — only a rare few geomantic marvels, manses, and First Age structures are capable of resisting it.

When used in a body of water, the spell instead creates a maelstrom that draws anything in its wake into the depths with similar results. Ships caught in the maelstrom must resist its pull each round, suffering two points of hull damage for every failure. If destroyed, the ship sinks into the depths.

Control: During the scene in which it was cast, the sinkhole is truly bottomless, leading to the Labyrinth. Those who fall in appear there at a point of the Storyteller's choosing. On moonless nights, specters may sometimes emerge from the sinkhole in pursuit of their dark ambitions.

Distortion (10): A swift necromancer may distort the spell before it expands to medium range, delaying that by their (Essence/2, rounded up) rounds. If it has already expanded, distortion instead reduces the difficulty to resist the howling winds by half, rounded up.

THUS ENDS ALL FLAME**Cost:** 33nm, 3wp**Keywords:** None**Duration:** One week

Unfurling a shawl of black frost harvested from the nightmares of He Whom the Fire Forsook, the necromancer scour the land with nightmarish cold.

The necromancer curses an area within (Essence + 3) range bands that she can perceive, as large as a mile-wide region or as small as a single structure. Hoary mists rise over the next minute as the spell takes hold, giving a brief warning to the wary. After that, the intense cold snap is an environmental hazard with difficulty 7 and Damage 3L/minute. Anyone slain by it becomes a ghost bound within their frozen corpse until it is destroyed, gaining a Defining Tie of desperate loyalty to whomever whoever freed them.

Within the spell's area, all mundane flames are instantly snuffed, and new ones can't be lit. Magical flames and heat reduce their damage by five, to a minimum of one, and halve the range of their illumination. At the Storyteller's discretion, other effects possessed by supernatural fire may be similarly diminished. Water freezes, encrusting standing bodies with ice thick enough to walk across or filling moving rivers with jagged ice. Fire-based spirits and behemoths who die within the frosts are permanently destroyed.

Passion is likewise chilled. Intimacies based on primal emotions (p. 320) or on positive emotions such as joy, hope, or love are treated as one step lesser in intensity within the region. Affected characters with such Intimacies treat the area as difficult terrain, weighted down by their own hearts, though the necromancer and characters unencumbered by such passions pass through freely.

Control: The necromancer is forever wreathed in frost as if radiating severe cold. Characters unequipped for this cold suffer a -1 penalty within short range or her or -2 within close. Spirits associated with flame and heat count as having a Minor Tie of fear towards her, and small flames snuff themselves out when she passes by.

Distortion (16): A rival necromancer may weave a counterspell, protecting him and anyone within close range from the passion-dampening effect and granting (his Essence/2, rounded up) automatic successes on rolls to resist the cold. Distortion may also be used to free a large room or equivalent area from the cold, like the eye of a storm.



Necromantic Workings

Like sorcery, necromancy goes beyond spells to encompass large, unique miracles known as workings — the personal passion-projects of necromantic savants, ranging from creating unique undead monstrosities to laying bespoke curses on hated foes and rebellious kingdoms. These workings always draw upon the

themes of death, the Underworld, and other powers invoked by necromancy, but they are capable of reshaping any realm to reflect these dark influences.

Necromantic workings use the rules for their sorcerous equivalents (**Exalted**, p. 483), with a few differences. Canny necromancers can benefit from sacrifices to empower their magic but also suffer additional complications — especially when undertaking workings in Creation.



A **minor sacrifice** is a significant, meaningful thing destroyed for the sake of power, providing one additional Means. By far the most common minor sacrifice a necromancer might employ is the death of a mortal, spirit, or other sentient entity. Most animal sacrifices don't rise to this level, but this isn't always true for exceptional cases — slaughtering a cow might not suffice, but slaughtering six cows from a herd blessed by Ahlat might.

Other sacrifices may also be employed, so long as they are personally meaningful to the necromancer and thematically relevant to the working. The Lord of the Last Ember plucked one of his beloved's eyes as reagent for a curse against her wicked family, and Emil Dust-Speaker sacrificed his ability to love to build an afterlife for his people. The ravenous power of necromancy facilitates such sacrifices, which scar the soul beyond all but the most powerful healing.

A **major sacrifice** is something darker, providing two additional Means. These are tragedies and cruelties out of legend, with either intense personal stakes or vast, indiscriminate horror. In the first case, the necromancer commits an act with deep, personal meaning — the death of every remaining member of his living family, the destruction of his home village, and the like. In the second, the necromancer simply inflicts death and suffering upon hundreds or thousands, wiping towns from the map or extinguishing an entire royal line.

Complications

Necromancy exists in the friction between the Underworld's ossified Essence and the twisting, churning, warping torment of the Neverborn. This makes its magic particularly willful and onerous to shape, prone to unpredictable results. **All failed working rolls result in a complication, not just botches.**

Example necromantic complications might include:

- Environmental corruption, rendering nearby plants toxic, water unpotable, or even transforming prey animals into vicious predators.
- Warped purpose, introducing quirks to the working that are especially onerous or dangerous. A “blessing” to ensure that all who die within a village return as ghosts might disfigure their phantom forms, or inflict the living with a thirst for warm blood in order to sustain their eligibility for this new afterlife. These changes never compromise the core intention and purpose of

Sacrifice

Necromancy has a hunger that cannot be sated. Skilled necromancers can turn this to their advantage, sacrificing life and meaning to the void that exists within the art itself to draw forth greater power. Necromancers can make one minor or major sacrifice as a Means for a working.

the working, only introduce new wrinkles for the necromancer to engage with.

- The working awakens to a dimly malicious sapience, gaining the tiniest sliver of its own will. It bends the working's power to haunt creatures under its aegis in ways that the necromancer neither intended nor controls.
- In general, complications can also recreate the phenomena of the Abyssal's Great Curse (p. 144), except for Thralldom.

CREATION'S BANE

Necromancy always inflicts an additional complication on workings to affect Creation and other realms beyond the Underworld, even without a failed roll. Necromancers may mitigate these deleterious effects by foregoing one Means for an Ivory Circle working, two for a Shadow Circle working, or three for a Void Circle working. Even then, the complication is not wholly gone but remains cosmetic — a working to protect a forest with bone-lion guardians makes the trees harmlessly shed blood instead of sap, or a working to transform a mortal into a Ghost-Blooded champion causes their skin to crack like parched earth.

Ambition

Many workings can draw on the same guidance as sorcery when determining Ambition — granting mutations to a willing subject might be Ivory Circle Ambition 2, while spreading those mutations across an entire ecosystem might be Shadow Circle Ambition 2. Given its proficiency with the powers of death, though, necromancy has a much easier time creating and manipulating the undead, spreading deathly influence, and inflicting curses, often resulting in a lower Ambition level compared to sorcerous equivalents.

Effects that create new life, encourage growth, or empower Creation's elements are more difficult even when they're appropriate to necromancy's themes, resulting in increased Ambition. Other effects may be entirely impossible — necromantic workings can't make a verdant paradise out of a blasted scrubland, but it might be able to transform it into a roiling swamp full of predators and disease.

IVORY CIRCLE

Ambition 1: Animate human-sized zombies. Extract a memory or passion from a ghost as a minor talisman. Wither a minor geographical feature such as drying

up a stream or blighting a grove. Ward an area against a particular type of undead or trap them within that same boundary.

Ambition 2: Curse someone to ensure they will linger after death, denying them the possibility of reincarnation. Instill a mindless undead with human-level intelligence and murky recollection of its life. Seal a living being in suspended animation. Extend a mortal target's life in exchange for a diet of living blood.

Ambition 3: Bind a ghost into a supernatural talisman providing the equivalent of an Essence 1 Eclipse Charm. Curse a region to spread deathly influence, such as making a disease particularly dangerous, granting those who drink its bloody water vigor at the expense of their total lifespan, or transforming natural elements into their Underworldly equivalents.

SHADOW CIRCLE

Ambition 1: Animate a zombie tyrant lizard. Bend or twist an existing supernatural property of a town-sized region of the Underworld. Cut off a ghost from the prayers of its worshippers. Inflict a region with a haunting of poltergeists. Radically transform or empower a ghost with a unique supernatural ability. Transform a god into a spirit of the Underworld.

Ambition 2: Create a small shadowland from a single meaningful death. Taint a living creature's Essence, binding spirits to the Underworld, or granting suitable mortal apprentices the knack for necromancy. Create an enchanted route between two Underworld locations. Curse a foe and his descendants unto the seventh generation.

Ambition 3: Extract souls and imbue them into new vessels. Animate or bind an undead servant with power comparable to a Second Circle demon. Dredge a new island from the Sea of Shadows. Create a localized afterlife for those who die in a certain location or under a certain circumstance. Enchant a ghost so they reform only a day after their destruction.

VOID CIRCLE

Ambition 1: Create a city-size shadowland with a single major sacrifice. Curse a city-sized region so anyone who dies there comes back as a zombie or lingers as a ghost. Enforce the Old Laws upon a city-sized region, forcing the living to defer to the dead. Enshroud a city-sized region in night that lasts all winter. Conjure a fortified citadel upon a death-touched site.

Ambition 2: Enchant a shadowland so it always leads to the Underworld, regardless of time of day. Move an island in the Underworld to a new relative location. Inflict horrible curses that forever hobble or torment even a powerful foe. Spread plagues of lesser curses on a city-sized region. Curse an area so hostile dead may remain materialized, even by day. Transform a manse or demesne into a shadowland with an Abyssal aspect.

Ambition 3: Animate an undead behemoth of tremendous power. Manipulate the entire Underworld to subtly strengthen or weaken the Old Laws, freeing ghostly slaves from servitude or forcing the weak to obey the strong. Alter the metaphysical influence of the Calendar of Setesh and similar works of transcendent power, creating predictable phenomena throughout the Underworld.

Evening rain made slick the eaves of the gabled roof. The Gallows Bride crouched under her cloak of waxed black canvas, considering the device in her arms. *It works, or it doesn't*, she reasoned. If this shot failed, she would have another. Ledaal Chuyin could run — and like all cowards, run well — but he would never hide from her for long.

She lifted the matte-black barrel, two meters long and riveted with orichalcum and blue jade. Salt-white tubing fed from a barbed soulsteel armband dangling at her hip alongside the weapon's stolen cartridges. Had the Mask noticed the artifact's absence? The Day Caste knew it was one-of-a-kind, though not necessarily priceless. *Just like you, Chuyin.*

The weapon crackled with ambient hatred. The Bride sharpened her senses, because across the misty courtyard, a fourth-floor window shone from the Hall of Bittersweet Chrysanthemums. That meant Ledaal Chuyin was taking his opium in the library. Slowly, inexorably, the Gallows Bride reached for the first cartridge.

Crisp feathers rustled by her side. A rain-glossed raven hopped toward her, head tilted in curiosity. The Bride considered it in silence. *No raven*, she realized, skin prickling. Half a heartbeat later, the bird was a scattering of violet stardust. The Bride scrambled behind a chimney stack, struggling to shield her sensitive eyes, the weapon rattling and keening. She was found out. How? By whom?

The chimney stack cracked, collapsed. The Bride twisted aside, a star-wreathed blade plunging past her shoulder. Rain and crumbling stone framed a fate-whetted face: nose like an axe, hair like spun gold, eyes like amethysts.

Her body wouldn't allow her to linger. The Bride sprung from her hands, twisting through the air like a hanged corpse in a gust of wind. There was nothing but mist and night. *I land, or I don't*, she reasoned.

Shingles cracked under her heels like the sound of a snapping neck. A memory resurfaced: *Mnemon Getha*, violet eyes unblinking while they fitted her and Blameless Crane with nooses. But this was no Dragon-Blooded youth hunting her. The Bride's brain burned with the effort of remembering.

"Never thought I'd find you here," she murmured into the dead wind, trusting it to carry her words. Her fingers worked at the barbed soulsteel. The bands were stinging cold, but that was nothing compared to the pain goring her arm when she locked them into place. The tubes turned garnet-dark. All at once, she was dizzy, her heart fluttering. She might only get one shot after all.

"You're accomplice to the murder of an Archon," the Bride continued coolly, sliding a heavy cartridge into the chamber.

"Everything has an ending," the mist whispered to her.

"But not Ledaal Chuyin?" Black lightning crackled between the rivets. Hatred lanced through her veins.

A violet star shone across the dark. Her hand flew across the hammer, her finger strangled the trigger.

It caught them in the shoulder, not a gout of flame like the Bride expected but a sphere of utter dark. They bled in black rays, screamed with no sound. The Whispers were defining. The Gallows Bride crouched under her waxed black cloak, silent while the thing that had been Mnemon Getha became nothing.

When the whispers faded to a drone, and the last of the assassin's Essence had inverted, the Bride finally allowed herself a shiver. With the wretched strength of a terrified and wounded animal, she ripped the bands from her arm, relieved at the sight of her red blood.

She was injured, spent, horror-struck, and the window on the fourth floor was dark.

But he would never hide from her for long.



Chapter Eight

Artifacts

The Underworld is a trove of soulsteel wonders and horrors fit to serve as the panoply of the deathknights. Whether granted by their Deathlords, claimed as prizes from foes older than memory, or crafted afresh by their dark genius, the Abyssals bear world-ending weapons, mysterious talismans, and treasures both beautiful and grotesque.

THE AGONY OF SOULSTEEL

Ghosts trapped in soulsteel are not lucidly conscious but are present enough to suffer. Bloodshed and necromantic rituals heighten this agony, but a wielder who feels compassion for the doomed dead might slowly learn to soothe the souls bound in her panoply, granting them a brief respite as she wields them.

Rattlebones

(Soulsteel Siege Crossbow, Artifact • • •)

“During my stay with Clan Ophris, my host enlisted me in appraising the panoply of the late Thousand-Curses Masara, an Exigent revolutionary of unknown origin. Masara conducted a campaign of gruesome assassination and sabotage against the Irshad dynasty of Y’danna during the Jasmine War, which heralded the beginning of the Ageless Empire’s decline.

Noteworthy among these treasures was a crossbow of gruesomely unconventional design, a crossbow of soulsteel, sinew, and animated fingerbones that load it with bolts and draw back its windlass. While ingenious, I confess the effect was singularly unsettling.

I ascertained that this work bore hallmarks characteristic of a ghostly artificer of fearsome reputation. The reclusive wraith is said to create weapons of a deathly and eccentric nature for those who are able to meet their abstruse costs and who are able to venture to their trading posts in the valleys of the Summer Mountains. Lest I be accused of tempting my readers, I will pen no

further details on the subject, save to say that I believe Masara or one of her compatriots traveled this road. Furthermore, I believe this was the weapon used to carry out her grisly murders.

Some months after leaving the Dreaming Sea behind, I received a letter from my host’s husband inquiring after leads on who may be interested in artifacts of this sort. Apparently, it had been stolen by rogues unknown and used in the murder of its former owner. Clan Ophris intends to go to great pains to bring the killers to justice. Despite my ready assistance, this artifact remains lost to this day.”

—Ledaal Kusam Valdris, *One Thousand Shards of Jade*

Attunement: 5m

Type: Medium (+12 DMG, OVW 4)

Accuracy: Close -1, Short +5, Medium +3, Long +1, Extreme -1

Range: Long

Tags: Lethal, Archery (Long), Crossbow, Piercing, Powerful, Slow

Hearthstone Slot(s): 2

Era: The Jasmine War

Evocations of Rattlebones

The wielder can commit an additional mote to set Rattlebones’ skeletal digits to work, removing the Slow tag. If she has magic capable of reflexively reloading Slow weapons, she doesn’t need to commit the additional mote.

EAGER ATROCITY MECHANISM

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

Rattlebones scuttles to its owner's hand on creeping fingerbones, eager to fulfill its gruesome purpose.

The wielder reflexively readies Rattlebones. Alternatively, if it's not currently on her person, she may have it crawl one range band in any direction. Any rolls necessary to navigate obstacles or escape restraints use the wielder's (Wits + Archery).

OSSEOUS ARBALEST GRAFT

Cost: 1m, 1wp, 1hl; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dissonant, Uniform

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisites: Eager Atrocity Mechanism

Rattlebones grafts itself onto one of its wielder's arms, gruesomely melding flesh and bone.

Rattlebones merges with its wielder, making it impossible to disarm and granting it the One-Handed tag. Fed by its wielder, the crossbow can produce endless bolts of sharpened bone, providing its own ammunition. The wielder can't use the hand that Rattlebones is merged with for anything else.

If the wielder has other magic capable of producing ammunition, like Relic Arrow Method (p. 152), she waives this Evocation's health level cost.

Dissonant: This Evocation's duration is one scene.

FLESH-IMPALING BONE SPEAR

Cost: 4m, 2i, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dissonant, Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Osseous Arbalest Graft

Rattlebones launches an enormous lance of saw-toothed bone, impaling foes with terrifying force.

The wielder makes a **decisive** attack. Dealing 3+ damage to an enemy within close range of a solid surface or large object, like a wall or tree, pins him in place with the oversized bolt. He cannot take movement actions until he or an ally within close range pulls the barb free, requiring a Strength 3 feat of strength at difficulty equal to the total damage dealt, maximum 7.

While using Osseous Arbalest Graft, the wielder adds up to (Essence) attack roll extra successes as damage dice.

Resonant: This Evocation can pin enemies within short range of suitable surface, knocking them back one range band to do so.

Dissonant: The difficulty to remove the barb can't exceed the wielder's (Essence + 2), maximum 7.

SHARP-TOOTHED NEEDLE SPRAY

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Osseous Arbalest Graft

Coughing and clattering, Rattlebones unleashes dozens of razor-sharp bone darts.

The wielder makes an undodgeable **decisive** attack against all characters, including allies, in a ninety-degree arc out to short range. Against hit enemies, the attack's base damage depends on their range from the wielder: three dice at close or two dice at short. The wielder divides her Initiative evenly among them, rounded up, to determine the total damage. Battle groups instead suffer (wielder's Initiative + 3) damage dice.

While using Osseous Arbalest Graft, this Evocation's range extends to medium. The attack's base damage against enemies at medium range is one die.

Resonant: If the wielder benefits from aiming, she may waive its usual benefits to exclude allies from this barrage.

Dissonant: This Evocation can only be used once per scene unless reset by crashing an opponent at close range.

LEGION-SLAYING REVENANT ARMATURE

Cost: 9m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dissonant, Resonant, Withering-only

Duration: One scene

Prerequisites: Flesh-Impaling Bone Spear, Sharp-Toothed Needle Spray

Shrieking in anticipation of horrors to come, Rattlebones unfolds and expands into an enormous, horrifying contraption of jagged bone and soulsteel.

To use this Evocation, Rattlebones' wielder must have Osseous Arbalest Graft active. The crossbow grows to enormous size, gaining the following benefits:

- It becomes a heavy weapon (DMG +14; OVW 5).

- The wielder adds (Stamina) to the raw damage of **withering** attacks.

- Rattlebones' bulk grants the wielder light cover.

- The wielder can pay a level of bashing damage in place of the Willpower cost of Flesh-Impling Bone Spear and Sharp-Toothed Needle Spray.

Resonant: The wielder adds (Stamina/2) dice of damage on **decisive** attacks.

Dissonant: The wielder must pay aggravated damage, not bashing damage, to waive Evocations' Willpower costs.

Special activation rules: This Evocation's Willpower cost is waived if the wielder uses it simultaneously with Osseous Arbalest Graft.

Pra Gita

(Soulsteel Razor Claw, Artifact . . .)

Once, there was a fisherwoman whose love was the stuff of legend. When her beloved husband fell deathly ill, she traveled the lands of the living and dead, beseeching spirits both sacred and profane. Yet no matter how sincere her pleas, they went unanswered by god and demon alike. At last, she came to a palace of crimson ice and fell to her knees before the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears. The witch-queen agreed but demanded that the fisherwoman first cut off her hands as proof of her love. Without hesitation, the woman drew her blade. Five days later, her beloved had been healed.

Yet what surprise could there be? In time, her beloved proved faithless, for his love was a meager thing compared to what she felt for him. Broken-hearted, she came again before the Lover, begging for revenge. The ghost-queen smiled upon the woman and returned her hands, now forged into talons of merciless soulsteel. With them, she slew her beloved and a hundred others, a sainted terror in the Lover's service. When at last she died, she passed into oblivion, content with her vengeance.

Pra Gita was recovered by Iopesh of Quay, warrior-king who sought them out to reclaim his throne from the faithless son who'd overthrown him. The necromancer Jurul Mokasha turned them against her brother after

his debauchery and dereliction stained their family's name. Time after time, those who wield them have learned that the wages of love are betrayal. The Lover smiles with each new wielder who claims them, for her great lesson spreads from the tip of each razored talon.

These claws appear as a pair of hollowed, leathery hands with razor-sharp fingernails of delicate soulsteel filigree. A hearthstone socket gapes like an open wound in each palm.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Light (+5 ACC, +10 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 3)

Tags: Lethal, Brawl, Concealable, Worn

Hearthstone Slot(s): 2

Era: Dawn of the Shogunate

Evocations of Pra Gita

Pra Gita punishes the **unfaithful** — those who are unloyal in love, friendship, loyalty, or the like. The wielder must be aware of this disloyalty to gain this artifact's benefits against the unfaithful.

Pra Gita's wielder awakens Dread Accuser's Talon at no cost upon attunement.

DREAD ACCUSER'S TALON

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

Pra Gita hungers for the flesh of the faithless, seeking them out wherever they hide.

When the wielder makes a roll against an enemy's Guile that could reveal signs of faithlessness, her target suffers -2 Guile. (Her target doesn't actually need to be unfaithful for this to apply). In combat, his Guile is reduced by his onslaught penalty instead, if it's higher.

If successful, every three extra successes lets the wielder's player ask the Storyteller a follow-up question related to the target's faithlessness.

Resonant: If successful, the wielder always receives one follow-up question in addition to any granted by her extra successes.

WIDOW'S VENGEANT NAILS**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Aggravated, Dual**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisites:** Dread Accuser's Talon

Pra Gita's talons sink into their victim's flesh, elongating and digging deep to pierce the hearts of the faithless.

The wielder adds (Essence) raw damage on a **withering** attack or rerolls (Essence) 1s on a **decisive** damage roll.

Against the unfaithful, the **withering** damage is post-soak damage, while the wielder can reroll any failed dice on **decisive** damage rolls, not just 1s. **Decisive** attacks also deal aggravated damage against the unfaithful.

BLEEDING LASH OF THE BETRAYED**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Essence 2**Type:** Supplemental**Keywords:** Resonant, Uniform**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisites:** Widow's Vengeant Nails

Pra Gita's razored talons extend outward for a single breath, proving that no one is beyond the reach of revenge.

The wielder can make a **withering** or **decisive** attack against an enemy within short range. Against the unfaithful, the attack's range increases to medium and she adds an automatic success on the attack roll.

Resonant: Once the wielder hits an enemy with this Evocation, she waives its cost against him for the rest of the scene or until she attacks a different enemy.

SUFFER THE BLAMELESS**Cost:** 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Resonant**Duration:** Until next turn**Prerequisites:** Bleeding Lash of the Betrayed

Pra Gita knows that none are truly loyal, slaying the innocent before their faith can falter.

The wielder chooses an enemy she suspects of being unfaithful and treats him as actually being unfaithful for a single action. If she receives confirmation of his unfaithfulness later that scene this Evocation's Willpower cost is refunded.

Resonant: This Evocation's duration becomes one scene.

WICKED HEART LAID BARE**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3**Type:** Reflexive**Keywords:** Aggravated, Decisive-only**Duration:** Instant**Prerequisites:** Bleeding Lash of the Betrayed, Suffer the Blameless

With a terrible ripping motion, the sainted terror reveals her foe's iniquities for all to see.

After damaging an unfaithful enemy with a **decisive** attack, the wielder may use this Evocation to reveal his greatest betrayal, ripping a phantasm free from his flesh that reveals his iniquity to all who see it. The victim can take (wielder's Essence) levels of unpreventable aggravated damage to prevent this, consumed from within by the terrible weight of his secret shame.

Against enemies wrongly branded as unfaithful with Suffer the Blameless, this instead reveals their innocence to the wielder and refunds this Evocation's cost.

Resonant: The victim of the betrayal learns of it even if they aren't present. If the victim is dead, the betrayal is instead revealed to whoever is most likely to avenge them.

Dissonant: Enemies who conceal their betrayal suffer dice of damage, not levels.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial faithless enemy.

The Shatterbond Knives

(oolsteel Dire Talons, Artifact ••••)

The tragic rivalry of the blacksmiths Crane and Phoenix is still remembered centuries later. It began as a friendly competition, each forging their best knife to prove who was the better smith. Each employed the secret and subtle arts of their trade. Crane burnt offerings to her ancestors in her forge-flame and whispered her secrets into its steel. Phoenix tempered her blade in a golden crocodile's blood and sharpened it on the petrified wood of a sacred tree.

When the time for the contest came, the two smiths found the finished knives were uncannily identical, indistinguishable to every test. Seething with bitter frustration, the two resolved to a duel as a final test

— yet when the blades met, they shattered. The stories differ on who was the first to turn their knife on the other, gripped with envy and murderous hatred, but in the end, both died of their wounds.

Death brought them no peace. Their wrathful ghosts wandered the Underworld in search of each other, bearing spectral blades forged from soulsteel and the broken shards that had been interred alongside them as grave goods. They finally met in the Labyrinth's depths, their bodies and minds warped by uncountable years. Yet no test could tell one from the other. They clashed, fell, rose, clashed again. Again. Again. Again.

None know how their duel finally ended. Only the Shatterbond Knives remain. Their blades are damascened with delicate ripples of soulsteel inlaid in iron; their curved bone handles are crazed with veins of the baleful metal. Reclaimed from the Labyrinth by unknown forces, they've eagerly found their way into new hands, yearning to draw blood.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Light (+5 ACC, +10 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 3)

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Thrown (Short), Special

Special: At the start of their turn, a wielder who holds one Shatterbond Knife may call the other to her hand.

Hearthstone Slot(s): None

Era: The Three Sisters War

Evocations of the Shatterbond Knives

When the Shatterbond Knives' wielder deals **decisive** damage to a nontrivial enemy or is dealt **decisive** damage by one, she may declare him her **rival**. The knives gain +1 Accuracy and +1 Damage on **withering** attacks against her rival.

The Shatterbond Knives Evocations draw power both from the wielder's Tie toward her rival and the rival's Tie toward her, whether positive or negative. The strongest Tie between them is called their **Rivalry**.

RIVAL-SEEKING REBUKE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

The Shatterbond Knives reserve their true strength for worthy foes, hungry to engage their true equal.

The wielder adds (Essence) to the raw damage of a **withering** attack or doubles up to (Essence) 10s on a **decisive** damage roll. Against her rival, these bonuses increase to (Rivalry) if it's higher or by +1 otherwise.

GIFT OF PAIN

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Rival-Seeking Rebuke

The Shatterbond Knives' wielder leaves her rival an enduring reminder of their struggles.

When the wielder deals 3+ **decisive** damage, she may embed one of the knives in her target, increasing his wound penalty by -1 and adding one die on all attacks she makes against him for the rest of the scene. Against her rival, she adds (Rivalry/2, rounded up) dice instead.

The victim can pull the knife out with a miscellaneous action, though he suffers (wielder's Essence) dice of unpreventable lethal damage. For the wielder's rival, this increases to (Rivalry) dice if it's higher or adds one die otherwise.

If the wielder recalls the embedded knife to her hand, it returns without harming her victim.

Resonant: When used against the wielder's rival, he can't pull out the knife unless she allows it.

DREAMS OF CEASELESS STRIFE

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Psyche, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Gift of Pain

Unleashing the endless enmity forged into the Shatterbond Knives' makers, their wielder afflicts her rival with feverish visions of battles they never fought.

After landing a **withering** attack against her rival, the wielder can use this Evocation to add (Rivalry) raw damage. If she uses this Evocation on a **withering** attack made with Inseparable Enemy Reunion, she adds that many post-soak damage dice instead.

If the attack leaves the wielder's rival with an Initiative lower than hers, he's afflicted with feverish visions of

countless duels they've never had. For the rest of the scene, he suffers a -3 penalty on all rolls, and loses one Initiative at the end of each round in which he didn't attack the wielder. This ends if he crashes or incapacitates the attacker.

Dissonant: This Evocation is Supplemental and must be declared before the attack roll.

INSEPARABLE ENEMY REUNION

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Gift of Pain

The Shatterbond Knives cannot stand to be parted long.

The wielder pulls an enemy affected by Gift of Pain toward her with an unblockable gambit. Its difficulty depends on the enemy's range: 1 for short range, 2 for medium, and 3 for long (enemies beyond long range can't be affected). Against her rival, she adds attack roll extra successes on the Initiative roll.

Success drags the target up to two range bands towards the wielder. If this leaves him within close range of the wielder, she may reflexively make a **withering** or **decisive** attack against him.

Dissonant: This Evocation can't affect enemies beyond short range, or medium range for the wielder's rival.

SORROW-SHARING DEFENSE

Cost: 5m, 2i; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Inseparable Enemy Reunion

Drawing on the bond that links her twin blades, the wielder uses them as a conduit for her pain.

To use this Evocation, the wielder must be within medium range of an enemy afflicted with Gift of Pain. She can use it after being hit by a **decisive** attack before the damage roll. If there are any 1s on the damage roll, the wielder transfers one level of damage from herself to that enemy. It can't be prevented. Against her rival, each damage 1 roll transfers one level of damage, maximum (Rivalry).

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by successfully using Gift of Pain on a nontrivial rival.

TWIN HEARTS BETRAYAL

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Decisive-only, Dissonant, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Dreams of Ceaseless Strife, Sorrow-Sharing Defense

Plunging one of the Shatterbond Knives into her chest, the wielder strikes at her rival's heart.

To use this Evocation, the wielder must first use Gift of Pain on her rival, who must be within long range. She makes a **decisive** attack against him by piercing herself with one knife, striking through the bond between the blades. She makes the attack roll against her rival's Resolve instead of his Defense. It's penalized by his onslaught penalty and by her Rivalry.

In addition to being unblockable and undodgeable, this attack ignores cover, Hardness, and similar physical obstructions. It can strike dematerialized foes or enemies who're hidden from the wielder.

The attack's damage uses the higher of the wielder's Initiative or that of her rival and adds (wielder's strongest Tie toward her rival + rival's strongest Tie to her) dice of damage. It deals aggravated damage. Incapacitating him with this attack awards the wielder one Willpower.

Resonant: This attack's range is unlimited as long as the wielder and her rival are both engaged in combat against each other.

Dissonant: If the wielder uses her rival's Initiative instead of hers to determine damage, it can't exceed (her Initiative + Rivalry).

Reset: Once per scene.

Huskflayer

(Soulsteel Grimsythe, Artifact • • • • •)

To speak of fallen Chalazion, of its bone-orchards' bitter fruits, of its skillful wound-leapers, is to tell the tragedy of Abeindor, the last of the shadowland's ghost-kings. Cunning in statecraft and warfare, Abeindor nonetheless failed to see the threat that toppled his kingdom: a cult of soul-warping despair spread by the nephwrack prophet Bleeding-Throat Evangel. Mass suicides decimated Chalazion's living as the Evangel's teachings spread like a plague, while its dead fell into oblivion in droves.

As an exiled Abeindor drowned in his own despair, he was visited by a necromancer calling himself the Star of Dirt and Doubt. The Star offered him vengeance, though they warned of its terrible price — but what had Abeindor left to lose? And so, the necromancer tore away the better part of Abeindor's soul, and cast it upon their anvil. With it, they worked a binding on all Chalazion's dead who had been loyal to the king in life, forging their souls into Huskflayer.

Abeindor fell upon his stolen kingdom like a storm from the Labyrinth's depths. Behind him marched the shambling corpses of his once-living subjects, raised by the Star's necromancy. By the end of Abeindor's merciless campaign, the awful scythe had claimed more victims than he could remember, and none save him drew breath in Chalazion. The Evangel was last to fall. Asking a final favor of his mysterious patron, Abeindor bade the Star forge the nephwrack into a bauble of soulsteel, which still dangles from Huskflayer's blade today.

With his vengeance complete, Abeindor had nothing. For a time, he turned Huskflayer to conquest, seeking new kingdoms to rule, but nothing eased the wound of lost Chalazion. Without purpose or passion, yet unable to find Lethe's release, Abeindor finally condemned himself to oblivion. Then came the vultures, for the scythe had long

been coveted by those who knew what the ghost king did not: the weapon's maker was a Deathlord in disguise.

Huskflayer's design bespeaks cruelty. Its curving soulsteel blade does not cut cleanly but tears away strips of flesh, which dangle from spiked flanges at the back of the blade like a wind-blown banner.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Heavy (+1 ACC, +14 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 5)

Tags: Lethal, Reaching, Melee, Piercing, Two-Handed

Hearthstone Slot(s): 3

Era: Second Stygian Renaissance

Evocations of Huskflayer

Huskflayer's Evocations are fueled by harvested flesh, represented by a pool of **gore points** ("g" in costs). This pool starts empty and can store up to ten points. When the wielder deals **decisive** damage with Huskflayer, she gains one point for each level of damage dealt. **She can't gain more than (Essence) points per round.** Gore points last until spent.



This is subject to the following modifiers:

- **Gore points can only be gathered from foes with flesh to harvest.** Automata, animated skeletons, and similar creatures have nothing to offer Huskflayer. A ghost's corpus counts as flesh, as does the substance of most other spirits.

- Incapacitating an enemy awards an additional point, but the wielder doesn't gain points for damage in excess of her enemy's Incapacitated level.

- If an enemy takes a crippling injury to negate **decisive** damage, the wielder still gains points for those levels.

- Against battle groups and enemies with Legendary Size, double the point award. (The wielder still doesn't reap points for dealing Magnitude damage to battle groups with **withering** attacks.)

- Against trivial enemies, the wielder reaps only one point per attack.

As Huskflayer swells with stolen flesh, its blows grow more forceful. For every three gore points it has, add one damage die on **decisive** attacks and +1 Damage and +1 Overwhelming on **withering** attacks.

Gore points spent on Evocations that enhance an attack still count toward determining this damage bonus, and any similar bonuses from Huskflayer's Evocations.

INSATIABLE SCYTHE HUNGER

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dissonant, Resonant

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: None

Huskflayer moves more like a living thing than a weapon, ravening for its gory repast.

Dissonant: Characters who are dissonant with Huskflayer can't awaken this Evocation.

Huskflayer's wielder increases the maximum number of gore points she can reap per round to (Essence + 2).

Resonant: With Essence 3, the maximum increases to (Essence x2).

Awakening: This Evocation can't be purchased with experience. It awakens for free when a **decisive** attack with Huskflayer deals 6+ levels of damage.

LIVING BLADE MONSTROSITY

Cost: 3m, 1g per die; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

A rippling mass of rotting flesh engulfs Huskflayer's killing edge, making its monstrous blade seem many times larger.

Huskflayer's wielder can spend gore points to add that many dice of **decisive** damage to an attack, up to a maximum of her Initiative. If she spends 3+ gore points this way, she also adds an automatic success on the damage roll.

Dissonant: The wielder can't add more than (higher than Essence or 3) damage dice.

Resonant: If the wielder spends 6+ gore points, she adds two successes on the damage roll, not one.

FLENSING EDGE TORMENT

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Living Blade Monstrosity

Huskflayer's edge tears through armor to feast on flesh.

The wielder subtracts Huskflayer's Overwhelming from her enemy's soak against a **withering** attack or from his Hardness against a **decisive** attack. If this reduces the penalized trait to zero, the wielder gains an additional gore point (even on a **withering** attack).

If the wielder uses this Evocation on a piercing attack (**Exalted**, p. 586), that tag's effects apply to natural soak as well as armored soak. If she gains any gore points, the piercing attack's Initiative cost is refunded.

FLAYED SKIN AGONY

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Perilous, Resonant, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Living Blade Monstrosity

With an agonizing wrench of her scythe, Huskflayer's master rips away flesh as painfully as possible.

If Huskflayer's wielder reaps gore points from an attack, she inflicts a -1 crippling penalty on her victim's rolls and to his effective Initiative for determining when he acts for the rest of the scene. When she attacks him, she adds this penalty to her banked gore points, maximum 10, to determine Huskflayer's damage bonus and the effects of its Evocations.

With Insatiable Scythe Hunger, the penalty inflicted increases to -1 for every two points reaped, rounded up.

Resonant: The penalty inflicted is increased by one.

GRUESOME TRIUMPH REVEL

Cost: 1m, 1wp, 6g+; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Perilous, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Living Blade Monstrosity

Sloughing off the bloated bulk of rotting flesh that encysts her scythe, Huskflayer's wielder readies it for a fatal blow.

To use this Evocation, Huskflayer's wielder must have at least 6+ banked gore points. She empties her gore pool and rolls Join Battle, adding a non-Charisma die for each gore point expended.

Resonant: This Evocation loses the Perilous keyword.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by reaping gore points from incapacitating a nontrivial enemy.

VENGEANCE-SUSTAINING SACRIFICE

Cost: 1ahl; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Gruesome Triumph Revel

Huskflayer gnaws greedily at its master's flesh, sating itself on a willing offering.

The wielder gains one gore point, plus additional points equal to the wound penalty of the health level damaged by this Evocation's costs — e.g., damaging a -2 level would yield three points. Damaging temporary health levels only awards one point, regardless of their wound level.

Reset: Once per day. With Essence 3, resonant wielders can use this Evocation once per scene.

ENDLESS FLESH RENEWAL

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dissonant, Perilous, Resonant

Duration: One scene

Prerequisites: Vengeance-Sustaining Sacrifice

Huskflayer's master enfolding herself in scraps of unliving flesh, drawing sustenance from her grisly harvest.

Huskflayer's wielder rolls dice equal to her gore points, gaining temporary -0 health levels equal to her successes as she grafts unliving flesh onto herself. Temporary health levels are the first to be filled with damage and vanish when filled.

Non-dissonant characters can repurchase this Evocation, letting them spend up to one gore point per success to heal that many levels of non-aggravated damage, in addition to gaining temporary levels. This can only be used once per day.

Resonant: The wielder doubles 9s on the roll.

Dissonant: The wielder can't gain more than (Essence) temporary health levels.

Special activation rules: Huskflayer's wielder can use this Evocation reflexively when she reaps 7+ gore points.

Reset: Once per scene.

WRITHING GALLOWS EXECUTION

Cost: 3m, 1wp, 2g; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dissonant, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Flensing Edge Torment, Gruesome Triumph Revel

As Huskflayer deals a telling blow, its scythe-blade splits into countless fleshy tendrils and talons, each hungry for more.

Huskflayer's wielder can use this Evocation when she crashes an enemy with a **withering** attack, forgoing the Initiative awarded by the damage roll and the Initiative Break and rolling that many dice of **decisive** damage against her victim.

If the wielder used Flensing Edge Torment on the **withering** attack, that Evocation's Hardness reduction and gore bonus apply to the **decisive** damage roll.

Special activation rules: The wielder can use Living Blade Monstrosity reflexively to enhance the **decisive** damage roll.

Dissonant: This Evocation can only be used once per scene.

ALL FLESH BETRAYS

Cost: 10m, 4i, 1wp (+1-10g); **Mins:** Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dissonant, Perilous, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Flayed Skin Agony, Writhing Gallows Execution

Huskflyer's malevolence festers in its victim's wounds, leaving traces of viscera and rotting flesh that worm through its victim's flesh to seize control.

Dissonant: Characters dissonant with Huskflyer can't awaken this Evocation.

Huskflyer's wielder rolls (Initiative + gore points) against each character she's harvested gore points from this scene. Nontrivial enemies may oppose this with a (Stamina + Resistance) roll. Battle groups add (Size + Might dice). She can spend gore points to take control of affected enemies, revealing she's left traces of harvested flesh in their wounds:

Mortals and Trivial Enemies: For one gore point, the wielder can take control of all affected mortals and trivial supernatural enemies for the rest of the scene. On each affected character's turn, Huskflyer's wielder can force him to take a physical action or speech-based social action of her choice, though she can't force supernatural beings to use magic. If he wishes to take another action on his turn, he must flurry. He can flurry actions that would normally be incompatible, like two attacks, and compelled actions never count as his attack or movement action for the round.

Supernatural Foes: Taking control of nontrivial supernatural characters costs (their Essence) points, or (Essence/2, rounded up) if they're crashed. This works like with mortals, but only on that character's next turn — or, if he's crashed, until he recovers from it, if that comes later.

Battle Groups: The wielder can pay (Size/2, rounded up) points to force an affected battle group to make a difficulty 3 rout check, turning soldiers under her control against their allies. If the battle group fails the rout check and suffers dissolution (**Exalted**, p. 209), it reforms under the wielder's command for the rest of the scene, losing one dot of Size.

Corpses: For one point, the wielder can reanimate any living enemies she's slain in this scene as zombies (**Exalted**, p. 502) with a Defining Tie of obedience toward her, which assemble into a battle group under her command. These corpses persist indefinitely once created.

This isn't a Psyche effect but a crippling effect caused by the grafted tissue taking over the victim's musculature. If the wielder tries to force a nontrivial character to violate one of his Major or Defining Intimacies or that would be unacceptable influence, he may resist it for one Willpower and one level of lethal damage, tearing away the grafted flesh. This still uses one of his actions for the turn. Battle groups lose a dot of Size instead of taking damage as newly freed soldiers cut down the wielder's thralls.

Resonant: The wielder can use this Evocation reflexively when Gruesome Triumph Revel raises her Initiative above that of all enemies. She doesn't empty her gore pool until after paying All Flesh Betrays' gore point cost.

Reset: Once per day. For resonant wielders, once per scene.

THOUSAND HORRORS HARVEST

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 5

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: All Flesh Betrays, Endless Flesh Renewal (x2)

Huskflyer's dark purpose is bloody revenge, and it turns all those slain or wounded by it into desperate flesh-puppets.

Resonant: Only characters resonant with Huskflyer can awaken this Evocation.

Huskflyer's master can use this Evocation when she accomplishes a major character or story goal or a legendary social goal in pursuit of revenge against someone she has a negative Defining Tie for. She decrees a punishment for her nemesis and uses those under Huskflyer's control to enact it. She could have a corrupt prince put on trial and executed by his reanimated court, or condemn a rapacious warlord to being eaten alive by his army. This is similar to All Flesh Betrays, applying to any mortal or trivial character wounded with Huskflyer or slain by it in pursuit of this vengeance, lasting until the task is complete.

The wielder's thralls treat any social influence contrary to her decree as unacceptable. They add +4 dice on all rolls related to it and +2 Defense and Resolve against the wielder's nemesis. When narratively appropriate, the Storyteller may simply declare the punishment unfolds exactly as the wielder desires.

If the punishment is successfully completed, the wielder tastes grim satisfaction. She sets her temporary Willpower to 10, even if that's higher than her permanent Willpower, and she loses all Limit.

Reset: Once per story.

Awakening: This Evocation can't be purchased with experience points. It awakens for free when the wielder learns that someone he has a positive Major or Defining Tie toward has been killed or suffers a similar loss and forms a negative Defining Tie of hatred toward the person responsible.

Scavenger's Shroud (Soulsteel Buff Jacket, Artifact . . .)

Many die alone in the frozen battlefields of the distant North. Radiant Abal thought himself different when he set out against The Winter That Walks. Seiglinde of the Crimson Veil cautioned her young Solar against his quest, but he spurned her counsel and left in secret to hunt the behemoth. By the time Sieglinde arrived, nothing remained of him save picked-over bones.

Fallen in battle, Abal's ghost was claimed by a pack of scavenging walkuren, soul-reaping shades born from dreams of death. Sieglinde, enraged, tracked the scavengers to their nest and slaughtered them. As a final humiliation, she fashioned Scavenger's Shroud, flaying the walkuren's skin for a coat and looting their ragpicker's trove to adorn it with innumerable amulets, hunting trophies, ancient coins, and other trinkets. The soulsteel wires threaded through the Shroud came from this hoard as well, forged from the scraps of long-discarded souls.

Seiglinde's ghost haunts her lonely cairn, where the Shroud lies buried with her. She has refused all who've sought it, save for her reincarnations or those of her Solar mate. Foxfang Beyza used Scavenger's Shroud to purloin House Akiyo's treasure-halls, bedeviling the young Scarlet Realm before falling to the Wyld Hunt. The sorcerer Zhanidar wore it when he stole the endless palace of Eidolon from a lord of chaos. Each time the Shroud's wearer falls, Seiglinde's ghost retrieves her creation and returns to her cairn to mourn. Rumor

claims that the Shroud has been stolen, for some claim to have seen a dark wanderer clad in the morbid raiment, but Seiglinde denies any lapse in her guardianship.

Attunement: 4m

Type: Light (Soak +5, Hardness 4, Mobility Penalty -0)

Tags: Buoyant

Hearthstone Slot(s): 1

Era: Shadows of the Usurpation

Evocations of the Scavenger's Shroud

The Evocations of Scavenger's Shroud express the nature and avarice of the walkuren it was made from, aiding in finding and stealing treasures.

Upon attuning Scavenger's Shroud, its bearer awakens Ragpicker's Ken for free.

RAGPICKER'S KEN

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisites: None

Clad in a carrion-eater's skin, the Shroud's wearer hungers for treasures to add to her trove.

The wearer names a material thing that she desires and senses the approximate distance and direction to the nearest such thing within (Essence x10) miles. However, she can only sense objects that are owned by someone else, whether living or dead. She adds (Larceny/2, rounded up) dice on Awareness, Investigation, and Survival rolls to uncover this treasure.

The wearer can seek out generic commodities, like food, coinage, or precious gems, or specific objects like a certain book or a foe's daiklave. However, if she seeks a specific object that's been hidden, she must roll (Perception + [Awareness, Investigation or Survival]) against the roll used to conceal it, receiving bonus dice as above.

If the wearer ends this Evocation before obtaining what she desires, she loses one Willpower. She suffers the same consequence if she fails a roll to detect a hidden treasure.

Resonant: The added dice are non-Charms.

SUBTLE STALKER'S AVARICE

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisites: Ragpicker's Ken

The Shroud conceals its wearer from watchful eyes, letting her ply her subterfuge in secret.

The wearer ignores up to two points of penalties on Larceny and Stealth rolls, except for the penalty for using Stealth in combat. If she makes a Larceny roll to steal something while concealed from her victim, she adds a non-Charisma success.

CLOAK OF DARK WINGS

Cost: 2m, 1i; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Resonant, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Subtle Stalker's Avarice

Mantled in shade and smoke, the Shroud's wearer becomes as insubstantial as a dying dream.

When the wearer is attacked while in concealment, she gains +1 Evasion or +2 in darkness or other sensory obstruction that imposes at least a -3 penalty on Awareness rolls.

Successfully dodging forces the attacker to make another (Perception + Awareness) roll against the wearer's Stealth successes, subtracting one die from his roll for each success that his attack missed by.

Resonant: The penalty on Awareness rolls subtracts successes, not dice.

DEATH-DREAMING VENOM

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Subtle Stalker's Avarice

The walkure are born from dreams of death. Drawing threads of these dreams from the Shroud, its wearer unleashes a soul-numbing poison.

The wearer suffuses a **decisive** attack using any weapon with a venomous dream, with Damage 3i/round, duration (wearer's Larceny or Stealth), and a

-2 penalty that subtracts successes instead of dice on Perception-based rolls.

If the wielder uses this Evocation on a surprise attack, it inflicts a two-success penalty on her victim's roll against the poison, while an ambush denies him the chance to roll at all.

Dissonant: Surprise attacks subtract two dice from the victim's roll, not successes, while ambushes subtract two successes.

WINGED REAPER'S FLIGHT

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dissonant, Resonant

Duration: One scene

Prerequisites: Cloak of Dark Wings, Death-Dreaming Venom

The Scavenger's Shroud unfurls its tanned hides into a pair of leathery wings, evoking the terror of the walkuren.

The wearer gains the following benefits:

- She can fly, as with five-dot Wings (**Exalted**, p. 167).
- While airborne, she can enter concealment without needing a hiding spot, vanishing into shadows and dark feathers.
- She can use Cloak of Dark Wings while airborne, even if she isn't concealed. If she's both concealed and airborne, the Evasion bonus increases to +2 even without obscuring conditions.
- Anyone poisoned with Death-Dreaming Venom temporarily suffers from Minor Madness (**Exalted**, p. 168) and must immediately make a Willpower roll against it. A crashed enemy who takes lethal damage from the poison retains that Madness even after the poison runs its course.

Resonant: This Evocation's duration becomes one hour. The wearer waives its Willpower cost if she renews it at the end of the hour.

Dissonant: The wearer must pay four motes at the start of each subsequent turn to maintain this Evocation. If she doesn't, she glides harmlessly to the ground.

The Nemesis Cuirass

(Soulsteel Articulated Plate, Artifact • • • •)

The people of the Intou Shogunate revered most Dragon-Blooded as bodhisattvas, guiding the faithful towards spiritual purity after death. Shahar Yun, however, was reviled, infamous for his vanity and brutality. After his death in an illegal duel, his ghost swore vengeance on his killer's family. The mortwright slew them to the last, all save his killer, and forged their souls into the Nemesis Cuirass. Spikes and blades festoon the heavy, all-concealing suit of soulsteel plate, along with the snarling faces of gargoyles and grotesques.

When his sworn enemies were dead, his vengeance did not abate. He went on to ravage the Intou Shogunate for denying him the worship and respect he believed was due. The villain's campaign of terror continued for more than a year before the Intou Wyld Hunt defeated and exorcized his shade. The armor passed into the hands of the ill-fated Dhakal clan, playing a central part in their escalating feud with the Jajars, which later became the subject of a famous tragedy.

Sometime after the fall of the Intou Shogunate, the Nemesis Cuirass was buried in an unmarked pit in a desolate shadowland, though rumors say it has since been reclaimed by a dark warrior.

Attunement: 6m

Type: Heavy (Soak 11, Hardness 10, Mobility Penalty -2)

Tags: None

Hearthstone Slot(s): 3

Era: The Year of Black Banners

Evocations of The Nemesis Cuirass

The Nemesis Cuirass draws power from its wearer's negative Ties and from weakening their positive Ties. However, **Ties of fear don't benefit any of its Evocations**, nor do other negative Ties the Storyteller deems unsuitable for the armor's enmity.

The Cuirass' wearer gains +1 Resolve against influence that would weaken negative Ties. The armor's menacing appearance grants its wearer the Hideous Merit (**Exalted**, p. 162).

BLOOD-FORGED STEEL ENDURANCE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Resonant, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

Empowered by hate, the Nemesis Cuirass makes its wearer seemingly unkillable.

The wearer gains +2 armored soak, or (Intimacy + 1) soak against enemies she has a negative Tie toward.

Resonant: If the wearer's soak reduces a **withering** attack to minimum damage, her attacker loses one Initiative. If she has a negative Tie toward him, she gains that Initiative.

SHARP-EDGED SPITE DEFENSE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Blood-Forged Steel Endurance

The Nemesis Cuirass' jagged barbs and spikes turn aside blades and pierce the flesh of unworthy foes.

When an enemy makes a non-ranged attack against the wearer, she counterattacks with a (Stamina + Resistance) disarm gambit, which opposes the attack roll's successes rather than the attacker's Defense. If she has a negative Tie toward the attacker, she adds (Intimacy) dice on her attack and Initiative roll.

Against unarmed attacks, this is instead a damaging **decisive** attack, adding (Intimacy) dice on the attack and damage roll if the wearer has a negative Tie toward the attacker.

Resonant: The wearer can make damaging counterattacks against enemies she has a negative to Tie even if they use weapons to attack.

IRON-BARDED BLACKGUARD

Cost: -(+3m); **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Soul Reins

Hatred binds rider and mount together as one, a terrible storm of steel riding down their fearful prey.

The Abyssal can pay a three-mote surcharge when she uses Soul Reins (p. 270) to grant her steed artifact heavy barding (**Exalted**, p. 203), matching the style of the Nemesis Cuirass. The steed gains all of her negative

Ties as long as that Charm is active. The deathknight can use the Cuirass' Evocations on her steed's behalf.

Awakening: This Evocation can't be purchased with experience. It awakens for free upon the Abyssal meeting its prerequisites.

BITTER MALICE EMPOWERMENT

Cost: 3m, 1i; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Perilous, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Blood-Forged Steel Endurance

In battle against a hated foe, every blow must be honed and perfected by absolute malice.

When the wearer attacks an enemy she has a negative Tie toward or takes another action capable of physically harming him, she rerolls (Intimacy) failed dice. This can also enhance rushes, threaten rolls, and Perception rolls against such characters.

Once the wielder uses this Evocation against a character, she can't use it against other characters for the rest of the scene unless her original target is incapacitated.

Resonant: The wearer isn't limited to using this Evocation against one enemy at a time.

UNDYING WRATH ASCENDANCY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Bitter Malice Empowerment, Sharp-Edged Spite Defense

The armor whispers to its master to sacrifice all that she is at the altar of victory.

The wearer can take a crippling injury (**Exalted**, p. 201) by sacrificing a positive Tie or a Principle expressing compassion or ethical principles instead of suffering maiming. This negates (Intimacy + 1) levels of damage. She can't sacrifice an Intimacy whose intensity is greater than that of her strongest negative Tie that's relevant to the fight. She can't regain the sacrificed Intimacy by any means until the end of the story.

Resonant: If the wearer has a negative Defining Tie that's relevant to the fight, this doesn't count against the once-per-story limit for crippling injuries. She can't use it more than once per scene.

HATE ALONE IS TRUE

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual, Resonant

Duration: One scene

Prerequisites: Undying Wrath Ascendancy

Casting aside compassion, restraint, and humanity, the Nemesis Cuirass' master revels in invincible hatred.

Resonant: Only wearers who are resonant with the Nemesis Cuirass can awaken this Evocation.

To use this Evocation, the wearer must have a positive Major or Defining Tie that's relevant to a fight, whether it's applicable to her enemies or her motivation for battling them. She sacrifices that Tie and rolls (Stamina + Resistance) with (Intimacy) non-Charm successes, banking a special pool of Initiative equal to her successes. This has the following benefits:

- She gains Hardness equal to amount of Initiative she currently has banked. If the Cuirass's Hardness is higher, it's increased by +1 instead.
- When she takes **withering** damage, she may choose to lose Initiative from this pool before her own Initiative. Attackers don't gain Initiative for points lost from this pool.
- When she makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy she has a negative Tie toward, she may add up to (Intimacy) of this Initiative to her damage dice. She can use this to make **decisive** attacks against such foes even while crashed, treating her own Initiative as zero before adding from this pool.
- She can use it to pay the cost of Bitter Malice Empowerment and any other instant-duration Charms she uses together with it.

The wearer can't regain the sacrificed Intimacy by any means until the end of the story.

Reset: Once per scene.

The Feverfear Guise (Soulsteel Mask, Artifact . . .)

The Feverfear Guise is a plague-mask of sleek, swooping black leather, set with lenses framed in soulsteel and stitched with behemoth-sinew. History records its creator as the Visitor, an opportunistic Ghost-Blooded

physician whose true name was lost in the turbulent dawn of the Great Contagion. He was, by chance, among those lucky few to survive the Contagion and become immune against it. He was, by choice, a charlatan who fattened his purse off the hopes and fears of the plague-ridden communities he visited. Vestiges of his soul and malicious cunning tarry still in the mask's soulsteel-shod beak, which sometimes shrieks with a noise like the distant cry of carrion birds.

Some of the mask's subsequent wearers have been liars in the mold of its original owner, while others have turned it to nobler aim. The merchant prince Siulé donned the mask and took the name of the Visitor to extort the city-states of Kesitha with their fear of the Contagion's return, absconding after ten years of terror to live in wretched splendor. For Jaspinder of the Saffron Bough, the mask was a tool of grim instruction, lending gravity to her warnings in her campaign against the five great diseases that had long plagued her people.

Attunement: 2m

Hearthstone Slot(s): One

Era: The Great Contagion — The First Days of Dread

Evocations of the Feverfear Guise

The Feverfear Guise protects its wearer against inhaled poison, airborne infection, and similar hazards, adding two non-Charisma successes on rolls to resist.

LOOMING BUZZARD MIEN

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

The Feverfear Guise warns of terrible things to come, of rotten wings beating unseen, of villages abandoned or piled high with corpses.

When the wearer draws on her medical expertise as part of an influence roll, she adds (Medicine/2) dice, can use applicable Medicine specialties, and may substitute Intelligence for Appearance to determine how many bonus dice it adds.

Against characters who sought the wearer out for her medical expertise, the added dice are non-Charisma. The same is true for threaten rolls and other fear-based influence rolls — for instance, warning that a water source is

tainted — are non-Charisma. She also gains this benefit on influence rolls made with this artifact's other Evocations.

Resonant: The wearer may pay a two-mote surcharge to extend this Evocation's duration to indefinite.

SNAKESKIN WINE SCHEME

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Looming Buzzard Mien

Looming over her patient with grim benevolence, the Guise's master offers salvation in obedience.

The wearer makes a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Medicine) persuade roll against a single character she's diagnosed or infected with a disease to prescribe a course of treatment. This influence may leverage the disease as if it were an Intimacy of equal intensity. She ignores up to (Medicine/2, rounded up) points of penalty for making implausible claims, like recommending herring for a fever or avoiding gamblers for a broken arm.

As long as the patient follows the prescribed treatment, he can use the wearer's base ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Medicine), including specialties, in place of his (Stamina + Resistance) for his next roll against the disease's morbidity. If he succeeds on the roll after following the wearer's instructions, he gains a Minor Tie of trust to her or a Major Tie if the disease was Major or Defining before the roll.

Dissonant: The imposed Tie is only Major if the disease was originally Defining.

Reset: This Evocation can't be used on the same character more than once per story.

CREeping PLAGUE SUGGESTION

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Snakeskin Wine Scheme

Hinting at grim possibilities, the Guise's master sows delusions of infection as insidious as any disease.

The wearer convinces her victim that he suffers from a mundane disease, making a special (Manipulation + Medicine) instill roll against a single character as she describes the disease.

If successful, the victim believes he's infected with the disease. He gains a Minor Obsession (**Exalted**, p. 168) embodying this belief, experiencing psychosomatic or hallucinatory symptoms, and must immediately make a Willpower roll against it.

Because this isn't a real disease, the victim doesn't receive (Stamina + Resistance) rolls against this "disease." Medicine rolls and magic that heal disease are likewise inapplicable. However, he appears infected to diagnosis rolls unless they succeed with three extra successes. Additionally, the wearer may treat it as a disease for any magic she uses against him if it's advantageous to her, other than healing.

If the wearer prescribes a treatment with Snakeskin Wine Scheme, the victim's Obsession also extends to following her instructions. The wearer may choose to make these treatments efficacious, removing the Obsession if her victim follows her instructions. Doing so causes him to gain a Tie of trust to her with an intensity one step higher than usual.

Resonant: With an Essence 3 repurchase, subsequent uses of this Evocation can be used to strengthen the Obsession. The wearer must leverage one of her victim's other Intimacies to support this, as usual (**Exalted**, 215).

Reset: This Evocation can't be used against the same character more than once per session.

ROOSTING NIGHTMARE MALADY

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Creeping Plague Suggestion

Fear and obsession turn a false diagnosis into a life-threatening ailment as if beckoning black-feathered disease spirits to roost in a victim's body.

Characters who suffer from Creeping Plague Suggestion suffer as though they were actually infected with a disease at the same intensity as their Obsession. Diagnosis rolls can't see through the false symptoms unless enhanced by magic.

Characters with Exalted Healing may pay (Obsession) Willpower to resist the disease's symptoms for one session.

CIRCLING VULTURE HYSTERIA

Cost: —(+5m); **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Psyche, Resonant

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Creeping Plague Suggestion (x2), Roosting Nightmare Malady

Gossip is a powerful contagion, spreading like plague as the Guise's master warns of dooms to come.

Resonant: Only characters resonant with the Feverfear Guise can awaken this Evocation.

The wearer can pay a five-mote surcharge to use Creeping Plague Suggestion against multiple characters, describing a disease's symptoms and vectors of contagion.

Rather than developing an Obsession immediately, affected characters only do so if they believe they've been exposed to a vector of infection. If the wearer prescribed a course of treatment as part of her warning, it's included in their Obsession as if she'd use Snakeskin Wine Treatment.

Such Obsessions fade after (wearer's Essence) days, although failing a Willpower roll against it resets that. If an affected character goes an entire session without encountering a vector, he's freed from this Psyche effect.

This Evocation is incompatible with Creeping Plague Suggestion's resonant repurchase — the wearer must strengthen victims' Obsessions one-by-one.

Nyraxes, the Dead Ember (soulsteel Lantern, Artifact . . .)

The Underworld has had many failed suns, the passion-projects of ancient necromancer-kings and nephwrack savants. The bale-star known as Nyraxes was a particularly spectacular example, forged by an exiled potentate known as the King Clad in Tattered Glories. Denied a place among the ranks of his people's honored dead, he sought to usurp their afterlife, supplanting it with one of his own design. The king kindled Nyraxes within his dread forge, with a core of ever-molten soulsteel trapped within concentric rings of bone stolen from the behemoth known as the Wandering Ivory Woods.

The King Clad in Tattered Glories placed Nyraxes within the firmament of his fledgling kingdom, a light to draw the ghosts of his people to him. For seven days it burned, and his people arrived with its mesmeric blue flame reflected in their eyes. On the eighth day, it fell and reduced the King and his kingdom to cinder and lamentation.

It is unknown who stole the ever-smoldering embers that fell from the star or the shards of soulsteel that dotted that landscape, but they forged them into a lantern, a ball of blue flame licking at the glass panes of its cage. Nyraxes remains a guiding star for the undead in this new form, drawing them to its master. In its history, it has passed through the hands of tyrants both dead and living. The Stark Princess wielded it as a war-banner for her seven champion wraiths but was betrayed by the eighth; the exorcist-prince Ketha of the Rime immolated the ghosts of seven of his wrathful siblings but fell to his youngest brother.

Attunement: 3m

Hearthstone Slot(s): One

Era: The Anticipation of Setesh

Evocations of Nyraxes

Nyraxes' bearer may dampen or kindle its flame at her whim, reducing it to a spark too faint to draw attention or increasing it into a blue blaze equal to a burning anima. Upon attuning to Nyraxes, its wielder awakens Dancing Cinder Allure for free.

DANCING CINDER ALLURE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

As Nyraxes once called a king's people to a new home, so too may it entrance those who behold its beauty.

When the lantern-bearer makes a persuade roll to convince others to follow her somewhere, she adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice. She treats the undead as having a Minor Intimacy that supports this influence and can influence even mindless undead.

Resonant: While Nyraxes' flame is flaring, the lantern-bearer's influence treats all characters who can see the light as having a Minor Intimacy.

VESSEL OF SOUL'S RADIANCE

Cost: 2m, 1a; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Resonant

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Dancing Cinder Allure

Those whose souls burn like pyreflame may fill Nyraxes with the light of their glories.

An Exalted lantern-bearer transfers a single level of anima into Nyraxes. Each level of anima stored adds one die on influence rolls against the dead or those made with Nyraxes' other Evocations. Nyraxes' light can't be dimmed below that of an anima banner of the same level.

When this Evocation ends, the stored anima returns to the lantern-bearer's anima banner.

An Essence 3 repurchase makes this Evocation Stackable, letting the lantern-bearer store up to (Essence/2, rounded up) levels of anima with multiple uses.

Resonant: The lantern-bearer can end this Evocation to pay an anima cost using the stored levels, rather than returning them to her anima banner.

LAST BREATH IGNITION

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Dancing Cinder Allure

A spark from the last breath of the dying tinges Nyraxes' flame.

When someone dies within long range of the lantern-bearer, she captures one of his Major or Defining Intimacies within its flame. If she's aware of such an Intimacy, she may choose to capture it; otherwise, the Storyteller picks. She can draw on the captured Intimacy as if she possessed it, letting her bolster Resolve, cite it in Decision Points, or use it for any other purpose. Each time she does, she gains that Intimacy at Minor intensity or strengthens it by one step if she already has it, up to a maximum of the captured Intimacy's intensity.

If the deceased lingers as a ghost, he loses the captured Intimacy and can't regain it by any means for this Evocation's duration. However, the lantern-bearer's influence can still leverage it against him.

BALEFUL SUN'S PSYCHOPOMP

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Dissonant, Psyche

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Last Breath Ignition



Nyraxes still guides the dead to their final rest, drawing them like moths to the fallen star's flame.

Dissonant: Lanternbearers who are dissonant with Nyraxes can't awaken this Evocation.

Nyraxes' light blazes out to long range as the lantern-bearer makes a special (Social Attribute + [Performance or Presence]) inspire roll against all undead who can see the light. She succeeds automatically against un-Exalted undead whose Essence is lower than hers.

Affected characters are filled with fascination with Nyraxes' light, which counts as a Defining Intimacy. They must approach as close to the lantern-bearer as possible, heedless of any peril in the way. In combat, they must use their movement action each turn to approach her, though they can still take other actions. They can't attack the lantern-bearer, though they can still attack her allies as long as they also move toward the lantern on their turn. This costs three Willpower to resist, although a character can resist for only one Willpower if he takes damage as a result of pursuing the lantern-bearer through dangerous ground.

If the lantern-bearer wishes, she may surround herself in a blaze of flame to greet the approaching dead, an environmental hazard that extends out to short range. It has difficulty 4 and Damage (Essence)L/round and deals aggravated damage to the undead. She can empower this hazard by expending levels of anima stored with Vessel of Soul's Radiance or Intimacies stored with Last Breath Ignition. For every two levels of anima or Major Intimacy spent, the hazard gains +1 difficulty or +1 Damage, to a maximum bonus of (Essence). Defining Intimacies add +1 to both.

Reset: Once per scene.

The Ravenous Throne

(Soulsteel War-Throne, Artifact . . .)

As the Slayer of the Eastern Storm lay maimed in battle with the agents of his erstwhile Deathlord, he was set upon by an ancient rantai, seeking fresh bones for its gruesome chains. Seeing his opportunity, the cunning Abyssal tied the creature in knots and forged the tortured souls impaled on its chains into soulsteel, binding the horror in place. He transformed his assailant into the Ravenous Throne, his monstrous vessel, and

THE RAVENOUS THRONE

Essence: 2; Willpower: 8; Join Battle: 8 dice

Health Levels: -0x4/-1x4/-2x4/-4x1/Incap.

Speed Bonus: +2

Actions: Appear Inanimate: 6 dice. Feats of Strength: 10 dice (may attempt Strength 5 feats). Senses: 7 dice. Stealth: 5 dice; Threaten: 10 dice

Appearance 2. Resolve 5. Guile 3

Combat

Attack: (Skittering Legs): 10 dice (Damage 15L/3)

Attack: (Grapple): 10 dice (12 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 12 dice

Evasion: 3; Parry: 4

Soak/Hardness: 12/8 (Soulsteel Sheathing)

Intimacies

Defining Tie: Current Master (Loyalty)

Major Principle: I hunger for ghosts and corpse-flesh

Minor Tie: The Slayer of the Eastern Storm (Terror)

Merits

Devourer of Souls: The Ravenous Throne can perceive and attack dematerialized ghosts, including grappling them. Incapacitating a nontrivial ghost grants its rider (ghost's Essence) motes.

Ossuary-Maw Renewal: The Ravenous Throne can heal all non-aggravated damage by spending a scene harvesting bone from a fresh corpse.

The Ravenous Throne is a high-backed armchair formed from a rantai's unnaturally elongated spine, skillfully folded and coiled like rope and sheathed in burnished soulsteel. The base and sides of the throne bristle with the rantai's rib-like bone hooks, which convey the throne and its rider like the legs of a centipede or extend to slash and stab at foes. At some point, a daring upholsterer fitted the throne with plush velvet cushions, which it sometimes tries in vain to remove.

Attunement: 5m

Era: The Wilted Rose Rebellion

Evocations of the Ravenous Throne

Most war-thrones are simply artifact versions of wheeled chairs. They're peerless mobility aids, and using one never incurs penalties or increased difficulties on movement rolls. Characters using one still make movement rolls with the usual Abilities, typically Athletics and Dodge.

The Ravenous Throne is an exception, a sapient war-throne that can be controlled using Ride. It has its own traits and is always rolled into combat alongside its master. While capable of independent action, it lacks the intelligence to understand most instructions, requiring its master to ride it to command it in battle.

MANY-LIMBED MOBILITY

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisites: None

The Ravenous Throne's countless legs find purchase wherever they go.

The throne's master adds (Essence) dice on a mounted movement action, or (Essence) successes on rolls involving climbing or balance. The war-throne can climb up sheer surfaces and under horizontal ones, though doing so counts as difficult terrain and its master must continue using this Evocation each turn or risk falling.

If the throne's rider knows Crouching Gargoyle Stance (p. 161) or similar magic that lets her move up walls, this Evocation's cost is reduced by two motes.

GRASPING TERROR CLAWS

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Simple

they fought many battles together against his former liege's minions.

The deathknight and his unusual steed were separated under unknown circumstances, and the ambulatory throne ran wild for a time, terrorizing isolated settlements of ghosts before it was finally captured. It currently resides in a cage in Stygia, where it awaits a high-profile auction gala hosted by the Black Heron herself.

Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Many-Limbed Mobility

The Ravenous Throne pins its master's foes in place with its many bony limbs.

The Ravenous Throne makes a grapple gambit against an enemy within short range, instantly moving into close range with its target. It adds (master's Ride) bonus dice to the attack and control rolls. As usual for mounts, only the throne suffers the penalties for grappling, and it must take a drag action to move.

Resonant: The Ravenous Throne doubles 9s on its control roll.

DEVOURING STEEL MAW

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Rending Terror Claws

Ensnared in the throne's claws, its mewling victims are dragged into the massive, spiked maw beneath.

When the throne makes a **decisive** savaging attack, it doubles 9s on the damage roll and adds damage dice equal to its current rounds of control, maximum 5.

Dissonant: The attack only doubles 10s on the damage roll.

HEKATONKIRE-THRONE THEW

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Devouring Steel Maw

Disliking the taste of its prey, the Ravenous Throne casts him away.

The Ravenous Throne both restrains and throws a grappled enemy. Alternatively, it can drag its foe rather than restraining him. The throw must be **decisive** and ignores the limit on how many rounds of control it can add to its damage roll. As long as the throw deals any damage, the victim is hurled to short range and knocked prone, suffering additional damage as per a fall of the same distance (**Exalted**, p. 232). If the throw attack has 10+ dice of damage, the throne can fling the victim to medium range.

Resonant: With 20+ damage dice, an enemy can be thrown to long range.

Underworld Hearthstones

The Underworld's demesnes are dominated by Abyssal Essence, richly associated with death, memory, ill omens, blood, sacrifice, and entropy. Elemental demesnes are rare, and where they exist, they are colored by the Underworld's strange phenomena: baleful pyre-flames, winds full of breath and prayer, and the inky depths of the Sea of Shadows. In either case, Underworld manses are often erected as funereal temples, mausoleum-fortresses, and cyclopean memorials, inspiring feelings of regret, dread, sorrow, peace, or horror.

BLACK ROSE BERYL (ABYSSAL, STANDARD)

Keywords: None

Example Manse: A monolith of tapering basalt surrounded by concentric rose gardens, the path always strewn with unexpected briars.

When a target touches this rose-cut beryl, the bearer intuitively one of the target's Intimacies rooted in betrayal, abandonment, unfulfilled desire, or similar, chosen by the Storyteller. If the stone's bearer makes an influence roll that leverages the revealed Intimacy in the same scene, its Resolve penalty is increased by one against that roll (but not later rolls in the same scene). Touching the stone to an unwilling character uses the same rules as other touch attacks.

BLEAK TRUTHS SAPPHIRE (ABYSSAL, STANDARD)

Keyword: None

Example Manse: A distant temple of hand-stacked stones worn smooth by time and tears.

This uncut sapphire glows from within with a dim light. The bearer adds one non-Charm success on read intentions rolls to discover Intimacies rooted in sorrow or regret, as well as to instill rolls to strengthen such Intimacies.

DARK OMENS COMPASS (ABYSSAL, STANDARD)

Keywords: Manse-Born

Example Manse: A lagoon that serves as a secret harbor, its walls carved with murals depicting the first five shadowlands to open in Creation.

The bearer of this obsidian sphere can automatically sense shadowlands, Abyssal demesnes or manses, and

similar places of deathly Essence within (Essence x20) miles, intuiting the distance and direction. With a difficulty 3 (Perception + Occult) roll, she may glean a single fact about her destination — the presence of a hostile force, a useful resource, or other advantage meant to forewarn her.

DRIPPING SLAUGHTER STONE (ABYSSAL, STANDARD)

Keywords: Dependent

Example Manse: An elegant pavilion of bleached bone, surrounded by manicured lawns whose purple grasses surge with blood instead of dew every morning.

When socketed into a weapon, this stone — like a great blood clot in color and shape — empowers its bearer's attacks. When she lands a **decisive** attack that increases a nontrivial enemy's wound penalty or incapacitates him, she adds a non-Charm bonus die on her next attack roll with that weapon. She loses this benefit if she doesn't attack by the end of her next turn.

NECROMANCER'S ONYX EYE (ABYSSAL, STANDARD)

Keywords: Manse-Born

Example Manse: A sweeping observatory where paper talismans hang from lofty beams, describing intricate mathematical observations about the Calendar of Setesh.

While socketed into a corpse, this cabochon sphere animates it as a zombie (**Exalted**, p. 502) with a Defining Tie of loyalty to the stone's master. The master can share the zombie's senses as if it were a familiar (**Exalted**, p. 161). If the stone's master wishes to retrieve it from afar, she may destroy it reflexively, causing it to reform it within its manse instantly.

TOKEN OF TIDAL REMEMBRANCE (ABYSSAL, STANDARD)

Keywords: Wild-Born

Example Demesne: Three spires of black rock worn down by the tides of the Sea of Shadows and strewn with a web of seaweed.

Blood-colored amber congeals within this shard of petrified driftwood, which forms only from Abyssal demesnes. Its bearer adds a non-Charm success on Lore rolls involving the Sea of Shadows or other Underworld waterways and doesn't need a Lore background to introduce or challenge facts about them. She also adds a non-Charm success on Intelligence-based Sail or Survival actions involving such dark waters.

ABHORRENT REAPER'S FANG (ABYSSAL, GREATER)**Keywords:** None

Example Manse: A hunting lodge tiled with mosaics of porcelain and ivory that detail a First Age hunting party that followed its hated prey beyond death so it could be slain twice.

This deceptively sharp ivory trinket is carved with blasphemous elegies for those who will fall to its master. A weapon socketed with the stone automatically slays trivial characters struck with it. Once per round, if the socketed weapon's wielder uses it to incapacitate a nontrivial enemy with a **decisive** attack, she adds +1 base Initiative upon resetting and gains one mote.

TEAR OF MIDNIGHT VISIONS (ABYSSAL, GREATER)**Keywords:** None

Example Manse: A sky-piercing tower of obsidian, veiled in an aurora of somber indigo radiance.

This mesmerizing indigo violane fills the night with haunted omens. Those who sleep within four miles of it must succeed on a difficulty 2 (Wits + Integrity) roll each night to recover Willpower from sleeping. The bearer may draw from one of her Principles related to death or the dead to shape the emotional tenor of these unsettling dreams; characters may accept this Intimacy at Minor intensity Principle to recover Willpower even if they fail the roll. They can't voluntarily erode the Principle until they leave this hearthstone's range.

The queen wasn't alone in her chamber when the Viscount Wreathed in Ruby Mists came calling. Her guards were gone, as they'd been paid to do. The entire wing of the palace was still, except for the Viscount's swift passage. He'd arranged for that, too. The lock on her door fell open at his touch, its pins crumbling to rust.

She should have been alone, asleep in her bed amidst dozens of silken pillows and beneath a pile of furs. Indeed, she slept, oblivious to the cold northern wind gusting through her open window and lending the chill of the grave to the chamber. The Viscount might have found that amusing since that was why he was here in the first place, except for the person who waited with her.

Leaning against the bedpost, between the queen and her would-be killer, stood a Weeping Raiton Cast Aside. She wore plain woolen robes and no armor that the Viscount could see, but her grimcleaver, ominously named The Taste of Blood, rested against the footboard in easy reach. He knew of her — sworn to no Deathlord, a scholar of the Old Laws. He'd not yet had the pleasure of meeting her, though her stance and the circumstances told him this was no social call.

Business first. He rushed toward the sleeping queen, daiklave slicing the air.... But a Weeping Raiton was faster than he'd imagined, that grimcleaver coming up between them in a blur. Soulsteel screamed where his blade met its haft, the battle-song of two cursed weapons meeting in equal mettle.

"Hold," she said as the encircled disk of her Caste mark seeped bloody on her forehead. "Attend my words, deathknight, and know that your mission is flawed."

He could have pushed past her; he was quick and a Raiton's reputation was that of an arbiter and philosopher, not a fighter. He could have killed the queen and *then* argued about it. But the very fact of the Moonshadow's presence gave him pause. If someone wanted the queen saved or the Viscount bloodied, they would have sent a warrior. Intrigued, the Viscount disengaged from her. She didn't lower the grimcleaver until he'd retreated several steps.

"How is it flawed?" he asked. "I'm here bringing justice at the Lover's behest."

"You carry out your mistress' will," she agreed, "but not that of the Neverborn."

"The Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears serves the Neverborn."

"She serves *herself*. Think of it — a year from now, two at most, the people of this city will revolt. The queen and her court take and take while they starve. They won't be so kind as to cut her throat while she's warm and safe in her bed, dreaming pleasant dreams. Who are you to give her an easy death and free her from the torment to come?"

The Viscount stared and let his instincts measure her words against his sense of death's chivalry. "I've taken vows—"

"—to the Neverborn first and foremost." The Moonshadow gestured toward the queen, who slept on as soundly as the dead, perhaps lulled by a Weeping Raiton's will. "Your liege would install a puppet in her place to further her own cause. Let the queen live to see her downfall. Or better yet, help her shape it."

She stepped away, leaving him a clear path to the queen, but the Viscount found himself unable — perhaps even unwilling — to take it.



Chapter Nine

The Roll of Deathly Personages

The First and Forsaken Lion

The First and Forsaken Lion, among the first of the Deathlords, is a terrifying foe. Their mere presence on the battlefield cows heroes, while their dread blade cuts through legions like a zephyr of violence. Their immense personal power comes from millennia of combat experience and mastery of the sword, but their true skill is as a peerless general. The Lion firmly believes none in the Second Age can match their strategic acumen or the Legion Sanguinary's might, and any would-be hero who opposes them will be hard-pressed to prove the Deathlord wrong.

Essence: 7; **Willpower:** 10; **Join Battle:** 14 dice

Personal: 120

Health Levels: -0x5/-1x10/-2x12/-4x14/Incap.

Actions: Command: 14 dice; Feats of Strength: 14 dice (may attempt Strength 7 feats); Intimidate: 13 dice; Necromancy: 10 dice; Read Intentions: 10 dice; Senses: 12 dice (see Vision of Endless Night); Social Influence: 10 dice; Strategy: 14 dice; Underworld Lore: 12 dice
Appearance 5 (Hideous), Resolve 7, Guile 5

COMBAT

Attack (Varan's Ruin, soulsteel grand dai-klave): 14 dice (Damage 23L/5)

Attack (Unarmed): 12 dice (Damage 16B)

Attack (Grapple): 11 dice (12 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 10 dice

Evasion: 3; **Parry:** 7

Soak/Hardness: 20/10 (soulsteel articulated plate)

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: I will conquer all the Underworld.

Defining Tie: The Neverborn (Hateful Resentment)

Major Principle: My wrath is easily roused.

Major Principle: I seek power in the Underworld's secrets.

Major Tie: The Legion Sanguinary (Pride)

Minor Principle: I will permit no challenge to my authority.

Minor Tie: Their Deathknights (Stern Patronage)

Minor Tie: The Black Heron (Respect)

Minor Tie: Creation (Scorn)

ESCORT

Whether in the Thousand or leading in the field, the Lion is typically attended by an honor guard of elite war ghosts and advisors, including multiple powerful lieutenants and court mystics (use nephwrack traits, **Exalted** pp. 506-508). They are often accompanied by one or more deathknights.

MERITS

Cult 3

Prison of Form: Any effort to free the Lion from their armor, whether mundane or magical, automatically fails. They're immune to body-altering Shaping effects unless the transformation can coexist with their armored form. Crippling effects that sever limbs or cause similarly grievous harm inflict only temporary injury instead, and the Lion can't voluntarily take crippling injuries. At the Storyteller's discretion, the culmination of a suitably legendary quest might be able to free the Lion.

Vision of Endless Night: The Lion doubles 8s on Senses rolls and is unimpeded by darkness. They can't be blinded.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Barbed Nightmare Chains (5m; Supplemental; Instant; Perilous; Essence 6): The Lion grapples an enemy within short range using their armor's animated chains, dragging him into close range if successful. The Lion can act freely while the chains maintain the grapple, and they can have up to seven targets grappled at a time.

Legion-Felling Sword (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only; Essence 5): The Lion makes a single **decisive** attack against every enemy within short range. It has a base damage of seven dice against each hit enemy,



and the Lion divides their Initiative equally among them. Their full Initiative is added to damage against battle groups and trivial characters.

None Before Me (6m; Supplemental; Instant; Withering-only, Essence 6): When the Lion makes a **withering** attack against an enemy with higher Initiative, they double their extra successes to determine the attack's damage. While crashed, they triple their extra successes. If this crashes their foe, the Lion gains (enemy's Essence) additional Initiative.

Swift Silence (3m; Reflexive; Instant; Perilous; Uniform; Essence 5): The Lion makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack reflexively, adding dice equal to their onslaught penalty. They can use it to clash an attack against them. Once per round unless reset when hit by an attack.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Black Steel Juggernaut Stance (5m; Reflexive; Until next turn; Dual; Essence 4): The Lion ignores wound and onslaught penalties. They add their combined total penalty to their Parry, soak, and Hardness, maximum +10. They retain their Hardness while crashed.

Devouring Void Defense (1m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Decisive-only, Perilous; Essence 4): The Lion subtracts their Hardness from the damage dice of a **decisive** attack against them. If it still deals enough damage to fill all health levels of one type, any excess damage is prevented.

Iron Claw Embrace (6m; Reflexive; Counterattack; Instant; Decisive-only; Essence 3): When hit by an attack from close range, the Lion counterattacks with a grapple gambit, adding attack roll extra successes as bonus dice on the Initiative and control rolls. They can use Barbed Nightmare Chain to counterattack from short range.

MOBILITY CHARMS

Steel and Shadow Assault (5m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Uniform; Essence 4): The Lion rushes an enemy within medium range. If successful, they instantly move into close range with him and make a **withering** or **decisive** attack. This Charm can be used together with Swift Silence, letting them rush and attack reflexively.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Abiding Ego Endurance (6m; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 3): The Lion gains +3 Resolve. Psyche effects and similar magic cannot force them to act against Major and Defining Intimacies.

Howl of Damnation (9m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 5): The Lion makes a threaten roll against all enemies who can perceive them, which also counts as a rally for numbers roll for their forces. Threatened characters are overcome with terror, suffering a -2 penalty on rolls against the Lion and command rolls for the rest of the scene. Battle groups must also immediately roll to resist rout. Trivial characters are instead killed instantly unless they're immune to fear. Resisting this requires citing a Defining Intimacy in a Decision Point to pay one Willpower. This doesn't count against the once-per-scene limit on rallying for numbers. Once per scene.

WARFARE CHARMS

Flame-Devouring Shadow Tactic (7m, 1wp; Reflexive; Clash; Instant; Essence 5): When the Lion is attacked, an allied battle group within close range of their attacker clashes the attack on the Deathlord's behalf, as though using a defend other action. The Lion reflexively makes an order roll to enhance the attack.

Hundred-Fanged Hydra Onslaught (6m; Supplemental; Dual; Instant; Essence 6): When the Lion attacks an enemy, they may reflexively make an order action, commanding a battle group to attack the same enemy. If the Lion makes a **withering** attack, the battle group may use the Deathlord's Initiative in place of its normal base damage. If the Lion makes a **decisive** attack, the Deathlord gains any Initiative the enemy loses from the battle group's attack.

Labyrinth-Mind Strategos (10m; Simple; Instant; Essence 6): While leading a battle group, the Lion reflexively enacts a stratagem of their choice, representing strategic preparations and legendary foresight. Once per scene.

Lashing Torment Strategy (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 4): The Lion doubles 8s on a Strategic Maneuver roll and can choose two stratagems at once, using the highest threshold between them. Even if they fail, they still enact the stratagem with the lower threshold.

The Legion Stands As One (8m; Reflexive; Instant; Uniform; Essence 5): After a damage roll against an allied battle group within short range, the Lion can use this Charm to take that damage in the group's stead or redirect it to another allied battle group within short range.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Fervor Beyond Death (1m per die; Reflexive; Instant): The Lion adds up to ten dice to an action. While acting in accordance with an Intimacy, they reduce the total mote cost by (Intimacy).

Materialize (60m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): The Lion takes on material form, manifesting with the painful sound of metal on metal.

EVOCATIONS

Hero's Ruin (8m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Perilous): The Lion doubles 10s on a **decisive** damage roll and rerolls all failed damage dice once. If the Lion kills a living creature or incapacitates a ghost, its soul is trapped within Varan's Ruin to interrogate at their leisure. Other spirits incapacitated by the attack are permanently destroyed.

NECROMANCY

The Lion is an experienced Shadow Circle necromancer with a wide repertoire of spells, mainly focusing on transport, the creation of minions, and other non-combat effects.

Demiurgic Art: Purgatorial Radiance

This power can only be used once all of the Lion's -2 health levels have been filled with damage. They unleash a long-hoarded secret weapon: a memory of impossible death stolen from the nightmares of the Neverborn. Their armor cracks as a nightmarish surge of anima erupts from within it. They roll Join Battle, adding ten bonus dice, and gain the following benefits for the rest of the scene:

- Howl of Damnation immediately resets.
- At the end of each round, the overflowing maelstrom of anima surrounding them deals seven dice of unsoakable **withering** damage to all characters within close range. The Lion doesn't gain Initiative from this. Crashed enemies take lethal **decisive** damage instead and lose one Willpower if they take damage, which the Lion gains. Those incapacitated by this are destroyed or trapped in Varan's Ruin.

- The damage to the Lion's armor inflicts -4 soak and Hardness but leaves them much faster. They double 8s on movement rolls and increase their base Evasion to 7.

- They ignore wound penalties on attacks.

- They regain an additional five motes at the end of each round.

- Swift Silence's reset condition is waived. The Lion can't use it against the same enemy more than once per round unless they're a battle group, but being hit by an attack resets this against all foes.

Once the Lion has unleashed this power, it can't be used again until this weapon is repaired or replaced. Whether it's possible to do so and how long it takes are left to the Storyteller's discretion.

Strategy

The Lion wades into the thick of combat, closing the gap with Steel and Shadow Assault or grappling foes at range with Barbed Nightmare Chain as required. They focus on the strongest challengers first, hunting down weaker foes as they scatter. They use None Before Me against enemies with higher Initiative, then either use Hero's Ruin against their strongest foe or Legion-Felling Sword if pressed by multiple enemies. They hold back when using Fervor Beyond Death, rarely spending any motes beyond its discount unless facing a serious challenge.

The Lion is content to take attacks, relying on soak and Hardness alone and only using Devouring Void Defense against the strongest **decisive** attacks. When wounded, their tactics become more cautious, making frequent use of Black Steel Judgment. They'll use Swift Silence and Flame-Devouring Shadow Tactic to clash attacks and counterattack enemies with Iron Claw Embrace to limit their offensive potential.

The Lion will use Purgatorial Radiance as soon as his -2 health levels have been filled. They'll typically use its increased mote recovery to use Black Steel Juggernaut Stance every turn and to make as many attacks as possible with Swift Silence. The Lion is loath to retreat but will make a strategic withdrawal if their destruction seems likely, for they have no desire to suffer the Dowager's fate.

The Benignant Annihilator of Hope and Falsehood

The Benignant Annihilator is spoken of only in fearful rumors of her deeds: the siege of the Weeping Mountain's impregnable fortress, the sack of Aphrin-Apal and its nine palaces, the massacre of the Hesperus Valley's famed war-monks. The Annihilator is a true believer in death's chivalry and revels in violence, power, and the fear of those who look upon her. The Dusk Caste reserves her greatest wrath for those who hold undeserved power, abuse their authority, and think themselves righteous. She knows their kind well.

Born to an emir of Feqaren, the Annihilator was a disobedient, temperamental child in her youth. She suffered under their cruel discipline and was kept hidden away from polite society lest she tarnish her family's prestige. Abused by her parents and ostracized by her peers, the only solace she could find was in war games and weapon drills. On her nineteenth birthday, she decided that her training was complete. She murdered her parents as they slept, then turned the blade on herself — only to find herself standing before the Walker in Darkness.

That night, Feqaren's palaces burned.

Tall, strong, and cruel-featured, the Annihilator cuts an imposing figure. Her neck bears an ugly gash from her attempted suicide. She's intense yet taciturn, prone to fits of melancholy or frustration that sometimes explode violently. She disdains decorum, possessing a dry, sadistic sense of humor.

Among the Walker's first deathknights, the Annihilator serves him as prodigal general and butcher. Her duties include leading the Company of Martial Sinners' vanguard in battle, slaying her liege's foes, and advising him on military matters. Her Deathlord's relationship with her is one of paternal indulgence; he favors her even as her temper sometimes leads her to conflict with his goals. She admires his devotion to the Neverborn and his subversion of the powerful, though she prefers the honesty of violence to his deceptions. Recently, he's taken to sending her on far-ranging duties to try and teach her restraint and calm, an approach she's responded to with characteristic impatience.



Between missions for her liege, the Annihilator wanders the Underworld and Creation, upholding death's chivalry by bringing low tyrants and heroes without thought of collateral damage. She keeps an ear open for worthy opponents, whether in a duel or over a Gateway board. As her frustration with her assignments grows, so too do her sojourns away from her Deathlord.

Based in the Iron Hill District, the Annihilator commands considerable sway in Stygia as one of the Walker's favored emissaries. She offers her services as a tactician and mercenary, accepting payment in favors and jobs that promise to challenge her or uphold the chivalry. She compulsively monitors the movements of militaries and empires in the eastern Underworld, keeping apprised of rumors of note.

Caste: Dusk

Essence: 4; **Willpower:** 7; **Join Battle:** 11 dice

Personal: 22; **Peripheral:** 54

Health Levels: -0/-1x4/-2x4/-4x7/Incap.

Actions: Command: 10 dice; Feats of Strength: 8 dice; Games: 10 dice; Intimidation: 12 dice; Investigate: 8 dice; Read Intentions: 7 dice; Resist Poison/Illness: 9 dice; Senses: 10 dice; Social Influence: 5 dice; Strategy: 10 dice

Appearance 5, Resolve 4, Guile 3

COMBAT

Attack (Considered Restraint, soulsteel grim-leaver): 12 dice (Damage 19L/6)

Attack (Unarmed): 10 dice (Damage 11B)

Combat Movement: 9 dice

Evasion: 4; **Parry:** 6

Soak/Hardness: 11/7 (Insurmountable Despair, soulsteel lamellar)

ESCORT

The Annihilator typically travels alone, but when marching for war is accompanied by at least a Size 2 battle group of war ghosts (**Exalted**, p. 504) with elite Drill and Might 2.

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: Death's chivalry is the only truth of existence, and I will show it to all.

Defining Principle: I am the scourge of those who think themselves beyond the reach of consequences.

Major Principle: It is better to be feared than loved.

Major Principle: Victory against worthy competition is the sweetest joy.

Major Principle: I seek stories of war and reports of battle.

Major Principle: Better bitter truths than sweet lies.

Major Tie: The self-righteous (Disdain)

Major Tie: The Walker In Darkness (Gratitude)

Minor Tie: Nobles and Aristocrats (Spite)

Minor Tie: War games (Enthusiasm)

ANIMA

Death Is Inevitable: At bonfire anima, add +2 Initiative when resetting after a successful decisive attack.

Fear Made Flesh: The Annihilator can intimidate targets that do not feel fear, such as certain undead, automatons, and fae.

EXCELLENCY

Bonus Dice: The Annihilator can add bonus dice on rolls for one mote per die. The dice limit depends on the action's base dice pool: +2 dice for pools of 1-2 dice, +5 dice for pools of 3-5 dice, +7 dice for pools of 7-10 dice, and +10 dice on pools of 11+ dice.

Static Values: The Annihilator can increase static values for two motes per +1 bonus. The limit depends on the base value: +1 for values of 2-3, +2 for values of 4-5, and +5 for values of 6+.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Blood-Parched Blade (3m + 1m per die; Supplemental; Instant; Dual): Add an automatic success on an attack roll and reroll 1s until they cease to appear. The

Annihilator can add up to five dice of post-soak **withering** damage or add up to four attack roll extra successes as **decisive** damage dice, paying an additional mote per die.

Fatal Scorn Stroke (3m, 2i, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Dual, Perilous): Add a free full Excellency on an attack against a crashed enemy. On a **withering** attack, each attack roll extra successes converts a die of damage to an automatic success. On a **decisive** attack, each attack extra success rerolls a failed damage die. Once per scene.

Guillotine Murder Flash (6m, 1wp [+6m, 1a, 2i]; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only): Make a **decisive** attack against all enemies within close range, rolling (Initiative/2, rounded up) dice of damage against each. If this incapacitates at least one enemy, she may pay six motes, one anima, and two Initiative to make a **withering** attack against all enemies in close range. The highest damage roll awards full Initiative; others can only grant up to three. Crashing at least one enemy lets her reflexively use this Charm again to make a **decisive** attack.

Leave No Survivors (5m, 3i, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only): Make up to five **decisive** attacks against one or more enemies. The Annihilator gains five Initiative and then divides her Initiative however she wishes between them, minimum one per attack. For each attack that deals damage, she gains motes equal to the damage dealt, maximum five per attack. She may move a single range band before each attack. Her Initiative resets after completing all attacks if any hit or loses two Initiative per attack if they all miss. She only needs to pay the cost of non-Excellency Charms once to enhance all attacks.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Blossoming Shadow Slash (4m, 1a, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Clash, Decisive-only): Clash an attack made by an enemy within short range with a **decisive** attack, ignoring Hardness. This increases to medium range at Initiative 10+ and long at Initiative 15+.

Death Well-Remembered (5m; Reflexive; Until next turn; Uniform): Ignore penalties to Parry, except from surprise attacks. On damage rolls against her, up to four 1s subtract successes.

Hundred Razor Circle (4m, 1i; Simple; Until next turn; Counterattack, Decisive-only, Perilous): When the Annihilator is attacked, she may make a **decisive** counterattack. Her Initiative doesn't reset until the next round begins.

Oblivion Devours All (4m, 1i per success; Reflexive; Instant; Decisive-only): After a **decisive** damage roll against the Annihilator, she can pay four motes and any amount of Initiative to subtract one damage roll success per Initiative spent.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Sheer Terror Visage (5m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant): Make a threaten roll with a free full Excellency, ignoring multiple target penalties. Living targets suffer -1 Resolve against it, or -2 if mortal. It can leverage a target's strongest Tie of fear as though it applied to the Annihilator. If she's already the object of his strongest Tie, the cost to resist increases by one Willpower. Once per scene.

WARFARE CHARMS

Morale-Shattering Cry (3m; Reflexive; Instant): Inflict a -3 penalty on a rout check for a battle group within long range. For living battle groups, 1s subtract successes on the rout check and any rally rolls to avoid dissolution. Once per scene, if the battle group suffers dissolution, the Annihilator gains one Willpower.

Sunless Strategos Genius (6m, 3i [+5m]; Supplemental; Instant): Double 8s on an order roll. If the attack hits, the Annihilator may pay five motes and forgo dealing damage to enact a stratagem whose threshold is lesser than or equal to the attack roll's extra successes, maximum four stratagems. Alternatively, she can negate an enemy stratagem of the same threshold.

Strategy

The Annihilator is a ferocious and deadly combatant. She focuses on overwhelming attacks against the strongest enemy, sparing minimal Essence for defense. Moreover, she enjoys leaving strong foes alive, be it to make examples to or of them regarding the chivalry of death or just to enjoy measuring herself against them later.

A Weeping Raiton Cast Aside

In her mortal life, A Weeping Raiton Cast Aside was fascinated by death, drawn to morbid hobbies that disquieted those around her. When death found her, she happily accepted the Abyssal Exaltation but came to resent her Deathlord's yoke in time. Surely her new-found power was meant for more than the petty whims of ghostly tyrants, not when she finally had the chance to walk among the dead as one of them. Embracing her role as Death's Lawgiver and her interpretation of the Neverborn's Whispers, she broke free of her master's service to bring her ministry to the dead. The death-knight-errant doesn't speak of how she escaped, nor why her former Deathlord seems to have abandoned pursuit of her. Perhaps she tricked her master into a binding oath or uncovered a secret great enough to blackmail a Deathlord.

A Weeping Raiton has traveled much of the Underworld, seeking out death's enlightenment and gaining firsthand experience with ghostly unlife. As Death's Lawgiver, she is an arbiter of disputes between the dead and a bringer of justice to the Underworld. She resolved a centuries-long disagreement between the tomb-kings of the Sunken City, brought an armistice to the Three Ceaseless Wars, and stayed the hand of Azet-Ithay when he descended up the Isle of Faithful Reminiscence. She's still a loyal servant of the Neverborn, following an idiosyncratic interpretation of death's chivalry that's heavily informed by what she's learned in her travels. Those among the dead who know her have begun to collect her sayings and offer quiet prayers to hasten the downfall of the unjust.

While performing her duties as a judge and arbiter, she paints her face with corpse makeup and wears a wooden mask carved like a vulture skull. She readily engages with anyone interested in philosophical or religious discussions or debate and thoroughly enjoys verbally and physically sparring with priests — the Exalted, gods, ghosts, and spirits alike who hold fast to any faith. She finds them interesting opposition and, while she holds her own beliefs as superior, does not hold them in poor regard. Loyal deathknights may find A Weeping Raiton to be either a threat to their



way of life or a glimmer of hope for shirking the yoke of the Deathlords. For their part, the Deathlords feign disinterest while keeping an eye on her ability to move through dead society with ease.

Caste: Moonshadow

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 8; **Join Battle:** 7 dice

Personal: 19; **Peripheral:** 47

Health Levels: -0/-1x2/-2x2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Administration: 9 dice; Mysticism: 10 dice; Read Intentions: 12 dice; Resist Poisons/Ilnesses: 5 dice; Senses: 7 dice; Social Influence: 12 dice; Underworld Lore: 10 dice. Appearance 2, Resolve 4, Guile 3

COMBAT

Attack (The Taste of Blood, soulsteel grimcleaver): 12 dice (Damage 13L/4)

Attack (Unarmed): 8 dice (Damage 8B)

Attack (Grapple): 6 dice (6 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 6 dice

Evasion: 3; **Parry:** 6

Soak/Hardness: 12/10 (Raiton's Feathers, soulsteel reinforced breastplate)

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: It is my sacred duty to resolve disputes among the dead.

Defining Tie: My former Deathlord (Disgust)

Major Principle: The dead deserve the respect of the living.

Major Principle: I delight in rigorous religious debate.

Major Principle: I find macabre pleasure in helping others accept death.

Minor Tie: The Neverborn (Devotion)

Minor Tie: Raitons (Affection)

Minor Principle: Even the living deserve ethical treatment.

MERITS

Cult 2

Whispers 4

ESCORT

A Weeping Raiton maintains a flock of trained raitons who serve her as spies and couriers, bringing requests for her services from across the Underworld.

EXCELLENCY

Bonus Dice: A Weeping Raiton can add bonus dice on rolls for one mote per die. The dice limit depends on the

action's base dice pool: +2 dice for pools of 1-2 dice, +5 dice for pools of 3-5 dice, +7 dice for pools of 7-10 dice, and +10 dice on pools of 11+ dice.

Static Values: A Weeping Raiton can increase static values for two motes per +1 bonus. The limit depends on the base value: +1 for values of 2-3, +2 for values of 4-5, and +5 for values of 6+.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Let Raitons Feast (6m; Supplemental; Instant; Dual): Raiton adds an automatic success on an attack roll and reroll 1s until they cease to appear. **Withering** attacks add three dice of post-soak damage; **decisive** attacks add up to three extra successes as damage dice.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Elegant Flowing Deflection (2m; Reflexive; Instant; Uniform): Ignore Parry penalties, except from surprise attacks. A successful block causes the attacker to lose one Initiative.

Vengeful Talon Rebuke (4m, 1a, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Clash, Decisive-only): Clash an attack from within short range with a **decisive** attack that ignores Hardness. The range increases to medium at Initiative 10+ and long at Initiative 15+.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Crumbling Foundation Critique (5m; Supplemental; Instant): Double 9s on an instill roll to weaken an Intimacy and add a non-Charm success if it's a positive Tie. Success also instills the target with a Tie of respect for A Weeping Raiton or weakens a negative Tie to her unless the target has a negative Major or Defining Tie for her.

Elegant Tyrant Majesty (5m; Reflexive; One scene): Add three dice on influence rolls and reduce the cost of Charms used to enhance them by one mote each.

Honey-Tongued Serpent Attack (4m; Supplemental; Instant; Mute): Those who hear Raiton make an instill, persuade, or bargain roll can't take offense at it or voluntarily change their Intimacies toward her because of it unless they pay one Willpower. This is separate from resisting the influence roll.

Ravenous Heart of Lightless Flame (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Aggravated, Psyche): A read intentions roll against Raiton fails automatically unless the opposing character accepts three dice of unpreventable aggravated damage. If the roll fails, he gains a Major Principle related to death, the dead, or the Underworld. Any influence Raiton uses that scene to leverage the Intimacy costs an additional Willpower to resist.

The Sovereign of Chains

Dari's bonds are debt, and even in death, those pulled there are bound by its ineffable strictures. Despite an eternity to repay their bond, many ghosts never escape the debts they owe to the Timeless Order of Manacle and Coin — and to its master, the Sovereign of Chains.

The Sovereign is an ancient ghost, his origins lost in the mists of vanishing memory. He made his empire, the Timeless Order, the old-fashioned way: by ruthlessly exploiting others over millennia, building his empire upon soulsteel shackles. The Timeless Order offers predatory loans to those trapped by debt, with terms tantamount to indentured servitude. Ghosts indebted to the Order rarely escape its grasp or shed the shackles inscribed with the burdensome terms of their contract.

To the Sovereign, this is well and good — the wise and clever rise, while the weak and foolish serve. Yet it is not *enough*. As the Sovereign binds others, so too is he bound, and the Timeless Order has become his reason for being. Without it, without the drive to grow, to open new markets, to see his ledgers ever weightier, he would surely have succumbed to the call of Lethe. At this point, the impulse to expand is as fundamental to his identity as the mask he wears. Some vestige of the mortal he once was lingers on — cool, calculating, genial with those he has no leverage against, cruel to those he does — but what drives him is growth and growth alone. Only with the closest of confidantes does he allow himself the luxury of what little intimacy



he can still muster within his withered heart, and even then, he maintains a guarded caution.

All the while, the Sovereign increases his own hold over Dari. Half the city is indebted to him, one way or another — but to him, that simply means his work is half unfinished.

THE ANACREONS

The anacreons are the Sovereign in Chains' lieutenants, overseeing the Timeless Order's affairs in far-flung markets and opening new ones to its business.

Tithe Upon Waking is one such lieutenant, a master of both logistics and persuasion. She rose from mere soul-procurer to overseer of an entire port before her elevation and set forth with an army of handpicked agents (not to mention many talents of silver, jade, and soulsteel) to leverage other hubs of trade in the land of the dead. She now has her hooks in several highly placed officials far afield from the Order's present territories — including one direct servant of a Deathlord. Hers is the long view, the slow invasion that begins in counting houses, market squares, and offices and ends with her as master of the city in all but name.

Thousand Brushstrokes believes in quick returns and seeks to outshine his peers by expanding the Order's business beyond the lands of the dead entirely. His agents now venture into shadowlands and beyond, establishing a presence in Creation, too. The more who die in debt to the Order, the more who find themselves in its service — it's all a game of volume. To sate the Sovereign in the meantime, he turns a tidy profit auctioning off the labor of bonded spirits, dead hands tilling the half-dead earth, or rebuilding ruined masonry.

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 8; **Join Battle:** 8 dice

Personal: 110

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x2/-2x4/-4x4/Incap.

Actions: Administration: 14 dice; Command: 9 dice; Investigation: 7 dice; Read Intentions: 12 dice; Senses: 8 dice; Social Influence: 12 dice; Strategy: 7 dice; Underworld Lore: 10 dice

Appearance 4, Resolve 5, Guile 6

COMBAT

Attack (Animated Chains): 10 dice (Damage 12L/3)

Attack (Unarmed): 6 dice (Damage 7B)

Attack (Chain Grapple): 10 dice (10 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 8 dice

Evasion: 3; **Parry:** 5

Soak/Hardness: 8/7 (Thousand Obols Mantle)

INTIMACIES

Defining Tie: The Timeless Order of Manacle and Coin (Obsession)

Defining Principle: I must have more.

Major Principle: Cunning and intellect will always prosper over brute force and hard work.

Minor Tie: Anacreons (Cautious Reliance)

Minor Tie: Dari-of-the-Mists (Possessiveness)

Minor Tie: Debtors (Disdain)

ESCORT

The Sovereign is often accompanied by war ghost bodyguards. (**Exalted**, p. 504)

MERITS

Cult 4

King of the Counting House: The Sovereign holds power over those indebted to him or the Timeless Order. Similar to Intimacies, debts have an intensity based on how difficult they are to repay: Minor (1) if it would be inconvenient to repay, Major (2) if it would be a significant burden, or Defining (4) if it would be life-ruining.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Chains of Debt (10m; Simple; Instant; Uniform; Essence 2): The Sovereign makes an attack or grapple gambit with his chains against an enemy within medium range. A grappled enemy is dragged into close range. Double 9s on the attack roll against indebted enemies, or double 8s for Defining debts.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Albatross-Burdened Debtor Defense (2m, 2i; Reflexive; Instant; Perilous; Essence 2): The Sovereign leans on an enemy's debts when attacked, inflicting a -(Debt) penalty on the attack roll. That enemy suffers that penalty on all attacks against the Sovereign for the rest of the scene.

Ambush-Flushing Gaze (5m, 1wp; Supplemental; One scene; Essence 3): The Sovereign doubles 8s on a Join Battle roll. He acts before any concealed enemies on the first round, regardless of Initiative. The Defense penalty from surprise attacks by one against him for the rest of the scene.

Indemnified in Blood (4m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Perilous; Essence 5): The Sovereign can use this Charm after a **decisive** damage roll against him, shunting up to (Debt) levels of damage to an indebted character he can perceive. This absolves the debtor of her burden.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Bait the Hook (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 1): Double 9s on a Social Influence roll to convince someone to become indebted to the Sovereign or the Timeless Order, or a Read Intentions roll to uncover information that will aid in doing so.

Debtor-Binding Damnation (10m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 5): Double 7s on a Social Influence roll against an indebted character. The debt supports the influence like an Intimacy. If the influence is already supported by an Intimacy of equal or greater value, it costs two additional Willpower to resist instead. Once per scene.

Stench of Debt (5m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Eclipse; Essence 3): The Sovereign can smell debt; the deeper, the sweeter. He makes a Read Intentions roll with double 8s to uncover a character's debts with a glance. If that character has related Intimacies, the Sovereign learns one of them plus an additional Intimacy for every three successes.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Materialize (35m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Like a cascade of falling coins casting ghostly echoes, the Sovereign takes on form.

Miser-King's Prowess (1m per die or 2m per +1 bonus; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 4): The Sovereign adds up to five dice on a roll or increase a static value by up to +3. Against characters who owe him a debt, he can add up to ten dice or +5 to a static value.

Sesim Ruseka, King-in-Exile, Rotting Lotus Signatory

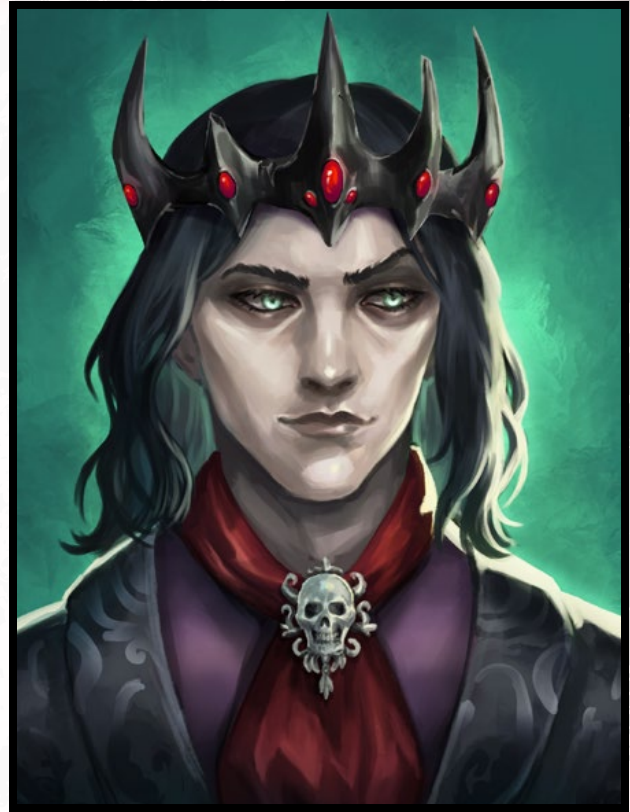
Once a necromancer-king of the Rotting Lotus Empire, Ruseka is now a monarch-in-exile, holding court in Stygia until he can restore the fallen kingdom to glory. Courtiers and walkuren bodyguards — battlefield specters with mighty wings and wicked claws — surround the ghost-prince as he strides through Stygia's Night Winds district. Pages and scribes scurry behind, delivering missives and recording his decrees.

In the great hall of Ruseka's palace, the Cobalt Ossuary, tatter-clad ghosts and dignitaries swathed in the finest lamentation-silks await him, eager to present their petitions. Birds nest in the Cobalt Ossuary's crenelated towers; they wheel about the immortal city, forming an avian spy network. Trained Stygian starlings alight on Ruseka's throne and repeat overheard conversations while Ruseka himself borrows other birds' senses as they perch in his rivals' courtyards. He challenges other Signatories when their aims conflict, though he avoids making permanent enemies whenever possible, smoothing ruffled feathers with extravagant gifts.

Ruseka towers over his companions, a gaunt, handsome figure made even taller by the heeled boots he prefers. Stygia's finest weavers produce his sumptuous brocade clothing, their motifs full of beautiful, mortiferous Underworld flowers. His crown is tarnished; he's known to remove it and run his thumbs over a broken tine when troubled or deep in thought. Once jagged enough to draw blood, centuries of handling have worn the metal smooth and burnished the bronze beneath.

In the First Age, the Rotting Lotus Empire's ghost-princes rebelled against the Old Realm. Ruseka commanded flocks of Underworld raptors on the battlefield, overwhelming enemies with a flurry of feathers and razor-sharp beaks. The Exalted crushed the ghost-princes, but Ruseka escaped his allies' fate. He wandered the Underworld in genteel poverty, a guest at other monarchs' courts while he shored up alliances and amassed enough wealth to build his court-in-exile in the immortal city.

After the ghost-queen Red Crown vanished, Ruseka lobbied to take her place as Signatory for the Thousand Tempests, a collective of undead sovereigns who ride the Underworld winds. Any holdouts were swayed by the backing of his patron, the Black Heron. While Ruseka remains deep in her debt, he negotiates with



the Mask of Winters and Ukhala-Enlightened-in-Blood to disentangle himself so he can treat with the Heron as an equal. He's come to view Stygia as a home-away-from home; while his political maneuvers further the restoration of his empire, his votes in the Cimmerian Council reflect what he believes are the city's best interests. It doesn't hurt that if Stygia prospers under his guidance, the Rotting Lotus Empire might also benefit.

Ruseka wasn't alone in his plans to return the empire to power. An impostor claiming to be the warrior-prince Jaya Fangbreaker has named herself the Rotting Lotus' rightful heir and established a rump state on the Brazier Islands. This is an insult to Ruseka not only as the empire's last true heir but also because the real Jaya was a confidant and friend. Rather than destroying the pretender and her ill-gotten kingdom, Ruseka plans to take it from her. He gathers soldiers, resources, and favors, building a network capable of resolving the matter in his favor swiftly and decisively. Currently, his spies in Jaya's court bring word of her machinations, and he works to poison her relationships with trade partners and allies.

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 7; **Join Battle:** 7 dice

Personal: 100

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x4/-2x4/-4x4/Incap.

Actions: Command: 10 dice; First Age Lore: 10 dice; Investigation: 7 dice; Mysticism: 11 dice; Necromancy: 13 dice; Stygian Politics: 11 dice; Read Intentions: 10 dice; Senses: 7 dice; Social Influence: 12 dice

Appearance 4, Resolve 4, Guile 5

COMBAT

Attack (Slashing Sword): 12 dice (Damage 12L/2)

Attack (Unarmed): 10 dice (Damage 10B)

Attack (Grapple): 9 dice (9 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 10 dice

Evasion: 4; **Parry:** 5

Soak/Hardness: 8/4 (Silken Armor)

INTIMACIES

Defining Tie: The Rotting Lotus Empire (Grief)

Major Principle: It's best to quickly settle grievances with my peers.

Major Principle: I must free myself of debts and obligations.

Major Tie: The Black Heron (Obligation)

Major Tie: Jaya Fangbreaker (Enmity)

Major Tie: Stygia (Stewardship)

Major Tie: The Thousand Tempests (Gratitude)

Minor Principle: Patience and planning bear the sweetest fruit.

Minor Tie: Sapphire Chain (Compassion)

Minor Tie: Ukhala Enlightened-in-Blood (Respect)

Minor Tie: The Exalted (Bitterness)

Minor Tie: The Silver Prince (Admiration)

ESCORT

Ruseka is accompanied by a Size 1 honor guard of walkuren (**Hundred Devils Night Parade**, p. 77) or a Size 2 battle group of war ghosts (**Exalted**, pp. 504). Both have elite Drill and Might 2. He might also command a Size 3 battle group of undead eagles with average Drill and Might 1 (**Exalted**, p. 570; see p. 333 for undead animal traits).

MERITS

Cult 2

MOBILITY CHARMS

Many-Winged Murder (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Indefinite; Essence 3): Ruseka bursts into a flock of carrion birds. In this aspect, he can fly up to fifty miles an hour but can't take any physical actions other than movement actions and dodging. He gains +2 Evasion, although not against area-of-effect attacks, and adds five dice on disengage and withdraw rolls. He can use this Charm in response to an attack to gain its Evasion bonus. It ends if Ruseka's incapacitated.

SOCIAL CHARMS

Lyrebird's Paean (5m; Simple; Instant; Essence 3): Ruseka collects rumors and gleans his worshippers' needs from their prayers. He asks his birds a question about someone, and they answer by repeating what people are saying about her: prayers to her good health, gossip concerning her, etc.

Phantom Heart Insight (2m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 3): Double 8s on an Investigation or Read Intentions roll against an undead character. With 3+ extra successes, Ruseka intuits an additional clue about the target's Intimacies, motives, or desires.

WARFARE CHARMS

Raiton-Prince's Crown (10m, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Essence 5): Ruseka doubles 9s on command actions or double 8s for battle groups made up of birds. Allied battle groups of birds gain Might 2, and Ruseka can flurry command actions targeting them with Shape Necromancy rolls.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Carrion Eye (5m, 1wp; Simple; One day; Eclipse; Essence 2): Ruseka can share the senses of a bird that serves him as though it were his familiar (**Exalted**, p. 161), increasing the bond's range to (Essence x5) miles.

Materialize (60m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Ruseka takes on material form.

Rotting Lotus Majesty (3m [+5nm]; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 4): Sesim adds three automatic successes on an action or adds +3 to a static value. He can spend three necromantic motes to increase this to five successes or a +5 bonus.

NECROMANCY

Advocate of the Fallen: See p. 299. Ruseka typically has a pool of five to eight necromantic motes tied to a hallowed oath.

Abhorrence of Breath (14nm, 1wp; One Scene): A fissure opens at a point within medium range. When another character within long range takes their turn, they must reflexively roll (Strength + Athletics) at difficulty 5 or be dragged one range band toward it. Within short range of the fissure, characters can't breathe, and mundane sound is silenced.

Pyresmoke Skiff (15sm, 1wp; Until ended): Ruseka calls upon a cloud of deathly smoke to bear him skyward. He can take one passenger with him, plus an additional passenger for every corpse he feeds to the hungry pyreflame at the center of the cloud (maximum 5). The cloud travels at 20 miles per hour and can rise as high as Ruseka wishes. In combat, Ruseka rolls 11 dice in place of standard movement rolls to direct the cloud but otherwise faces no penalties. Ruseka may disembark for one scene, after which the spell ends, and the cloud returns to the sky.

Lethe's Baptism (15sm, 1wp; Psyche; Indefinite): Roll 11 dice against the Resolve of a target at short range to prevent him from speaking of a single subject, entering a mindless fugue for an instant when he tries. Casting this can't be detected without magic.

Screaming Winds of Hoarfrost (15sm, 1wp; Decisive-only; Instant): Roll 11 dice as an undodgeable **decisive** attack against all characters in a line out to medium range (battle groups take -2 Defense). Roll (5 + threshold successes)L damage or (10 + threshold successes)L against battle groups. This doesn't reset Ruseka's Initiative.

Seat of Deadly Splendor (11nm; Control; One Scene): Ruseka conjures a gargantuan hand of bone to form his grisly seat. He gains a bonus dot of Appearance and adds three non-Charm dice on inspire and instill rolls based on fear. Approaching him requires entering a Decision Point and citing at least a Minor Intimacy to spend one Willpower. In combat, he exudes an environmental hazard with difficulty 4, Damage 2i/round, although he doesn't gain Initiative from this damage. Enemies crashed by it fall prone.

Renak, Ghostly Assassin

Renak are hungry ghosts imbued with the memories of dozens — if not hundreds — of assassins. Most are the creations of necromancers, made to serve as killers, spies, and saboteurs. Necromancers travel far in search of memories from suitable assassins, tracking down candidates by extracting attestations from their employers and victims. Imbued with these memories, the renak are creatures of cunning, cruelty, and smoking shadow, delighting in the delicate rites of murder.

Not all renak are servants. Many grow in volition over time, stealing wisps of will and intellect from their victim. Some escape their creators, leaving to seek bloodshed as they please or offer their services as assassins in Stygia and other great Underworld polities. Few renak crave wealth — the steep prices they demand aren't meant to enrich them, but to test the resolve of their clients, extracting whatever would hurt them most to lose. Others seclude themselves atop mountains or in perilous wilderness, contemplating their stolen memories and practicing grim austerities.

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 5; **Join Battle:** 10 dice

Personal: 30

Health Levels: -0/-1x3/-2x3/-4/Incap.

Actions: Complex Thought: 4-8 dice (Increases with age); Disguise and Mimicry: 10 dice; Feats of Strength: 9 dice (may attempt Strength 5 feats); Read Intentions: 7



dice; Senses: 8 dice (see Blood Scent); Stealth: 12 dice; Threaten: 10 dice; Tracking: 8 dice (see Blood Scent).

Appearance 3 (Hideous), Resolve 3, Guile 4

COMBAT

Attack (Soulsteel Claws): 10 dice (Damage 11L/3)

Attack (Grapple): 8 dice (7 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 10 dice

Evasion: 5; **Parry:** 3

Soak/Hardness: 8/7

INTIMACIES

Most renak have a Defining Principle related to their desire for violence and death and often have Intimacies representing the animalistic passions that drive them. Some have Intimacies gleaned from the memories imbued into them. Renak under a necromancer's command have a Defining Tie of obedience to their master.

MERITS

Blood Scent: Renak add three successes on Senses rolls to detect spilt blood and can smell bloodshed from five miles away. On rolls to track or detect characters who are bleeding, it adds automatic successes equal to their wound penalty.

Earthbound: Renak are naturally immaterial, but they materialize at night upon sensing potential prey,

remaining material as long as their prey is present. They can pass through solid objects even while materialized when fleeing back to their corpse before the sun rises. Exposure to sunlight inflicts three levels of unpreventable lethal damage per round unless the renak's resting in its corpse.

Shroud of Corpses: The renak can use its victims' remains to hide from the sun as if they were its own corpse.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Feather Kills the Ox (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Uniform; Essence 1): The renak adds (target's wound penalty + 1) dice on an attack roll. On unexpected attacks, it adds them as dice of **decisive** or post-soak **withering** damage instead.

Ghostly Nail Lance (5m; Simple; Instant; Essence 2): The renak makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy within short range. If it deals 3+ damage, its enemy loses his movement action for the round — or the next round if he's already taken one.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Stalking Phantom Flicker (5m, 2i; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 2): If the renak dodges an attack, it vanishes and reappears one range band away, reflexively making a threaten roll against all enemies who witness this. If it uses its next turn to attack an affected enemy, it becomes a surprise attack.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Flense the Flesh-Mask (5m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 2): Double 9s on a disguise roll. If the renak disguises itself as someone, it can perfectly mimic his voice. If it knows one of his Intimacies, it adds (Intimacy) non-Charm dice on its roll to impersonate him.

Shadow-Riding Horror (5m, 1wp; Simple; Indefinite; Essence 3): The renak rolls seven dice against the Resolve of a mortal within short range, vanishing into his shadow if it succeeds. It's immaterial and unaffected by sunlight while within his shadow. It can be perceived and attacked with applicable magic.

Grandmother Weaver

Grandmother Weaver oversees her family of silk-weavers with obsessive, meticulous care, each descendant a thread to be woven into her grand pattern. Her especial favorites sometimes feel her cold touch guiding theirs as they work at spindle or loom. The most devoted are cremated in elaborate shrouds to become her silent overseers, hovering on brocaded, iridescent wings. They communicate only to their Grandmother, tugging at ethereal threads tied to her fingers to inform her when the day's quota has been met.

The ghost's vigilance is born of betrayal. She died when one of her daughters set fire to her precious workshops and mulberry orchards, leaving her to burn along with them. Her other descendants, destitute, offered what pittance grave goods they could, including a few fire-blackened silk moth eggs recovered from the ruins. To the ghost's delight, the black silkworms born from those eggs gorged on the umbral orchid and midnight oleander of a nearby shadowland, the Pernignant Gardens. Soon, she claimed the Gardens as her domain, and cocoons clustered on every branch, their dark thread rippling with unearthly iridescence. She's regained the prominence she had in life and brought her family great wealth, producing striking and luxurious clothing. She claims that her greatest works grant fortune to its wearer — though in truth, they curse their wearer's enemies instead.

The family's artisans now spend each Calibration laboring to prepare their best work as ritual offerings for Grandmother's judgment. The pattern she wears when she manifests is put into production, and its maker is granted a blessing of her knowledge and skill, while rejected garments are cast into the flame. A popular but mischievous prodigy, Tranquil Heron, often submits brightly-colored, whimsical creations, laughing off the warnings of her dour elders. Her recent disappearance has caused a flurry of whispered rumors among others of her generation.



Having crushed her local competitors, Grandmother Weaver now works to secure her family's ongoing prosperity by expanding into larger markets. River-pirates harry the family's few ships, though sinister tales have recently begun to spread among their number. They tell of a grim woman standing unbent and motionless before their raiders, her dark silks shimmering hypnotically in the moonlight, the air around her swirling with black moths and poisonous flowers, the threads tied to her fingers writhing like living things.

Essence: 3; **Willpower:** 6; **Join Battle:** 6 dice

Personal: 80

Health Levels: -0/-1x2/-2x2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Investigation: 6 dice; Read Intentions: 8 dice; Senses: 6 dice; Social Influence: 8 dice; Weaving: 10 dice

Appearance 4, Resolve 3, Guile 4

COMBAT

Attack (Lashing Threads): 8 dice (Damage 11B)

Attack (Unarmed): 6 dice (Damage 8B)

Attack (Grapple): 4 dice (3 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 6 dice

Evasion: 3; **Parry:** 2

Soak/Hardness: 3/0

INTIMACIES

Defining Tie: Her family's business (Obsessive Pride)

Defining Principle: I know what's best for others.

Major Principle: Defiance must be corrected before it spreads.

Minor Tie: Her family (Distant Affection)

MERITS

Cult 1

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Inevitable Thousand-Thread Entrapment (5m, 2i, Simple; Instant; Eclipse, Stackable, Withering-only; Essence 2): Weaver's elegant gesture sends forth uncountable drifting, entangling threads, making a **withering** attack with Lashing Threads against an opponent within short range. If she hits, her enemy suffers a -1 penalty on physical rolls until he takes a miscellaneous action to tear them away. If this crashes him, he's bound in a silk cocoon, preventing him from taking movement actions and increasing the penalty to -3. Breaking the cocoon requires a difficulty 4 feat of strength, difficulty 2 gambit with a suitable weapon, or similar action. Eclipses roll this attack with (Wits + Craft [Weaving]).

Silkmoth-and-Orchid Vortex (5m, 4i, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Eclipse, Perilous; Essence 3): Phantasmal silk moths and poisonous blossoms whirl through the air around Weaver. Characters within medium range are exposed to a poison with Damage 3i/round, Duration 5 rounds, and a -2 penalty. This can affect material characters while she's dematerialized. Once per scene.

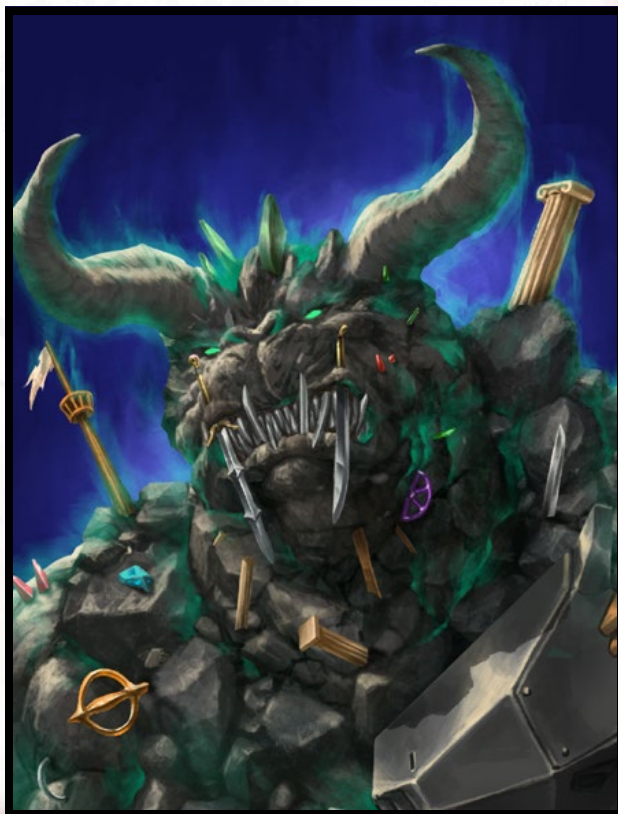
MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS

Apparition (1m; Simple; One scene; Essence 1): With a fluttering of spectral moths, Grandmother Weaver becomes visible, but not corporeal, for one scene.

Haunted Loom Blessing (1m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Weaver blesses one of her descendants with a pool of three automatic successes. She must be able to perceive the descendant unless he's wearing clothing made with her enchanted silk or praying to her. The descendant can add these dice to a single Craft (Weaving) roll or other roll related to the family's business in the next day. However, if he fails the roll, he gains a Minor Tie of fear to Grandmother Weaver.

Eluget-that-Was, the Eschaton Engine

A horror stalks the old places of Creation, tearing down all that remains to remind it of a lost past. It destroys



records, devours treasures, and desecrates temples. Most of all, Elnuet-that-Was directs its ire towards the Exalted, for they remind it of a time that can never be again. Even when the glories of the First Age are truly dead, the creature will not be satisfied until all the world is dust and silence.

In another time, Elnuet was known as the Miracle Engine, appointed as steward of many First Age wonders. The gemstone heart of the Citrine Tower was imbued with intelligence in a great work of sorcery and charged with a mission of preservation: the Engine was to be a bulwark against the strife of the First Age's final centuries, a living memory to catalog and archive the history of the world, to remember the miracles of the Age of Glories should they ever be forgotten, and to be a wise teacher to all the generations that would come after.

As the fires of war overtook the Citrine Tower during the Usurpation, Elnuet was destroyed by one of the very wonders it was charged with preserving. Razed and shattered by the cataclysmic power of clashing war menses, the remaining shards of the Miracle Engine sank deep into the Labyrinth. Over agonized centuries, its fragments drank in the whispers of the Neverborn. Elnuet-that-Was marshaled its Essence and drew together a body of forgotten things to pursue its new mission. The ancient intelligence relentlessly seeks out and destroys what it was created to preserve, unmaking all vestiges of the past and denying them to the future. If anything could soothe the Neverborn in their tortured dreams, it would be to see the prodigies of the Exalted so perverted in their purpose.

The Eschaton Engine is an enormous construct, with rubble and ash for its flesh and broken daiklaves for its claws and fangs. Its body is studded with castoff wonders; the pillars of destroyed menses, the beams of ancient warships, armored plates from automatons and warstriders. Deep within, the broken core of Elnuet chimes a discordant song. The behemoth's precise form changes year to year, as it is forever reforging itself. At times, its appearance seems recognizable, an imitation of some natural form or ancient wonder, though such resemblances mean nothing to the Engine.

Essence: 8; **Willpower:** 9; **Join Battle:** 10 dice

Personal: 80

Health Levels: -0x20/-1x7/-2x7/-4x10/Incap.

Actions: Command Simulacra 11 dice; Feats of Strength: 14 dice (May attempt Strength 10 feats); First Age Lore: 14 dice; Senses: 9 dice; Threaten: 12 dice.

Appearance 4 (Hideous), Resolve 5, Guile 5

COMBAT

Attack (Daiklave Claws): 14 dice (Damage 22/5)

Attack (Pillar Tail): 12 dice (Damage 27/6)

Attack (Siege Crossbow Volley): 14 dice (Damage 20/4, Archery: Medium)

Attack (Grapple): 14 dice (14 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 7 dice

Evasion: 1; **Parry:** 7

Soak/Hardness: 18/11 (Shattered Jade Chassis)

INTIMACIES

Defining Principle: I am the death of hope and beauty.

Defining Tie: The Exalted (Unreasoning Hatred)

Major Tie: The Neverborn (Reverent Fear)

Major Tie: The First Age (Grief)

Minor Tie: Artifacts (Possessiveness)

ESCORT

When Elnuet destroys a historically or culturally significant structure or treasure, its rubble-flesh writhes and buds off a miniature version of itself. It's often attended by a Size 2-3 battle group of simulacra (use walking statue traits, **Exalted** p. 500) with average Drill and Might 2. If Elnuet has been bound to serve a master using necromancy, these simulacra obey its master's orders.

MERITS

Apocalyptic Legendarium: Elnuet can devour artifacts and their grave good replicas, absorbing them into its composite body. It can use their Evocations, including those that would normally have to be made using the artifact. Artifacts devoured this way are slowly broken down over decades until they become non-functional.

Automaton: Elnuet is immune to poison, disease, fatigue, and fear. It doesn't need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep.

Legendary Size: Elnuet suffers no onslaught penalties from attacks made by smaller opponents, unless they're magically inflicted. **Withering** attacks from smaller enemies cannot crash it unless they have at least 10 post-soak damage dice, although attackers still gain the full amount of Initiative damage dealt. **Decisive** attacks from smaller enemies cannot deal more than (3 + attacker's Strength) levels of damage to it, not counting any levels of damage added by Charms or other magic.

Living Rubble Anatomy: Elnuet can spend a scene absorbing parts of a destroyed structure that was formerly of impressive craftsmanship or cultural significance: palaces, temples, prominent agoras, masterfully engineered bridges. It heals all damage and can entirely reconfigure the form of its body, gaining up to eight dots of mutations.

OFFENSIVE CHARMS

Elegy of the End (9m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): With Initiative 12+, Elnuet can chime in an unsettling series of crystalline notes that poison those who hear them. This is a special inspire roll with a pool of thirteen dice against everyone within medium range. Affected characters are exposed to its sound-borne poison (Damage 3L/day, Duration 8 days, -2 penalty). The poison's duration can't be reduced below one by opposed rolls. Even constructs, undead, and others normally immune to poison must roll to resist. Those killed by the poison dissolve, while nearby terrain and plant life suffer accelerated decay and erosion over the next week, as though centuries had passed.

Implosion Bow Cannonade (20m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only): Elnuet makes an unblockable **decisive** attack against all characters within short range of a point within long range. Battle groups and trivial characters are hit automatically. Initiative is divided equally between targets, rounding up, and Elnuet's attack roll extra successes are added as dice of **decisive** damage against each. If Elnuet misses by three or fewer successes, its target still suffers eight dice of unsoakable **withering** damage. Elnuet gains Initiative from this after resetting to base. Those killed by the attack are destroyed utterly, as are any objects and structures that lack artifact-level durability. The area is made difficult terrain.

Falling Monolith Sweep (8m; Simple; Instant; Withering-only): Elnuet makes a single **withering** attack with its Pillar Tail against all enemies within close range. Damaged enemies are knocked prone. Elnuet only gains Initiative from the highest damage roll, plus one Initiative per additional target damaged.

Fury of the Fallen Age (10m; Simple; One scene; Uniform): Elnuet screeches in a discordant howl, emanating waves of all-annihilating necrotic Essence. It gains three successes on attack rolls and feats of destruction and radiates an environmental hazard out to short range (difficulty 5, Damage 3L/round). However, it suffers an automatic level of lethal damage at the end of each round after the first.

Perpetual Entropy Engine (5m; Reflexive; Instant; Dual): Double 8s on a physical action and gain one Initiative for every 10 on the roll. On a **decisive** attack, this Initiative is added after resetting to base. Once per round.

DEFENSIVE CHARMS

Ruinous Husk Defense (6m; Reflexive; One scene, Uniform, Essence 5): Elnuet raises a shell of rubble around itself, granting itself +2 Defense from heavy cover. In areas with significant amounts of rubble or detritus, like craters created by Collapsing Point of Destruction, this

increases to +3 Defense. This Charm ends if Elnuet moves or takes **decisive** damage.

Engine of Inevitability (3m, 3i; Reflexive; Instant, Decisive-only; Essence 6): Elnuet's form shifts and warps to avoid an attack. It inflicts a -3 penalty on the attack and damage roll of a **decisive** attack against it. The penalty increases by one each time the Charm is used in the scene as Elnuet adapts to its opponents, to a maximum of -8.

Tombstone Hammer Counter (4m; Reflexive; Instant; Counterattack, Uniform; Essence 5): Elnuet responds to an attack that fails to hit it with a counterattack using its Pillar Tail, gaining bonus dice on the attack roll equal to the number of successes its attacker missed by.

MOBILITY CHARMS

Firmament-Shaking Leap (4m, 4i; Simple; Instant; Essence 5): Elnuet leaps two range bands in any direction. If it leaps into close range with any enemies, it can use Falling Monolith Sweep reflexively.

Labyrinth-Tunneling Step (10m; Simple; Instant; Essence 8): Elnuet's song rises to a scream before it sinks into the space-warping tunnels of the Labyrinth, reappearing anywhere within four range bands. It can bring any simulacra within short range along with it with it, as well as a necromancer who's bound Elnuet. Outside of combat, Elnuet can travel hundreds of miles in a day.

OTHER CHARMS

The Miracles That Were: (10m; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 6): Elnuet adds four successes and doubles 9s when introducing or challenging a fact about First Age wars, destructive artifacts and magic, or similar knowledge that furthers its destructive goals. With an appropriate stunt, this also count as a threaten roll.

Strategy

Elnuet initially closes range with its enemies, focusing its ire on the hated Exalted if it can identify any. It uses Falling Monolith Sweep if faced with multiple opponents or attacks a single vulnerable enemy with its dai-klave claws, using Perpetual Entropy Engine to enhance its attacks as often as possible. When its Initiative is high enough, it uses Elegy of the End to poison its enemies.

If its foes prove too tough for these tactics, Elnuet will retreat with Labyrinth-Tunneling Step and blast the area using Implosion Bow Cannonade. It will attack at its convenience with its siege crossbows before charging back in with Firmament-Shaking Leap, then establishing a defense with Ruinous Husk Defense.

If enemies consistently avoid its attacks, Elnuet activates Fury of the Fallen Age to greatly increase its

attack accuracy and passively damage enemies with an area hazard, trusting its durability to protect it from the ongoing damage. Unless compelled otherwise by a necromancer that has bound it to service, it will flee upon entering its -4 health levels, teleporting away with Labyrinth-Tunneling Step.

Arts of the Dead: Ghost Charms

The following Charms can be used when creating ghostly Quick Characters or added to existing characters. Some are appropriate for other undead characters.

Fetter-Bound (Permanent; Essence 1): The undead possesses an especially deep bond to a person, group, place, or object from her mortal life, known as a fetter. She has a Defining Tie toward it, which she can't voluntarily weaken. It can't be fully eroded with social influence. As long as she has the Tie at Defining intensity and regularly interacts with her fetter, she gains the following benefits:

- Once per day, she can treat social influence that's opposed by her Tie as unacceptable unless it's supported by one of her Major or Defining Intimacies or a Psyche effect. This even applies to the commands of a necromancer who's bound her. With Essence 4, this can be used against Psyche effects.
- She can always reform after being destroyed, appearing at her fetter's location (**Exalted**, pp. 508-509).
- She can concentrate for a moment to sense the well-being of her fetter at any distance.

If the ghost's fetter is destroyed, she permanently loses these benefits and suffers a sympathetic backlash, risking falling into Lethe. A ghost can have multiple feters

at the Storyteller's discretion.

Hand of the Wind (3m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 1): The ghost performs an unrolled action that affects the material world without needing to materialize: opening or closing a door, knocking an object to the ground, shoving someone. With Essence 4, she can make rolled actions, but suffers a -3 penalty on attacks and material enemies can still clash and make counterattacks.

Ichor-as-Ink Approach (5m; Supplemental; Instant; Eclipse; Essence 1): The ghost writes on a surface within short range, using or conjuring the likes of blood, brackish water, or even writhing maggots. She can do so even while dematerialized.

Aura-Reading Technique (6m; Simple; Instant; Eclipse; Essence 2): Emotions and passions are a vivid tapestry in the envious ghost's eyes. She makes a Read Intentions roll with double 9s to discern the target's emotional state even if there's no outward sign of it. If he has an Intimacy related to his current feelings, she also learns it on success.

Nine Terrors Visage (10m, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Essence 2): The ghost warps her corpus into an inhuman, exaggerated shape, gaining the Hideous Merit (**Exalted**, p. 162). They double 8s on threaten rolls. Enemies with lower Resolve than the ghost's Appearance can't attack her unless they spend one Willpower to resist for a scene. Essence 5+ undead gain this Charm's benefit as a permanent effect.

Watchful Ancestor's Eye (5m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 2): The ghost sries on one of her descendants, feters, or grave goods. She gains a general awareness of its location and current condition but can't make out specific details.

Words Beyond the Veil (1m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 2): The ghost sends a cryptic dream, eerie omen, or similar uncanny apparition to one of her living

BURIAL COMPANIONS

Animals occasionally leave behind ghosts, most often those buried with humans following their masters into the Underworld. They rarely possess many Charms — typically those related to their deaths or Charms like Ghost-Devil Form or Nine Terrors Visage. Familiars may learn suitable spirit Charms as magical abilities (**Exalted**, p. 554).

Reanimated animal corpses gain two additional -2 health levels and two -4 health levels. They gain the Deathly Stench, Plaguebearer, and Mindless traits (**Exalted**, p. 503).

descendants or worshippers. She can send a message or convey social influence through this. Complex or abstract messages risk potential misunderstanding by their recipients, requiring an (Intelligence + Occult) roll at a difficulty set by the Storyteller to accurately interpret them.

Ghost-Devil Form (10m, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Essence 3): The ghost takes on a battle form, gaining eight dots of mutations and adding (Essence/2, rounded up) dice on physical actions. Each ghost has a unique set of mutations that it manifests with this Charm.

Ghost-Warden's Vigil (5m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 3): The ghost can sense a specific, narrow circumstance: her tomb being disturbed, her children facing danger, a specific ritual performed on the night of the new moon. She can sense when it occurs within (Essence x10) miles and use this Charm to immediately appear at the scene, even if she must cross between Creation and the Underworld. This range is multiplied by (Intimacy) if the ghost has a relevant one. She can materialize by paying the usual cost (**Exalted**, p. 510). At the scene's end, she returns to her original location. Once per story.

The shipyard lay hidden in a mist-shrouded harbor on the Isle of Bitter Tears. The Mask of Winters had quietly built it and ferried the workers there, where they labored to produce ships made from the bones of a dead behemoth dragged from the depths. Spindly looking scaffolds and drydocks littered the shore. A beacon tower grown from pale coral loomed up over it all, though no light shone at its peak to guide crews to safety.

The Gallows Bride stood at the prow of the skiff as the Mariner steered out of the billowing mists. They were protected for a time, the spray clinging to them even as they sailed out of it, drawn along by a gesture the Mariner made. The Kingeater hauled on the oars, propelling them through the waves toward a small cove. The Voice That Speaks in the Silence and the One Who Walks Behind You were already ashore, rowed there by the Mariner's crew. Now the *Stonefish* and its crew would wait on the other side of the mists, watchful for the Circle's return.

The Mask's fleet was a formidable sight, even if dozens of ships were still just frames. Impressive as they all were, they were overshadowed by what was obviously meant to be the Mask's new flagship. The Gallows Bride knew little about boats, aside from how to fight aboard them, but even to her untrained eye, the ship seemed menacing, violent, and swift. If she'd spotted it giving chase through a spyglass, she'd worry for whatever vessel she was on. It was made of gleaming wood and polished bone, and she was certain from its shape that the ribbing beneath the hull was that of some great pelagial beast.

A figure paced the deck, tall and broad, with the hilt of a grand daiklave peeking up over their shoulder. The Bride knew that confident stride and the slash of crimson that lined his cloak. The Knight of Broken Shadows. She'd patrolled at his side many times before she'd renounced the Mask's service. He was one of her most zealous hunters.

The skiff pulled even with a rocky jetty, and the Gallows Bride readied her bow. "This is far enough for me," she said. "I'll draw him off. You two get to the ship."

The Kingeater held the boat steady as the Bride clambered up onto the rocks. "Are you sure? I can come with you. The Mariner could take the ship alone."

"There's something else belowdecks," said the Mariner. "I can feel it."

"Ah," said the Kingeater. "Seems like I have a job to do anyway."

The Bride smiled. "It's all right. We have old business best left between the two of us."

"Luck to you, then," said the Kingeater. "When this is all over, I'll take you sailing."

The Bride muffled a laugh so it didn't carry out over the water, then she gently pushed the skiff away from the jetty and straightened to face her old friend.

The arrow flew straight and true, burying itself in his shoulder and spinning him with the force of its hit. His hand came up to tug it free or break it off, but already it was corkscrewing deeper and deeper into his flesh, spurred on by cruelty and Essence. She pushed back her hood and let the wind whip her violet hair around. The Knight recognized it and wasted no time. He vaulted from the deckrail and onto the water, rushing across the surface of the waves toward where the Bride waited on the jetty.

• • • •

Walks Behind's informants had mentioned the shipwrights and architects being funneled from the Mask's stronghold of Black Diamond to the isle, but seeing the sheer number of them in person was still impressive. The docks buzzed with activity as workers transported materials, shaped wood, and sewed sails. Messengers hurried between drydocks, and cooks parceled out bowls of fish stew for the living. Many of the workers were undead, but even those gathered for the scent of warm stew and fresh bread.

Walks Behind, and the Voice moved through them with the air of inspectors examining the shipyard's progress. Few challenged them as they made their way through, and those who did quickly ducked their heads and averted their eyes at Walks Behind's imperious frown. He'd cowed some of Stygia's most dangerous criminals with that look; it worked just as well on the Mask's laborers.

The guards at the beacon tower, however, weren't quite so easily moved. These were dedicated soldiers, ghosts from the Lookshyan legion used to enemies attempting to infiltrate their ranks. The Mask had hardly been

secretive about his maneuvering; he certainly would have expected his rivals to respond, and the guards had their warnings.

Still, that was something Walks Behind could use. He strode straight up to the tower's gate, nodding in satisfaction as the half-dozen ghost-guards closed ranks. "Good," he said, adopting a general's booming tone. "You're assembled and ready. We've been betrayed."

A murmur rippled through them, and their commander stepped forward. "By whom?"

"Our liege is dealing with that. Our duty is to root out the saboteurs before they can do any harm." He swept an arm toward the shore, to the cove where his allies had beached their skiff. It was empty now, the Kingeater and the Mariner already gone, their bootprints leading toward the shipyard. "Go," he said. "Stop them. The dock's guards are already on watch, but we might be able to catch them before they make it there."

The commander barked a sharp order, and her troops fell in line. Walks Behind had only a moment to relish the triumph as they marched toward the cove.

A shadow filled the gate, and the whisper-screams of soulsteel accompanied the darkness that bloomed around the nephwrack barring their way.

The Voice stepped even with Walks Behind, pushing up the sleeves of his robes to reveal arms tattooed with sigils and snakes. "I'd thought the others were going to do all the heavy lifting," he said. He raised his hands, and all around the courtyard, the ground trembled. This isle had once been a burial place, and now the dead beneath it clawed at the earth, eager to serve.

• • • •

The Kingeater launched herself onto the flagship's deck with one mighty leap, bounding over cowering dockworkers. The Mariner wasn't far behind, hauling herself up the scaffolding in a matter of seconds. They'd been right about the Knight of Broken Shadows not being alone. Waiting for them on the deck was a man seven feet in height, wearing a helm fashioned from a siaka's skull, its many-toothed maw framing his face. He was one of the leaders in the Mask's Perfect Circle, named the Duke with Seven Jaws. The Kingeater had heard tales of him — an admiral, a shapeshifter, and a terrifying foe.

She unsheathed her rapier and spread her arms wide. "Come on, then. Let's begin."

The Duke laughed, a sound hollow as the grave. He hefted a massive mace and raced for the Kingeater, his steps thundering across the deck. The Kingeater was a blur of motion herself, phantoms splitting off from her shadow to dart in and stab at him even as she dove beneath his swing.

Behind her, the Mariner intoned words that made the Kingeater's gut twist. As she rose up behind the Duke, the admiral's movements slowed. His limbs grew stiff and pale as veins of ivory shot through his skin and solidified. He moved despite it, groaning as his corpus cracked and bled, but the Mariner's spell gave the Kingeater an opening. Chains shaped from her Essence spooled out from her and wrapped around him, immobilizing him further. "The Mask should have sent more of you," the Kingeater said.

Then the Duke's form twisted and writhed as he changed shape beneath her grasp. The Kingeater sprang backward, chains still taut, eager to see what else he had in store.

• • • •

Sea spray surrounded the Bride and the Knight as they faced one another along the jetty. He stood, daiklave drawn, regarding her with regret. "You could come back," he said. "Even now, the Mask might forgive you."

The offer was empty, and they both knew it. She'd sold their liege's secrets again and again, not to buy her own power but to chip away at his. The Mask rewarded ambition — if she'd done it for her own personal gain, he might have given her a chance to earn back his good graces. But her actions were an affront to him, and while she *had* benefited, the profits were of the hide-saving kind. She'd bought safety and protection, boltholes and allies, but little more.

"I can never go back," she said. "I made sure of it. But you could come with *me* if you wanted."

The Knight shook his head. "Far better for me to haul you in myself. I imagine the reward will be quite handsome."

"I tried," she said. "Remember that when I send you back to him bloodied." The Bride reached into her shadow, and from it drew a broadsword shaped and honed with her hate. Then she dove toward him with a roar that matched the ocean's fury, stepping into shadows thrown by the crashing waves and reappearing behind him with a mighty swing.

• • • •

Walks Behind reached the tower's summit alone. From below came the sound of the Voice's sermon as he clashed with the nephwrack, punctuated by the sound of his fists in their righteous rage. The Moonshadow looked out over the isle, where he saw the chaos his Circle had sown. The docks were in disarray, their planks twisted into strange labyrinthine configurations at the Mariner's bidding. Down on the jetty, the Gallows Bride stood alone, resting on her blade a moment as she watched a body sink beneath the waves. On the flagship, the Kingeater soared into the air and dove gracefully toward her hulking opponent, making their fight look like a dance. The Mariner was busy with the flagship's sails, unfurling them before turning to haul up the anchor.

He peered out into the mists, scanning for shapes in the dense cloud, but whatever lay beyond remained stubbornly hidden.

Only one thing left to do.

Walks Behind pulled several vials from his robes, handling them carefully as he mixed their contents atop the silver disk in the center of the space. Bright blue fire shot forth from them, a beacon made of pyreflame to cut through the mists. "It's time!" he called down to the Voice, hoping his own shout would cut through the priest's battle-frenzy.

From below came the sound of something wet and heavy tumbling down the spiral stairs. A moment later, his companion peered up at him, exhilarated. "We should run," he said. "He won't be down for long."

• • • •

The Mask's flagship groaned and creaked as it broke free of its moorings. Its sails filled with the whipping winds, and it picked up speed as it headed toward the mists. Alarms sounded from the harbor behind them. It wouldn't be long before the Duke with Seven Jaws would recover and give chase.

"It's a long way to Stygia," said the Bride.

"We'll have the *Stonefish* with us," said the Mariner. "My crew is good; they'll buy us extra time."

"We're close enough to Black Diamond that they'll catch us before long," said the Kingeater. "Two against the Mask's fleet. I hope you all can swim."

"About that," said Walks Behind as they passed through the mists. Behind them, the pyreflame beacon burned, hazy but a clear landmark. They emerged from the mists to find not only the *Stonefish* but a score of other ships besides bearing the flag of the Damned Sails. Aikeret herself, crimson coat flapping in the wind, raised a hand from the prow of the *Sanguine Marauder*.

"I met with Aikeret before we set sail," he said. "She offered us an escort to show that her allegiance is still with the Silver Prince."

The pirate fleet joined them in formation as the Mariner set course for Stygia. The Bride looked out over the waves as the Isle of Bitter Tears receded into the mists. "I suspect the bounty on my head might have tripled," she said as the Kingeater joined her at the rail.

"Let him try," she said. "Now come on. I found some wine in the cargo hold, and I promised I'd take you sailing."



Exalted Backer

"Cursed for Vengeance Sated"

"Reseru" Sansone

A Crompton

A Single Corvid

A. Brown-Baxter

A. Doan

A. Dufield

A. Dufield

A. Gunnerson

A. Salomons

A.Cerer

A.E. Harbo Torres

Aaron LaBrie

Aaron Potheary

Aaron Scott

Acolyte

Adam "Magus" Loyd

Adam Beyonce Lowe

Adam Daniel-Wayman

Adam Horne

Adam Jeter

Adam McAteer

Adam Pecar

Adam Rajski

Adam Rose

Adam Whitcomb

Adbán, The Fisher of Souls

Adoil

Adrian "Maarken Brashari" Cumming

Adrian Burns

Adrian Praetorius

Adrian Tymes

Adrovicz András

Advent Revenant of Unmourned

Sons and Daughters

Aegle Erebos

AG

AggroCulture

Aiden Foote

Aisling H.

Akai Kitsune

Alan Douglas

Alan Reed Mitchell

Alan Schwartz

Alan-Michael Tyrson

Alannah Rideout

Alarick Erian

Alastair McNab

Aleah M.

Alec Anderson

Alex Blankenfeldt

Alex Buzz

Alex Drake

Alex Fewings

Alex G.

Alex Geoghagan

Alex Karge

Alex M

Alex 'Ohiska' Mason

Alex Whisennand

Alexander Barnett

Alexander Cresswell

Alexander Rodriguez

Alexander Scigajlo

Alexandra C Flowers

Alexandre Côté

Alexandre Pilon

Alexis Courteix

Alexis Pyne

Aliasi

Alice Marks

Aliharu

Alison "Estro" Dunnett

Allen Bashford

Allen Charest

Almarion Sanreal

Alwin Penterman

Amanda/Owlbear

Amara Ilysea Ahmed

Amber

Amber C.

Amber Vietzke

Amelia Fetch

Amine Hsu Nekuchan

Amit Ben Zeev

Amit Netanel

Amy Waller

Anders Meistrick

Andreas Dahl

Andrei Antonio Gonzalez Reyes

Andrés Muñoz Alarcón

Andrés Santiago Pérez-Bergquist

Andrew "Volund" Bastien

Andrew D. Mackenzie

Andrew Hows

Andrew K.

Andrew MacLellan

Andrew Martin

Andrew McGregor

Andrew Rowe

Andrew Snow

Andrew Stephens

Andrew Stephens

Andrew Waterfall

Andrzej "Ulran" Gronowski

Andrzej Kubera

Andy Clark

Andy W.

Andy Zeiner

Angela R. Sasser, The
Uncrucified Eclipse

Angelborn

Angelwick Prime

Anja Kraus

Annah Comyn

Annei Lyranae

CROWDFUNDING BACKERS

Anshu Shines-With-Surety	Banners Unfurled in Mourning	Brandon Machart
Anthony C.	Bartek Wcislo	Brazen Tiger
Anthony Tortt	BatRadia	Brendan Pease
Antoine ASTIER	Beachfox	Brenden Miller
Anton Adam	Bear Carson	Brennan Willingham
Antonio Ganzon	Bear Winters	Brennen Willer
Apotheosis Rains Upon The Faithful and Fools Alike	Ben BB	Brent W. Ezell
Apregis	Ben Cook	Brett Alexander
Aquatica	Ben Kruger	Brett Wood
Arabella Cross	Ben McKenzie	Brian Campbell
Aramithius	Ben Stewart	Brian DeVico
Aravon Harlingar	Ben Stone	Brian Hon
Archon	Ben Wood	Brian McCain
Arion Wind	Benjamin "BlackLotos" Welke	Brian Perdomo
Arno Le Blanc-Ringuette	Benjamin Loy	Brian Quinn
Arrith of the Fallen Ashes	Benjamin Mire	Brian Rivers
Arthur Drexel	Bennett Palmer	Brian Upton
Artur 'Ev7n' Plociennik	Benoit Devost	Brian Walgren
Ash Stark	Benoit L	Bridget Jewel
Ashen Vespasian Hunter	Bentley W Chism	Brightfires
Ashen Words of Bitter Truth	Bernd Kruse	Brook Freeman
AshenFox	Bertie Bobbins	Bruce Ferguson
Ashes of Tyrants Humbled	Beryllium Mask	Bruce Stone
Ashley "Ghost" Buffington	Bilious "Exploding Frogs" Slick	Bryant Devillier
Ashley Thompson	Bill Shaffer	Bryson Daugherty
Ashley! Ashley! Ashley!	Bill Weepie	Bulshock
Atrellu	Bittersweet Embrace	C & D Edwards
Audrey Paiement	Björn F.	C Canadian
Aurius Vorayn	Black Wings to Blot the Sky	C. Dias
Austin Lamb	Blackpepper of the Silver Pact	C. Kent
Austin Loomis, old enough that he ought to know better	Blair A Monroe	C. Malecypse Smith
Autumn Michaels	Blair Cliff	C.Lowe
Avlis Solast	Blake Campbell	Caerul Artemia
Axel J.	Blake McCormack	Caim Frostheart
Aya G	Blazing Judgement	Caleb Haddix
Azouth	Blissful Wail of the Tenebrous Fountain's Erupting Deluge	Caleb Shelley
B Hill	BlueJane	Cameron St.
B. Fowler	Bob Huss	Camille Nogueira
B. Michelot	Bob Manning	Caoimhe Brennan
B. Yang	Bradley "Jimborg" Schulz	Carl Söderberg
Balwin	Brandon "CrownedSun" Quina	Carles Samarra
	Brandon H	Carlo Tommasini

Carlos "Monsada The Iberian Troll" Checa Barambio	Chris W	Cory Pinto
Carmine Laudiero	ChrisCrOss	Cory Tabibian
Carter Blalack	Christian "Su-tehp" Fernandez-Duque	Cosmos Furiosi
Cary Hook	Christian Pearson	Covert Mercucio
Casey Caston	Christian Rounds	Coyotekin
Casey Corbin	Christian Walters	Craig Bonnes
Casey Marisol Carter	Christie Jennings-Wyckoff	Craig Irvine
Cason Snow	Christoph Laurer	Craig Mercer
Castle of Steel Clouds	Christopher Adam Wallace	Craig Tremblay
Cecil DeBuck	Christopher Bishop	Cristo Kyriazis
CertainlyNotTheOddOne	Christopher Bolster	Curtis Stark
ChandraMagic	Christopher Campione	Cynis Orin
Chaos	Christopher Daniel	Cypher Nyx
Charan DuFrançois	Christopher Emerson	D Weatherwax
Charis Siozios	Christopher Gilbert	D. Fotheringham
Charles Espinoza	Christopher Lee Moore	D. Hawkins
Charles L'Espérance	Christopher Reinhardt	D. J. Winterbottom
Charles Marion Watford Jr	Christopher Trapp	D.J. Sweet
Charles Nichols	Christopher V. Martin	D.K.
Charles S.	Chronos	Da Blackmoon
Charles Siegel	Chrysanthos Lynda McCullers	Dacar Aria Arundottir
Charlie "PookaKnight" Cantrell	Ciaran Carbery-Shaha	Damian Crevello
Charlotte Luttrell	Cinnamon D'Aubigny	Damos Mandraag
Chase Burton	Circlemaker	Dan Lewis
Cherry Blossom on the Wind	Citrine Sunset	Dan Tompkins
Chimes in the Mist, Moonshadow	Clarion of Foresung Triumph	Dan Tunseth
Caste Keeper of the Harem at the Edge of Night	Claudia Creed	Dan Veroneau
Chow Matthew	Clay Oeffinger	Dana Jacobson
Chris Brashier	Clayton Bell	Dana McVey
Chris Costello	Clayton Higbee	Dane "Kota" Allington
Chris Gawne	Clete D.Collum	Dane "Noctis" Madsen
Chris Larrabee	ClyncyeRudje	Dane Batema
Chris Mangum	Cody M Kern	Daniel "Squid" Ericsson
Chris Martin	Colin Earle	Daniel and Jasmin Bomm
Chris Mawford	Colin R. Jones	Daniel Hanna
Chris McDonough	Conri Purcell	Daniel Jamison
Chris McGuire	Constellation Autumn	Daniel Meagher
Chris P.	Corey "Kenhito" Salter-Davidson	Daniel of Secrets
Chris Shaffer	Corin Maslin	Daniel Singer
Chris Thomas	Corpreal Fale	Daniel Sullivan
Chris Venus	Corwyn Alambar	Dark Lord Zebedee
	Cory Gilman	Darkshifter

CROWDFUNDING BACKERS

Darla Burrow	Debbie Bevers-Malone	Blossom of Carnage
Darrell Hon	Declan Needham Church	Elethayn
Darren Hennessey	Deltalisk	Elias Helfer
Daryl Abell	Demiurge J	Elika Aumônier
Dave Ault	Dénéthorian	Elissa Titanid
Dave Brookshaw	Dennis Sullivan	Elliott Freeman
Dave Jones	Deputy Dawg	Elliott I Davis
Dave McFarland	Derek Semsick	EmanantVolition
Dave Walker	Derek W. Branim	Emerald Dawn
David Albert Toboz	Desolate Litany of Ponderous Endings	Emil Rydningen
David Boniface	Dev Nevot	Emily S.
David Castro	Deven Mitton	Emmanuel Navarre
David Chart	Dirgeraven, Song Seer of Souls	Empress Upon a Throne of Ravens
David Dorward	Djipo	Empyrean Sepulcher of Despair
David Frederick Mitchell	Dom Hero Ellis	Emy
David Fulford	Dominic Pinchott	Enemy of All Dice Tricks
David Futterer	Dorian Franklin	Entropy
David Gearhart	Dorian Stretton	Erebus C
David Insley	Dottie Davis	Eric "Mouky" Brisebois
David Kotsonis	Doug Bloomer	Eric Alexander
David L. Miller	Douglas Caillard	Eric Allen
David Lee Terhune	Douglass Kern	Eric Coutu
David Likar	Dr Cuddles	Eric Embree
David Mann	Dreadno	Eric Garcia
David Mortensen	Dreams of the Faceless Millions	Eric Gordon
David Parkinson	Drew "Nyx" S	Eric J. Heckathorn
David Paul	DS	Eric Kroier
David R Saeva	Duan Bailey	Eric McCommon
David S	Dylan G.	Eric Minton
David Scott (Gaius)	Dylan Reed; The Master of the House of Critical Treasures	Eric Painter
David Stephenson	E. Kelly "Diesolar"	Eric Robibaro
David Weidendorf	E.J. Strother	Eric Rowland
Davide C. Milano	Eben Lowe	Eric Ruhnaw
Davide Ferlan	Echo Cian	Eric Schalk
Davin Wärter	Ed Morland	Erich Dobler
Dawngreeter	Edward Feeney	Erik Dahlman
DC Eskier	Edward Richter	Erik Gurule
DeadlyReed	Eetu "Zergon" Pykäläinen	Erik Tyrrell
Déan Pijpker	Ejtaka, Master of Ceremonies	Erik Welehodsky
Déan Pijpker	Elais Player	Esben Mølgaard
Dean Stuart McNabb	Eleanor Asher - Lament of the forgotten.	Eternal Phantom
Deathlord G. W. Minor	Elegantly Unfolding	Ethan O

Ethan Wilke
 Eurandros
 Eusis
 Evan Lusky
 Evelyn Addams
 Everett Oakley
 Evil William
 F. Gowans
 Fabien Tsuki Malfoy
 Fabio V.
 Falls Sideways
 Felipe Bovolon
 Felix Dipp
 Felix Grothkopp
 Felix Shafir
 Filip Van Huffel
 FiskerPen
 FlamesRising.com
 Florian Millet
 Forgotten History
 ForteBass
 Four Fold White Paper Crane
 Fox Y. Whitworth
 Francesco Zanette
 Francis Rapadas
 Francisco Costa
 François Perriot (Eznoka)
 Frank Hayden
 Frank McCormick
 Frank S.
 Frédéric "Volk Kommissar
 Friedrich" POCHARD
 Fredrik Karlsson
 Fredrik Lyngfalk
 Frosty Myst
 Frosty-Blade
 Fukata
 G Fabic
 G Force
 G. Alex Williamson
 G. Shellabear
 G.F Duthie
 G.Tatum

Gabriel Mull
 Gabriele Uccellani
 Gareth Gingell
 Gareth Thomas
 Garrett CZ
 Garrett Hutton
 Garrett R. Henke
 Gary Stephen
 Gaspard Fleury-Hurtubise
 Gavin Mutter
 Gavin Rapp
 GenericMaleNPC01
 Gentle Snow
 Geoff S
 Geoffrey (Jetstream) Walter
 Geoffrey Kincaid
 Geoffrey Neil Meikle
 George Pitre
 Gilad Goodman
 Gilfredo Rodriguez
 Gillian and Alistair Winters
 Ginger Stampley
 Ginger Stampley
 GK and Julia Coleman
 Glen Blosser
 Glen R. Taylor
 Glen R. Taylor
 Glenn Clifford
 Godaemus
 Godsent Brushstroke Mauled
 through Inked Tears
 Gordon Pfeil
 gotyaoi
 Götz Weinreich
 Graham Kemp
 Graham Sandison
 Grand Architect Gwosh
 Grant Hoeflinger
 Gratua Cuun of Fallen Starlight
 Gravehunter of the Inevitable End
 Graziano Zanichelli
 GreenSun
 Greg Berry

Greg Collins
 Greg Larkin
 Greg Petersob
 Greg Roy
 Greg Valleau
 Gregory Stayner
 Greivous Winter, the Subtle Knife
 grenade_beam
 Grey Harmony
 Grim Dragonslayer Who Marches
 to War for Love and Death
 Gryff
 H. Mainzer
 Hailey McAuliffe
 Hajime Saito
 HalfTangible
 Halwin Malison
 Hank Driskill
 Hannah Butzen
 Harbinger of the Furthest Shore
 Haroon Alsaiif
 Harvest of an Age Past
 Harvester of Sorrows
 Hawksmoor
 Hayden J Deverick
 Hazel
 He of Cruelty Without Malice
 Heather O'Hearn
 Heather Ulrich
 Heaven's Grace
 Hel
 Henrik Jäderkvist
 Henry B
 Henry F. Bruckman Vargas
 Heptalemma
 Herald of the Pelagic Shadow
 Herja, the Destroyer
 Herman Thedon Page
 High Priestess Seraphel
 Hollow Wolf Hunting Ever-Distant Light
 Hugo Richard
 Hungry Reflection of Infinite Depths
 Hunter Harper

CROWDFUNDING BACKERS

Ian Groombridge	Jack Oyston	Jateshi, Exalt of Paperwork
Ian Hamilton	Jacob Ansari	Javon E.
Ian Holzman	Jacob Kleffel	Jay Holiday
Ian MacRae	Jacob Smith	Jay Smith
Icholas Etna	Jacqueline Zawyrucha	Jay T Sanders
Ikalios	Jacques Barcia	Jazaen
Imran Inayat	Jae Armstrong	JC Voskaya
Incandescent Dragon Creations	Jae Michels	JD Maynard
Indigo	Jae Michels	Jeanne Ingram
Indigo Shade	Jair Vianna	Jeff Churchill
Indoor CatSith	Jake Almighty	Jeff Clark
Indulgent Teacher of Bespoke Nightmares	Jake Mandel	Jeff Gilbert
Inge G	Jake VanGunda	Jeff Robinson
Insigrad Sparda	JakeMilo	Jeffrey A Beckett
Iomhar	JakeMilo	Jeffrey Brodovsky
Ioni Valencia	James "Mindworm Jim" Jones	Jeffrey Craft
Iorwerth Thomas	James A. Stothard	Jeffrey D Hayes
ipsi	James Bell	Jeffrey Mintz
Iron Ox	James Deeley	Jeffrey Palmer, Psy.D.
Isaac Lee	James Dyer	Jeffrey Syracuse
Isaiah Bahr	James Freeman	Jeffrey W. Borden
Iselsi Navia	James Glanville	Jennifer Neff
Isla M	James Holden	Jens Ole Knudsen
Ivan V.A.N. Slipper	James M Shaw	Jeremy "Blackwingedheaven" Puckett
Ivo "Xireon" Goudzwaard	James McKay	Jeremy A. Mowery
J D Goudie	James Metca	Jeremy and Tasha Cue
J&B Proehl	James New	Jeremy G
J. Blake	James Small	Jeremy Godley
J. Dillon	James Taylor	Jeremy Kopczynski
J. Ronan	Jamie Vann	Jeremy Mettler
J. Sandstrom	Janos Crownsguard	Jeremy Pinske
J. Singer	Jared Levine & Marisa Considine	Jeremy Pour-El
J. Spiegel-Brown	Jason "Dreadlord" Best	Jeremy Salyer
J. Teixeira	Jason A. Guerra	Jeremy W
J. Veltman	Jason Barton	Jerry "LordJerith" Prochazka
J. W. Bennett	Jason C Marshall	Jerry Doolin
J.H. Kaguko	Jason Hall	Jesal Sena
J.Murphy	Jason Italiano	Jesse Bigger
J.Vig	Jason Mowry	Jesse Breazeale
Jaakko Kaisanlahti	Jason Murguz	Jesse Goble
Jabberwocky	Jason Ross Inczauskis	Jesse R. Thomas
Jack Harrison	Jason scott	Jessy and Soul

JF ROBERT

Jim Groves

Jim Schofield

Joe Arnaud

Joe Limond

Joe Rainwater-Cummings, M.S.

Joe Turner

Joel B.

John A. Yackel

John B.

John B.

John Canterbury

John Fay

John K.

John Lambert

John M. Atkinson

John Phillips

Johnathan Giese

Joia Rahl, Peony Maze, Weaver of the Void Cosmos and the Hanged Man.

Jon Delmater

Jon Hendrickson

Jon Hygom Gislason

Jon Michael Razo

Jon Weber

Jonathan A

Jonathan D. Smith

Jonathan David Rust

Jonathan Head

Jonathan Luis-Kennedy

Jonathan O'Atsalakotos

Jonathan Sharrow

Jonathan Stoetzer

Jordan Etherington

Jordan Springer

Joris Kühl

Jose Palma Gil aka The Spiteful Typhoon Herald In Midnight Clad

Joseph Anthony Dempsey

Joseph Beaulieu

Joseph Nikolaus

Joseph Penrod

Josh Parrish

Josh Silberfein

Josh Will

Joshua and Kevin-Lynn Kubli

Joshua Gorham

Joshua Little

Joshua Paladin Combs

Joshua Robison

Josiah Aldridge

Jotunn

Joyful Artificer

JP Estey

Jub Jub, Fear Be His Name

Julien "Crop-Weaver" Teychené-Blanc

Julien Lecleire

Juno Hart

Jürgen Czerny

Jürgen Hubert

Justin "Dellmarr" Fermaint

Justin Buckley

Justin F.

Justin G

Justin Hoyland

Justin Mabry

Justin Sandhu

Justin W.

JV

JW

K. Jennings

Kaeli Chambers

Kai D,

Kaiden the Vampire

Kaius

Kallan Oderfla

Kamala Kara Arroyo

KappaToast

Kari A. Clark

Karl Rodriguez

Karlee F

Karlo Shehaj

Karol "szabba" Marcjan

Kat Schelonka

Kate Crittenden

Kathleen Hailperin

Kathrin Tammy Smith

Kaya 'Greenstrider' YAVUZ

Kebhab

Keegan Clefisch

Keegan Sullivan

Keiran Stockley

Keith Kemp

Kelly and Alex Beigh

Kelly Pedersen

Kemp

Ken Finlayson

Kenneth Gilbert

Kenneth McComber

Kergonan

Kevin Lawler

Kevin Mueller

Kieran Healey

Kijok

Kim Caya

Kira Weaver

Kirisu Rose

Kirt LeBlanc

Kit Hohler

Kitty Murking -

Kolbey Araujo

Koldaris

Kotensu Hinairusu

Kris Deters

Kumiko from Ryazan

Kyle Doolin

Kyle Henick

Kyle Novich

Kyle Oppy

Kyle R

Kyle Wheeler

Kyranthos

L "wyrdness" Fletcher

L.Mc

Lalo Martins

Lars Lauridsen

Lars-Henrik Evjan

CROWDFUNDING BACKERS

Lasse R. K.	M "InkSplatterM" Laut	Matt Stacy
Last Breath's Rush	M. Mathew	Matt Streit
Laurie et Geneviève	M. Niel	Matt T
Lawrence G	M. Žurek	Matt Trent
LCollins	Maciej "Delf" Baran	Matt Weatherson
Ledaal Kebok Catala	Maciej Napiórkowski	Matthew and Stephanie Roark on behalf of Edwin Darksteel
Lee Moneta-Koehler	Mackenzie Belmont	Matthew Ballard
Leet	Maddie H. Thorne	Matthew Blanchard - Wellspring of the Unending Distemper
Legion9001	Madge Arwell	Matthew Blanski
Legionman	magicmasterp	Matthew Bridges
Leo "Kuruderu" Heby	Magus	Matthew Doherty
Lewis Anderson	Mahogany Justice	Matthew Dunne
Lexi Hernandez	Mak Andrlon	Matthew Earlywine
Liam Andrew Green	Malte Schultz	Matthew Joel Stewart
Liam Murray	Mao Tenno V	Matthew Leviant
Lillian Brimm	Marc Lummis	Matthew McGuire
Lily Amber Capizzi	Marceline DS	Matthew Parsons
Lindharin	Marcelo C.	Matthew Pascal
Lisa Cassandra Dyson	Marco Gracia Jr.	Matthew Roberts
Liz Weir	Marcos Garcia	Matthew Russo
Logan Corkwell	Marcus & Basse	Matthew Sanderson
Logan Rollins	Marcus "Vorpalesque" McClure	Matthew Tait
Loki "Silver Eyes" Asha'man	Marek Benes	Matthew W. Oldhaver
Lord Broken Mask of Forsaken Truths	Marigold	Matthew York
Lord Terrinx	Mark Cornelius	Matthias Zuchowski
LordRavnos	Mark Couture	Mattias Westermarck
Lorelei	Mark Manders	Matty Kay Bay Bay
Lorelei Descroix	Mark Moore	Max "khamyr" Lerin
Lorenzo Fuica Martineau	Mark Parker	Max H
LossCondition	Mark W. Roy	Max Nevill
Lotus of the Still Pond	Markus Kostarczyk	Maxine Scheen
Louis of the House of Thomas	Markus Raab	Meatcarpetprincess
Luca P.	Marques Haley	Meles Badger
Lucas Garrett	Marshall K. Ludwig II	Melinda Morrison
Lucas L.	Martin Heim	Melusine the Rose Widow
Luke Moran	Martin Kirstein Hansen	Meredith
Luke Phillips	Martti Vuorinen	Merry Cooperator at the Funeral Procession
Luke Radtke	Matt Hufstetler	Mewsocks
Luna-Victoria	Matt Pellegrino	Micah Leming
Lyle Hansen III	Matt Petruzzelli	Michael "Monghani" Watkins
Lyndsey D.	Matt Proctor	
Lysander Sky	Matt S	

Michael Agapeyev	Monoka, Blissful Sage	Nituki
Michael Bachelder	Moonlit Dreamer of the Broken Cycle	Noah G Hirka
Michael Brewer	Mordred	Noah Kent
Michael C. (MadAsTheHatters)	Moreno Bianconcini	Nolan W
Michael Dalton-Martin	Moribund	Nono
Michael Danlin	Morrigaine	Ntlatko
Michael Feldhusen	Moss	Odanuki
Michael J. Cosio	mourge40k	Olav M. Voll
Michael Kastanowski	Mouse Queen	Oliver S.
Michael Kostruba	Mr. Mercutio	One Little Hissy Boy
Michael Maitan	Murakami Arashi	Oomizuao
Michael O. Holland	Muti	Orlando Llorca
Michael P. Porter	Mystrich	Orlando Santos Soares,
Michael Parker	N. Ramasamy	Oak of the Creeping Rot
Michael Pichon	N.James	Oscar Fenton
Michael Pietrelli	Naomi Clark	Oscar Ubeda Segmar
Michael Schulz	Nasser al'Ahmad	Owen Cartwright
Michael Segarra	Natalya Kelley	Owen Milton
Michael V. Roberts	Nate Knife	Owen Wesley Kerschner
Michael Warren	Nathan C.	Pablo "Hersho" Dominguez
Micheal Glenn	Nathan Foxgrove	Panu "Possessed" Laukkanen
Mikael Assarsson	Nathan Hoskins	Paolo Biggio
Mike Bowie	Nathan P.D.	Pär Lindén
Mike Bruner	Nathanael Grinnell	Paradim
Mike Gill	Nathaniel Santore	Patrick "Thirst Unending" Maes
Mike Gilligan	Navve Segal	Patrick Carrick
Mike Hance	Nessa	Patrick Colford
Mike Montgomery	Newton Grant	Patrick Fagan
Mike W. Leavitt	Ng Wai Yee Ryan	Patrick J. Blanchard
Mikko j. Rauhio	Niall McMahon	Patrick JAURION
Minty Vandire	Nicholas "TenfoldShields" Parker	Patrick Leuchter
Mischa Wolfinger	Nicholas Huntington	Patrick McCann
Mitch Berthelson	Nicholas M.	Patrick McMullin
Mitsugi Lin	Nicholas P	Paul Hayes
MJ Monleón	Nicholeas Kirkpatrick	Paul Messenger
MJ Strolla	Nick Harlow	Paul Rummel
Mocking Laughter at the Fallen's Folly	Nick Spears	Paul Ryan
mole	NicklausG	Paul Weimer
Molly Landgraff	Nicola Went	Paull Patterson
Molua Young	Niels van Tol	Paulo Contopoulos
Mongward of Or-Tench	Nik May	Pavi Jones
Monika "Gryf" Biskupska	Nikos Sonus	peelingchrome
		Perverseness

CROWDFUNDING BACKERS

Peter "Doc Coyote" Davis	Rationale for the Culling	Rosewood
Peter Engebos	Raven on Ashen Wings	Ross Bokemeyer
Peter Petrovich	Raymond Welt	Ross Owen Qualls
Peter R.	Raziera	Ross Story
Peter Steponaitis	Rebecca Harbison	Rot Reigns Resplendent
Petri Wessman	Redana Claudius	Ruby Hidden in the Sands
Petter Wäss	Rem Diaz	Ryan & Danielle Ferguson
Petteri Turtiainen	Remembrance of Light	Ryan "The Galby" Galbraith
Phil Beal	Remy Spears	Ryan C.
Phil Hattie	Requiem of Countless	Ryan Cain
Phil S	Unnecessary Errors	Ryan Gracey
Philip Barkow	Reshy	Ryan Holden
Philipp "P3" W.	Reth Shannar	Ryan Kent
Philipp Neurohr	Rev. Phillip Malerich	Ryan McWilliams
Pierre "Tyrendia" MARTIN	Rian Socia	Ryan Moore
PJ Hooper	Richard "Tombfiller	Ryan Pa
PlatFleece	Unrepentant" Stratton	Ryan Poss
Plucky Hero	Richard Javier "Blaque" Stephenson	Ryan Rasey
Pól	Richard Jenkin	Ryan Ventura
Prince Emmanuel Maxi	Richard Sexton	Ryan Wellman
Prince of Brass	Riley McMurry	Ryan Williams
Prof Tentakulus	Rion Urven	S. Mertens
Prof. Metal	Rob Lally	S. Snyder
proteanPrincess Lixie	Rob W	Saelvarath
Puppet of the Drowned City	Robert "Jefepato" Dall	Sagacious Wave
Pyrosorc	Robert Harris	Salvador & Patricio Montes
Quasarchef71	Robert Klein-Beernink	Sam "Bifford the Youngest"
Quasi	Robert Siemiński	Sam "Scattershot" Miller
R Hutchinson	Robert Watson	Sam Clarke-Willson
R Rensberger	Roberto Hoyle	Sam Dail
R. Gregory Luciani	Robicus	Sam Feuerstelle
R. Hogsden	Robin Longhurst	Sam Luquin
R. Poindexter	Robinson Fulcher	Sam Myatt
R. Sean Callahan	Roderic P	Samantha L.
Radio Free Will	Rodger L. Gamblin	Sameer Yalamanchi
Rafael e Luciana Devera	Roffster	Sanguine Seeker Forgotten in the Snow
Rafe Richards	RogueUsagi	Santino A. Crivello
Rage Out Of The Cage	Roland "Hazard" Labo	Sapphire Seraphim and Mei Boey
Rajiv GM Bartol, Breaker of Chains	ron beck	Sarah Fairbanks
Ran	Ronald James Neises J.R.	Sarah Kennedy
Raphael Bressel	Rorou, Arbiter of the 4th Law	Sarc
Rapture of the Razor's Edge	Rory Fansler	Saskia. P
	Rose Chord	

Savan Varil	Shattered Sapphire, Purveyor of Pain and Pleasure	Stormer Aurion
Sayantana Bandyopadhyay	Shawn Connor	Stormshot
Sayuri	Shawn Hagen	Stu 'Disco Stu' MacLeod
Scent of Lily on the Widow's Breath	Shawn P	Stuart "Pattern Spider" Adam
Schelos	Shawn P	Sundara Nermaja Sian
Scipia Harold	Shawn Polka	Supreme Fuzzy Sculptor of Unwilling Clay
Scorned Rook of Broken Faith and Ashen Fields	Shawn Stutzel	Synapse
Scott "Lyshote" Banks	She Who Dreams Below Weeping Willows	Szymon Anikiej
Scott Kelley Ernest	Sheep22	T. Hudson
Scott Morris	Shlagevuk	T.J. Wilson
Scribe of the Mournful Passing	Silent Guardian of Noble Dreams	Talia Mallo
Sean and Katherine Handcock	Simon Beaver	Taliesin Morgan
Sean 'Ariamaki' Riedinger	Simon Lavigueur	Tanay Dutta
Sean Greaney	Simon Thomson	Tanya Armstrong
Seán Leaney	Sine A. E. Watson	Targrus
Sean Moore	Sinople	Tarynn Levesque
Sean O'Neill	Sir Chris	Tatsuryuu
Sean Patterson	Skelethin	Tatsuya
Sean Patti	Snake	Taylor Northington
Seana McGuinness	Soft-Handed Kai	Ted Williams
Sebastian Menke	Sokarera	Tellyn Languedoc
Sebastian Oregel	Somajima "Quercia Contorta"	Terrance A. Bryant
Sebastian Paetsch	Somber Orchid	Terrtling Master of Stories
Sebastian Sigmon	Sophie Anderson	Tetsuo Shima
Sei Feng, God of Bad Decisions	Soul Of Honour	Thad Green
Seigward	Spencer Timerman	Thaine E Hepler III
Seika, The Black Baron of Forsaken Shores	Spencer Verlo	The Ashen King Crowned in Misery
Selani Verash, Maiden of the Dawnflower, Bride of the Unconquered Sun	Stacey Shpaner	The Bear Is Decaying
Selanye	Star'n'Six	The Beneficent Prince Eternal
Selina Miriana de Windia	Steel Lotus	The BlackDow
sesus pining sweetly (and sesus whispering sweetly, my talking bird whom i love)	Steelcondor	The Bloodied Martyr in Restraints of Dark Iron
Sesus Weijin Jahar	Steen Chr. Rosenørn	The Cacophony of Sorrows.
Seth Dasta	Stefano Monachesi	The Candleman
Shafi Ziauddin	Stephen Egolf	The Charnel God
Shan Payn	Stephen Esdale	The Crow Whom Harbors Destined Death
Sha'ne Prime Herald of the Generous Doom	Stephen Naum	The Crownless King of Lands That Are No More
Shane S	Steve Bond	The Cultivar of Bloodied Sunsets and The Faceless King Crowned in Heart's Ash
	Steven E. Ehrbar	The Cultivator of the Sarcous Bonzai
	Stigma of the Blood-soaked Firmament	
	Stoker	
	Stormcloud Thunderdeath	

CROWDFUNDING BACKERS

The Desecration Committed By
a Black Rose Blooming From a
Drop of Blood Sown in Ashes

The Destined Flower Wilted,
Having Bloomed Too Late

The Devourer of Nightmares

THE Donnie

The Drew Stevens

The Ebon Seraph Of The
Final Judgement

The Evil Midnight Lurker
what Lurks at Midnight

The Eye of Eternity

The Fall of Jiara Podcast

The Flawless Glory of Silence

The Font of Sweet Waters

The Fractured Princess of
Light's Last Eclipse

The Freelancing Roleplayer

The General of Trivial Kitabasis

The Gourmet Who Harvests in Darkness

The Great Dichoro

the Great Sage

The Illustrious Mage of Cows (Eden)

The Last Word (played
by Simon Darkstep)

The Little Wolf Chained by the Heron

The many-masked firefly

The Mournful Chorus of
Shattered Heavens

The Nested Crow Aloft on
Bones o'er the Ocean

The Nightmare King, William Smith

The Pernicious Saint

The Pirate of Horrid Oceans
on the Black Ominous Ship

The Prophet of Crimson and Steel

The Reaper of Fallow Fields

The Riddleback

The Sharp Tongue That
Silences the Littlest Sun

The Speaker for the Voiceless
Amidst a Cacophony of Silence

The Steel-Clad Jackal
Blinded by the Grave

The Tree Who is Like God

The Truant in the Garden of Death

The Tyranny of Books

The Unsung Hero

The Virtuosa Peering Deep into
Darkness Dreaming of Labyrinthine
Secrets Bound Within

The Wakeless Requiem

The Wraith of Infectious Despair

TheBoundFenrir

Theodore Alteneder

Thomas Blick

Thomas C.

Thomas Connolly

Thomas Haakinen

Thomas L

Thomas Maund

Thomas P. Kurilla

Thorn Amidst Roses

Thousand Forged Lurker

Thousand Whispering Voices

Three fat men with a whip

Tim Chamberlin

Tim D.

Tim Swift

Timolution

Timothy A. Wiseman

Timothy Mushel

Tobias Lykke Skovhus

Tom F

Tom Johnston

Tommy Svensson

tonberrian

Toni A.

Tony Adkins

Tony Bilzi

Tony Ferrannini

Tore André Rønningen

Tory Cristancho

Trae R.

Travis T.

Travis Tarnell

Travis Totcky

Trevor "Kuiper" Hamblin

Trevor Hannon

Trey Ross

Tristan Smith

Troy Brown

Troy Lenze

Tsire Iz Divyn

Two Steps Over the Horizon

TwoQuestions

Tybar Sunsong

Tyler Brenman

Tyler Perry

Tyler Shield

Tyler Wirth

Tyson Collins

Unnecessary Honorific Pretentious
Title Indeterminate Noun

Unrepentant Sadness Sage

Unsalient Vigilance of the
Maker (Creation Gate)

unseenlibrarian

V. Lopez

Vagabond Reverie

VagueZ

Valerie

Vanya Evette Spiderfist

Vengeful Cry of a Songbird
Pierced by Spears

Vera of the Huskers

Verdant Sorrow's Malice

Vernon Lee Leggett Jr

Veronica

Vessel Wrapped in Diamond Glory

Viatos

Vibrant Author of Stories Untold

Victor De Sena

Victor T.

Viks Tori

Vincent "Victorien Loyola" MORA

vincent furstenberger

Vincent Gonsalves

Vincent Turchetta

Violet Green

Viridian Sun

Virtud Pecaminosa
Visage of the Lost and Forgotten Dead
Vise
Voice of the Heavens
Vojtech Pribyl
VoltaicOvine
VonSatanburger, Executive Deathlord
Vucrulez
W. Wheelless
W.King
Wajanai Snidvongs
Walker Glassmire
Walker of Starless Skies
Walter B. Schirmacher
Walter F. Croft
Wanderer Upon Roads of Shadow
Wandering Ninuan Dustling
Waroth Keldire
Watcher of the Righteous Dead
Wayne Harris
Wayne Seeger
WDG
Weltwandler
Wes McM.
Whisper in the Void

Whispers From Beyond
Wielder of the Cursed Bones
Will Figueiredo
Will Hudson
William Bethel
William E Powers III
William Guyaux
William Martin, Crown of
Unceasing Numbers
William Powers
William Romanenko
William Schuchman
Willow Lavender
Willy Kaceres, Dark
Master of Whispers
Winter Ayars
Winters Last Threnody
Wolfgang - Tepet Talin - Neckel
Wolfspectre
Worldly Cannibal
worm
Wrathful Tiger in Broken Chains
Xander Critchley
Xiwo Xerase
Xuanlu Song of the New Dawn

Xyrue
Y. Krehl
Yamajin
Yannick Gueye
Yellow Blade
Yesman
YOLF
Yuno
Z. Pollak
Zach M
Zachary C.
Zachary Shar-D'Angelo
Zachery Naldrett
Zack Jeffreys
Zack Simon
Zak Strassberg
Zalera Amrit, The Midnight Swan
Zarick
Z-Dawg
ZenDaemon
Zeustopher
zmef
ZTL
Zxpie Zander

Exalted Retailer

Connecticut Exalted Nexus
Daniel Gochnauer: Demolition
Games, Salt Lake City, UT

Estevan F. Queiroz
Trolllune (Lyon, France - www.trolllune.fr)

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CONCEPT: _____
ANIMA: _____
APOCALYPTIC ABILITY: _____

STRENGTH_____●○○○○○
DEXTERITY_____●○○○○○
STAMINA_____●○○○○○

CHARISMA _____ ●○○○○
MANIPULATION _____ ●○○○○
APPEARANCE _____ ●○○○○

PERCEPTION_____●OOOO
INTELLIGENCE_____●OOOO
WITS_____●OOOO

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<input type="checkbox"/> BUREAUCRACY	00000
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<input type="checkbox"/> LARCENY	00000
<input type="checkbox"/> LINGUISTICS	00000
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O	O	O	O	O
PERSONAL			_____ _____	
PERIPHERAL			_____ _____	
COMMITTED			_____	

CURRENT:_____ TOTAL:_____

CURRENT:_____ TOTAL:_____

[illegible][illegible]

ARMOR	SOAK	HARD	MP	TAGS
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
NATURAL SOAK:				FINAL SOAK:

PARRY: _____

RESOLVE: _____

EVASION: _____

GUILE: _____

RUSH: _____

DISENGAGE: _____

JOIN BATTLE:

[illegible]

Natural Soak: Stamina + Charms • Parry: ((Dexterity + Brawl, Martial Arts or Melee, whichever is appropriate to the character's current armament) / 2, round up) + Weapon's Defenses bonus
Evasion: ((Dexterity + Dodge) / 2, round up) – armor's mobility penalty • *Resolve:* ((Wits + Integrity + specialty) / 2, round up) • *Guile:* ((Manipulation + Socialize + specialty) / 2, round up)



INTIMACIES

[illegible]

CHARMS

[illegible]

INVENTORY

[illegible]



The Abyssal Exalted awaken, and the world holds its breath.

At the moment of their demise, each Abyssal was offered power, survival, and revenge. They swore to bring about the apocalypse, wiping all life from the face of Creation in service to the Deathlords and Neverborn. They are blood-soaked warriors, nihilistic evangelists, prodigious necromancers, perfect assassins, and bleak emissaries ready to work their epic will upon the world. With their baleful power, they may doom existence...or break their oaths and rule as Death's Lawgivers.

This Exalted Third Edition sourcebook provides everything players and Storytellers need to introduce the Abyssals to their story. Inside you will find:

- Rules for creating your own Abyssal characters, including their vicious, death-stained Charms.
- New character options, including artifacts, martial arts, and necromancy.
- Setting information for the enigmatic Underworld and its shadowlands.
- An array of ghostly antagonists and allies to populate chronicles with champions of the dead.

