Chapter Six: Latter-Day Masterworks

...and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might; and there came an arm and a hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water.

—Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*

This is the artificing chapter. Before we get going, let's discuss what this is and what this isn't.

What this *is*, is a set of bespoke systems to allow Exalts to create impossible items by infusing magic into their creations, or utilizing advanced superscience, or forging sorcery into enduring miracles. What it *isn't* is a system for porting capital-A Artifacts from **Exalted** into **EXvWoD**. This system doesn't make daiklaves. This system doesn't make warstriders. This system doesn't make any of the wild shit from **Dreams of the First Age**. Recreating a sword capable of parrying at atom bomb without taking a scratch remains impossible in the degraded reality of the World of Darkness.

Making a magic sword to fuck up your enemies with, though… *that* is something the Chosen can very much do.

The Argument

I'm now going to break down what these rules are and why they're here. If you don't care and want to skip the essay, tl;dr: the Wonder-crafting rules in **M20** are unusably fucked and if you let players loose on them they will fuck your game up, so I've replaced them with something new and purpose-fit. Go ahead to the "Wonder-Forging" header. Otherwise, keep reading.

In the initial, First Edition release of **Exalted vs World of Darkness** I did not include any provisions for making magical doodads at all. I felt very justified in this at the time. First, a major theme of the game is that the World of Darkness is a very different place than the Age of Sorrows. You have 10-ish points of Essence to spend rather than a pool of 60+ motes because reality is thin and worn-out and at the end of its rope. There's no Wyld-Shaping Technique because there's no sea of untamed potential *to* shape. Ancient sorcery has collapsed down to a single flat list of spells rather than three tiers of power. Essence 6+ is now impossible to attain (not that you need it). As a result, I felt well-justified in simply cutting out artificing. Omitting daiklaves, warstriders, and spell-capturing cords felt thematically appropriate. This is the end of time. You have only your own divine power to rely on, not the ancient panoply of your forebears. The Age of Legends is *gone*.

Second, this gave me a very convenient excuse to simply avoid a huge design headache. (Update from a few days after writing that sentence: Seeing as this section ended up clocking in north of 27,000 words and becoming its own fucking chapter instead of just being part of Chapter Five, *past me read that situation correctly.*) Artifact crafting has *always* been a horrendous pain in the ass to conceptualize and balance, in *every* edition, without fail. Just tossing Wonder-forging out of the game made my life *vastly easier* than having to line up and attempt, for a *fourth time*, to nail down a system that, frankly, ended up being the thorniest and most troubled part of *all three* official editions of **Exalted**.

Third, I felt that giving characters artifact-making capabilities detracted from the focus I wanted **Exalted vs World of Darkness** to have. I wanted it to be a game about reality on the brink,

about canceling the apocalypse, about picking up whatever tools and allies you had to hand and making a last desperate rally to stop the light from winking out forever. I did *not* want it to just be "**Exalted** invades the modern day." I did not want people to fort up and start rebuilding the First Age in Toronto. *The Age of Legends is gone.* We're *so far past* its ending that it is not coming back. This is a *versus* game. I did not want to drop in a major element that drew attention away from the *versus* and encouraged Exalts to focus on themselves. I still, to this day, feel that these were good reasons, and that not having any sort of crafting in the game was a solid decision.

It was not, however, a *popular* decision. Pretty much everyone who regularly plays Twilight-type characters expressed that they missed being able to do Wonder-making. So, when it came time for the **EXvWoD Companion**, I thought about the issue. My feelings really hadn't changed. I still didn't want Exalts rebuilding **Exalted** in the modern day. I still didn't think daiklaves and other signature-to-**Exalted** artifacts had any business in the modern day. I still thought Dawns should fight with fists, mall katanas, or desert eagles, not fifteen foot buster swords. I still didn't really want Exalts just sitting at home in a demesne cranking out game-breaking shit all day.

But… it's not like the World of Darkness was devoid of magic items, was it? No. Werewolves had Fetishes. Mages had Talismans and Devices. Even vampires and the Hungry Dead had a small assortment of magic doodads. So, I thought, I'll stick to my guns and avoid letting people import **Exalted** artifacts into **EXvWoD**, but I'll let Exalts play with the magic bullshit that already exists in the setting. I'll let them use **Mage** Wonders. I'll let them use **Werewolf** Fetishes. I suppose I can even let them *make* those things. Why not? It hasn't broken **Mage** or **Werewolf**.

Well, that theory panned out pretty well as far as Fetishes and other minor magic items go, but I made a couple of *severe* miscalculations by letting **M20** join the party. A recent campaign I played in which had a Twilight with Wonder-Forging Genius in the Circle convinced me that this wasn't just a rough spot, but a serious problem in need of urgent attention.

The Problem of Wonders

I'll make a confession: I knew that **M20's** Wonder-making rules were a convoluted, ill-described mess. I didn't really want Exalts to have that capability in the first place, but since the audience had clamored for it anyway, I figured that having to navigate the **M20** ruleset was a fitting punishment for running against the grain of the game's design to get what those players wanted.

The trouble is, I made this decision while juggling like fifty other bits of subsystem design and didn't pay close enough attention to *how* screwed Wonder-making was. How screwed is it? Let's delve into it.

(The point of this section, I should say, is not to shit on **Mage**. I love **Mage**. I know **Mage** is scary-hard to write for because of how open-ended it is. I *am* going to be very mean to **M20** in a minute, but that does not come from an urge to tear it down; it is because I feel the need to justify the decision I ultimately came to, which was that I had no choice but to rip out a hunk of the existing game and replace it. I should also, for the sake of fairness to Satyros Phil Brucato, note that having fucked-up Wonder-forging guidelines is not a problem original to **M20**. This has been a really shaky part of *every* edition of **Ascension**. *Many* talented writers broke their ship on these particular rocks. I should *also* point out that by re-appropriating and modifying those rules

for something they weren't originally designed for, I took existing instabilities and made them *much worse*, so the list of people who have fucked up **Mage's** Wonder-forging rules also now includes Yours Truly.)

First up: **M20**, page 653, defines a Wonder's rating in terms of "how many different powers does this thing have," rather than "how impressive is what this thing does." There are two problems with this right off the bat. For one, it doesn't match the majority of written examples, which mostly just do one or two things regardless of their rating. For another, it primes the average Wonder to be a shitty, minmaxy collage of useful bonuses rather than a cool unified magical item. It *also*, one paragraph later, suggests that a Wonder's dot rating corresponds to the highest Sphere dot used to make it. This will come back to haunt us later.

Next: The rules don't actually line up with the examples given. At all. Page 653 describes a three-dot Wonder as being "worth 7-9 bonus or experience points." What? If we then go on to the actual Wonders detailed a few pages later, Primium Countermeasures is a three-dot Wonder which has *four* potential grades of strength, costing anywhere from 4 to 10 Background points. All four, I guess, are a three-dot Wonder. The Implanted Plasma Cannon, another three-dot wonder, is worth 9 or 11 Background points. The Rebooter Self-Retrieval Bio-Printer appears to break every single rule or guideline to be found in either **M20** or **Book of Secrets**.

Moreover: While mages at least notionally have to fit their Wonders into a particular paradigm, Exalts have no such restriction, which is where the Calvinball really gets rolling. Alas, it's not where it stops.

Further: Mages at least have some checks and balances in that they need the Sphere dots to enact the effects they're baking into Wonders. In my infinite wisdom, to spare players from having to make two-thirds of a mage character sheet just to play a crafter, I waived that restriction, so Exalts get to ignore the fact that Sphere dots are eye-wateringly, testicle-smashingly expensive, and can just throw down five dots of everything *on* everything. Want a ring that lets you time-travel, come back to life when you die, turn invisible, teleport anywhere in the world, and read minds? That's a legal five-dot Wonder, rules-as-written, and *no problem for an Exalt to make*. It's *no problem for an Exalt to make twelve of.* It's also a chronicle-ruining piece of shit, but don't worry: it gets worse.

Finally: Mages at least have to deal with Paradox, right? Well. When an Exalt uses a Wonder, the Paradox accumulates on the Wonder. Oh, I thought to myself, well, at least you'll shred your Swiss Everything Ring in short order as you teleport about through time. Then I reviewed the Paradox rules. You know how much Paradox you get for successfully casting a vulgar effect in front of 10,000 witnesses? One. One fucking point. So just do that *twenty times* and your Wonder breaks. Unless you suffer the extremely minor inconvenience of dissipating that Paradox in a Dragon Nest, in which case, the sky's the limit. But hey, even if it does blow up, like I said before, you easily made 11 backups during downtime.

The whole thing has to go.

Exalts Using Wonders

If a mage gives you a Wonder, or you steal it, that's fine, whatever. Exalts can still *use* Wonders. They just can't *make* them anymore. If your Storyteller then decides a mage made the Infinity Gauntlet and gives it to you, what happens to the game is on him, not me.

Wonder-Forging

So, bottom line: Exalts can no longer make Wonders as defined in **Mage: The Ascension**, because making Wonders as defined in **Mage: The Ascension** is a meth-fueled hell nightmare. The Charms that used to do that have been re-written and can be found in Chapter Seven. Instead, Exalts are able to create *Prodigies*, *Splendors*, *Gadgets*, and *Arcana*. Explanations and systems for each are given in greater detail below, but briefly:

Prodigies are objects which have been imbued with supernatural qualities or powers. Prodigies *do a magical thing*, or *do a mundane thing in a magical way*. Examples include magic swords, flying carpets, and invisibility cloaks. These are your very traditional "magical items" and are the closest to the Artifacts found in **Exalted** proper, though they're still a lesser grade of magic. True Artifacts are gone and aren't coming back. If you want to play a traditional wonder-maker, Prodigies are the subsystem for you.

Gadgets are either future-tech working on advanced principles just beyond the grasp of cutting-edge science, or else are implausible prodigies of engineering that combine the functions of multiple objects. Unlike Technocracy Devices, these are genuine mad science, not magic cosplaying as science. Gadgets don't tend to work for anyone but their inventor. They're the easiest sort of special items to make, but are maintenance-dependent and prone to breakage. If you want to be a cutting-edge super-genius engineer or McGyver improv whiz, Gadgets have your back.

Arcana are uncanny creations capable of independent action: golems, homunculi, automata, undead horrors, and the like. There are a wide variety of Arcana available, from living statues to carry a sorcerer's stuff around to Abyssal-made necrosurgical war monsters. Arcana appeal to a wide variety of characters, from mad scientists to sorcerers.

Splendors bind together lingering traces of Age of Legends, grounding echoes of mythic power into a physical and spiritual manifestation. They project enchantments or curses into the world or onto their user. They're a weird, particular class of magical items designed with a point-build system, demanding to make and awkward to deploy but potentially pretty powerful. Heart-Eaters are particularly fond of them. Splendors are mainly the bailiwick of sorcerers.

Prodigies

Prodigies are the most straightforward variety of magical item crafted by the Chosen. Woven with enchantments during the process of their creation, they may exhibit miraculous properties and do impossible things. These are the laws and definitions that govern Prodigies:

• **A Prodigy must be crafted by an Exalt.** Prodigies are never existing objects which are later granted enchantments. They must be hand-crafted, hand-tooled, hand-forged, by a single Exalt or a group of qualified Exalted working together, under the intention of creating a mystical object. While the Chosen may have un-Exalted assistants help them with the construction of particularly large or complex Prodigies, they must be responsible for the vast majority of the work.

• **A Prodigy cannot take the form of advanced technology.** Prodigies take the form of tools, furniture, clothing, art, and decorations. A gun, clock, or motorcycle might be a Prodigy; a cell phone, laptop computer, or smart bomb cannot. Very few Prodigies require electricity to function; those that do take the form of machines that most people are very comfortable with. A magic vacuum cleaner might be possible; a magic drone definitely isn't. Broadly speaking, a

Prodigy must be created and maintained or repaired with the Crafts Skill, not Computer, Technology, or Science.

• **A Prodigy only generally carries one enchantment, or at most two related enchantments.** Prodigies are not conglomerations of random enchantments. They generally do one miraculous thing. A magic rope springs forth to do its owner's bidding. A magic carpet may fly about while carrying a rider. A magic cloak blends into its surroundings. A magic sword leaps from its scabbard and fights on its own. Or, a magic sword casts forth waves of fire when swung.

There are two recurring exceptions in the case of powerful Prodigies. First, a common enchantment of minor Prodigies is to simply be a peerlessly excellent example of whatever the object is: a magic sword that is incredibly sharp and durable, for example. This can be combined with a unique power in the case of highly-rated Prodigies, such as a sword that can shoot fire *and* is remarkably swift and sturdy. Second, a powerful Prodigy may have two powers that closely interlink with one another. For example, a magic car might have headlights which reveal ghosts caught in their beams… and the ability to run over ghosts while they're illuminated in this fashion without taking damage.

• **A Prodigy's form and function are always related.** A magic blender probably tears things apart or mixes them together in some strange way. It almost certainly only acts upon things placed inside of it. You don't just gesticulate at people with the blender and turn them into animals. That has nothing to do with a blender.

A magic sword defends, cuts, kills, fights. It does something martial. A magical ladder might extend to absurd lengths. A magical cloth hides whatever it is draped over. A magical clock strikes midnight when in the presence of a vampire. A magical lantern never consumes its fuel, burning forever. A magical flashlight projects sunlight. A magical sword *doesn't* turn the person carrying it invisible… although the blade *itself* might be able to become invisible, since that would make it better able to be used to kill people. A magical ladder *doesn't* start yelling when a vampire shows up. A magical cloth *doesn't* project sunlight. Enchantments are always something that intuitively makes sense for the object in question. They're never random mish-mashes.

This rule is allowed to have some flex for odd pairings with mythic resonance or which just seem cool, like a flying carpet, staff that transforms into a serpent when you throw it down, or cape that becomes wings and lets its wearer fly.

• **A Prodigy must be actively used.** Prodigies *do things*. You attack with magic swords, reveal stuff with magic lamps by shining their light around, or open doors with magic keys. Prodigies *don't* passively give a benefit to a character. Magic rings that make you stronger and magic tattoos that make you immune to poison are the province of Splendors. Magical clothing can straddle this line, but generally shouldn't get any more passive than "being incredibly tough and thus providing inconspicuous armor." Broadly speaking, Prodigies want to be situational enchantments that you would want sometimes but not all the time, like "a cloak that makes its wearer invisible," rather than "a cloak that gives its wearer +2 Stamina," which, shit, I'd sleep in that if I could. Also, a cloak (a concealing garment) that makes you invisible makes sense, while a cloak that makes you healthier and tougher… runs afoul of the "form and function" rule, above.

Basically, don't use Prodigies as ways to pad your character sheet's Traits. Splendors do that.

• **Prodigies usually care about who owns them.** Most Prodigies must be attuned before they can be used, and can only be used by the Exalted. Powerful Prodigies might ignore one or both of these restrictions, but doing so is part of what makes them powerful, which is to say you won't ever see top-shelf superpowers on Prodigies that anybody can pick up and use.

• **Prodigies are shy.** Prodigies are remnant embers of the power of the Age of Legends. Though capable of mighty feats, they are not as mighty as the Exalted who create them. They are not resilient enough to redefine the course of an era, and falter when pitted in opposition to the established momentum of mundane history. Or, in less baroque terms, they become unreliable when exposed to the scrutiny of the masses. This phenomenon, detailed below, is known as *mystic collapse*.

• **Prodigies cannot be boring.** Prodigies are narratively compelling, stylistically rich and interesting works of magic. They can't make the game boring. Their effect can't be to make the game engine sit there and jerk itself off. You can't build a Prodigy that makes it so that every vampire that sees it falls asleep as though the sun was up and stays that way as long as the Prodigy exists because going out and solving the fucking vampire problem is *your* job. You can't make a Prodigy that lets you store 5 extra Essence because *snooore*. You can't make a Prodigy that pulls some cutesy technical end-run around another magic item's restriction. If the instinctive response to a Prodigy is to go "ugh" then the magic won't cohere and it can't be made.

• **Prodigies can be daunting to make.** Stronger Prodigies require more than just an infusion of Essence and minor enchantments woven into their creation. They require the sacrifice (often literally) of potent supernatural forces to catalyze them.

• **Prodigies may require fuel.** Prodigies with very powerful effects may need to be fed Essence to fuel those effects. The most potent and earth-shattering of Prodigies—the kinds that would wildly deform the shape of a chronicle if used regularly—may require even stronger fuel than the breath of the gods.

Determining a Prodigy's Rating

Prodigies are rated from one to five dots. The primary consideration for a Prodigy's rating is the power of what it does.

A one-dot Prodigy carries a very minor enchantment, often one that simply makes it better at doing whatever it was that it already did as a mundane object. This is the rating of tools that reduce the difficulty to use them by one, or which are incredibly durable or elegant. If a weapon is optimized in this fashion, it's immune to casual wear and tear and won't break on a botch, either (although it *can* still be destroyed by concerted, deliberate efforts to do so), and also enjoys two of the following benefits:

• +1 damage bonus.

• –1 difficulty to attack with.

• –1 Strength minimum to wield.

• Double the normal Range.

Other one-dot Prodigies include minor enchantments that don't seem overtly supernatural, such as lucky dice or cards that always favor the character attuned to them, cups that neutralize poison, or small objects that are always in your pocket when you want them.

Two-dot Prodigies are enchanted with useful, mild supernatural enchantments. This is the level of a rope that ties things up for you (or unties itself on command), a car that doesn't take damage from intentionally ramming things, binoculars that can see through walls, or enchantments that make some part of the Exalt's life much easier or more convenient. Armored clothing that doesn't impair the Exalt is a two-dot Prodigy, as are highly-conditional effects that compromise another character's judgment.

Three-dot Prodigies include most useful combat enchantments, movement enhancements, illusions, and limited-scope mind control. This is the realm of utility enchantments that give you a significant advantage over people who aren't aware that you possess the Prodigy, such as invisibility cloaks or boots that let you walk up walls.

Four-dot Prodigies are powerful enchantments that provide three-dot benefits to groups (a flying bus), produce major tactical advantages in battle such as weapons that fight on their own or which launch area-of-effect attacks, and utility teleportation (a set of keys that, when thrown on the ground, teleports the Exalt and the keys to the car the keys go with). Four dots is the point where a Prodigy can move small groups into and out of other realms like the Umbra.

Five-dot Prodigies are the upper boundaries of magical items. They have a very wide swing range which may provoke steep costs at the upper bounds (see Prodigy Costs, below), but at their extreme upper end can include things like bringing the dead back to life or messing about with time.

These ratings can be modified by a variety of elements. Adding supernatural quality (as enjoyed by many one-dot Prodigies) to a higher-rated Prodigy raises its rating by a dot. Allowing a Prodigy to be used without requiring attunement raises its rating by a dot, while allowing non-Exalts to activate it adds another dot to the rating. If a modification would drive a Prodigy's rating above 5 dots, that modification can't be applied.

Some considerations can also reduce a Prodigy's rating. If a Prodigy possesses significant drawbacks, limitations, or handicaps, those can potentially lower its rating by one dot. Mostly, this is a matter of eyeballing and consideration. An enchantment that sears vampires with blazing rays of sunlight is pretty powerful if you put it on a silver cross and it's activated by brandishing it… but less powerful if it takes the form of, say, a door they have to walk through, which blasts them as they pass through, since you can't bring the door to the vampires.

Prodigy Attunement

Attuning to a Prodigy requires establishing ownership of it through at least a day's uncontested possession, and then spending fifteen minutes or so communing with the Prodigy within a Dragon Nest and making a successful Essence roll with a difficulty of (4 + the Prodigy's rating). Attunement remains active until someone else attunes to the Prodigy.

An Exalt may be simultaneously attuned to a number of Prodigies equal to her Essence rating. 4 and 5-dot Prodigies "take up" 2 Essence worth of capacity, but may still be attuned by Essence 1 characters.

Prodigy Costs

Prodigies which create area-of-effect attacks usually cost 1 Essence per use, as do those which produce some effect that functionally takes an opponent out of action (such as by offensively teleporting them out of the scene). In effect, if it seems like having free always-on access to an enchantment would cause it to be the most dominant feature of the chronicle, assign it an Essence cost.

Some Prodigies are capable of massively impactful, story-redefining effects. These Prodigies don't consume Essence to power their activation. They consume the potential of the world itself.

The Dragon Nest Background rates the security of a Nest rather than its intrinsic power. **Exalted vs World of Darkness** doesn't usually care how *strong* a Dragon Nest is, because they have a flat benefit for the Chosen regardless. In other World of Darkness games, Dragon Nests (most often called Caerns or Nodes) are rated on a scale of one to five dots, describing the depth and scope of their mystic potential. For the purpose of top-shelf Prodigies, we may assume that any Dragon Nest can be described as either "weak" (1-3 dots) or "powerful" (4-5 dots).

Prodigies which allow chronicle-altering feats such as teleporting a group of people anywhere in the universe, influencing Exaltation in minor ways, or unveiling the deep secrets of the supernatural world must be activated within a Dragon Nest, and consume a great deal of its power in the process. If activated in a powerful Dragon Nest, it is reduced to a weak Nest. If activated in a weak Dragon Nest, the Nest is destroyed outright.

Prodigies which allow chronicle-*defining* feats such as traveling through time, raising the dead, or influencing Exaltation in substantial ways (like transforming a Solar into an Abyssal) can only be activated within a powerful Dragon Nest, and consume its mystic strength entirely in the process.

Mystic Collapse

It is not the fate of these latter-day miracles to remake the common world. When exposed to the scrutiny of the mundane, their magic often falters. While Prodigies have no difficulty operating in front of a few mortal witnesses, large crowds render them unreliable. When a Prodigy does something blatantly impossible in front of a large group of ordinary human beings, *and those people notice*, a check must be made for mystic collapse. Roll a number of dice equal to the Prodigy's rating against difficulty 8, or difficulty 9 if the Prodigy is being used in an incredibly high-profile or momentous fashion (such as during a live, nationalized broadcast, or to murder the President of the United States). Success allows the Prodigy to function successfully. Failure immediately robs the Prodigy of its miraculous power for the rest of the scene. A botch shuts the Prodigy down for the rest of the story, and introduces a permanent flaw of some kind into its operation.

Mystic collapse isn't a risk if the Prodigy's function isn't undeniably supernatural (you can push a gun that never runs out of ammunition pretty far, or a car that resists damage from impacts). It's also worth repeating that mystic collapse occurs due to the *attention* of large groups of ordinary people, not merely their presence. An Exalt could probably transform a Prodigy necktie into a deadly asp and hurl it into someone's face in the midst of a gala ball with no real trouble, since only a few people are probably watching her at the moment of the transformation. By contrast, riding a flying carpet through the same ballroom would surely draw mass attention and provoke mystic collapse.

Finally, *ordinary people* doesn't just mean "people without magic powers," it means people without awareness of or involvement in the supernatural world. A vampire's knowing flunkeys, a Technocracy lab full of unenlightened assistants, or a Caern full of werewolf Kinfolk would not provoke mystic collapse.

Making a Prodigy

Creating a Prodigy proceeds in four steps: Having the capability, crafting the vessel, weaving the enchantments, and awakening the Prodigy.

Having the Capability: This part's simple. The Exalt must possess an appropriate Charm, such as Wonder-Forging Genius, in order to be able to make a Prodigy at all. Solars, Abyssals, Infernals, Sidereals, and Getimians possess such Charms.

Crafting the Vessel: The Exalt must, either working alone, together with a group of other Exalts with Prodigy-creating Charms, or assisted with minor un-Exalted support, physically construct the Prodigy. This takes however long creating a mundane, un-enchanted version of the object would, assuming the work is performed at a masterwork level. This process can be sped up with Charms like Craftsman Needs No Tools, as normal. At the end of the construction process, the primary architect makes an (Appropriate Attribute) + Craft roll against a difficulty two points higher than would be usual for the project. Success means the vessel has been correctly constructed and, if nothing else, the Exalt has an excellent example of a working mirror, bicycle, spear, or whatever else it is she's made.

Weaving the Enchantments: At every step of the construction process, the Exalt weaves whispered blessings and minor spells into the Prodigy. Its inner surfaces are carved with hair-fine sigils of power. Its steel is tempered with songs of glory. At the end of the physical construction process, the character rolls (Charisma or Intelligence) + Occult against difficulty (4 + Prodigy rating). Success means the Prodigy has been properly prepared and is ready to receive an infusion of power to uplift it from mundane object to divine panoply.

Awakening the Prodigy: The final step is to infuse the Prodigy with the power necessary to catalyze its latent enchantments. This is generally the most demanding element of Prodigy-making; luckily, a correctly-crafted and -enchanted Prodigy can sit idle in an Exalt's workshop while she makes her preparations for the next step for an effectively unlimited period of time. So long as the vessel suffers no structural damage, it remains ready.

To awaken a Prodigy, the Exalt must enact a ritual lasting (Prodigy's rating) hours, during which she infuses it with her divine Essence. (Prodigy's Rating x 5) Essence must be spent to properly catalyze vessel and enchantments.

While one-dot Prodigies can be awakened anywhere, Prodigies rated two dots and above *must* be awakened within a Dragon Nest.

One and two-dot Prodigies can be awakened with nothing more than this infusion of Exalted power, but stronger Prodigies require additional reagents. They *must* be tinged with the power of the modern nights, the power of the world-that-is to ground the power of the world-that-was.

In game terms, this means that some emblem of substantial supernatural power must be consumed in the course of awakening a three dot-Prodigy. Examples include the blood of an elder vampire, magic mushrooms plucked from the center of an extremely powerful Dragon Nest *not* controlled by the Chosen (in **Mage** lingo, tass from a 4 or 5-point Node), a minor faerie

treasure or sorcerous Wonder, or the offering of a spirit or ghost captured in an Essence Vessel (see below).

Four-dot Prodigies require the spirit and supernatural Essence of a potent monster to catalyze them: an elder vampire, a legendary werewolf, an ancient ghost, a master magician, a very powerful spirit, or the like. The monster in question should resonate with the enchantments and character of the Prodigy. Capturing their Essence requires the use of an Essence Vessel.

Five-dot Prodigies carry the same requirements as four-dot Prodigies, but demand even more rare and potent sacrifices: Methuselah or Antediluvian vampires, Incarna-level spirits, archmages, Malfeans, and the like. Again, an Essence Vessel is required.

Example Prodigies

Cerements of Preservation (•)

The traditionalist's interpretation of this Prodigy takes the form of a winding-shroud or very, very long waxed-cloth bandage which is to be wrapped around a corpse, though the enchantment could also potentially be imbued into a bodybag. A corpse wound about with Cerements of Preservation does not decay, allowing an aspiring necromancer or necrosurgeon to stockpile raw materials. Since the basic version of this Prodigy requires attunement to the Exalt winding it around a corpse, and Exalts who use this Prodigy often want several copies of it, Cerements of Preservation are often created as a two-dot Prodigy, allowing any Exalt to apply them without attunement.

Essence Vessel (•)

An Essence Vessel usually takes the form of a carved gemstone about the size of a baby's fist, or else an intricately-constructed mirror box inlaid with tiny gems and gold filigree—in either case, the raw materials for its construction require Resources •••• or the willingness to commit a few crimes. The Vessel, uniquely for a one-dot Prodigy, doesn't require attunement, but must still be used by one of the Chosen. It can be activated in the moments immediately following a monster's destruction by spending 1 Essence. The monster's dispersing supernatural powers and soul (if it has one) are drawn into the Essence Vessel and trapped there. The monster's image can sometimes be dimly glimpsed in the depths of the Essence Vessel. An Essence Vessel can only hold one monster's essence at a time. This is generally used as a catalyst for magical item crafting, but could also potentially be given to a mage for use in ritual sorcery, or simply "dumped out" through the expenditure of another point of Essence to free up the Vessel to capture a more lucrative target.

Purifying Chalice (•)

Name notwithstanding, this is more likely to be an ordinary-looking wineglass, beer stein, or shotglass than an ornate drinking cup. Whatever is placed in it becomes safe to drink. The Chalice neutralizes contaminants, poisons, diseases, and even supernatural maledictions. Vampire blood drunk from the Purifying Chalice will not form a Blood Bond, for example. The Prodigy does nothing to improve the taste of its contents, and so while it is possible to safely drink bleach or raw sewage from it, this still is not recommended.

The Purifying Chalice only offers its benefits to the Exalt to which it is attuned. A version of the Chalice which could be used by any Exalt would be two dots, while one that would work for anyone would be three dots.

Ever-Useful Rope (••)

This twenty-foot length of rope will obey the commands of the Exalt it is attuned to as best it can. It can slither from place to place like a serpent, tie things up, untie itself and return to its owner, coil itself neatly, or even stand straight up and anchor its far end to the air itself, allowing it to be climbed. While it *can* be ordered to tie someone up, the rope lacks the strength and aggression to overwhelm a resisting target, and as such cannot launch a grapple attack on its own; at best, it will entangle the target for a few moments before giving up, increasing the difficulty of the target's next action by +1 and lowering the difficulty for someone else to grapple them during that turn by –2.

Hard-Boiled Pistol (••)

This 9mm handgun never runs out of ammunition. It has the normal traits of a light pistol, but simply doesn't run out of bullets. Firing it ceaselessly and without let-up still isn't terribly recommended, since the Hard-Boiled Pistol's barrel can still eventually overheat and the weapon can still jam, and probably will after running a hundred bullets through it in a minute, but when you just don't have time to reload, well, hey, you don't have to. The gun *does* still need ammunition in it to work (it doesn't induct bullets into the chamber *ex nihilo*, the ammo in the gun just never runs dry), so it can't be fired after ejecting the magazine and clearing the chamber to show someone it's not loaded, alas.

The Hard-Boiled Pistol has only its normal ammunition capacity if fired by someone who hasn't attuned it.

Tracker Trinket (••)

This enchantment may be woven into a variety of different small objects. Wallets and small *objets d'art* are the most common forms this Prodigy takes. If the attuned Exalt ostentatiously displays the Tracker Trinket to a particular person, they must make a Willpower roll against difficulty 7, or else become seized with a powerful desire to possess the Trinket. While this compulsion isn't strong enough to make someone violate their Nature or act wildly out of character—which is to say, they won't simply try to seize it by violence unless they are a Bravo or otherwise have no compunctions about extremely antisocial behavior, and won't try to steal it from the Exalt's pocket unless they're an accomplished pickpocket—they *do* need to spend a Willpower point to resist the urge to take the object if they think they can do so without consequences.

The Tracker Trinket carries a second, related enchantment as well: the Exalt always knows exactly where it is so long as she remains attuned to it. Because of the nature of how this Prodigy functions, versions of it which do not require attunement cannot be made.

Midnight Clock (•••)

This ornately-tooled, gold-inlaid grandfather clock's bodywork is decorated with fanciful depictions of monsters creeping out from behind bushes, clouds, and tombstones. When its hands are dialed forward to 12:00, the clock and everyone in the same room with it are all snapped forward in time to precisely midnight. It does not require attunement, but may only be used by one of the Exalted.

Skeleton Keys (•••)

This jangling ring of keys will fit into and open any traditional lock, although they still can't bypass non-standard locks like maglocks or combination dials. They only operate for the Exalt who has attuned to them; anyone else will find they refuse to fit or turn.

Dancing Sword (••••)

This keen, double-edged blade can spring forth to do battle on its own when cast into the air by the Exalt who has attuned to it and commanded to fight. It attacks a target of the Exalt's choosing, and can switch targets according to its attuned owner's sense of threat priority when that foe is defeated (i.e. the player can decide who the sword attacks), or return to the Exalt to be reclaimed if no enemies remain. It can also be reflexively recalled at any point with a command, in case an enemy surrenders.

The Dancing Sword attacks with a base dice pool equal to its attuned owner's Essence rating, and has an effective base Strength equal to the owner's Essence rating as well. It has the traits of an ordinary sword. It reflexively attempts to parry any close-range attack directed at it, and to dodge ranged attacks, again using a dice pool of its owner's Essence. If struck successfully, the sword falls to the ground and must be manually retrieved and reactivated by its owner if it is to be used again.

Gadgets

Gadgets are products of one-of-a-kind engineering solutions, applications of cutting-edge scientific principles, or rediscoveries of lost laws of physics from older eras of the world. They push the boundaries of current knowledge, understanding, and materials science, using a pinch of Essence to bridge the gaps between inspired vision and final product. They are, in short, one-off products of "mad" superscience. Gadgets have particular qualities that make them distinct from other wondrous creations:

• **A Gadget must be built by its inventor.** Gadgets are always personally assembled or modified by their inventor. They cannot be produced by another character, even another Exalt, working from blueprints or plans; the result of such efforts never function properly. While an Exalt *can* have assistants help with the construction, their labors must always be guided and supervised in a fairly direct manner by the inventor.

• **A Gadget can be made of aftermarket parts.** Unlike Prodigies, which have to be assembled as purpose-built vessels for enchantment from the ground up, Gadgets can and frequently do consist of existing objects an Exalt has heavily modified, scavenged for parts, combined with something else, or re-assembled in some way. A junkyard is often an Exalted inventor's best friend.

• **Gadgets are always technological to some extent.** Not all Gadgets involve computer chips—the majority don't, in fact—but they're always children of the modern age. A Gadget won't take the form of a better sword. If it's some kind of tricked-out pair of boots, that's just because the gravity pads had to be mounted on *something* wearable, and even then, the boots probably have a shitload of cogs and watches all over them. Gadgets are vehicles that can rise up on stilts, jet-packs, flamethrower gauntlets, and turntables that remix time. Broadly speaking, a Gadget must be created and maintained or repaired with the Computer, Technology, or Science, not the Crafts Skill.

• **Gadgets either do something impossible, or combine possible functions of different things in an implausible way.** The majority of Gadgets consist of two (or more) devices torn apart and jury-rigged together into a hybrid device that adds the properties of one to the other, such as a shotgun + stove combo that heats its slugs red-hot as they leave the barrel; or an umbrella and rifle, resulting in an umbrella that is also a rifle; or a car and several dozen pogo sticks, producing a car that can do trick jumps and survive landing from them. The rest are purpose-build devices that do something weird or impossible. These are jet-packs, anti-gravity boots, mind-reading helmets, and the like.

• **Gadgets that do something impossible only do one impossible thing.** While it's possible to create a Gadget car jammed to the gills with unlikely James Bond gimmicks, a car that drives through time will do that and *nothing else*. Flying jet packs do not double as portable supercomputers. This restriction is the major limiter on suits of high-tech battle armor: it's hard to get them much above the steampunk ironmongery level before they're defeated by the demands of their own combined impossibilities. An inventor trying to make Iron Man armor will find herself stymied as she tries to design a single Gadget with both plasma hands *and* anti-gravity flight. Those who refuse to be put off from such goals are forced to design independent Gadgets and attempt to use them in tandem.

• **A Gadget's form and function are always related.** A twelve-barreled shotgun does exactly what it looks like it does: fires an assload of shots at once. A Gadget car goes places. A Gadget stereo will use sound to accomplish *something*. Even in the case of esoteric combinations, there has to be at least a conceptual link. A Gadget has to intuitively *make sense* when you see it in use. A penlight that focuses its beam into a cutting laser makes sense when you see it being used. A penlight that changes someone's appearance when you shine it on them… not so much.

• **Gadgets effect themselves or the world around them.** Gadgets *do things*. A car deploys wings and afterburners and flies. A laser gun shoots lasers. A supersmart computer program finds the data you tell it to find. Gadget *don't* generally give passive benefits to their user simply for carrying them around. There are no Gadget rings of +2 Strength. In the case of wearable technology, the Gadget either needs to be actively turned on and used (like a cloaking field generator built into a hat), or else it's going to be very attention-drawing if *does* provide passive benefits by nature of what it is (a suit of power armor made from a couple of salvaged cast-iron stoves and a micro-fusion generator).

• **Gadgets mostly only work for their inventor.** It's extremely difficult for anyone else to sort out the principles by which a Gadget functions, even if it's intended to be user-friendly. Gadgets tend to simply not work when other people fiddle around with them, and on the rare occasions they do, they usually break immediately after.

• **Gadgets are cranky.** Gadgets are prone to break down under intensive use. Most of them can be put back in working order afterward, but maintenance and repair are two constant companions for any dedicated inventor.

• **Gadgets can't be dull.** Gadgets are fun super-science inventions. They're not technical run-arounds to break the rules of the game engine. They're not allowed to make the game boring or annoying. There's no Gadget that manipulates probability fields to lower the difficulty of all your actions by two. It's not that a Gadget can't manipulate probability fields. A Gadget could totally do that. It's just that it had better be designed to help you cheat at cards, not wank off all your dice rolls, or it's not a valid Gadget.

• **Gadgets are largely inanimate.** Gadgets can take the form of "smart" software or voice-responsive objects, but generally speaking, robots are not Gadgets. Robots are a form of Arcana, and constructed using the Arcana construction system. The lines *can* get blurry, admittedly. Doctor Octopus's arms are Gadgets, even though in the Sam Raimi movies they sort of have a mind of their own. Is a motorcycle that acts like a faithful steed a Gadget loaded with smart software, or is it an Arcana shaped like a motorcycle? Honestly, you could probably represent it with either system, and the choice is best left up to you and your Storyteller.

> Talismans and Devices and Gadgets, Oh My
>
> This might seem like an odd question to everyone else, but it's one people with a background in **Mage: The Ascension** may be wondering: Why are Gadgets and Prodigies two different things? I'll answer it, since this system is replacing Wonder-crafting.
>
> Basically, this is a system for Exalts, not mages, and the notion that a plasma gun and a magic wand are the same thing is *extremely* specific to high-Arete mages. Exalts don't generally come from a background of viewing the universe as defined by the power of will and paradigm, and so will treat *magic* and *hypertech* as two completely separate affairs. And, *because they are not mages*, they are correct to do so. Gadgets are super-smart weird science held together with a little spit of Essence to make up the shortcomings in theory or available materials. They're not willworking masquerading as products of natural law. Examined with supernatural scrutiny, Gadgets show up as being nonmagical objects, or at most only very slightly magical.

Gadget Types

Gadgets come in three varieties: *Trinkets*, *Inventions*, and *Apparatuses*. These each have different qualities.

Trinket: A Trinket is a single-use Gadget, generally constructed shortly in advance of anticipating a need for it or even on-the-spot with the assistance of Charms such as Craftsman Needs No Tools. Trinkets are things like improvised firebombs or hyper-efficient acids whipped up with Science, flashlights modified to shoot a death ray precisely once and then totally burn out beyond any hope of repair with Technology, or an algorithm coded into your car's GPS with Computer that leads you to the nearest thin spot in the Gauntlet (and then burns the GPS out).

Invention: Inventions are conventional objects which share the qualities of other objects. Most Gadgets are Inventions. This is the domain of Death Car, the car made out of an old Studebaker and fifteen lawnmowers. It's the province of the Werefucker 5000, a portable spud gun or t-shirt cannon that fires entire cases of silver cutlery in a shotgun-like shrapnel blast. Here can be found the Slinky Tazer, which cannot be parried; the Hand Which Commands Flame, combining a welding torch and an old Nintendo Power Glove; and the Umbrellacopter, which can whisk its inventor from street to rooftop in a pinch.

Apparatus: An Apparatus is a Gadget designed to do something not really possible with conventional technology, or at least not conventionally *available* technology, or which functions much *better* than existing technology; jetpacks currently exist, but they're extremely limited and suck in many ways. Gadget jetpacks don't suck. An Apparatus can be anything from a plasma cannon to a hypnotic jukebox to an actual no-shit time machine. As a general rule of thumb, the

more story-defining an Apparatus's function is, the harder it is to keep it running all the time. A plasma cannon, which is just a really nice weapon, is fairly reliable. You can expect your time machine to basically catch fire and need to be rebuilt after every use.

Gadget Maintenance and Repair

This is a subject that varies between the three categories of Gadgets.

Trinket: Trinkets are designed to operate on a fire-and-forget basis. They break after being used once, either because that's intrinsic in their design (a bomb made out of shit found in a janitor's closet obviously consumes itself in use) or because they aren't built to handle the rigors of what they do (a sunlight flash-bomb overloads its mechanical innards and fuses them solid upon activation). You don't repair a Trinket, you just make a new one.

Trinkets *can* be stockpiled in advance of need, but not very effectively. Trinkets tend to degrade quickly. They're not made for storage or transport. Chemical states degrade. Quick solder jobs come loose in the trunk of a moving car. Glue loses its grip. In general, an Exalt can have a number of trinkets equal to her Essence rating stored and ready to deploy, and they'll hold together for a number of days also equal to her Essence rating.

On the bright side, unlike all other forms of Gadgets, once it has been made, *anyone* can use a Trinket. You don't need any special insight to throw a bubblegum-sealed Coke can full of volatile chemicals at a vampire.

Invention: At the end of any scene of rigorous use of an Invention, make an Essence roll against difficulty 7. Failure indicates that it has accumulated *static*, while a botch means it has *broken down*.

An Invention can accumulate static a number of times equal to the inventor's Essence rating without any real trouble. A static-afflicted Invention still works. Once the static accumulations exceed the inventor's Essence rating, however, the Invention breaks down. This can be avoided by spending one to three days (Storyteller's discretion, based on size and complexity of the Invention) performing intensive maintenance work on it and then making an Intelligence + (most appropriate of Computer, Science, or Technology) roll against difficulty (5 + static accumulations, to a maximum of 9). Success clears all static off the Invention. A botch makes it break down.

An Invention that has broken down must be repaired before it will function again. This requires an extended Intelligence + (most appropriate of Computer, Science, or Technology) roll against difficulty 9, made at one-week intervals, which must accumulate a total of seven successes. Success restores the Gadget to perfect functionality. A botch at any point during the repair process destroys the Invention.

If someone other than its creator tries to use an Invention, they must make an Intelligence + (most appropriate of Computer, Science, or Technology) roll against difficulty 9 to figure out how to properly operate it. Success allows them to use the Invention safely, precisely once, after which it promptly breaks. Failure means it won't operate for them. A botch generally ends badly for the person screwing with hypertech they don't understand.

Apparatus: During the process of its creation, every Apparatus is assigned an *impact* value, ranging from 0 to 3. At the end of any scene of field use, an Apparatus *always* gathers static, as described for Inventions.

"Field use" means taking the Apparatus out and using it to *do* something. An inventor character can putter around inside of his lab using his jetpack to reach high shelves, as a matter of roleplaying flavor, without racking up static at a drastic rate, but once the jetpack is used to meaningfully impact the story or solve a problem, it accumulates static.

An Apparatus can harmlessly harbor a number of static accumulations equal to its impact value. Once this value has been exceeded, the Apparatus breaks down. In the case of impact 0 items, this means the Apparatus *always* breaks after field use.

Like Inventions, an Apparatus can be cleared of static through regular maintenance. Maintaining an Apparatus is an extended roll of Intelligence + (most appropriate of Computer, Science, or Technology) against difficulty 9, made at one-day intervals and needing a total of five successes. Success clears all static off the Apparatus. A botch makes it break down.

A broken-down Apparatus needs to be repaired. This is an extended Intelligence + (most appropriate of Computer, Science, or Technology) roll against difficulty 9, made at one-week intervals, which must accumulate a total of 25 – (impact x 5) successes. Success restores the Gadget to perfect functionality. A botch at any point during the repair process destroys the Apparatus. Yes, this does mean that an impact 0 Apparatus is a huge pain in the ass to get up and running again. Impact 0 means "story-defining," which means you probably don't want it getting used more than once or twice per chronicle.

If someone other than its creator tries to use an Apparatus, they must make an Intelligence + (most appropriate of Computer, Science, or Technology) roll against difficulty 9 to figure out how to properly operate it. Success allows them to use the Apparatus safely, precisely once, after which it promptly breaks. Failure means it won't operate for them. A botch generally ends badly for the person screwing with hypertech they don't understand.

> Gifted Gadgets
>
> An Invention *can* be designed specifically to be used by someone other than the inventor. This requires both a decision made at the planning stage, and time spent training the recipient in its proper operation. The recipient can then use the gifted Gadget without it always failing or breaking. However, when the recipient uses the Invention, it *always* accumulates static at the end of the scene. (If the recipient doesn't have an Essence rating, roll one die anyway. The Invention breaks on a 1.) Nor can the recipient perform maintenance or repairs; that burden will fall on the inventor.
>
> If and *only* if the recipient is also capable of designing Gadgets, they can use a gifted Invention normally, as if they had created it themselves, and can perform maintenance on it, though not repairs.
>
> An inventor can still use an Invention meant for someone else as well as she could any of her other creations.

Making a Gadget

Creating a Gadget proceeds in several steps, detailed below.

Having the Capability: First, can the inventor do this in the first place? The Exalt must possess an appropriate Charm, such as Cutting-Edge Solution, in order to be able to make a Gadget at all. Solars, Infernals, and Alchemicals possess such Charms.

Describing the Gadget: Describe what the Gadget is supposed to be and do. Determine whether it's a valid Gadget, and whether the Gadget is a Trinket, Invention, or Apparatus.

If making an Apparatus, this is the stage at which its impact is set. Impact dictates how much the presence of the Apparatus is probably going to change the story to being *about* the Apparatus, and is rated from 0-3. The greater the projected impact, the *lower* the rating. Thus, an Apparatus that probably won't have any more impact than a low-level Charm purchase would be Impact 3, while something that lets you bring the dead back to life or travel back in time would be Impact 0. Lower Impact makes an Apparatus more prone to breaking down after being used, prevents it from being used as often without stopping to perform maintenance, and generally means it has less opportunity to be present in the story.

World-redefining inventions spend most of their time in the shop being maintained or repaired rather than used. That's the nature of these things.

Designing the Gadget: As the first step taken in-character, the inventor sketches out blueprints, schematics, or an action plan for the Gadget she means to create.

Trinkets don't need to be designed. Skip this step for them. You can pull Trinkets out of your ass on the fly.

Inventions and Apparatuses work almost identically during the design phase. First, the Exalt plans out a design for the Gadget. This is an extended roll of Intelligence + (Computer, Science, or Technology) against difficulty 9, with each roll made at the end of a week of intensive design work (for an Invention) or a month of intensive design work (for an Apparatus), which must accumulate a total of 10 successes. A botch means the Exalt must discard all successes and start over.

This design is unique, and can't be re-used again for the construction of subsequent Gadgets, owing to inconsistencies in available materials and conditions at the time of planned construction.

Materials: Next, the Exalt must gather any necessary materials for the project.

Trinkets require their materials to be on-hand, but by their nature Trinkets can usually be constructed out of whatever crap is available. At worst, the inventor might disassemble their cell phone or part of a nearby car for parts, but in general, a storage closet or garage can generally be raided to make most any sort of Trinket desired.

Inventions, being hybrid combinations of different sorts of objects, require those objects to be acquired. If the invention is the Umbrellacopter, you need an umbrella (easy) and some helicopter parts (may take a bit more doing). There may be intermediary bouts of crafting at this point if it's easier for the Exalt to just assemble some of the necessary parts herself than source them on the open market or steal them.

Apparatuses generally require some highly-specific, sometimes exotic materials, but the nature of Gadgets is to be hodgepodge collections of repurposed machinery. As such, acquiring the raw materials for an Apparatus is a Resources 4 expenditure if the Exalt simply purchases the best of everything, or a Resources 3 purchase if they're willing to go dumpster-diving, steal things from junkyards, or cannibalize pieces of old inventions they don't really use much anymore.

Workshop: The Exalt ideally then has a dedicated work space to begin building her Gadget.

Trinkets don't need a workshop. They're often made in the trunk of a car during a firefight. Trinkets are convenient.

Inventions are another matter. Depending on their size, nature, and complexity, the Inventor might need a fully-outfitted machine shop, or she might just need a table big enough to spread all her parts out on. Craftsman Needs No Tools and its equivalents help tremendously in cutting corners at this stage.

Apparatuses always need a dedicated and properly-equipped workspace, simply because they take so long to finish. That being said, Craftsman Needs No Tools and similar Charms can drastically lower the requirements for such a space, sometimes down as far as just "needs walls and a roof."

Construction: Within her workshop, the Exalt then builds the Gadget. Again, the particulars vary depending on what's being made.

Trinkets require an (Intelligence or Dexterity) + (Computer, Science, or Technology) roll against difficulty 7, or 8 if the Storyteller feels that the Exalt is really stretching to make the raw materials they have available work. Simple as that: success produces the desired Trinket.

Inventions require an extended Intelligence + (Computer, Science, or Technology) roll against difficulty 8, made at one-day intervals and requiring a total of 20 successes. A botch at any point ruins the project, forcing the Exalt to go all the way back to the design stage. Only one Invention can be made per story. The spirit of inspiration needs time to recharge.

Apparatuses demand an extended Intelligence + (Computer, Science, or Technology) roll against difficulty 9, made at one-week intervals and requiring a total of 20 successes. A botch at any point ruins the project, forcing the Exalt to re-start from fresh blueprints. After successfully completing an Apparatus, (5 – Essence rating) stories must elapse before another can be designed. At Essence 5, one Apparatus per story can be invented.

Example Gadgets

Sunbang (Trinket)

This bulky grenade-like object is made of pieces scavenged from several cameras and two kinds of rechargeable batteries. When activated and thrown, it emits a tremendous flash (and then promptly melts itself) precisely reproducing the ultraviolet wavelengths of sunlight. This bright flash disorients people who aren't expecting it (–2 dice on their next turn), and counts as one turn of exposure to diffused sunlight for vampires.

Arcana

Arcana are magical servants, slaves, familiars, or companions. They are magical creations capable of independent motion and action. Where Prodigies are enchanted items, Arcana are enchanted *beings*.

Arcana vary widely, depending on the sort of Essence used to give them a semblance of life. As a result, different sorts of Exalts may create different varieties of Arcana.

Broadly, Arcana break down into the following categories:

Golems are made from stone, wood, clay, metal, and the like. Though they may be roughly humanoid in body plan, they will never be mistaken for human. A golem's chief virtue is generally that it is stronger and more durable than other sorts of Arcana.

Phantasms are artificially-constructed spirits, anchored to a physical *keystone*. The most common sort of phantasms, *ephemera*, are mostly designed to operate in one of the otherworlds, with limited capability to physically influence the mortal world. Others are *emanations*, with greater agency to act in material reality but still not natively part of it.

Simulacra are Arcana designed in the image of humanity. They vary tremendously, from what are essentially sophisticated golems projecting an illusion of normalcy, to clones, to congeries of reanimated body-parts. A simulacrum can generally pass for human.

Horrors are Arcana constructed primarily out of dead flesh, with limited inclusions of inanimate support materials.

Arcana and the Chosen

Different sorts of Exalted possess the wherewithal to spark the animation of different sorts of Arcana with their Essence. Specifically:

Dragon-Blooded may create golems and ephemera. Their golems are always of strongly elemental character, as are their phantasms.

Solar Exalted may create any sort of Arcana save for emanations and horrors.

Lunar Exalted are able to create golems and ephemera.

Sidereal Exalted possess the capacity to forge golems and ephemera.

Abyssal Exalted can craft ephemera, and may build simulacra out of dead flesh. They are the only variety of Chosen capable of forging horrors.

Infernal Exalted are able to build golems, design simulacra, and are the only Exalted who may craft emanations.

Heart-Eaters can build ephemera and simulacra.

Qualities of Arcana

Arcana can vary tremendously, but at a baseline they have a number of qualities in common. It should be remembered that these qualities *can* be altered through designer intent or error, or through the growth of exceptional Arcana. They are, ultimately, a baseline, not hard boundaries of Arcana existence:

• **Arcana come into existence able to perform their functions.** Arcana generally don't need to be educated. They know the things they need to know to do the things they're made to do. A librarian-ephemera knows how to read, how to organize, and is in all respects a qualified librarian. Most Arcana can understand and speak their creator's native language (assuming they possess a mouth or other means of expression).

• **Arcana possess a general understanding of the world.** Arcana are not baffled by the existence of airplanes, cars, animals, or humans. They know what countries are. They know what laws are. They know what children are. They are able to navigate the world on a basic level to perform their tasks.

• **Arcana do not possess specific knowledge outside of their intended functions.** Arcana are bereft of trivia, unless being receptacles of information is their primary function. Arcana know that the mortal world is governed by laws, and thus know not to to smash a window and start looting things with police watching. They *don't* know the specific nuances *of* the law, unless designed to do so. They can't tell you who won particular historical battles, run down the pros and cons of different sorts of firearms, or identify major figures in organized crime. Arcana can dress themselves, but not in a well-coordinated outfit except by luck.

• **Arcana are able to learn things.** While it might not understand why polo slacks don't go with a halter top at first, Arcana *can* observe their surroundings and figure things out if they're smart enough. They can be taught. They can be trained. If allowed to interact with the world, they tend to become more sophisticated over time.

• **Arcana are loyal to their creator.** As an intrinsic quality of being, Arcana will obey both the letter and spirit (to the best of their understanding) of their creator's instructions. Moreover, they generally wish to protect and promote the interests of their creator. This is not an invincible quality, particularly in the case of older, more intelligent and strong-willed Arcana. It is difficult, but possible, to fray an Arcana's loyalty through protracted abuse.

• **The loyalty of Arcana is transferable.** An Exalt can gift an Arcana to someone else, declaring them to be its new master. This individual then inherits the loyalty described in the preceding quality, although with each transference, it becomes easier and easier for an Arcana's loyalty to decay.

• **Authority over an Arcana can be delegated.** An Arcana only attaches its true loyalties to one master. An Arcana can be told to follow the instructions given to it by someone else, or even a group of other people (the common example is being told to cooperate with the other members of a Circle of Exalts), and it will then generally do so. However, the Arcana always evaluates these instructions against its fundamental loyalty to its primary owner, and may disobey if it suspects it is being made to work against its owner's interests.

Creating Arcana

In order to make an Arcana, there are three considerations to start with.

Having the Capability: Is the Exalt able to make Arcana at all? To do so, the character must possess an appropriate Charm, such as Wonder-Forging Genius. Dragon-Blooded, Solars, Lunars, Sidereals, Abyssals, Infernals, and Heart-Eaters possess such Charms.

Select a Type: Next, decide what sort of Arcana you're making. The Charm that enables you to do so will tell you what kind of Arcana you are able to make. Note the Arcana Features associated with your Arcana type.

Decide on Power Level: Arcana are rated from one to five dots. A higher-rated Arcana can be of significantly greater power and complexity, but will also be much more difficult and demanding to construct.

Once these decisions are made, the Arcana is then built according to the following system.

Design: First, the Exalt plans out a design for the Arcana. This is an extended roll of Intelligence + Occult against difficulty 9, with each roll made at the end of a week of intensive design work, which must accumulate a total of (Arcana's rating x 3) successes. A botch means the Exalt must discard all successes and start over. In the case of Solars or Infernals designing golems or

simulacra with a technological rather than sorcerous basis (a big robot servant, or a human-like android), Technology may be substituted for Occult. In the case of Solars making simulacrum clones, Science may be substituted for Occult.

This design is unique, and can't be re-used again for the construction of subsequent Arcana, with the sole exception of horrors. Horrors may be built using a recycled template, so long as no element of their design is changed.

Materials: Next, the Exalt must gather any necessary materials for the Arcana.

Golems tend to require substantial amounts of raw physical materials such as wood, stone, and metal. Being able to simply purchase these materials requires that the character (or someone placing orders on her behalf) have Resources rated at (golem's rating + 1). Both 4 and 5-dot golem materials are a Resources 5 purchase, including things like rare woods of exceptional quality, expensive substances such as huge blocks of Italian marble, high-grade gemstones, complicated transistors and carefully-machined titanium braces, and so on. 5-dot golems also require the destruction and incorporation of a resonant magical item (such as a Fetish or Prodigy) rated at 3 dots or above.

Phantasms have the simplest requirements, needing only a keystone to anchor them in the world. This can be nearly any small object of great emotional or financial value. If the keystone is of great emotional significance, that significance need not necessarily be to the Exalt making the phantasm. In the case of 5-dot Phantasms, the keystone needs to be a magical item of some kind, such as a Fetish or Prodigy, rated at 2 dots or above.

Simulacra are the most variable Arcana in terms of raw materials. A simulacrum might potentially be a marble statue brought to life, a clone force-grown from a tissue sample, an android made from advanced composite materials, a variety of corpses stitched together and brought to life, or a bundle of corn sheaves and twigs bound into the shape of a person and woven with potent enchantments. As a result, the preparations required can vary *widely*.

Simulacra built on the model of a more elegant golem are fairly demanding, requiring raw materials worth at *least* Resources 3 at the most basic level, and rising to Resources 4 for 3-dot simulacra and 5 for 4 and 5-dot simulacra. Clones require either a fully outfitted cloning lab, which is a Resources 5 investment, or some kind of ramshackle Apparatus (see the Gadgets section) designed to facilitate the cloning, along with a genetic sample or samples. Androids present the same Resources burden as golem-style simulacra. Frankenstein-esque simulacra are at least comparatively cheap, requiring only the breaking of a number of laws to acquire, preserve, and store the necessary bodies. The rustic simulacra built by Heart-Eaters are the easiest to prepare, requiring only whatever trash the Heart-Eater intends to make the Arcana out of.

Horrors are straight-forward, at least: it's a mostly matter of meat. The Exalt needs lots of corpses to work with, along with some staples, surgical thread, structural rods, rivets, and metal plates to hold the construct together.

Workshop: Having designed the Arcana and gathered the materials, the Exalt must construct her creation in a workshop situated within a Dragon Nest. This can be especially troublesome for those pursuing a technological approach to their creation, since there aren't many Dragon Nests with fully-outfitted clone labs or machine shops already on the grounds, and those that do exist already belong to individuals *very* invested in maintaining control over them.

Construction: Within her workshop, the Exalt then crafts the Arcana. Again, the particulars vary depending on what's being made.

Golems generally require an extended (Intelligence or Dexterity) + Crafts roll at difficulty 8, made at one-week intervals, requiring a total of (Arcana's rating x 5) successes. In the case of robot servants, the roll is Intelligence + Technology instead. A botch at any point ruins the entire project. All materials are rendered unsuitable and must be replaced, and a new design must be drawn up.

Phantasms are built through sorcerous ritual rather than physical handicrafts. Weaving an epehemera or emanation is an extended (Charisma or Intelligence) + Occult roll against difficulty 8, made at two-week intervals, requiring a total of (Arcana's rating x 4) successes. A botch at any point ruins the entire project, renders the keystone unsuitable, and necessitates that a new spirit must be conceived and designed.

Simulacra, once again, can be produced through a number of approaches. Animated masterworks require an extended Dexterity + Crafts roll against difficulty 9, made at one-week intervals and requiring a total of (Arcana's rating x 4) successes. Androids require Intelligence + Technology against difficulty 9, made at one-month intervals, and demand a total of (Arcana rating x 3) successes. Clones require Intelligence + Science rolls at difficulty 9, made at one month intervals, and demanding a total of (Arcana rating x 3) successes. Patchwork corpse-people need an extended (Dexterity or Intelligence) + Medicine roll against difficulty 7, made at one-day intervals, and requiring a total of (Arcana rating x 7) successes. Finally, the manikin-husk simulacra constructed by Heart-Eaters demand only a single successful difficulty 9 Dexterity + Craft roll, taking the better part of an afternoon to complete. A botch at any point ruins the entire project, forcing the Exalt to discard her incomplete simulacrum and to start over from scratch with new materials and a new plan (with the exception of clones; she can re-use a clone lab or Apparatus, and must simply acquire a new tissue sample).

Horrors require an extended roll of Dexterity + (Craft or Medicine) against difficulty 8, made at daily intervals, requiring a total of (Arcana rating x 10) successes. A botch leaves the would-be necrosurgeon with a disgusting mess that cannot be animated, and must be disposed of in some way. She must acquire fresh bodies, though she *can* recycle her original design notes.

Animation: To bring her creation to life, the Exalt enacts a ritual or technical procedure lasting (Arcana's rating) hours, during which she imbues it with (Arcana's rating x 5) points of her own Essence. Finally, she connects the Arcana directly to the power of the Dragon Nest it was created in, making an Intelligence + Occult roll against difficulty (4 + Arcana's rating) to properly channel and protect the connection. The Dragon Nest is then exhausted of its power. If the roll succeeded, the Nest will recover after (Arcana's rating) weeks. If the roll failed, the Nest will recover its power after (Arcana's rating) months. If the roll botched, the Nest's power is permanently consumed.

> Whoops
>
> In case you were wondering, yes, botching at any point while trying to make a franken-simulacrum is a really good way to end up with a new Liminal in your chronicle.

Arcana Design

Before embarking up the creation of the Arcana, or upon its completion, the player also *designs* the Arcana. This process is much like character creation. Alternately, she can leave this step up to the Storyteller if she's not particularly picky about the fine details of her creation, and just wants a big thing made of stone to carry heavy shit for her.

Arcana (•) Creation

• All Attributes begin at 0 dots.

• Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to the Arcana's role.

• Divide 6 dots among primary Attributes, 4 dots among secondary Attributes, and 3 dots among tertiary Attributes.

• No Attribute can have more than 4 points.

• All Abilities begin at 0 dots.

• Rank categories of Abilities (Talents, Skills, Knowledges) in order of importance to the Arcana's function.

• Divide 11 dots among primary Abilities, 7 dots among secondary Abilities, and 4 dots among tertiary Abilities.

• No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Freebie Points.

• Record Willpower (2) and Backgrounds (0).

• Record Health Track (Bruised, Hurt, Wounded, Mauled, Crippled, Incapacitated — the Arcana lacks the Injured level most characters possess).

• Select 2 Arcana Features.

• Spend Freebie Points (15), and, optionally, purchase Merits and Flaws (max. 7 points).

Arcana (••) Creation

• All Attributes begin at 1 dot.

• Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to the Arcana's role.

• Divide 6 dots among primary Attributes, 4 dots among secondary Attributes, and 3 dots among tertiary Attributes.

• No Attribute can have more than 4 points without spending Freebie Points.

• All Abilities begin at 0 dots.

• Rank categories of Abilities (Talents, Skills, Knowledges) in order of importance to the Arcana's function.

• Divide 11 dots among primary Abilities, 7 dots among secondary Abilities, and 4 dots among tertiary Abilities.

• No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Freebie Points.

• Record Willpower (3) and Backgrounds (0).

• Record Health Track (Bruised, Hurt, Injured Wounded, Mauled, Crippled, Incapacitated — a standard track).

• Select 3 Arcana Features.

• Spend Freebie Points (15), and, optionally, purchase Merits and Flaws (max. 7 points).

Arcana (•••) Creation

• All Attributes begin at 1 dot.

• Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to the Arcana's role.

• Divide 6 dots among primary Attributes, 4 dots among secondary Attributes, and 3 dots among tertiary Attributes.

• All Abilities begin at 0 dots.

• Rank categories of Abilities (Talents, Skills, Knowledges) in order of importance to the Arcana's function.

• Divide 11 dots among primary Abilities, 7 dots among secondary Abilities, and 4 dots among tertiary Abilities.

• No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Freebie Points.

• Record Willpower (3) and Backgrounds (0).

• Record Health Track (Bruised, Hurt, Injured Wounded, Mauled, Crippled, Incapacitated — a standard track).

• Select 5 Arcana Features.

• Spend Freebie Points (21), and, optionally, purchase Merits and Flaws (max. 7 points).

Arcana (••••) Creation

• All Attributes begin at 1 dot.

• Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to the Arcana's role.

• Divide 7 dots among primary Attributes, 5 dots among secondary Attributes, and 3 dots among tertiary Attributes.

• All Abilities begin at 0 dots.

• Rank categories of Abilities (Talents, Skills, Knowledges) in order of importance to the Arcana's function.

• Divide 13 dots among primary Abilities, 9 dots among secondary Abilities, and 5 dots among tertiary Abilities.

• No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Freebie Points.

• Record Willpower (3) and Backgrounds (0).

• Record Health Track (Bruised, Hurt, Injured Wounded, Mauled, Crippled, Incapacitated — a standard track).

• Select 5 Arcana Features.

• Spend Freebie Points (15), and, optionally, purchase Merits and Flaws (max. 7 points).

Arcana (•••••) Creation

• All Attributes begin at 1 dot, save those in primary category, which begin at 2.

• Rank categories of Attributes (Physical, Social, Mental) in order of importance to the Arcana's role.

• Divide 7 dots among primary Attributes, 5 dots among secondary Attributes, and 3 dots among tertiary Attributes.

• Attributes in primary category can be raised to 7.

• All Abilities begin at 0 dots.

• Rank categories of Abilities (Talents, Skills, Knowledges) in order of importance to the Arcana's function.

• Divide 13 dots among primary Abilities, 9 dots among secondary Abilities, and 5 dots among tertiary Abilities.

• No Ability can have more than 3 points without spending Freebie Points.

• Record Willpower (5) and Backgrounds (0).

• Record Health Track (Bruised x 2, Hurt, Injured Wounded, Mauled, Crippled, Incapacitated — an extra Bruised level).

• Select 6 Arcana Features.

• Spend Freebie Points (15), and, optionally, purchase Merits and Flaws (max. 7 points).

Arcana Freebie Point Costs

Trait	Cost (per dot)
Attribute	5
Ability	2
Backgrounds	2
Willpower	1
Arcana Feature	7

Arcana Background Restrictions

Arcana do not get any Background points to spend natively, but *can* possess Backgrounds by spending freebie points. During the course of play an Arcana can accumulate any Backgrounds that make sense, such as Allies and Contacts, as they interact with the world, but during Arcana design only a very limited range of Backgrounds make sense. These are:

Alternate Identity (**V20**, p. 111), which assumes that the Arcana's creator has gone to some pains to provide it with appropriate identifying documentation and the like.

Cult (**EXvWoD**, p. 290), again assuming that the Arcana's creator has primed a group of mortals for the imminent arrival of a divine being.

Destiny (**M20**, p. 311-312), indicating that the universe has something special in store for the Arcana.

Familiar (**EXvWoD**, p. 293), though only up to a maximum of three dots, generally indicating that some sort of helper-beast was designed in tandem with the Arcana to assist it in completing its duties.

> Playable Arcana
>
> Since the rules for designing Arcana are, functionally, character creation rules, there's nothing really stopping anyone from playing Arcana. Playable Arcana have an embedded Intimacy of loyalty to their creator (or current owner), which may be changed to something else after (10 – Arcana's rating) consecutive stories of abusive treatment. Any time the Arcana's ownership is transferred, this permanently reduces the threshold for how many stories of mistreatment are necessary to give it a chance to abandon its loyalties by one.
>
> Player Arcana earn and spend experience points like Exalts. It generally isn't possible to purchase new Arcana Features with experience points.

Arcana Features

Arcana automatically gain the Arcana Feature for the type of Arcana they are at no cost. During the design phase, they also gain a number of features dictated by their dot rating.

• **Golem:** Increase the Arcana's Strength and Stamina by two each. This may increase their ratings above the maximums normally permitted for the Arcana's dot rating and Arcana Features. Golems may never have any Mental Attribute rated above 5 dots, even if another Feature might potentially provide it. A Golem cannot have an Appearance higher than 3, even if another Feature might potentially provide it. Golems can soak lethal damage, but not aggravated.

Golems are always obviously not human, and obviously made of inanimate materials.

• **Phantasm (Ephemera):** Ephemera can soak lethal damage, but not aggravated.

Select either the Umbra or the Underworld. This is the phantasm's native home. It may roam freely in its native realm, where it enjoys the natural ability to converse with the other native denizens and to navigate without undue difficulty (in the Umbra, this amounts to having the Charm Airt Sense, while in the Underworld it amounts to having several dots of Argos). The phantasm may manifest in the physical world only while within one hundred yards of its keystone, and must pay one Willpower to remain manifest for a scene. It is always aware when its keystone is being moved or disturbed, and may pay one Willpower to immediately teleport to its keystone's location.

If the phantasm's master speaks while within the keystone's presence, the Arcana hears her words wherever it may be. If she commands the ephemera to attend her, it may teleport to the keystone's location without paying any Willpower. If the keystone is destroyed, the phantasm is also destroyed. If the ephemera is slain, it may reform a year and a day later within its keystone. Each point of Essence fed into the keystone by its master quickens this recovery by 28 days.

Ephemera are always unmistakably phantasmal beings. Even when manifested physically, the edges of their body seem to roil and waver like fog, or to possess other overtly "spirit-like" or "ghostly" traits.

• **Phantasm (Emanation):** Emanations can soak lethal damage, but not aggravated.

Select either the Umbra or the Underworld. This is the emanation's native home. It may roam freely in its native realm, where it enjoys the natural ability to converse with the other native denizens and to navigate without undue difficulty (in the Umbra, this amounts to having the Charm Airt Sense, while in the Underworld it amounts to having several dots of Argos). The phantasm may manifest in the physical world only while within one hundred yards of its keystone, or within ten yards of its master. It must pay one Willpower to remain manifest for a scene. It may pay one Willpower to immediately teleport to its master's or keystone's location.

If the phantasm's master the emanation's name, the Arcana hears her words wherever it may be. If she commands the ephemera to attend her, it may teleport to her master's location and manifest without paying any Willpower. If the keystone is destroyed, the phantasm is also destroyed. If the emanation is slain, it may reform one hundred years later within its keystone. Each point of Essence fed into the keystone by its master quickens this recovery by 10 years.

If the emanation's master has learned The King and the Kingdom: The Thousand and First Hell, the phantasm may treat its master's Hell as a keystone.

Ephemera are always otherworldly, disturbing beings with demonic features of some sort that cannot be mistaken for as human.

• **Simulacrum (Artificial):** Artificial simulacra (those made of inanimate materials, or androids assembled out of advanced robotics) can soak lethal damage, but not aggravated. Androids are generally either outwardly of perfectly human appearance, or so close to human that they can hide any inconsistencies with heavy clothing. Most golem-style simulacra are blessed by a shroud of Essence that makes them look and feel human. Those rare androids that do not have a human or near-human chassis can generally project a formed-light illusion of a mundane appearance around themselves. In either case, this false-seeming may flicker or fail when the simulacrum is subjected to intense stress or physical disruption (moments of terror or anguish, or when the Arcana is roughly flung about or engages in violence).

• **Simulacrum (Clone):** Clones are, for most intents, mortals, although they're immune to the Delirium (see **W20**). They can only soak bashing damage. A clone may be either a genetic replica of a single person, or a hybrid of the features of multiple tissue donors — essentially a "child" of the donors, created in a clone tank.

• **Simulacrum (Patchwork):** Simulacra created by the Frankenstein method enjoy an additional Bruised health level, but suffer a –2 penalty to all social rolls to interact with ordinary people, who instinctively sense that there's just something *off* about them. In general, normal folks tend to react to patchwork simulacra with fear or distrust. A patchwork simulacra can never have an Appearance rating above 5, even if other rules or Features should enable it. The loyalty of patchwork simulacra frays more easily than other Arcana (if one is being played as a character, the threshold starts at 3 – rating scenes of mistreatment). Simulacrums can soak lethal damage, but not aggravated.

If a patchwork simulacrum's Appearance is less than 3, then it's clear at a glance that there's something wrong with them. At Appearance 2, it might be thought that they've had extensive reconstructive surgery after some sort of horrible accident, but at Appearance 1, they look like exactly what they are: a bunch of different people stitched and stapled together.

• **Simulacrum (Manikin):** The simulacra created by Heart-Eaters can only soak bashing damage. They look like people made out of odds and ends: bunches of newspaper held together with twine and sheets of chickenwire, or old corn-husks and bunches of sticks bound together with string. However, a manikin who touches a person's blood may spend a point of Willpower and assume their appearance for a year and a day, in the process learning their name and where they live.

• **Horror:** Horrors are an intensely limited form of Arcana in many respects. Their secondary category of Attributes can never have a rating higher than 3, while their tertiary category can never have a rating higher than 2. Their Mental and Social Attributes always begin at 0, regardless of their dot rating. All Social Attribute dots may be traded in for an extra Arcana Feature, if desired. Horrors with Intelligence 0 are effectively feral, hungry animals who can only understand and obey their master's commands. Horrors with intelligence 1 have enough basic cunning to obey their master's commands and navigate the world with enough self-awareness to hide themselves from scrutiny whenever possible, and may follow complex instructions from their master, but are otherwise exhibit very few of the qualities associated with higher intelligence. It's not that they don't *understand* the world as other Arcana do, it's just that they don't *care* about anything but obeying the master and perhaps feeding on living flesh.

On the other hand, all horrors can soak lethal damage, reduce all wound penalties by two points (and do not suffer wound penalties at all from bashing damage), cannot be knocked out by marking bashing damage in their Incapacitated health box, and get an extra Arcana Feature above and beyond what would normally be indicated for their dot rating.

Horrors generally look like exactly what they are: corpses mutilated and combined into a rotting war machine.

• **Body Spikes:** The Arcana's body is covered in deadly spikes, jagged stakes, or sharpened bones. Anyone who directs an unarmed attack against it must soak one level of lethal damage. The Arcana's grapples inflict Strength + 2 lethal damage.

• **Battlefield Repairs:** The Arcana can spend several minutes scavenging body parts from (hopefully) dead opponents and attaching them to its body. This repairs three levels of lethal damage or one level of aggravated damage. This feature is only available to horrors and simulacra made out of flesh.

• **Deadly Projection:** The Arcana can issue some lethal expulsion such as flames, lightning, or a noxious and disease-ridden stew of boiling dead tissue (Arcana rating) times per day. This is an attack made with Dexterity + Athletics at difficulty 7, with an absolute range of 10 yards, and inflicts (Strength) dice of lethal damage. Using this attack inflicts one level of unsoakable bashing damage on the Arcana.

• **Divine Favor:** The Arcana gains a Favored Ability, which may be raised as high as 6 dots. Increasing the Arcana's Favored Ability only costs one freebie point per dot.

• **Elemental Frame (Air):** The Arcana's body is made primarily out of materials strongly resonant with the element of air. It is much lighter than its frame would otherwise suggest. It is immune to damage from electricity, it cannot be moved against its will by powerful winds, and it is immune to falling damage, slowing in a gust of air just before landing. All Arcana constructed by Dragon-Blooded *must* take one Elemental Frame quality.

• **Elemental Frame (Earth):** The Arcana's body is made primarily out of stone or clay. It reduces the difficulty of soak rolls by one, or by two against harm inflicted by stone weapons. All Arcana constructed by Dragon-Blooded *must* take one Elemental Frame quality.

• **Elemental Frame (Fire):** The Arcana's body is made primarily out of materials strongly resonant with the element of fire. It is immune to damage from fire, and can radiate enough heat for up to five people to stay warm by huddling against it even in the depths of a blizzard. All Arcana constructed by Dragon-Blooded *must* take one Elemental Frame quality.

• **Elemental Frame (Water):** The Arcana's body is made primarily out of materials strongly resonant with the element of water, or else it is equipped with features such as gills and fins. If of an Arcana type normally subject to biological limitations such as the need to breathe, it cannot drown. It can swim, even if it is a bulky golem that by all rights ought to sink like a stone. If it is a sort of Arcana that *should* be able to swim, it swims at twice the speed it otherwise ought to. All Arcana constructed by Dragon-Blooded *must* take one Elemental Frame quality.

• **Elemental Frame (Wood):** The Arcana's body is made primarily out of wood. It gains Survival 3 and Animal Ken 2 at no Ability point cost. All Arcana constructed by Dragon-Blooded *must* take one Elemental Frame quality.

• **Elongated Reach:** Perhaps the Arcana has tentacles. Perhaps it can stretch its limbs. Perhaps it has an obscenely long neck, or arms. Perhaps its limbs are actually many, many arms joined together in a crackling network of joints. Whatever the case, it can take appropriate actions against targets or objects up to 8 yards away.

• **Environmental Adaptation:** The Arcana's body is immune to environmental or movement penalties and incidental damage from a certain type of harsh environment. This can protect it against arctic cold, poisonous fumes, or the burning heat of a desert, but not against intense perils such as industrial acids or molten lava.

• **Expertise:** The Arcana gains seven additional dots of Abilities, which may be used to raise them above three dots. Taking this Feature additional times provides only five bonus dots.

• **Fast:** Perhaps the Arcana has inhuman legs. Perhaps it is a dozen torsos stitched together and speeding along on a dozen sets of arms. Perhaps it is propelled by an elemental wind. Whatever the case, its movement speed and is doubled, or tripled if this Feature is taken twice.

• **Flight:** Whether due to wings, magical levitation, or bladders full of rotten gasses, the Arcana is capable of flight at its normal movement speed.

• **Hardened Form:** The Arcana's body is made of tougher stuff than others of its kind. If the Arcana could normally only soak bashing damage, it can now also soak lethal damage. If the Arcana could normally soak lethal damage, it can now also soak aggravated damage at difficulty 8.

• **Incredible Might:** The Arcana lowers the difficulty to lift and carry extremely heavy loads by two.

• **Integrated Weapons:** The Arcana's body is incorporates some sort of deadly weaponry such as metal fists, claws, fangs, horns, or sharpened bone protrusions. Her Brawl attacks inflict Strength + 1 lethal damage.

• **Living Bomb:** The name notwithstanding, this Feature is normally found on horrors. When the Arcana dies, it takes its enemies with it by violently detonating in a shrapnel-blast of crystals, bone shards, splinters, or whatever else. Everyone within ten yards at the moment of death must soak (Arcana rating) levels of lethal damage.

• **Luminescent:** The Arcana can shed enough light to illuminate a room through either integrated electrical lighting, bioluminescence, a mystical radiance, or partially wreathing itself in flames. It may or may not be able to direct this light like a flashlight as well.

• **Manifold Limbs:** The Arcana possesses a multitude of arms and/or legs. By spending a point of Willpower, it can take an extra action at the end of each turn.

• **Malleable:** Perhaps the Arcana is made from living clay, or is an ephemera formed of animate smoke. Perhaps its body is a nanoswarm that can recombine itself. Perhaps she's a bunch of little pieces of corpses held together with string and spells. Whatever the case, the Arcana can slither, squirm, disjoint or discorporate her body to gain great flexibility. The difficulty of all rolls to squeeze through tight spaces, escape from bonds, or gain control of a clinch *with the intent to immediately escape from it* are reduced by two.

• **Ooze:** The Arcana is coated in some sort of natural lubricant, such as a sheath of elemental water, a or a gruesome layer of mephitic rot. The difficulty of all grapple attempts against the Arcana increases to 8.

• **Poisonous:** The Arcana's body is highly toxic. Anyone imbibing or coming into infectious contact (that is, via a mucous membrane such as the eyes or nostrils, or open wound) with its blood or bodily secretions must soak (Arcana rating) levels of lethal damage.

• **Psychic Attack:** The Arcana can protect itself by assaulting the minds of others. First, settle on a dice pool that makes sense for the vector of the attack. A phantasm that rends an enemy's soul might make a straight Willpower roll, while a horror that sings soul-rending dirges would use Charisma + Performance, for example. This is treated as an unblockable or undodgeable (pick one) attack which costs one point of Willpower to deploy, and inflicts a base "damage" of (Arcana rating). The victim soaks with their Willpower. If any "damage" gets through, the victim suffers a derangement for a number of days equal to the "damage" inflicted. Purchasing this Feature twice allows psychic attacks to be aimed at groups of targets in a cone reaching out to (Arcana rating x 5) yards.

• **Rancid Stench:** The Arcana is surrounded by an incredibly distracting, distressing, and usually disgusting aura. In the vast majority of cases, this Feature adorns Horrors whose presence is accompanied by a literally eye-watering pong, but it might also be used for phantasms surrounded by a psychic field of mild hallucinations or the like. Anyone within (Arcana rating x 3) yards of the Arcana increases the difficulty of all actions by one.

• **Rapid Healing:** If the Arcana is capable of natural healing, then it now heals at the same rate as Exalted do.

• **Reinforced Body:** The Arcana has been reinforced with armored plates. It rolls three extra dice to soak damage.

• **Resilient:** The Arcana has an additional Bruised (-0) health level. This Feature can be taken more than once.

• **Self-Maintaining:** This Feature is only available for golems, artificial simulacra, and manikins. The Arcana knows how to repair itself when injured, though it takes twice as long as an Exalt would to enact repairs and the difficulty to do so is increased by one.

• **Stealth:** The Arcana can use some method, such as color-blending, an optic camouflage field, or simply becoming the same substance as a nearby wall, to hide effectively. Reduce the difficulty of all Stealth rolls by two.

• **Superior Body:** The Arcana gains three additional dots of Physical Attributes, which may increase its traits to 6. Taking this Feature a second time provides only two bonus dots, but raises the permitted cap to 7.

• **Superior Mind:** The Arcana gains three additional dots of Mental Attributes, which may increase its traits to 6. Taking this Feature a second time provides only two bonus dots, but raises the permitted cap to 7.

• **Superior Poise:** The Arcana gains three additional dots of Social Attributes, which may increase its traits to 6. Taking this Feature a second time provides only two bonus dots, but raises the permitted cap to 7.

• **Technopathic Integration:** The Arcana has most likely has a machine-mind, though it might also have some other quirk like a technological spirit having been bound into it during its creation. Whatever the case, the difficulty of all the Arcana's Computer rolls are reduced by two.

• **Telepathy:** The Arcana can project its thoughts into the minds of other nearby people to communicate with them. It can communicate with its master across up to (Arcana rating x 100 miles) of distance. By spending a point of Willpower, it can also receive communications from someone… or, to put it another way, it actively reads their surface thoughts for the rest of the scene. The target can always sense this, and can shut the Arcana out by spending a point of Willpower.

• **Transformation:** The Arcana has a second form it can change into by spending a turn in concentration and spending a point of Willpower. This form might have slightly different Physical Attributes and might swap out one Feature for a different one, such as trading Reinforced Body for Flight when turning into a bird. This Feature can be repurchased to gain additional variant forms.

• **Tunneler:** The Arcana possesses great digging claws, or perhaps a mystic affinity for a certain substance that it can pass through easily. In the correct circumstances, the Arcana can dig through appropriate solid materials at its normal movement rate. Depending on how it accomplishes this feat, it might or might not leave behind a tunnel others could follow.

• **Unaging:** The Arcana is designed with especially durable enchantments, or has had its genetic profile modified to disable ageing, or has had its corpse sprayed with remarkably efficacious preservatives. If the Arcana is of a variety that would normally get older (or wind down over time) and eventually die, it doesn't. Phantasms and golems don't normally need this Feature to endure indefinitely, unless the golem is made of something notably prone to wear and tear like soft wood or wax.

• **Undying:** When the Arcana is slain, the spark of Essence within it tries to surge back to life. Roll its Arcana rating against difficulty 6. On a success, the Arcana returns to life a few minutes, hours, or days later and permanently reduces its rating by one dot. If this reduces the Arcana to a

rating of zero, then it will unavoidably fall dead again, this time for good, at the end of the current story.

• **Unfeeling:** The Arcana cannot feel pain. It reduces all wound penalties by two, and takes no wound penalties at all from bashing damage. Horrors cannot take this feature, as it is already built into them.

• **Unnatural Sense:** The Arcana has some superhuman sense, such as the ability to see in infrared, to see in the dark, or to hear radio waves.

• **Venomous:** The Arcana has some sort of deadly attack build into it, usually through Integrated Weapons, and that attack is envenomed, inflicting +2 base damage if it is possible for the target to be poisoned. If the Arcana lacks such a weapon, then it has some sort of integrated poison delivery system such as a small needle somewhere on its body, and must lock in a grapple to deliver it. Venom delivered in this fashion inflicts one level of lethal damage per turn of continued injection.

• **Verticality:** Whether due to specially adapted limbs, being covered with fingers, or embedded gravity-manipulating devices, the Arcana lowers the difficulty of all climbing rolls by two.

Arcana Repairs

Phantasms and non-artificial simulacra (including manikins who have donned a human guise) can heal themselves at the same rate as mortals when damaged. Golems and artificial simulacra can also naturally heal while in a Dragon Nest; otherwise, golems, artificial simulacra, and horrors must be repaired when damaged. For golems and artificial simulacra, repairing a single level of damage requires a number of hours of work equal to (1 + the wound penalty associated with the health level being restored) and a Dexterity + (Craft or Technology, as appropriate) roll at difficulty 6 for bashing damage, 7 for lethal damage, and 8 for aggravated damage. Mending a level of damage to a horror requires thirty minutes of work and a Dexterity + (Craft or Medicine) roll against the same difficulty profile.

Only Exalted (or supernatural beings with valid qualifications, such as some mages) may repair damage to golems or simulacra, but anyone can patch up a horror, assuming the awful thing will let them work without trying to eat them.

Arcana Flaws

Arcana can possess Flaws as a result of mistakes made in their design, or tradeoffs incorporated to squeeze out more power elsewhere. While a number of standard Flaws found in other World of Darkness books are certainly also applicable to Arcana (a clone could easily also be a child, for example), the following are a selection of Arcana-specific Flaws.

Hideous (1 pt. Flaw)

The Arcana's appearance is monstrous, revolting, or terrifying. Its Appearance is permanently rated at 0. Horrors can take this Flaw, and usually do, but it awards no points for them.

Dependence (1-5pt. Flaw)

The Arcana has either a highly specific need that must periodically be met for it to remain alive and animate. It must either be fed a very specific substance, ritually recharged with magic from a Dragon Nest by one of the Chosen, or recharged with a highly specific fuel or power source. Each time its dependence period goes by and the Arcana is left unsatisfied, it suffers one level of

aggravated damage that cannot be healed by any means until the dependence is satisfied. The value of this Flaw depends on how often the Arcana needs to be fed or recharged: One point for every month, two points for every two weeks, three points for every week, three points for every three days, or five points for daily.

Decay (2-5 pt. Flaw)

The Arcana is slowly decaying or degrading. The Arcana ages rapidly, and it may experience progressive neurological decay (or whatever the equivalent to that would be for a creature made of stone). If it's a horror, then it hasn't been outfitted with preservatives to keep it from rotting away over time. If the Arcana has only a few years to live, this Flaw is worth three points. If the Arcana only has a few months, it's worth four. Add an extra point to the value if, at the end of each story, the Arcana must make a Stamina roll against difficulty 9, with failure indicating that it permanently loses an Attribute dot selected by the Storyteller. Subtract a point from the value of this Flaw if an Exalt can treat the Arcana with an entire week of dedicated "tuning" once per story to hold its decay in abeyance for the duration of that story.

No Mouth (2 pt. Flaw)

The Arcana lacks the necessary anatomy for easy communication. It can still understand speech, and it *could* speak if it possessed the proper facilities to do so, but alas, it doesn't. It can still communicate effectively with its master through pantomime.

Unwieldy (2 pt. Flaw)

The Arcana doesn't really have proper hands, as such; or if it does, they're not really equipped with functional fingers. It also doesn't have anything to adequately substitute for the lack, like nimble tentacles or pseudopods. As such, it suffers a +2 difficulty penalty when engaging in tasks requiring fine manipulation.

Animal Mind (3 pt. Flaw)

The Arcana has the mind of a beast. While it can still understand its master's commands, it cannot understand anyone else's speech, and cannot use language. It cannot be designed to possess the following Abilities: Academics, Computer, Crafts, Drive, Etiquette, Firearms, Finance, Larceny, Law, Science, or Technology.

Dragonbound (3-4 pt. Flaw)

The Arcana sustains itself by constantly drawing on the energies of a Dragon Nest. If it ever leaves the confines of a Nest, it begins to die immediately, suffering one level of unsoakable aggravated damage per hour, which cannot be healed unless it returns to a Nest.

This Flaw is normally worth four points, but may be taken for three points if it is possible for the Arcana's master (or another Exalt) to hold this decay in abeyance by feeding the Arcana one point of Essence per hour.

Weak Point (4 pt. Flaw)

The Arcana has a flaw in its design, and that flaw is unfortunately pretty obvious, like a big glowing opening in its chest or a large exposed gem on its forehead. This weak point can be targeted with a called shot at +2 difficulty, and if the weak point is struck, the Arcana suffers unsoakable aggravated damage.

Example Arcana

Walter (•)

Walter is a gelatinous lump of slime that can form itself into a humanoid shape when interacting with people, but mostly extrudes pseudopods to manipulate its environment. Walter was created to tend to the prisoners in a Twilight's dungeon (actually an old repurposed wine cellar, and the Twilight hasn't actually captured any monsters yet, so at the moment Walter mostly fetches wine upstairs and oozes around in the dark).

Type: Golem

Nature: Idealist

Demeanor: Conformist

Concept: Servile slime

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 2, Wits 1

Talents: Alertness 2, Awareness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Empathy 2

Skills: Crafts 1, Etiquette 2, Larceny 2 Stealth 3, Survival 2

Knowledges: Academics 1, Finance 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1

Arcana Features: Elongated Reach, Golem, Malleable, Ooze

Willpower: 4

Health: -0, -1, -2, -2, -5, Inc.

Splendors

Splendors are mystic vestiges of the Age of Legends, recovered and woven into potent miracles by the arts of the Chosen. They are essentially a form of ancient sorcery grounded into a worldly incarnation and bound to the command of an Exalted master. The Age of Legends is a time long gone, an epoch of dust which has left behind not even faint memories; and yet it underlies the structure of the world and the magic of the night. As such, Splendors are torn forth from the substance of the Earth and the bodies of the night folk in blood and violence, then captured and strengthened by spellcraft and further sacrifice. They are a potent addition to any Exalt's panoply. Ownership of a Splendor indicates that an individual has powerful friends, or else that they have slain the mighty once and are likely to do so again.

In short, Splendors are essentially a form of solidified sorcery. They normally exist as a formless enchantment upon their owner, and must be conjured into the world before their power can be unleashed.

Splendors are rated from one to five dots, with their rating based on the power and complexity of the Splendor. They take the form of either *Adornments* or *Fascinations*.

Adornments focus the power of a Splendor in upon its owner. They provide enchantments, transformations, or similar benefits to the Exalt who wields them. They affect only their owner herself.

Fascinations focus the power of a Splendor outward. They affect other characters. They beguile, transform, or kill, according to the enchantments and maledictions woven into them.

> What Is This About?: Splendors
>
> Splendors are weird congealed magic spells. They're rings or hats or capes that give you special powers, or else they're magic mirrors that fuck with people who look in them or trees that make people who eat their fruit love you. They're built out of parts from a point-buy system, which is itself simple, but deciding how to hook the parts together to produce results is very much like learning and employing a programming language. It's either something you'll find baffling and off-putting, or a deep well of sneaky weirdness you'll enjoy figuring out how to bend to your creative whims.
>
> Splendors are magic items for sorcerers. They're intended to give sorcerers the option to surround themselves with Dr. Strange-style weirdness, or to conjure forth offbeat *American Gods*-style downplayed miracles to engage in baroque problem-solving with. Alternately, they're a way for a sorcerer to gift weird and dangerous objects to her allies (or enemies…), since there are fairly strict limits on how many Splendors a character can attune at once.

Splendor Ownership

A Splendor always has an owner. This individual need not be an Exalt: anyone can own a Splendor. There's no limit to the number of Splendors a single individual might own.

When a Splendor comes into being, its creator automatically gains ownership of it. From that point, there are only two means by which ownership can be transferred. The Splendor may either be intentionally given to someone else, an act requiring conscious and deliberate choice and the expenditure of one point of Willpower; or else the Splendor may be taken. This requires the murder of its current owner. Ownership of the Splendor automatically transfers to whoever was most directly responsible for its former owner's death.

If the owner of a Splendor dies by natural causes, by their own hand, or by accident or mishap that is the fault of no one but themselves, then they pass into the underworld as a wraith and continue to own any Splendors they possess there.

The Neverborn Malfeans have collected a tiny handful of Splendors from souls fallen into Oblivion. With the Chosen once more abroad in the world, they may stand to gain more.

Splendor Attunement

Ownership is not sufficient to wield a Splendor. First, it must be attuned. Attuning to a Splendor requires an hour of undisturbed meditation upon it, allowing the Essence of the splendor to wash over its owner. Next, a successful Essence roll must be made against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating). Attunement remains active until voluntarily relinquished.

An Exalt may be simultaneously attuned to a number of Splendors equal to her Essence rating. 4 and 5-dot Splendors "take up" 2 Essence worth of capacity, but may still be attuned by Essence 1

characters. A character can only have one Adornment attuned to her at a time, but may be attuned to multiple Fascinations.

Un-Exalted magicians can also attune to Splendors, if they can somehow gain ownership of one. This requires an Arete roll for mages, an Instinct or Self-Control roll for vampires and hedge magicians, a Rituals roll for werewolves, a Gremayre roll for changelings, a P'o roll for the Hungry Dead (beware of botching), a Faith roll for demons, and a Sekhem roll for mummies, all made at difficulty (6 + Splendor's rating), with Splendors rated at 4 or 5 being impossible to attune, and only one attunement at a time possible.

> ### Attunement, Splendors, and Prodigies
>
> Splendors and Prodigies both require attunement before they can be used. This begs the question: do they both draw from the same "stock" of attunement "slots," or do the two different sorts of magical items have their own separate slots?
>
> It's the former. An Essence 2 Exalt could attune two Prodigies, or two Splendors, or one of each, but *not* two of each.
>
> Additionally, if a character becomes the beneficiary of the same helpful Element from more than one different Splendor, they don't stack.

Using a Splendor

Splendors normally lie dormant inside of a character's anima or spirit. Before it can provide any benefits, a Splendor must first be summoned. This requires a turn of concentration and the expenditure of one point of Essence (or, in the case of un-Exalted owners, of a point of Quintessence, blood, Chi, Sekhem, Gnosis, or whatever else).

Adornments promptly manifest, appropriately enough, adorning their owner and providing her their benefits. If an Adornment is removed, it ceases to provide its blessings until put back on again. If an Adornment is seized by another character who is not its owner, it provides them no benefit and fades away at the end of the scene, resuming its slumber in its owner's heart until summoned again. An Adornment's owner may banish it with a turn of concentration if the Adornment is in her possession.

Fascinations manifest in their owner's possession or immediate presence (as appropriate), and then remain for however long they ought to last, according to their rating. It's impossible to sever attunement to a Fascination while it is manifest, or to deliberately banish it before it has run its course. A Fascination's owner is always immune to any malignant effects it might produce. If a Fascination demands a dice roll, it uses its owner's traits.

A one-dot Adornment remains manifest for one scene. A one-dot Fascination remains manifest for one story, or a set period of time defined by its owner lasting up to one week.

A two-dot Adornment remains manifest for one day. A two-dot Fascination remains manifest for one story, or a set period of time defined by its owner lasting up to one month.

A three-dot Adornment remains manifest for one week. A three-dot Fascination remains manifest until some condition defined by the owner at the time of its summoning is met. If that condition is the passage of time, the Fascination may endure for up to a year.

A four-dot Adornment remains manifest for one month. A four-dot Fascination remains manifest until some condition defined by the owner at the time of its summoning is met. If that condition is the passage of time, the Fascination may endure for up to a decade.

A five-dot Adornment remains manifest for one year. A five-dot Fascination remains manifest until some condition defined by the owner at the time of its summoning is met. If that condition is the passage of time, the Fascination may endure for up to a century.

Countering a Splendor

Splendors are no more durable than their physical form would indicate (a Splendor which takes the form a wooden mask is exactly as sturdy as you'd expect a wooden mask to be). If destroyed, they are banished back to their owner's heart and cannot be re-summoned for the rest of the current story.

Creating a Splendor

Creating a Splendor is a three-step process.

Having the Capability: In order to be able to forge a Splendor, the character must possess an appropriate Charm, such as Legend-Severing Eye. Solars, Lunars, Abyssals, Infernals, Nightmares, Revelers, and Heart-Eaters possess such Charms.

Gather the Power: Splendors are formed from concentrated supernatural power. The Charms that enable an Exalt to create a Splendor also allow her to capture such power within the cage of her Essence and to store it for up to (Essence rating) stories before it dissipates. During that time, she must advance to the next steps and use the power before it dissipates.

But just talking about "power" isn't very informative. The might necessary to forge a Splendor can come from one of several places:

• **A formidable monster:** The Exalt may capture the departing supernatural essence, and possibly even the soul, of a monster in the moment of its death. In order to do so, the monster must be truly destroyed (as with Ghost-Eating Technique in the case of spirits that can later reform themselves, and the like), not just temporarily defeated or dispersed. Only powerful monsters are suitable for this purpose, such as elder vampires, veteran werewolves, master magicians, and the like. This can produce a Splendor rated one or two dots, depending on the Storyteller's evaluation of how powerful the monster was. In the case of *legendarily* formidable foes, such as a Methuselah vampire or godlike spirit, a three-dot Splendor can be forged.

This is the only means by which Lunars can create new Splendors.

• **A Dragon Nest:** The Exalt may perform a ritual requiring an extended (Wits + Occult) roll against difficulty 8, made at one-hour intervals and requiring 5 total successes, to tear out the heart of a Dragon Nest and take its power into herself. This permanently destroys the Dragon Nest, but allows for the creation of a three-dot Splendor.

This is the only means by which Revelers can create new Splendors.

• **An Exalted soul:** The Exalt may carve her own soul into a Splendor, or the soul of another consenting Exalt (Liminals excluded, since they lack souls). This can produce a three-dot Splendor. Whoever owns a Splendor that is also an Exalt's soul may issue that Exalt whatever commands they desire, and these cannot be disobeyed. As usual, when created, the Splendor

automatically becomes the property of the Exalt who created it, *not* the Exalt to whom the soul originally belonged.

This is the only means by which Nightmares can create new Splendors.

Focus the Power: Having gathered the power, the Exalt must then carve it into a mystic token. This is an extended Intelligence + Occult roll against difficulty (4 + Splendor rating), made at one-hour intervals. Success requires a total accumulation of (Splendor rating x 7) successes. Each roll requires the expenditure of 5 Essence, making this a process best performed in a Dragon Nest. Abandoning the project before gaining enough successes (due to distraction, attack, or more urgent business) means the Exalt must start over, and the rating of the Splendor she can make is reduced by one. A botch ruins the Splendor and disperses its power uselessly. If someone's soul was being shaped, this grants them an appropriately nasty Flaw like Nightmares, but another try can be made after the end of the current story.

Improving a Splendor

Four and five-dot Splendors can't be crafted outright. These must be attained through *infusion*: a process of funneling additional power into an existing Splendor.

One or two dot Splendors can be infused and raised by one dot by slaying a strong monster or destroying a Dragon Nest, but to take a Splendor to four or five dots, there are only two options. The first is to gather the power from slaying a legendarily powerful monster such as a godlike spirit, Malfean spectre, or thousands-of-years-old vampire. The second is to kill and take the power of an Exalt.

Power harnessed for an infusion lingers for the same amount of time as it would for Splendor-crafting. Before it dissipates, the Exalt must use it to reforge an existing Splendor that she owns, a process identical to the one described in "Focus the Power," above, save that abandoning the project before completing it causes the power to disperse and the Splendor to resume its prior form, while a botch damages the Splendor and makes it lose one dot rating and collapse into a less powerful configuration.

When improving a Splendor, you collapse it back down to a raw mass of Element Points appropriate to its new rating and remake it from scratch. It does not need to share any elements in common with its former function or appearance prior to infusion.

Designing a Splendor

Splendors are designed by combining *Form Elements, Root Elements*, and *Mystic Elements*. Form Elements describe the physical manifestation of the Splendor itself. Root Elements are the enchantments that form the fundamental building blocks of Splendors: magical benefits or curses. Mystic Elements are secondary enchantments that modify a Splendor's Root Elements.

First, decide whether the Splendor is an Adornment or Fascination. Adornments *only* effect the character who has attuned and is wearing them. Fascinations affect *everyone* who interacts with them indiscriminately, save for their owner, who is immune to their harmful effects (but not their beneficial effects, if they have any).

Fascinations always have a *vector* for their effects: something that people have to do, or fail to do, in order for the Splendor's effects to take hold. Decide on this while designing the Fascination. Vectors *must be* interesting and resonant with the form and function of the Splendor, and it must be possible to escape from them. A good example of appropriate vectors would be a

magical tree whose perfumed scent draws people to sample its fruits, which put those who eat them under the control of the Splendor's owner. A vector can generally be avoided or resisted with an appropriate roll such as Wits + Alertness to look away in time, or just a straight Willpower roll to resist a compulsion, generally against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

A *bad* vector is something like "when you breathe" or "when you blink" or "when you fail to recite an entire patter song from *The Pirates of Penzance*." Those examples are all boring, stupid variations on someone trying to say "you get fucked with no chance for interaction or storytelling." Don't try to figure out a way to do that, it makes your awesome magic item less awesome and less interesting.

One-dot Splendors are built with up to 4 Element points, exactly 1 of which must be a Form Element and 3 of which must be a Root Element.

Two-dot Splendors are built with up to 5 Element points, 1 or 2 of which must be Form Elements and 3 of which must be a Root Element. 1 point may be from a Mystic Element.

Three-dot Splendors are built with up to 7 Element points. They have 1 to 4 points of Form Elements and at least 3 points from a Root Element. Up to 3 points may be from Mystic Elements.

Four-dot Splendors are built with up to 9 Element points. They have between 1 and 6 points of Form Elements and 3 to 6 points of Root Elements. Up to 5 points may be from Mystic Elements.

Five-dot Splendors are built with up to 12 Element points. At least 1 of these must be spent on a Form Element, and at least 3 on a Root Element. There's no longer an upper limit on how many *can* be spent on Form, Root, or Mystic Elements as the player desires.

> I'm Repeating This Because It's Really Fucking Important
>
> *When you design Fascinations, you have to build in a way to avoid their effects.* The Elements don't usually have those cooked in so as not to stifle your creativity, but this system can produce things like "A little campfire that conjures a local blizzard around it, and convinces people who come to warm themselves at the fire to take all their clothes off so they freeze to death." If that effect is cooked all the way down to "a cold-based environmental hazard and a compulsion to take your clothes off," it's an inescapable death-trap for most characters. People need to be able to realize there's something wrong with the fire with a Perception + Awareness roll, and it's your job to put that in there because the Dangerous Compulsion Element doesn't do it for you. If people turn to stone when they look at your mask, they need a roll to look away. If you've just put a Splendor together that can poison everyone in an area, please structure it as a tree that sprouts poisoned fruit so that people can potentially *not* eat the fruit, and also so that it's more interesting than just a conjured poison cloud.

Form Elements

Form of Ash and Dust (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something that is evocative of death. It might be a funeral garment, or an old bone, or decorated with skulls. It might be smeared with crematory ash. This

Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the power of death*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

The Splendor can be summoned directly into the Underworld when made to manifest, if its owner desires. As the basis for an Adornment, it grants its user the ability to see and interact with ghosts on the other side of the Shroud. As the basis for a Fascination, it can interact with both the land of the living *and* the Underworld.

Form of Crackling Fire (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something that is hot, or brightly-colored, or energetic. It might be decorated with flame-like markings, it might actually be on fire, or it might simply be a free-standing flame which does not burn its owner. This Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the elemental power of fire*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

The Splendor cannot be burned. As an Adornment, it lowers the difficulty for its user to soak damage from heat or fire by two, or allows them to soak their Stamina to soak such damage if they're not normally able. As the basis for a Fascination, it may generate the creator's choice of: sufficient warmth to provide protection from freezing weather; sufficient light to see for (Splendor's rating) x 10 yards around the Splendor; or may be literally ablaze with the intensity of a bonfire.

Form of Dreams and Nightmares (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something that is evocative of the fantastic. It might be a child's toy, a brightly-decorated banner, a monster or carnival mask, or a treasure chest. It might be a kaleidoscope, or a bundle of bright balloons. This Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the power of the Dreaming*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

The Splendor stands out as a powerful work of magic when seen with chimerical eyes or mystic scrutiny, but it seems nigh-impossible to credit it with any specific significance if observed with purely mundane senses. Even when presented with compelling evidence that there's something weird about the object, anyone who hasn't made a magical survey of the Splendor must make a Willpower roll against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) to accept such a conclusion.

As an Adornment, it raises the difficulty to affect the user with hostile works of Glamour by one. As the basis for a Fascination, it may have one minor impossible feature such as floating in defiance of gravity, reflecting people's true selves when looked into, or aging backwards in time.

Form of Gentle Water (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something that is elegant, or fluid, or wet. It could be decorated with patterns of waves, or depictions of fish. It might contain liquid. Its colors might be washed-out or sea-hued. This Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the elemental power of water*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

The Splendor cannot be damaged by immersion, and it floats or sinks regardless of its natural properties of buoyancy according to whatever would be most convenient to its owner. As an Adornment, it allows its user to breathe underwater. As the basis for a Fascination, it may

generate the creator's choice of: thick fog banks; a gentle but steady rain; a light snowfall; changes in the way a nearby body of water flows or behaves.

Form of Graceful Winds (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something that is graceful, or cold, or crackles with electricity, or is marked with decorations evocative of winds and clouds. It might be made of ice. This Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the elemental power of air*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

The Splendor cannot be harmed by wind, cold, or electricity. As an Adornment, increases its user's basic movement speed, *before any multiplication by Charms or other powers*, by (Splendor's rating) yards per turn. As the basis for a Fascination, it may generate the creator's choice of: clear skies; specific constant (nonviolent) behavior of the wind (blowing north to south at a brisk but not dangerous speed, for example); or specific whimsical behaviors of the wind (whisking away people's hats, bookmark, or other loose items and depositing them next to the Splendor, for example).

Form of Imminent Violence (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of a weapon. It has the traits of a Melee weapon such as a sword or mace, or an archaic ranged weapon such as a bow. The Splendor must also have a one-point Form Element with some sort of *character* to it.

If the Splendor is *aligned with the elemental power of air*, this weapon produces a great thunderclap and burst of air when swung. Anyone struck by it who suffers more levels of damage than their Dexterity rating is knocked prone.

If the Splendor is *aligned with the elemental power of Earth*, this weapon is one which inflicts bashing damage. It inflicts one die of bashing damage more than would be normal for a weapon of its type.

If the Splendor is *aligned with the elemental power of fire*, this weapon burns red-hot when swung and its damage is considered to be fire damage.

If the Splendor is *aligned with the elemental power of water*, this weapon is always something flexible and graceful, like a whip or thin-bladed sword. The difficulty to parry or dodge its attacks increases by one.

If the Splendor is *aligned with the elemental power of wood*, this weapon is always something with a substantial amount of wood in its construction. The difficulty to parry attacks with it decreases by one.

If the Splendor is *aligned with the feral, primitive, and bestial*, this increases the difficulty of rolls to attack with it by one, but lowers the difficulty of damage rolls made with it by one.

If the Splendor is *aligned with the power of death*, this weapon inflicts aggravated damage to ghosts.

If the Splendor is *aligned with the power of the Dreaming*, this weapon may, at its user's discretion, inflict chimerical rather than real damage (see **C20**).

If the Splendor is *aligned with the power of the Spirit World*, this weapon inflicts aggravated damage to spirits.

Form of Portentous Moonlight (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something otherworldly. It may be a religious symbol, an overtly magical object such as a wand or pentacle, or a strange haze. It may be an inchoate thing of coalesced light which can be held and touched. This Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the power of the Spirit World*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

The Splendor can be summoned directly into the Umbra when made to manifest, if its owner desires. As the basis for an Adornment, it grants its user the ability to see and interact with spirits on the other side of the Gauntlet. As the basis for a Fascination, it can interact with both the physical world and the Spirit World.

Form of Primal Nature (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something that is primitive, crude, bestial, or a beast. Items tend to be natural objects like rocks and branches, or are crudely-worked, or are decorated with beast-motifs. More often, the Splendor is literally a living animal. This Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the feral, primitive, and bestial*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

While animal-form Splendors are never hostile to their owner, they do not obey that individual as a servant. Instead they will follow their normal instincts and habits, or else act according to some particular pattern of behavior established when the Splendor is designed. If the Splendor is an Adornment, it may be designed so that its blessings benefit the animal rather than the Exalt. Taking a second characteristic Form makes it possible for an Adornment to take the shape of both a beast *and* an item used by its owner, and to give its benefits to both of them.

Form of Steadfast Earth (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something that is solid and durable and sturdy. It might be made of stone, metal, or mineral deposits. It might be a crystal or gemstone. It might be dirty and roadworn. This Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the elemental power of earth*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

The Splendor is extremely rugged, and the first attempt to damage or destroy it in any scene automatically fails. As an Adornment, it grants its user one extra die of soak. As the basis for a Fascination, it may generate the creator's choice of: useful tools for a certain kind of work; an aura of quiet and serenity; periodic foreboding tremors in the earth.

Form of Verdant Wood (1 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor takes the form of something that is vital, or lively, or green, or fecund, or, most likely, something made of wood. It might even be a living plant. This Element defines the Splendor's physical form and gives it a *character*, and that character is *aligned with the elemental power of wood*. Other Elements may draw upon this fact.

The Splendor easily blends into natural surroundings when it would be useful for it to be hidden, and immediately stands out when its owner is looking for it, or to those it wishes to attract. As an Adornment, increases its user's Initiative modifier by two. As the basis for a Fascination, it may generate the creator's choice of: fragrant scents; an area encompassing (Splendor's rating x 5) yards in which animals and insects will not attack; enticing fruit, which may act as the focus for a Root Element; or an aura of peace and tranquility.

Form of the Hearth (2 pt. Form Element)

This Element can only be incorporated into Fascinations.

The Exalt touches a building or a spot of land about the size of a family home or a local playground when summoning the Splendor. It exists as an enchantment cast over the entire structure or a small defined outdoors area ("the gazebo and the area right around it"). The Splendor is coded with conditions and instructions on how to interact with the affected region. Root Elements such as Beautiful Lie (see p. XX) can then go to work upon any valid target in the area. Realizing that there's something weird about the enchanted area requires a Perception + Awareness roll against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

If this is the only Form Element a Splendor has, the difficulty of rolls to resist it are lowered by one, and it manifests in the form of a feature that would make sense in the environment (a table in a house) but is slightly out of date or out of fashion.

Form of the Hero's Shadow (2 pt. Form Element)

The Splendor manifests in the world as an enchantment embedded in a specific person present at the time of its summoning, chosen by its owner. If it has no other Form Element, then it appears as a mark like a tattoo somewhere on the infected individual's body. Wherever they go, so too goes the Splendor. If it has a physical Form Element, then it appears in the infected individual's possession, and will always return to them at the beginning of each scene even if thrown away, left behind, or given away. If its physical Form is something immobile like a tree, then the targeted individual is going to find that tree wherever they go for the duration of the Splendor's manifestation.

If the Splendor is an Adornment, then this Element allows its benefits to be enjoyed by the person to whom the Splendor is attached, even if they're not its owner and not attuned to it. Even if they're not Exalted at all.

Form of the Keep (4 pt. Form Element)

This Element can only be incorporated into Fascinations.

The Exalt touches a spot of land, or building or collection of buildings about the size of a manor house, high school, or large local park when summoning the Splendor. It exists as an enchantment cast over the entire structure or a large defined outdoor area ("this entire street and both of the sidewalks"). The Splendor is coded with conditions and instructions on how to interact with the affected region. Root Elements such as Beautiful Lie (see p. XX) can then go to work upon any valid target in the area. Realizing that there's something weird about the enchanted area requires a Perception + Awareness roll against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

If this is the only Form Element a Splendor has, the difficulty of rolls to resist it are lowered by one, and it manifests in the form of a feature that would make sense in the environment (a tree or bench in a park) but is slightly out of date or out of fashion.

Form of the Castle (6 pt. Form Element)

This Element can only be incorporated into Fascinations.

The Exalt touches a spot of land and enchants up to several city blocks worth of ordinary wilderness, urban, or suburban landscape, or touches a single megastructure such as a skyscraper when summoning the Splendor. It exists as an enchantment cast over the entire massive building

or defined district ("all of Compton"). The Splendor is coded with conditions and instructions on how to interact with the affected region. Root Elements such as Beautiful Lie (see p. XX) can then go to work upon any valid target in the area. Realizing that there's something weird about the enchanted area requires a Perception + Awareness roll against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

If this is the only Form Element a Splendor has, the difficulty of rolls to resist it are lowered by one, and it manifests in the form of a feature that would make sense in the environment (a mailbox on a corner, a parked car, an old Xerox machine) but is slightly out of date or out of fashion.

> Splendor-Granted Backgrounds
>
> Lots of Splendors grant Background dots. What if you already have that Background?
>
> Broadly speaking, when a Splendor gives you Background dots, they're added to any dots you already have. If this would push you above 5, you cap at 5
>
> Since Elements of a Splendor don't stack with themselves when they act upon you repeatedly, if you're building up permanent Background dots with a Splendor, you'd need to get a stronger result to "overwrite" the older one to do so.

Root Elements

Beautiful Lie (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor embodies a specific statement (such as "[The Splendor's owner] is your friend") and convinces everyone who falls under its sway that this statement is the absolute, unquestionable truth. Targets must spend a number of points of Willpower equal to the Splendor's rating to think otherwise, spent at a rate of at most one per scene.

This Element is almost always used as a Fascination, but *can* be incorporated into an Adornment, in which case the user is the target of the beautiful lie.

Blessing of Health (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor grants the gift of healing to those it affects. Roll Intelligence + Medicine against difficulty (10 – Splendor's rating). The Splendor may heal that many levels of bashing or lethal damage in each person granted the Blessing of Health, up to a maximum of (Splendor's rating) levels healed. Lethal damage is healed first, if present.

As an Adornment, the user must spend a point of Willpower to gain the Blessing of Health, and may take advantage of this Element no more than (Splendor's rating) times per story.

As a Fascination, an individual may only be granted the Blessing of Health once per story.

Dangerous Compulsion (3 pt. Form Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor embodies a specific compulsion, such as "Eat the fruit growing on this tree" or "Go to 129 West 81st Street, Apartment 5A, and spit on the door." It inflicts this compulsion on its targets, and those affected will obey so long as it doesn't violate their Nature and isn't "kill yourself." Dangerous Compulsion *can* induce people into extremely dangerous actions, like

running three blocks with their eyes closed or trying to juggle knives provided for them by Art of Conjury.

Dreaming a New Dream (3 pt. Root Element)

This Splendor changes a person's Nature.

As part of an Adornment, it grants its user a different Nature while in use. This Nature is chosen when the Splendor is designed.

As part of a Fascination, the Nature it bestows is based on criteria defined when the Splendor is designed. This might be eternally fixed (simply creating Bon Vivants, for example) or it might be contextual (changing a target's Nature to its polar opposite, or causing the target's Nature to match their Demeanor). If the Splendor doesn't contain a condition under which the target may revert to their original Nature, or the target fails to satisfy that condition, then they return to normal after one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Emptiness (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element does nothing at all. It is used to construct subtle or particular Splendors which focus on mystic elements without forcing the involvement of a powerful Root.

The Splendor gains one extra point to spend on Mystic Elements.

Enemy-Bestowing Blessing (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor grants each of its targets a true nemesis. Someone, somewhere, comes to hate them and to desire their destruction. They gain the Enemy Flaw. This Flaw lasts for one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Essence-Stoking Spirit (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of an Adornment.

The Splendor stokes the fires of the Exalt's Essence whenever she affirms her innermost self. When she regains Willpower from fulfilling her Nature, she also refills her Essence pool.

Fortuitous Reprieve (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor reweaves the target's destiny to ensure that she will receive help when she needs it. Upon summoning the Splendor, roll Manipulation + Leadership against difficulty 6. Each success grants the target one dot of Allies or Backup. If used in an Adornment, the user chooses how to divide the dots as she likes. If used in a Fascination, the distribution of dots is determined when the Splendor is conjured (and can be set to be either static or contextual). This cannot give the target more total dots of either Background than the Splendor's rating. She does not choose who her Allies or Backup are; they will reveal themselves as needed, as the need for them arrives.

If the Splendor is a Fascination, these dots last for one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Gleaming Reputation (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor blesses the target with positive notoriety. Upon summoning the Splendor, roll Charisma + Expression against difficulty 6. Each success grants the target one dot of Fame or Influence. If used in an Adornment, the user chooses how to divide the dots as she likes. If used in a Fascination, the distribution of dots is determined when the Splendor is conjured (and can be set to be either static or contextual). This cannot give the target more total dots of either Background than the Splendor's rating.

If the Splendor is a Fascination, these dots last for one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor. The Fascination can dictate, broadly, what sort of Influence its targets gain (either over a pre-specified thing, or the granted Influence can be contextual), but what they might gain Fame for is beyond the Splendor's control.

Illuminated Connections (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor creates an artificial web of debts and memories, granting inroads to useful people. Upon summoning the Splendor, roll Charisma + Etiquette against difficulty 6. Each success grants its targets one dot of Contacts, up to a maximum rating of (Splendor's rating).

If the Splendor is an Adornment, it grants these Contacts to its user. She doesn't know who these Contacts are. She'll be put in touch with them when she needs them. Once she removes the Adornment, they all cease to have any inclination to speak with her.

If the Splendor is a Fascination, it grants Contacts of a type defined when the Splendor is created to those who trigger it. These dots last for one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Invincible Assertion (3 pt. Root Element)

This Splendor defines a rigid certainty and imposes it upon existence.

When used in an Adornment, define a specific roll of (Attribute) + (Ability) and a specialty that it falls under. When the user makes such a roll, she cannot botch and cannot fail regardless of the difficulty. No matter what, she always generates at least one success. If this roll is opposed by another character, Invincible Assertion instead adds two bonus successes.

When used in a Fascination, define a specific roll of (Attribute) + (Ability) and a specialty that it falls under. Under circumstances defined by the Splendor, such rolls cannot fail in its presence, and always generate at least one success. If such a roll is opposed, it adds two bonus successes.

This Element may be incorporated into a Splendor more than once.

Long Reach (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of an Adornment.

The Splendor allows the Exalt to use one particular Ability, such as Larceny or Brawl, from much farther away than she really ought to be able. The Exalt can act from (Splendor's rating) x 5 yards past her normal limits.

Lucky Money (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor causes fortune to find its target. Upon summoning the Splendor, roll Wits + Finance against difficulty 6. Each success grants the target one dot of Resources, up to a

maximum rating of (Splendor's rating). The money comes to her thanks to a variety of unrelated events.

If the Splendor is an Adornment, it grants these Resources to its user, and they become suddenly unavailable for various reasons as soon as the Splendor is removed.

If the Splendor is a Fascination, these dots last for one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Malediction of Abandonment (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor strikes at the social connections that link its targets to the world. Roll Manipulation + Expression against difficulty (10 – Splendor's rating) when this curse strikes at a valid individual. They lose a number of dots of Allies, Backup, Contacts, or Mentor equal to the successes rolled, with the losses split up in whatever way the Splendor's owner desires. The lost dots return at a rate of one per story as people realize they don't know what drove them apart in the first place and come drifting back.

Memory-Smothering Pall (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor embodies the act of forgetting that a particular thing exists, such as "vampires," "laws," "the fact that Clark Kent is Superman," or "pain." It causes anyone it targets to become unable to remember that the specified thing exists. The maximum duration this forgetfulness can last (assuming it doesn't abate because the target fulfilled some condition built into the Splendor) is one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Mind-Breaking Art (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor inflicts a Derangement on its target.

As part of an Adornment, the Derangement inflicted is chosen when the Splendor is created. Its target is the user and the Derangement lasts as long as the Adornment is worn.

Incorporated into a Fascination, the Derangement may either always inflict a pre-set Derangement, or may inflict a contextually-chosen Derangement. If the Splendor doesn't contain a condition under which the target may escape the Derangement, or the target fails to satisfy that condition, then they escape from its influence after one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Private Idaho (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element creates a mystical "pocket" realm, accessible only through the Splendor. The Splendor *must* possess at least one Form Element with a *character*, which both defines the style and possibilities of the private realm, and defines the shape of the object which serves as means of entry to the realm. The Splendor *must* also possess a location-type Form element, such as Form of the Hearth. This dictates the *size* of the pocket Realm, rather than causing the Splendor to affect a widespread area as it normally would.

As an Adornment, only the user may enter this pocket realm. They must pay a point of Willpower while wearing the Splendor to do so. They leave a faint mystical imprint upon the

world while in their pocket realm, and must spend another point of Willpower to return to the world at the point of that imprint.

As a Fascination, the Splendor itself serves as a doorway into and out of the pocket Realm, at least for those who know the trick of triggering Private Idaho to admit them. Those already inside may leave at any time through an obvious doorway, unless other Elements are used to confound such attempts.

If the Splendor is destroyed or banished (or, in the case of Adornments, removed) while anyone is inside the pocket realm, they are violently ejected back into the real world at their point of departure, taking (Splendor's rating) in levels of lethal damage.

Pronouncement of Obscurity (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor shrouds its target in a veil of obscurity, hiding them from the world. Upon summoning the Splendor, roll Charisma + Etiquette against difficulty 6. Each success grants its targets one dot of Arcane, up to a maximum rating of (Splendor's rating).

If the Splendor is an Adornment, it grants Arcane to its user so long as she wears it.

If the Splendor is a Fascination, it grants Arcane to (or inflicts it upon…) those who trigger it. These dots last for one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Raise the Dead (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor raises corpses as zombies when certain criteria are met. These have the same traits as the zombies found on page 46 of the **Exalted vs World of Darkness** corebook. In order for this Element to function, there must be one or more corpses in the Splendor's immediate vicinity for it to animate. It can only animate one zombie per scene, unless it incorporates one of the location-type Forms such as Form of the Hearth, in which case it can animate up to (Splendor's rating) zombies per scene. During extended downtime, assume it generates that many zombies per day.

Zombies default to ambling about and devouring the flesh of the living unless given specific guidance through other Elements such as Dangerous Compulsion ("linger and guard this site") or Beautiful Lie ("you must do everything this Splendor's owner demands of you"). If a locale runs out of useful corpses, Art of Conjury may prove useful in providing more. If deployed over a graveyard, Sovereign Elemental Sway is handy for helping the animated dead escape from their graves.

Reputation-Burning Curse (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor strikes at the underpinnings of its targets' popularity and renown. Roll Charisma + Empathy against difficulty (10 – Splendor's rating) when this curse strikes at a valid individual. They lose a number of dots of Fame, Influence, or Status equal to the successes rolled, with the losses split up in whatever way the Splendor's owner desires. The lost dots return at a rate of one per story as people remember who the target is and why that once mattered.

Ruinous Misery (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor destroys its targets' finances and fortunes. Roll Manipulation + Finance against difficulty (10 – Splendor's rating) when this curse strikes at a valid individual. They lose a number of dots of Resources equal to the successes rolled. The lost dots return at a rate of one per story as their cash-flow equalizes, assuming their life hasn't collapsed in the meantime.

Sacred Protection (3 pt. Root Element)

This Splendor defines that which cannot threaten those within its influence, according to the Splendor's *character* as defined by appropriate Form Elements.

It provides immunity to damage from wind, cold, and electricity (air); being crushed, cut, or pierced by stone or metal (earth); being burned (fire); being drowned (water); being poisoned or struck by wooden objects (wood); disease (death); possession (spirit); or the twisting of the mind by supernatural powers (dreams). If its protection is bestowed by a Fascination, it lasts for a number of hours equal to the Splendor's rating, and may be set to persist indefinitely while within the Splendor's influence in the case of Forms such as Form of the Hearth.

If more than one characteristic is drawn upon when this Element grants its Protection, then instead of invincibility, damage is simply downgraded from aggravated to lethal, lethal to bashing, and bashing damage cut in half after soak (round down), while immunity to possession and thought alteration become the ability to make a Willpower roll at difficulty (10 – Splendor's rating) to immediately shake the effect off, and immunity to disease becomes the ability to make a Stamina roll at difficulty (10 – Splendor's rating) to immediately shake the infection off.

Shadow of the Conqueror (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of an Adornment.

The Splendor projects an overpowering aura of defeat upon those who oppose its owner. Once per scene, when the Exalt accomplishes something useful during a conflict (such as wounding an opponent, or getting one of her opponents to fold their Poker hand), she may spend a point of Willpower to draw upon this Element. All of her opponents must make a Willpower roll at difficulty (2 + Splendor's rating) or immediately become convinced that she is triumphant and they are defeated.

Soul Snare (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor captures souls. It may hold a number of souls equal to its rating. Captured soul of potent supernatural beings may later be fashioned into Prodigies or used in Splendor-crafting. Lesser souls might be bartered to beings interested in them, or used as display pieces.

To use Soul Snare as an Adornment, the Splendor must also have Form of Imminent Violence. The soul of anyone slain by the Splendor is drawn into it.

As a Fascination, Soul Snare either indiscriminately absorbs the soul of anyone who dies in its vicinity, or may be designed to exercise discretion and only capture *certain* departing souls. If combined with the Form of Dust and Ash, anyone who dies while interacting with the Splendor whose soul is *not* trapped by it is guaranteed to linger in the Underworld as a wraith. Coupled with Form of Dust and Ash *and* a location-type Form such as Form of the Hearth, this fate befalls anyone who dies in the Splendor's area of effect.

Subtlety (3 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of an Adornment.

The Splendor enchants the user so that bystanders without a strong attunement to the uncanny overlook her supernatural feats. When she fires a cutting blade of Essence across the street and slices a truck in half, onlookers may be alarmed because of the outbreak of sudden violence, but it will not occur to them that they've just seen something supernatural and frightening unless their Awareness rating is equal to or higher than the Splendor's rating.

Transformation (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor causes a transformation in accordance with its *character*, as defined by Form Elements such as Form of Graceful Air. The nature of the transformation depends on the Form or Forms in play, but might include transformation into things like a sparrow (air), pig (earth), a living flame (fire), a fish (water), a stag (wood), a walking corpse (death), a semitranslucent spirit (spirit), or a fantastic beast such as a sphinx (dreams). These are meant to be examples, and not an all-inclusive list.

As an Adornment, this Splendor requires a point of Willpower and a turn spent in transformation to either assume the characteristic form or return to the user's native form.

As part of a Fascination the maximum duration of the transformation (assuming it isn't cut short earlier by fulfilling some criteria built into the Splendor) is one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Twisted Horror Curse (3 pt. Root Element)

The Splendor twists its targets into monsters. Roll Intelligence + Intimidation against difficulty (10 – Splendor's rating) when this curse strikes at a valid individual. They suffer a cosmetic transformation and gain one Aspect per success, which may be chosen freely from among Lunar, Infernal, or Nightmare Aspects.

As an Adornment, Twisted Horror Curse's target is its user. She always gains a number of Aspects equal to the Splendor's rating, and they are always the same Aspects.

As a Fascination, the Splendor's owner may set a priority order for Aspects, may impose a general theme and leave the details up to chance, or may permit those transformed to do so according to their own desires. The maximum duration of the transformation (assuming it isn't cut short earlier by fulfilling some criteria built into the Splendor) is one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor. Alternately, the transformation may be permanent, but in this case the Splendor can only unleash this Element against a maximum of (Splendor's rating) individuals per story. During extended downtime, assume it can create no more than that number of monsters per week.

Wonder-Work of Heroes (3 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of an Adornment.

The Splendor grants the user one bonus dot of one Attribute, chosen at the time of its creation. This Element may be incorporated into a Splendor more than once, but no individual option can be picked more than twice. No option can raise an Exalt's rating above 5 dots unless the Splendor is rated 4 or 5 dots. No option can raise an Exalt's rating above 6 dots unless the Splendor is rated 5 dots.

Second Coming (6 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of an Adornment.

In the moment of its user's death, the Adornment self-destructs in a brilliant pyrotechnic display of unbound Essence, restoring her to life with one remaining unwounded health level. The Splendor is permanently destroyed in the process.

Shattering Futility (6 pt. Root Element)

This Splendor damns its targets to futile toil. Name a roll consisting of (Attribute) + (Ability) and a specialty. Afflicted targets automatically fail this roll whenever they attempt it. No matter what the dice say, they always generate zero successes. Alternately, a more mundane task can be selected, such as "waking up on time," "using a fork," or "dressing yourself." The maximum duration this curse can last (assuming it doesn't abate because the target fulfilled some condition built into the Splendor) is one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Damnation in Scarlet (6 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor transforms its target into a vampire. A Splendor *must* be forged or upgraded through the sundered power of a mighty vampire to have this Element. The target becomes a 14th generation Caitiff. The Splendor can only unleash this Element against a maximum of (Splendor's rating) individuals per story. During extended downtime, assume it can create no more than that number of vampires per week.

Flowering of the Soul (9 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor strikes its target's soul with the echoes of ancient glory, daring her to be more. A Splendor *must* be carved from an Exalt's soul to have this Element. The target makes a Willpower roll against difficulty 6. If they generate any successes, they gain a free one-point Merit which allows them to stunt as though they were Exalted. If they generate five or more successes, they Awaken as a mage. The Splendor can only unleash this Element against a maximum of three individuals per story. During extended downtime, assume it successfully creates no more than one mage per month, always from someone with Willpower 5+.

Flowering of the World (9 pt. Root Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor unfurls into a bastion of ancient power. It *must* possess Form of the Hearth to incorporate this Element. The area encompassed by the Splendor becomes a temporary, minor Dragon Nest for so long as the Splendor is deployed. Anything which destroys the power of the Nest also destroys the Splendor.

Mystic Elements

Fitful Malady (0 pt. Mystic Element)

The Splendor's power is flawed, and its curses and blessings cannot maintain their hold for long. Select one Element of the Splendor whose effects last for a limited time. That Element's

maximum duration is decreased by one category (from one month to one week, one week to to one day, and so on). If the duration is already "one day," the Element is reduced to one hour. Taking this Element grants one additional Element point, which must be spent on a Mystic Element.

Sorcerous Imbuing (0 pt. Mystic Element)

The Splendor's outward trappings may be modified to reflect the aesthetics of an ancient sorcery spell that the creator knows. For example, a Splendor that uses Scourge the World and Form of Graceful Winds to create a deadly ice storm might instead create a swirling rain of obsidian butterflies, or a downpour of venomous spiders.

Addiction (1 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor creates an addiction to its presence in those under its influence. Under criteria set when designing the Splendor, those interacting with the Splendor must roll Willpower against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) or else become addicted to its presence.

Art of Conjury (1 pt. Mystic Element)

The Splendor creates a mundane object which resonates with one or more of its *characters*, as defined by Form Elements such as Form of Crackling Fire or Form of Ash and Dust. Conjured objects can have a Resources value no higher than the Splendor's rating.

Incorporated into an Adornment, this Element allows the Exalt to spend a turn and to make a Wits + Craft roll against difficulty (4 + object's Resources value) to summon whatever object she likes to hand, so long as it resonates with the Splendor's character in some way, such as a shovel for an earth-affiliated (or death-affiliated…) Splendor. Objects can be created no more than once per scene.

Incorporated into a Fascination, this Element allows the Splendor to create particular objects in response to certain stimuli and conditions which are in accord with its character — often, this trigger is "when someone is cursed by the Splendor's Root Element." No more than (Splendor's rating) objects can be created per scene.

Deadly Poison (1 pt. Mystic Element)

The Splendor afflicts those it targets with a deadly poison. Poisoned individuals must make a Stamina roll against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) each turn or suffer a level of unsoakable lethal damage. Once the target has succeeded at this roll three times in a row, the poison has run its course.

This Element is normally part of a Fascination. It may only be incorporated into an Adornment if that Adornment has the Form of Imminent Violence, in which case the weapon is envenomed and delivers this Element upon inflicting lethal damage.

Elongation of the Curse (1 pt. Mystic Element)

The Splendor is loathe to relinquish its hold on those it claims. Select one Element of the Splendor whose effects last for a limited time. That Element's maximum duration is increased by one category (from one scene to one day, one day to one week, etc). If the duration is already "one year," the Element can be rendered permanent.

This Element can be taken more than once to enhance multiple Elements.

Evangelism (1 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor grips those who fall under its sway with a nigh-irresistible urge to go forth and tell others of what they experienced while interacting with it. At least once per scene, they must tell their story to at least one other person or else spend a point of Willpower to resist this Element. The compulsion fades once the Splendor's rating has been matched in a combined total of people who have heard the story and/or Willpower points spent.

Liar's Tell (1 pt. Mystic Element)

Whenever someone lies, the Splendor cracks, gutters, or otherwise visibly takes damage. After revealing its rating in lies, the Splendor is forcibly banished. As an Adornment, this Element only triggers if someone lies to its user. As a Fascination, it triggers whenever someone lies in the Splendor's presence (and this might, itself, act as the trigger condition for its Root Element).

This is, potentially, a powerfully advantageous enchantment… but it also can't be turned off, meaning that if anyone figures out how the Splendor works, they can disable it by yelling five bits of nonsense. Exalts are advised to exercise discretion.

All damage inflicted by Liar's Tell is repaired when the Splendor is banished and re-summoned.

Mystic Fortification (1 pt. Mystic Element)

One of the Splendor's snares or benefits is particularly wicked or potent. Modify one roll associated with the Splendor by increasing or decreasing its difficulty by two, or modify one value associated with activating or resisting its effects (such as the number of points of Willpower that must be spent to shake off a Beautiful Lie) by two.

Ode to the Incurious (1 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor causes anyone who falls under its sway to become utterly incurious about something defined when the Splendor is summoned. If the Splendor doesn't contain a condition under which the target may escape this blasé state of mind, or the target fails to satisfy that condition, then they escape from its influence after one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Overriding Vision (1 pt. Mystic Element)

This Splendor grants someone an Intimacy.

As an Adornment, it gives its user a new Intimacy while in use. This Intimacy is chosen when the Splendor is designed.

As a Fascination, the Intimacy it bestows is based on criteria defined when the Splendor is designed. The maximum duration before a target loses the Intimacy (assuming they don't win free of it sooner by fulfilling some criteria built into the Splendor) is one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

Sovereign Elemental Sway (1 pt. Mystic Element)

The Splendor manipulates and reshapes that which resonates with its *character*, as defined by Form Elements such as Form of Crackling Fire and Form of Ash and Dust. The benefits provided depend on whether the Splendor is an Adornment or Fascination, and on which Form or Forms it has incorporated.

Incorporated into an Adornment, this Element allows the Exalt to use Craft actions to sculpt wind, water, and fire as though they were clay, creating impossible works of art or short-lived elemental tools. Living wood can be induced to grow into patterns the Exalt desires in the same fashion, while the difficulty to work with stone or metal is reduced by two. The difficulty to craft dead flesh into Arcana may be reduced by two as well. The Exalt can raise or lower the Gauntlet by one degree per success on a Crafts roll to modify it, and can rework the chimerical identity of things.

Incorporated into a Fascination, this Element allows the Splendor to rewrite the details of landscapes and objects, rerouting the paths of a graveyard, changing the appearance of a corpse, repairing a rundown wooden shack, or making a barren landscape green and verdant.

Summons (1 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor can call those who have formerly interacted with it back to its location when the correct criteria are met. Make a contested roll of Charisma + Performance against the target's Willpower. If the Splendor gains more successes, the target is compelled to return to it, guided back by dreams and visions.

Unthinkable Ward (1 pt. Mystic Element)

The Splendor is shrouded in a psychic ward that makes it unthinkable to even consider harming it in any way. Anyone attempting to do so must succeed at a Willpower roll against difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) and then spend a Willpower point on each turn in which they attempt to do harm to the Splendor.

Beguiling Display (2 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor swirls with hypnotic and distracting patterns which simultaneously confound and compel the eye. So long as someone can see the patterns, all of their actions are taken at +1 difficulty. If not otherwise disturbed by pressing business, they'll idle in the presence of the patterns until they succeed at a difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) Willpower roll, made at 30 minute intervals.

Idling in the presence of the Fascination for one hour is a frequent activation condition for Splendors with this Element.

Enervation (2 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor scourges the hearts of those before it. Under criteria set when designing the Splendor, it attacks valid targets by rolling Willpower + Essence against difficulty (10 – Splendor's rating). Each success strips a target of one point of Willpower. Targets reduced to 0 Willpower lose volition and simply idle near the Splendor.

Idling in the presence of the Fascination for one hour is a frequent activation condition for Splendors with this Element.

Entrapment (2 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor bends space around itself so that paths recursively lead back to it. When someone wishes to leave the Splendor's presence they must succeed at a difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) roll of Perception + (Survival or Streetwise, as appropriate to the environment). If this fails, they are lost for at least 30 minutes before they can try again. Being caught in the Splendor's web for one hour is a frequent activation condition for Splendors with this Element.

If the Splendor also contains one of the location-type Form Elements, such as Form of the Hearth, then Entrapment may be used to rearrange the affected location's geography. Potential options include routing everyone who enters the afflicted area to a particular location within it, forcing a difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) roll to navigate the area successfully, causing specific rearrangements of how space connects to itself within the area, or causing specific spatial anomalies that only trigger for some people who meet certain criteria.

Panoply of Wonders (2 pt. Mystic Element)

This Splendor manifests the resources of a Background, chosen at the time of the Splendor's creation. The Background is either Arsenal or Library (see **M20**, p. 318).

As an Adornment, the character may spend a turn and a point of Willpower to simply manifest whatever equipment or research materials they desire from their Arsenal or Library. They have an effective rating in the Background equal to the Splendor's rating while wearing it.

As a Fascination, Panoply of Wonders requires that the Splendor also have a location-type Form Element such as Form of the Hearth. The chosen Background has a dot rating equal to the Splendor's rating, and manifests throughout the affected area.

Soul-Numbing Curse (2 pt. Mystic Element)

This Splendor defines something that its target simply cannot, for any reason or under any inducement, care about, or names an emotion she cannot feel.

If part of an Adornment, this numbing lasts as long as the Adornment is worn.

If part of a Fascination, the maximum duration this apathy can last (assuming it doesn't abate because the target fulfilled some condition built into the Splendor) is one day for a 1-2 dot Splendor, one week for a 3-dot Splendor, one month for a 4-dot Splendor, and one year for a 5-dot Splendor.

This Element is not powerful enough to override the effects of Limit Break or its equivalents.

Scourge the World (2 pt. Mystic Element)

This Element can only be part of a Fascination.

The Splendor creates environmental hazards according to the *character* of its Form Elements, such as Form of Crackling Fire or Form of Ash and Dust. The nature of the created hazards vary accordingly:

• **Air** produces hazards such as blizzards, intense cold, or furious storms. They either impose a penalty of –3 dice on all actions, or else inflict (Splendor's rating / 2, round up) levels of lethal damage per minute of unprotected exposure. Alternately, in the case of slashing ice storms or aggressive lightning strikes, this damage might be inflicted every turn, but can be avoided by proper actions taken at difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

• **Earth** produces hazards such as dust storms, landslides, earthquakes, or fields of barbed wire and shrapnel. They either impose a penalty of –3 dice on all actions, or else inflict (Splendor's rating / 2, round up) levels of lethal damage per turn spent moving through the hazard zone at anything faster than a careful walk. Alternately, in the case of slashing landslides and earthquakes, this damage, along with knockdown, might be inflicted every turn, but can be avoided by proper actions taken at difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

• **Fire** produces hazards such as flames and heat waves. They either impose a penalty of –3 dice on all actions, or else inflict 1 + (Splendor's rating / 2, round up) levels of lethal damage per turn, but can be avoided by proper actions taken at difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

• **Water** produces hazards such as ripcurrents, undertows, sudden waves, or torrential downpours. They either impose a penalty of –3 dice on all actions, or else inflict (Splendor's rating / 2, round up) levels of lethal damage per minute of unprotected exposure. Alternately, in the case of smashing waves, this damage might be inflicted every turn, but can be avoided by proper actions taken at difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

• **Wood** produces hazards such as bristling thorns or attacking vines. They either impose a penalty of –3 dice on all actions, or else inflict (Splendor's rating / 2, round up) levels of lethal damage per minute of unprotected exposure. Alternately, in the case of deadly animated vines and the like, this damage might be inflicted every turn, but can be avoided by proper actions taken at difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating).

• **Death** produces hazards such as disease, feelings of overwhelming sorrow, or attacks by zombies. They either impose a penalty of –3 dice on all actions (in the case of overwhelming sorrow), or require proper actions taken at difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) to avoid contracting a disease. Zombies use the usual traits found on **EXvWoD**, page 46. Up to (Splendor's rating) can be produced per scene.

• **Spirit** produces hazards such as drawing in minor hostile spirits, or expelling targets across the Gauntlet. They either impose a penalty of –3 dice on all actions (due to the interference of meddling spirits), or require proper actions taken at difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) to avoid being shunted into the Spirit World. Spirits are hostile minor Gafflings and up to (Splendor's rating) can be produced per scene.

• **Dream** produces hazards such as enchantment, compulsion, or chimera. They either impose a penalty of –3 dice on all actions due to hallucinogenic distraction, or require proper actions taken at difficulty (4 + Splendor's rating) to avoid being enchanted (and thus brought into chimerical reality) or compelled to do a thing while in the presence of the Splendor. If the Splendor summons hostile chimera, they are weak creatures and only up to (Splendor rating) can be attracted per scene.

• **Feral** generally produces animal attacks, generating up to the Splendor's rating in swarms or beasts per scene.

Example Splendors

Ever-Ready Roll (•)

This Fascination takes the form of a roll of dingy low-value currencies of various sorts. When presented as payment for anything, the person being given the Splendor must make a Wits + Finance roll against difficulty 5 or else they will unquestioningly accept that the roll contains sufficient money to pay for what is being purchased.

Paying someone with this Splendor does not count as transferring its ownership. The Ever-Ready Roll ends its manifestation once someone who has taken it as payment stops paying direct attention to it.

Form Elements: Form of Steadfast Earth

Root Elements: Beautiful Lie

Gravedigger (•)

This Fascination takes the form of a cobweb-festooned shovel. Anyone who sees it being used to dig up a grave or otherwise disturb the rest of the dead must make a Willpower roll against difficulty 5 in order to remember that there's anything wrong with such activities.

Form Elements: Form of Ash and Dust

Root Elements: Memory-Smothering Pall

All-Seeing Blindfold (•)

This Adornment takes the form of a black blindfold adorned with a border of fine silver threadwork. When its user wears it, she can see into the Spirit World and interact with spirits, and automatically succeeds at all Perception + Alertness rolls to notice things she can't see. If such a roll is contested, she instead gains two automatic successes.

Form Elements: Form of Portentous Moonlight

Root Elements: Invincible Assertion

Haunting Light (••)

This Fascination is an eerie blue lantern. Those illuminated by its light, both living and dead alike, forget that death exists and cannot tell the difference between living people and restless shades. This forgetfulness fades once they leave the lantern's presence.

Form Elements: Form of Dust and Ash, Form of the Crackling Flames

Root Elements: Memory-Smothering Pall

Shit-Stirring Shadow (••)

This unusual offensive Adornment takes the form of an infectious Essence attached to someone's spirit, often producing arcane knuckle tattoos. It creates an Intimacy of blinding hatred for "whoever the Splendor's owner is beefing with," and convinces the infected individual that there will be no negative consequences for acting upon that deep-seated hatred. Judiciously applied, it's an excellent way to suddenly stop being outnumbered by turning an enemy into a berserker semi-ally.

Form Elements: Form of the Hero's Shadow

Root Elements: Beautiful Lie

Mystic Elements: Soul-Numbing Curse

Waking Nightmare (••)

This Fascination is a terrible nightmare which engulfs everyone inside of a house. Those who sleep while the nightmare prowls the building's halls are swept into a hideous dream where they relive the worst abuses they have ever visited upon others. If those offend certain sensibilities of the Splendor's owner, the sinners are transformed into grotesque monsters by an Intelligence + Intimidation roll against difficulty 8, with each success saddling them with an Infernal Aspect that speaks of their depravities. Those who are not sinners by the standards of the Exalt, or who manage to make a panicked Wits + Awareness roll against difficulty 6 to wake up from the dream before it can transform them, may escape unscathed.

Form Elements: Form of the Hearth

Root Elements: Twisted Horror Curse

Merciless Fists (•••)

This Adornment takes the form of a set of gleaming brass war gauntlets with bladed knuckles. They have the traits of katars. The wearer becomes immune to harm from stone or metal while wearing this Splendor, and cannot feel pity.

Form Elements: Form of Imminent Violence, Form of Steadfast Earth

Root Elements: Sacred Protection

Mystic Elements: Soul-Numbing Curse

Tree of Endless Rebirth (•••)

This Fascination takes the form of a fantastic tree, with rainbow-hued leaves and charms hung from its branches. Those who stand under its boughs must make a Stamina + Awareness roll against difficulty 7 or else become seduced by its perfumed scent, which compels them to eat of its colorful fruit. Anyone who eats of the tree's fruit must then roll Willpower against difficulty 7, or become addicted to the experience of basking under the tree's branches. This is usually the least of their concerns at that moment, however, as they are also transformed into a bizarre beast combining the features of several diverse animals, unable to speak but keeping their own human face. This transformation occurs whether addiction sets in or not, and lasts for a day, but may be ended prematurely by accepting an Intimacy of terrified reverence for the tree's owner. The Intimacy lasts for a week… by the end of which, the victim has likely been drawn back by their addiction and induced to eat of the fruit of the tree again.

Form Elements: Form of Dreams and Nightmares

Root Elements: Transformation

Mystic Elements: Addiction, Fitful Malady, Overriding Vision, Scourge the World

Unlucky Monkey (•••)

This Fascination is an ape of some sort, usually a chimpanzee or orangutang, who finds an area with moderate foot-traffic. There, it conjures a flat stone, three halved coconut shells, a small rock, and a modest stack of dirty, grimy money that appears to have been scavenged out of a

gutter somewhere (worth Resources •). The ape then begins shuffling the shells about in hypnotic and beguiling patterns. Anyone who stops to watch the show will become befuddled and increase the difficulty of all actions by one. Until they succeed at a difficulty 7 Willpower roll, they'll also hang about to watch people challenge the ape, and maybe have a go themselves sooner or later. (If this were a 5-dot Splendor, then it could incorporate Dangerous Compulsion to *compel* those who stick around to watch the show to challenge the monkey. Alas, at its meager present rating, this Splendor must simply trust to human nature.)

The ape will accept bets against its (at first meager) pile of cash to play the shell game. Unfortunately, playing the ape's shell game subjects the player to Ruinous Misery: the ape rolls Manipulation + Finance at difficulty 7 (using its owner's dice pool), with each success destroying one dot of the player's Resources. This reduction generally begins with a series of increasingly costly bets against the ape, which consistently fail.

The Unlucky Monkey will pack up its game and move elsewhere if hassled, taking any accumulated cash with it. It remains manifest until its owner comes by to collect the ape's winnings, at which point the Splendor vanishes.

Form Elements: Form of Primal Nature

Root Elements: Ruinous Misery

Mystic Elements: Art of Conjury, Beguiling Display

Black Chalice (••••)

This Fascination takes the form of a jeweled chalice that slowly fills with a cold, clear liquid which smells and tastes like tears. The liquid is poisonous; anyone who drinks it must make a Stamina roll against difficulty 8 each turn or suffer a level of unsoakable lethal damage. This continues until they succeed three times in a row.

If the Black Chalice is formally presented to someone, they may swear an oath of fealty to the owner of the chalice. Doing so grants them an Intimacy of loyalty toward the Splendor's owner for one year and changes the liquid in the chalice from clear to blood-red. The blood is no longer poisonous, and drinking it transforms the oath-taker into a vampire. This transformation can be performed up to four times per story before the chalice's power must rest.

Form Elements: Form of Ash and Dust

Root Elements: Damnation in Scarlet

Mystic Elements: Deadly Poison, Overriding Vision

Comedian's Face (•••••)

This Adornment takes the form of a novelty-store beaglepuss which makes its wearer hilarious. They cannot fail to entertain an audience with a Charisma + Performance roll to tell jokes. Doing so satisfies the new Trickster Nature they gain by donning the Splendor and causes them to both gain a point of Willpower and to replenish all of their missing Essence.

The user can also roll Wits + Craft against difficulty (4 + object's Resources value) once per scene to conjure a prop for her comedy routine. If anyone lies to her while wearing the Splendor, or simply fakes laughing at her jokes, the Splendor cracks and begins to fall apart. Since the

character is infallibly hilarious, such responses tend to indicate that someone in the audience is *literally incapable* of genuine mirth… an interesting development in its own right.

Form Elements: Form of Dreams and Nightmares

Root Elements: Dreaming a New Dream, Essence-Stoking Spirit, Invincible Assertion

Mystic Elements: Art of Conjury, Liar's Tell

Dead Cold Flame (•••••)

This Fascination takes the form of a localized snowstorm, inflicting three levels of lethal damage per minute of unprotected exposure. At the heart of the storm, just visible from its edges, is a warm and beautiful flame. Upon closer examination, the flame floats just off the ground. It radiates a modest but cheery warmth, just enough to knock a bit of the edge off the chill. Anyone who reaches out to warm their hands by the fire must roll Willpower against difficulty 9 or remove all of their clothes, leaving them unprotected from the snowstorm. The fire is adequate to warm the hands, but not to offer any meaningful protection from the cold. Unfortunately, failing this Willpower roll also makes the victim forget that it's possible to freeze to death, so they're likely to ignore everything but the toasty feeling in their hands.

Anyone who dies in the flame's presence is reanimated as a zombie. Zombies are unbothered by the cold, and are compelled to remain concealed in the snowstorm. They also forget that it is possible to attack people who are warming their hands by the flame, and so never trouble them. Those who choose to stumble away from the flame and into the storm, on the other hand, may run into the hungry arms of the Splendor's previous victims.

It is nearly impossible (requiring a difficulty 9 Willpower roll *and* the expenditure of a point of Willpower if successful) to think of extinguishing the flame in order to destroy the Splendor.

Form Elements: Form of Crackling Fire, Form of Dreams and Nightmares, Form of Graceful Winds

Root Elements: Raise the Dead, Memory-Smothering Pall

Mystic Elements: Scourge the World, Unthinkable Ward

Keeper of Ultimate Enlightenment (•••••)

This Fascination takes the form of a wise sphinx who poses a riddle to those it meets. Those who answer the riddle gain a minor blessing in the form of the ability to perform stunts. Those who truly *comprehend* the riddle Awaken.

Mystic Fortification is used to reduce the difficulty of the riddle from 6 to 4.

Form Elements: Form of Dreams and Nightmares, Form of Primal Nature

Root Elements: Flowering of the Soul

Mystic Elements: Mystic Fortification