

MERITS

PHYSICAL

SELECTIVE CONCEPTION

(1-PT. MERIT)

Characters with this Merit have full conscious control of their fertility. They may be as sexually active as desired without risk of unwanted pregnancy and yet as fertile as always when they decide. Females with this Merit can automatically conceive as a result of a given union for a cost of one Willpower point, and such characters automatically know if they become pregnant. Males cannot assure conception and do not know if they sire offspring, but they may withhold their fertility as desired.

AMBIDEXTROUS

(1- OR 2-PT. MERIT, 1-PT. FOR LUNARS)

For one point, the character can use both hands equally well and never suffers an offhand penalty for any task. Characters with the two-point version of this Merit can also hold weapons and tools with their feet as readily as their hands, an adaptation common among the Haltans of the East and highly useful for characters who have lost the use of both hands. Matters of balance and common sense still apply, however, so omnidextrous characters will not be able to walk around carrying objects with every hand and foot simultaneously. Lunars pay only one point to be omnidextrous.

ACUTE SENSE

(1- OR 3-PT. MERIT PER SENSE)

The character has one or more senses heightened to superhuman sensitivity, for a cost of one bonus point each. The character adds two dice to any Perception and/or Awareness dice pool involving a heightened sense, but his player must make a reflexive Wits + Awareness roll at standard difficulty whenever that sense experiences extremely intense stimuli. Failure inflicts a one-die penalty to all actions requiring concentration until the stimulus abates or the acclimation roll succeeds on a successive turn. If a character instead pays three bonus points per sense, the sense is heightened to preternatural acuity. For example, a character with preternatural hearing could navigate entirely by the reflection and pitch of echoes, compensating entirely for pitch darkness or blindness except for an inability to discern colors and purely visual data. This sensitivity also adds four dice to relevant rolls involving the sense. Unfortunately, such extreme acuity increases the difficulty of sensory-overload rolls and the dice penalty for failure to two. The enhance-

ment provided by this Merit is not cumulative with Charms and other magic. Only the highest bonus applies. Bonus dice awarded by a heightened sense do not aid in resisting overstimulation.

DOUBLE-JOINTED

(1- OR 3-PT. MERIT, 1- OR 2-PT. FOR LUNARS)

For a cost of one point, the character is unusually supple and capable of remarkable feats of contortion. Add one die to such an individual's grappling attempts, as well as to any Athletics or Larceny rolls where such flexibility proves advantageous. Characters with the three-point version of this Merit are uncanny contortionists, capable of seemingly impossible feats. These freakish acrobats add two dice to rolls benefiting from flexibility and can bend every finger to the wrist, kick their legs straight up, maintain indefinite splits, dislocate and reset joints painlessly and slip free of most conventional restraints with a Dexterity + Athletics roll at a difficulty assigned by the Storyteller. Lunar Exalted pay only two points for the greater version of this Merit.

PAIN TOLERANCE

(3-, 5- OR 7-PT. MERIT)

Characters with this Merit can shrug off injuries that would leave most individuals unconscious or writhing in agony. For a cost of three points, the character can ignore one die of wound penalties, but this numbness increases the difficulty of all Awareness rolls based on touch by one. Five points allow the character to ignore two dice of wound penalties but also increases the difficulty of touch-based Awareness by a like amount. At seven points, the character feels nothing. Even if mortally wounded, he may continue to act without any penalties for injuries that do not involve actual maiming. If maimed, the character can briefly jog on broken legs, swing his shattered stump of an arm like a club and perform other acts of relentless fortitude. The downside to seven-point resilience is that the character automatically fails rolls that require a sense of touch and must visually inspect his body for injuries that require treatment to prevent infection or bleeding to death. The effects of this Merit are not cumulative with Charms and other magic that negate wound penalties. Only the most powerful effect applies. Pain Tolerance is particularly common among ghosts, Lunar Exalted and deathknights with corpse-like flesh.

LARGE SIZE

(4- OR 6-PT. MERIT)

Characters with the four-point version of this Merit are roughly 25 percent larger than average, standing over seven feet tall and usually weighing in at 300 pounds or

more. Such imposing bulk grants one additional -0 health level. For six points, the character is almost impossibly huge, standing eight to nine feet tall and weighing 500 or more pounds. Such characters receive one -0 level and one -1 level but lose one die from Dexterity rolls to use small weapons, writing instruments or other tools not designed for their massive hands. Unlike health levels bestowed by Charms, the added toughness afforded by this Merit is immediately evident to everyone. The character will certainly stand out in most crowds and may have to stoop to pass through doorways built for smaller individuals. Most characters with this Merit have both Strength and Stamina rated at 3 or higher. Lunar Exalted with this Merit are proportionally larger in all forms and thus receive the extra health level(s) unless wearing another specific being's face as with Prey's Skin Disguise (see **E:L**, p. 129). Large Size may also represent extremely obese characters of normal stature, particularly when coupled with a low Dexterity.

LEGENDARY ATTRIBUTE

(5-PT. MERIT, 3-PT. FOR EXALTED)

Characters with this Merit have the potential to attain superhuman strength, speed or resilience and may select a Physical Attribute in which they can attain a rating one dot higher than the normal limit imposed by their Essence allows. This may be done during character creation or after it. For mortals and Exalted with Essence 1 to 5, this allows a rating of 6 in the chosen Attribute. Exalted with Essence 6 may raise the Attribute to 7, etc. Other versions of this Merit exist to accommodate Social and Mental Attributes. Such Legendary Attributes follow the same rules apart from being classified as Social or Mental Merits.

SPECIAL RESISTANCE

(VARIABLE COST MERIT)

For every point invested in this Merit, the character adds one additional die on applicable Resistance and Endurance rolls versus poison or disease. A character may not purchase more than five additional dice of immunity to either form of injury. Alternately, the character may have total immunity to a specific poison or disease for a cost of one point. The character will suffer no ill effects from that toxin or become sick from exposure to the malady. It is not possible to purchase immunity to infected wounds with this Merit. Immunity to alcohol simply means that the character will never suffer alcohol poisoning, though he may become inebriated and even pass out from excessive drinking. All forms of this Merit assume the character has built his Special Resistance through repeated exposure to the appropriate danger — intentionally or otherwise.

SPECIAL SENSE

(VARIABLE COST MERIT)

Characters with this Merit have one or more senses that process stimuli beyond the normal ranges of detection for their species. For example, a character may be able to see heat as well as visible light, to hear high frequency pitches like a dog or to recognize pheromones like a bee. There is no fixed mechanical effect for this broader sensitivity, but Storytellers should certainly accommodate the character's gift when narrating sensory details. If this Merit is taken in conjunction with the appropriate Acute Sense Merit (see p. 18), the character's heightened awareness also applies to the unusual ranges of that sense. Every significant expansion of a single sense's range costs two bonus points.

MUTATION

(VARIABLE COST MERIT OR FLAW)

Characters with this Merit display unusual or even unnatural features, typically as a result of supernatural parentage, direct or ancestral exposure to the Wyld or an uncapped Demesne or even an especially pronounced Lunar Tell. Regardless of their actual origin, aberrations purchased with this Merit take the form of Wyld mutations (see **Exalted**, pp. 280-281, or **E:L**, pp. 212-222). Useful mutations costs a number of bonus points equal to their mutation point rating + 2. Harmful mutations taken as Flaws grant bonus points equal to their mutation point rating + 1.

Characters with an Essence pool may spend 2 motes of Essence in place of one Willpower point to fuel any activation costs required by mutations but may not purchase the Essence Channeler blight under any circumstances. Similarly, character with a natural healing rate superior to mortals cannot purchase the Regeneration affliction. As always, the Storyteller may veto or modify the cost of any mutation deemed unfair, particularly if that feature is already covered by another Trait. Features obtained with this Merit do not count as actual Wyld mutations for the purposes of determining whether a creature may safely endure Creation, but only beings with less mutation points than their Stamina may pass their aberrations on to offspring (who must still take this Merit/Flaw as appropriate).

MENTAL

COMMON SENSE

(1-PT. MERIT)

A character with this Merit has a decent grasp of what constitutes a good idea, a bad idea and a very bad idea. She won't rush into calamity without recognizing her folly, though nothing prevents her from ignoring her better judgment. This Merit chiefly exists to warn inexperienced

players about the obvious dangers implicit in a particular course of action. The Storyteller should give fair warning in such cases, though he needn't belabor the point.

INTERNAL COMPASS

(1-PT. MERIT)

The character has an uncanny sense of direction and gains one extra die to all rolls made to navigate a ship or to find her way through a maze. She can orient herself with regard to the cardinal directions of Creation or the Underworld with a Wits + Awareness roll at standard difficulty.

EIDETIC RECALL

(1- TO 5-PT. MERIT, 3-PT. FOR ALCHEMICALS)

Characters with this Merit have a nearly perfect memory of everything they have ever witnessed, at a cost of one bonus point for every sense the character can infallibly recall. Eidetic Recall allows character to identify someone by a whiff of remembered perfume or to remember the exact wording of every argument used in a trial or to revisit scenes with photographic memory. It is assumed that this record is always functioning, though the Storyteller may require a Wits + Awareness roll to memorize or remember details observed in moments of intense stress (such as combat). Alchemical Exalted pay a flat cost of three points for full Eidetic Recall of all five senses.

PRODIGY

(2- TO 5-PT. MERIT, 2- OR 4-PT. FOR

DRAGON KINGS OR GOD-BLOODED)

The character excels at a particular skill or knowledge, gaining one additional Favored Ability for every time this Merit is purchased. Characters may not have more than five Favored Abilities in total, so Prodigy is not available to Solars, Abyssals or Lunars (who already reach these limits as part of their Exaltation). Similarly, Alchemical Exalted may not take this Merit at all, as they favor Attributes instead of Abilities. Heroic mortals and ghosts may only take this Merit with express Storyteller approval, and it is assumed that these characters *already* favor one Ability if they receive permission. All characters must abide by normal rules of Ability allocation regarding Favored Abilities: Exalted and most magical beings must have one dot in each, while mortals and ghosts cannot have a non-Favored Ability rated higher than any of their Favored Abilities. Purchasing a Favored Ability with this Merit costs three bonus points for most characters and two points for Dragon Kings and God-Blooded of all heritages.

Players of characters who already favor an Ability or treat it as a Caste/Aspect/Auspicious Ability may pay an extra two bonus points to increase their characters' aptitude even further. This cost may be stacked onto the cost

of purchasing the Trait as Favored with Prodigy or paid separately for characters who innately gain Favored Abilities as part of character creation. The increased aptitude lowers the cost of raising the Trait with experience to $(\text{current rating} \times 2) - 2$ and adds one die to all rolls involving the Ability. This bonus die does not actually adjust the character's rating and, therefore, does not count for determining the experience cost to raise the Ability, but the bonus does permit superhuman mastery for characters who purchase their fifth dot.

VIRTUE SPECIALTY

(2- TO 6-PT. MERIT)

A character with this Merit finds his moral resolve strengthened under certain conditions. For example, a meek villager may stand as a lion in defense of his family, and a celibate monk may train himself to better resist the lure of flesh. The character receives a number of additional dice to applicable Virtue rolls equal to half the number of points invested in this Merit. However, this also increases the virtue's effective rating in circumstances where a character wishes to act against his moral judgment. Regardless of allocation and the number of times this Merit is purchased, a character may not have more than three specialty dice for a Virtue. This limitation duplicates the restrictions on specialties for Abilities. As always, Storytellers may veto any specialties deemed too broad.

DRIVING PASSION

(3-PT. MERIT)

Characters with a Driving Passion live for a cause directly tied to their Nature (most commonly Architect or Visionary). The cause can be anything of any scope, from liberating the Threshold from the tyranny of the Realm to avenging a loved one's murder to becoming a peerless master swordsman. Whenever the character takes an action *directly* furthering this goal, his player adds one additional die to the roll involved. The Storyteller remains the final arbiter of what situations merit this bonus. A character seeking vengeance for his dead wife would certainly gain dice when searching for clues, dispatching the murderer's flunkies and the final dramatic duel with the killer. However, the character would not gain a bonus in combat with roadside brigands on the way to the murderer's home city because the combat is only tangentially connected to the Driving Passion. If a character actually resolves or fulfills her Driving Passion, she immediately loses this Merit and gains six experience points.

TACTICAL INSTINCTS

(3-PT. MERIT)

The character has an intuitive understanding of tactics, from the myriad stratagems of Gateway to the most

elaborate battlefield formations. With a Wits + Lore roll as a normal dice action at standard difficulty, the character, upon glancing at any contested forces or the arrangement of a game board, immediately discerns all weaknesses and distribution of strength. Successes accumulate as a pool of extra dice the character's player may subsequently add to any Lore rolls to devise a winning strategy or Presence rolls to command forces in pursuit of that victory. Other pertinent rolls may benefit from this pool with Storyteller permission. No more than three of these dice may be applied to any single roll, and bonus dice remain until used or the end of the scene. Characters may not reevaluate the tactical scenario to refresh the bonus pool until they empty it. Dawn and Dusk Caste Exalted pay only two points for this Merit, as do the Chosen of Mars.

TRUE LOVE

(3-PT. MERIT)

A character with this Merit shares a deep and abiding romance with a partner who reciprocates her affection. This commitment adds one die to all rolls made in defense or aid of that love or the loved one. As always, the Storyteller remains the final authority of what rolls receive this bonus. The player of a character with this Merit may also roll (Compassion + 1) in place of Conviction for her character to regain Willpower each morning, if so desired. If the character's lover ever perishes, she immediately loses this Merit, but she may subsume her feelings into an appropriate Driving Passion, with Storyteller approval. Such passions often focus on completing the work of the deceased, honoring her memory or avenging her untimely demise.

TRUE PARAGON

(3-PT. MERIT)

The character exudes honor and nobility, either from a formal code or an instinctive fulfillment of what she believes is right. As a result, she may spend bonus or experience points to raise any Virtue to a rating of 6. Characters with this Merit capable of raising their Virtues above 5 for other reasons instead add one to their permitted maximum. However, this Merit does not allow permanent Willpower to exceed a rating of 10. In addition, the character's player may choose to roll her character's highest Virtue in place of the standard Conviction roll for her to regain Willpower after sleeping. Only characters with the Paragon Nature may purchase or retain this Merit. Characters who betray their code lose this Merit without compensation.

JACK OF ALL TRADES

(4-PT. MERIT)

Characters with this Merit have a broad basis of knowledge and skill to draw upon and an almost preternatural

ability to adapt their understanding to new purposes and situations. They suffer no penalty to Attribute rolls when lacking the required Ability for a dice pool.

SOCIAL

BORN TO RULE

(2-PT. MERIT)

Characters with this Merit convey authority in every gesture and inflection, most likely as a result of aristocratic upbringing. Others develop such majesty through the practice of leadership or upon receiving the mantle of Exaltation. Regardless, this Merit adds one die to all Social rolls when interacting with an acknowledged inferior (as determined by the Storyteller).

ENCHANTING FEATURE

(2-PT. MERIT)

Something about the character is striking and attractive or at least conveys a strong presence. He may have deep eyes that seem to hold the secrets of the universe or a voice that resonates like the basso rumble of a lion. Whenever the character can exploit this feature, he adds one die to all pertinent Social rolls, as decided by the Storyteller.

INNOCUOUS

(2- OR 4-PT. MERIT)

Characters with the two-point version of this Merit have an eerily unremarkable visage. Height, weight and build are all average, all plain. No one is apt to pick them from a crowd unless their skin and hair is dramatically different in hue than all the locals — and, possibly, not even then. People are less likely to remember them at all if they do nothing to draw attention to themselves. Such everyman anonymity adds one die to pertinent Larceny and Stealth rolls and adds one to the difficulty of any casual pursuit or investigation of the character. This will not foil any serious inquiry, nor does it grant any bonus if the character is alone or does something memorable (such as showing any level of an anima banner). Characters must have Appearance 2 in order to purchase this version of Innocuous.

The four-point version of Innocuous is a Supernatural Merit rather than Social. The character is not simply ordinary, but cloaked in an aura of subtle obscurity. Those who witness and even interact with her find their memories blurred. They may recall the conversation, but not the person with whom they spoke. More astute characters might remember "that girl" or maybe even "that red-haired girl" if they are especially insightful, but that's about the best most can hope for.

Mechanically, this more powerful version doubles the bonuses afforded by the lesser version of this Merit. Additionally, onlookers do not remember more than superficial details from interactions with the character without a Wits + Essence roll. The base difficulty of this roll is 6, reduced by 1 for every significant interaction the observer had with the character in the previous week. Roll at the conclusion of each encounter. Once a witness pierces the anonymity, the difficulty of subsequent memory checks is the number of full weeks she has gone without interacting with the obscured character. This roll is made once a week, starting with the first full week of no contact. On a failure, existing memories of previous encounters with the obscured character blur and fade regardless of their significance. Magical beings (those with Essence 2+) indefinitely ignore the aura of anonymity after they pierce it once, but only if the hidden character has a lower permanent Essence. Unfortunately, magically cloaked characters have obvious difficulties forming lasting relationships and may not have more than two dots each of Allies, Contacts, Mentor or any other socially dependent Backgrounds unless their associates are powerful magical beings assumed to have pierced the veil. Veiled characters may not have Followers, Henchman, a Cult, any form of Command or other Backgrounds contingent on being widely known without *extremely* unusual circumstances approved by the Storyteller.

Sidereals may not purchase Innocuous in either version, as their innate Arcane Fate surpasses and supersedes the Merit's effects. The effects of Innocuous do not stack with Charms and other magic that conceal identity. Only the most powerful effect applies.

FAVOR

(VARIABLE COST MERIT OR FLAW)

If this Trait is a Merit, someone of roughly equal or greater power owes the character a favor. The value of this Merit depends on the extent of service required to cancel the debt. For one point, the debtor must perform a task that might take a few days but would not place her in any foreseen danger or require her to go especially out of her way. For two points, the debtor must perform a service whose execution may involve considerable inconvenience but little danger. Three-point favors are quite serious and may involve substantial risk of injury or other misfortune. Four-point favors represent a life debt that can only be repaid by directly saving the favor holder's life or fulfilling any single task she demands whenever she demands it. In the convoluted politics of Yu-Shan and the great spirit courts, a minor Celestial favor is worth two points, a moderate favor worth four points and a major favor costs six points.

This Trait may also be taken as a Flaw, in which case the character owes a favor to someone powerful enough or well-connected enough to call it in. The value of this Flaw

depends of the severity of favor as noted previously. Characters with Backing or similar Backgrounds most likely owe this to another member of their organization or at least to a well-regarded associate. For other characters, the possibilities are limitless: Guild factors, politicians, merciful victors of a duel, etc. Characters who renege on their favors will suffer considerable loss of face at best and possibly much worse if they break their word to someone especially powerful or vengeful.

In either form as a Merit or a Flaw, a Favor lasts until the holder calls it due. Once paid, the Trait vanishes without adding or subtracting experience or other recompense. Storytellers should not go easy on characters who owe favors, even at low levels. Indebtedness is not pleasant or convenient, and a mundane errand called due in the middle of an epic quest can create all sorts of life complications. It is common practice among spirit courts and in certain other groups to exchange their favors as social currency. In such systems, a favor debt may be transferred to another party in order to cancel a debt of like value. Such transfers do not need the consent of the party who owes the service. This practice can lead to considerable complications if a god purchases a favor from characters who haven't even heard of it, especially if that god has a diametrically opposed agenda to those owing it service.

PROPERTY

HEIRLOOM

(1-PT. MERIT)

The character owns a piece of property more valuable than his means and lifestyle can afford. Such treasures may be actual heirlooms, spoils of a heist, gifts or something more exotic still. Such an item costs only one bonus point regardless of its Resource value. Most weapons and armor purchased with Heirloom will be of exceptional quality. This Merit is particularly easy to abuse and requires close Storyteller monitoring. If an object has little utility but sufficient value to raise a character's Resources rating if sold, the Storyteller should probably require purchase of Resources at that level and assume that the wealth is simply concentrated into very narrow holdings.

HIDDEN MANSE

(1- OR 2-PT. MERIT)

The character controls a Manse forgotten to history and geomantic maps or perhaps a Manse in a more public area shrouded by some mysterious property of its arcane nature. Such a hidden place of power makes an excellent base of operations or secret lair, provided that the character and those trusted with the secret don't compromise the location with their actions. Assuming the character is properly discrete, no one need ever know about his

magical lair. This Merit costs one point for a hidden Demesne or two for an actual Manse. Characters must have the Manse Background to purchase this Merit.

HEIR APPARENT

(1- TO 5-PT. MERIT)

Characters with this Merit will receive an inheritance left by their parents or another benefactor. They need only wait for the current owner to die — or find some way to hasten that process along without getting caught (which would forfeit the gain at the very least).

Every point invested in this Merit grants two dots of Backgrounds that the character will ultimately gain, but characters may not spend more than five points in this fashion. Add an extra dot to the pool of invested Backgrounds for every major stipulation applied to the Inheritance, up a maximum of three conditions. This can include requirements that the character be married or unmarried, serve in the military for a defined number of years, etc. Background dots obtained with this Merit are cumulative with Backgrounds the character already possesses and may raise a Background above a rating of three. Although Heir Apparent is typically used to transfer resources, artifacts, followers and other tangible goods or servants, but it may also include business partners and associates in the form of contacts, allies and the like. Still more exotic selections rely on situation and Storyteller approval, such as a necromancer whose blood-inscribed will bestows her Whispers to an heir.

LEGENDARY ARTIFACT

(10-PT. MERIT)

A character with this Merit has gotten hold of an artifact of world-shaking power, a relic on par with the Mantle of Brigid or the Eye of Autochthon. Such rare and often unwisely coveted devices invariably reshape the lives of all who come into contact with them, even defining the very epoch of their use. These relics bring terrible danger commiserate with their power, as the doomed prophet Ikerre and Bagrash Köl learned in their futile attempts to master the fabled Eye. And then too, these devices attract the worst and deadliest ambitions of gods and demons and Exalted hungry for their power. Storytellers do not need to allow this Merit *ever*, as legendary artifacts are innately and grossly unfair plot devices that will likely dominate any series they occupy. This Trait merely aids in telling stories revolving around these relics.

CACHE

(VARIABLE COST MERIT)

The character has wealth hidden or legally stored in banks in many locations, for a cost of one bonus point per city beyond the character's home. The character has full

access to the value of his full Resources or Salary at any of these locations and their surrounding regions. Characters with five points of Cache are assumed to have access to their wealth in any settlement town-sized or larger in a selected direction of Creation or the Blessed Isle, though it may take up to a week for the money to arrive in smaller towns. Each additional point beyond five extends this domain by another direction. Characters must have Resources 4+ or Salary 2+ to purchase this Merit.

SUPERNATURAL

ALTERNATIVE DIVINATION

(1-PT. MERIT)

Characters with this Merit can crudely divine the workings of fate through methods other than astrology. Some read destiny in the pattern of tea leaves or the entrails of birds or upon the symbolic threads of a spider's web, while others spout disjointed verses of prophecy from a drug-induced trance or read palms or gaze into crystals. Whatever the method, the rolls and effectiveness of divination remain the same as for conventional astrology (see **Exalted**, p. 251). Any divination ritual should take a minimum of one scene to complete, though most will be considerably longer. Methods less complicated and quicker than astrology suffer an increased difficulty assigned by the Storyteller, while complicated, well-described rituals should benefit from a stunt bonus. Characters may purchase this Merit multiple times, with each purchase granting knowledge of one effective ritual beyond astrology (or two rituals per purchase for Sidereal Exalted). However, characters may not purchase this Merit more times than their Occult rating. Alternative Divination methods exploit the tendency of a powerful fate to inscribe its marks upon certain unfolding patterns in Creation (or in the Underworld, for those who seek the shadowed destiny of that realm). Such patterns are never as reliable as the confluence of stars and almost never allow glimpses of the future beyond the diviner's Occult rating in years.

TERRESTRIAL BLOODLINE

(1-PT. MERIT)

The blood of the Dragons does not awaken in all who bear it, and some children of the Terrestrial Exalted never receive the blessing of their ancestry. Still, the Dragons sleep fitfully, and it is not at all uncommon for Exaltation to skip a generation or more. Mortal carriers of a Terrestrial Bloodline are mechanically considered patricians of good pedigree for the purposes of producing a Dragon-Blooded child. This does not automatically make them actual patricians or grant them social standing in imperial society, but it does dramatically increase the odds that they will be able to marry into a good family if their bloodline is known.

In the Threshold, a brief tryst with a roaming Dragon-Blood can result in the mysterious Exaltation of grandchildren or great-grandchildren decades later, according to the fickle or perhaps inscrutable will of the Elemental Dragons. If a character with this Merit mates with a mortal lacking such ancestry, their child Exalts on a roll of 1 on a 10-sided die. A result of 2 to 3 indicates the child is mortal but also gains this Merit. Anything else indicates the bloodline ends unless reinvigorated with new blood. If two characters with this Merit mate, any offspring who do not Exalt automatically gain this Merit. For such couplings and other permutations of Dragon-Blooded breeding, see page 282 of **E:DB**.

Celestial Exalted may purchase and retain Terrestrial Bloodline until they reach Essence 4, but any Half-Caste children they produce have no chance of Exalting as Dragon-Blooded. Obviously, Dragon-Blooded may not purchase this Merit, nor do they have any need to do so.

PRIEST

(1- OR 7-PT. MERIT)

The character is a recognized priest of a particular deity or religion. Apart from lowering the difficulty of prayers directed at the appropriate spirit (see **Exalted**, p. 335), the one-point version of this Merit has no defined rules effects. Storytellers may award symbolic dream messages to priests or provide omens sent by their patrons, but no systems govern these visitations. The effects of this Merit are automatically bestowed upon Zenith, Midnight and No Moon Caste Exalted, and all Sidereal Exalted are automatically priests of any astrological colleges they are initiated into. Such characters do not need to purchase their ordination, as it is an innate aspect of their Exaltation.

The seven-point version of this Merit signifies far greater favor from the priest's spirit patron. Such high priests receive portentous dreams and even waking visions from their masters, but their devotion and faith must be ever-unwavering to retain favor. Piety has its rewards, however, and high priests may petition the god, elemental or demon they serve for miracles. A petition of this magnitude is performed as a standard prayer roll, but the player must spend a Willpower point to add an automatic success or channel a virtue appropriate to the prayer.

Provided that the god, elemental or demon accepts the petition (Storyteller's discretion), successes on this attempt may be spent to: restore 2 spent motes to the character's Essence pool (one success), restore one spent Willpower point to the character's pool (two successes), exorcise a possessing spirit from a host (requires successes equal to the offending spirit's Essence + 3, and the character's patron must have a higher Essence rating than the targeted spirit) or heal a dying character to stable

condition at Incapacitated (five successes; Resources 4+ offering required).

Storytellers may allow other specialized prayers at their discretion, using the preceding list as inspiration for the level of power and number of successes required for miracles. It is also important to remember that some spirits will not or cannot perform certain miracles based on their nature or power. It is possible for priests asking for a miracle to promise future offerings at the soonest opportunity, particularly when praying to save a life, but such deferred sacrifices only reduce the difficulty of the prayer roll by half their Resources value (rounded up). Patrons who accept deferment will not answer any further prayers until they receive their promised tribute. For bloodier gods and many demons, a human sacrifice has a Resource value equal to the combined permanent Essence of all victims offered in the patron's name.

Spirits can perceive a distinctive mark of Essence upon characters with this Merit. The design and placement of this mark depends on the patron. Exalted castes who are innate priests of their gods pay only six points to receive anointing as high priests, but their Caste Mark glows brightly whenever they pray for a miracle.

DESTINY

(1- TO 5-PT. MERIT)

A character with Destiny shall live most auspiciously, her fate written large in the stars above. Providence comes in many forms and degrees of fortune, as represented by the number of points invested in this Merit. A one-point destiny may be a long and uneventful life of good health without serious hunger. Two points promise a lifetime of financial prosperity or many offspring to carry the family name — or perhaps the greater prosperity of a famed tradesman, local hero or honored elder. In three points lie the destinies of merchant princes, kings of small nations and those of similar ilk. The favored scion of a Dynastic house might bear such a fate, as might the conscript who survives and rises through the ranks to become a general in his own right. Four points promise the life of a hero whose deeds shall live on in songs and stories for many generations to come or perhaps the founder of a lasting noble dynasty. Five-point destinies only surround the mightiest sorcerers and emperors whose exploits transform their era and world. The combined fate of entire nations bends before such epochal figures.

While ultimately positive in its way, destiny need not be kind to those who bear it or those who stand in its path. A foreordained king may claim his crown through assassination and treachery, his greatness rooted in tyranny. Conversely, a selfless hero may deliver her people from that same tyrant through her martyrdom,

her greatness culminating in personal tragedy even as her name becomes legend. Such juxtapositions of greatness and doom may best be represented by a combination of this Merit and the Dark Fate Flaw (see p. 39). Characters bearing the twin marks of fortune and misfortune will fulfill both in their time, usually through the same events. Any astrologer can sense the weight of fortune upon the horoscope of those bearing Destiny with a single success (see **Exalted**, p. 251), though discerning the specifics of such a destiny requires far more effort and research.

It is worth noting the difference between *capacity* for greatness and *certainly* of greatness. All Exalted bear the capacity to become mighty heroes or despots by virtue of their power, yet not all do so by virtue of the very free will granted by that potential. Those with Destiny *must* fulfill their fate unless that destiny is re woven by the power of the Maidens, and even the Celestines cannot alter the fate of the dead and Abyssal Exalted. It is incumbent

upon Storytellers to ensure that coincidence protects those with a powerful fate until that fate finds fruition, though such protection may seem cruel or callous. Such characters are not wholly defended from misfortune and injury, but only such misfortune as directly interferes with their appointed role. There is no system for such protection, as it is more of a storytelling matter.

Players who invest points in this Merit may request a particular destiny for their characters or leave the specifics in the hands of the Storyteller. As always, Storytellers should feel free to veto any fate they find inappropriate for their story. Celestial, Abyssal and Infernal Exalted can only have the smallest of destinies, as their Exaltation overrides rigid fate with the freedom of true self-determination. As such, they may not have more than one or two points of Destiny (see sidebar). Terrestrial and Alchemical Exalted do not base their Exaltations on destiny and, therefore, suffer no such limitations.

LUCKY

(1- TO 5-PT. MERIT, 1- TO 3-PT. FOR SIDEREALS)

A character with this Merit lives in interesting times, blessed with an unlikely preponderance of fortune that follows his every enterprise. He may or may not also have Destiny (see p. 25), as luck is quite a different force than fate. Those with Destiny find their luck invisibly guiding them toward that ordained end, while those without particular fate drift aimlessly and gracefully as a wind-blown leaf through the challenges of life.

Lucky characters receive a luck pool equal to the number of points invested in the Merit. Players may spend a point of luck to repeat any roll at the same difficulty and target number. Even botches may be rerolled with luck, provided the botches are not the result of broken oaths enforced by the anima of an Eclipse Caste Solar or a Moonshadow Caste Abyssal or similarly potent curses. Multiple rerolls may be applied to a single task until the desired result is obtained or until the luck runs out.

Players may also spend points of luck to affect a game of chance or other *completely random* event involving the character. Each point spent in this manner increases the character's chance of success by 10 percent. In such situations, the Storyteller should roll one die, adding one to the result per luck point spent. If the modified result comes

up 6 or higher, the event favors the character. Characters with this Merit regain one luck point after every full week they do not call upon their luck and refresh their luck pool fully at the end of each story. Sidereal characters receive two more luck points than the number of points invested in the Merit, though they may not have a luck pool greater than five. Consequently, Sidereals with this Merit pay a maximum of three points for a luck pool of five and may not have a luck pool smaller than three.

PAST LIVES

(1- TO 5-PT. MERIT)

Celestial Exalted with this Merit remember vignettes and emotional moments from previous incarnations of their Essence. The extent of this recall determines the cost of this Merit. One-point memories are fragmentary and not especially useful, though they can add color to a series and give indirect clues about life in the First Age. Alternately, the Exalt remembers something highly useful, but incompletely, perhaps remembering the treasures and traps of her sanctuary without knowing the tower's location.

Two-point memories are considerably more substantial and varied, but the information remains relatively fragmented. However, this overall familiarity with the First Age adds one die to any roll to operate the magical technology of that era.

Three-point memories provide priceless insight into the magic and society of the First Age, albeit one told through disconnected scenes. The character's player now adds the earlier bonus to any rolls for the Exalt to remember details about social matters and lifestyle, as well as technology operation.

Four-point memories are thorough and comprehensive, like being transported into that forgotten time to witness its splendors. The character's period of intermittent recall spans centuries if not millennia and may encompass more than one incarnation. The character's player adds three dice to any roll related to knowledge of the First Age.

Five-point memories are expansive in their beauty and terror. The character remembers scenes from the entire span of the First Age, beginning with the war against the Primordials, progressing through the glory and corruption of the Solar Deliberative and culminating in visions of the bloody Usurpation. This increases the aforementioned bonus to five dice. Such memories can easily overwhelm young Exalted, driving them to madness or worse (see "Throwback," p. 41).

Sidereals cannot purchase this Merit, but instead, rely on their Savant Background to unlock memories and learn knowledge of the First Age. Likewise, up to two points of this Merit may be taken under extraordinarily rare circumstances by mortals or Dragon-Blooded to reflect memories leftover from previous incarnations of their higher soul. Such Past Lives only apply to the most recent life, invariably much more recent than the First Age and, therefore, without any accompanying benefit to operating First Age technology.

Storytellers can create memories for a character with this Merit or may allow players to design memories (with close monitoring and approval). The former method is often better in that a slow trickle of revealed memories can help unfold a plot, particularly if the current story has its roots in events and enmities of the distant past. If players founder and become stumped, an errant memory can prove an invaluable clue. Similarly, Storyteller-controlled memories don't need to be scripted in advance and may be improvised as the situation demands. On the other hand, player-designed memories can add entirely new levels to a character's backstory, enriching the game for everyone. Ultimately, this Merit serves as a plot device and background element more than a power, as information provided by memories is often incomplete at best.

SIGNATURE STYLE

(2-PT. MERIT)

Characters with this Merit combine movement and attitude into a distinctive flair that defines their legend. Signature Style functions like an Ability specialty for stunts, adding one extra die in appropriate circumstances. This extra die stacks with the rating of the stunt to determine the

final bonus, but it does not alter the number of motes or Willpower returned if the action succeeds. Possible stunt specialties include "Obvious Impossibilities," "Damn, I'm Smooth," "Making it Look Easy," "Look Upon Me and Despair," "Economy of Motion," "Excessively Flashy," "Visual Poetry" and "Shocking Brutality." As always, the Storyteller remains final authority on whether a particular stunt embodies the character's Signature Style. Characters may purchase this Merit up to three times, but only one Signature Style can benefit the same stunt.

SWORN BROTHERHOOD

(2-PT. MERIT, EXALTED ONLY)

Exalted with this Merit have taken part in the Terrestrial spell Sworn Brothers' Oath (see **E:DB**, p. 161), sharing a bond with a rating equal to the number of members (maximum eight). Sworn Brotherhood is most commonly used to link the players' characters together in common purpose and loyalty, and therefore, all members of the brotherhood must purchase this Merit. Sworn Brotherhood is extremely rare among Exalted other than Dragon-Blooded, though some Lunar packs bind themselves together in this fashion.

TAINT'S WARNING

(2-PT. MERIT FOR SOLARS, 1-PT. FOR ABYSSALS)

A Solar Exalt with this Merit intuitively senses the presence of demons, Infernal Exalted, deathknights, Deathlords, the undead and other creatures of darkness. Whenever such a being approaches within a number of yards equal to his permanent Essence, he senses the presence and spends a mote to light his Caste Mark. This expenditure is reflexive and automatic. The Solar cannot suppress the light, although he need not expend Essence if his anima already exceeds the 4-7 range of display. The character only knows that something unclean approaches. The vague impression does not reveal the creature's exact location or identity. An Abyssal with this Merit does not receive a warning of taint, but rather *from* her own taint. Her Caste Mark emerges and bleeds in the presence of Solar Exalted, celestial lions (see **GoD**, p. 33, or **E:S**, p. 20), mice of the sun (see **CotW**, pp. 15-16) and other direct agents of the Unconquered Sun.

LEGENDARY BREEDING

(3-PT. MERIT, DRAGON-BLOODED ONLY)

A Dragon-Blood with this Merit is the pinnacle of physical perfection, a veritable avatar of those ideals and qualities associated with her aspect. As a result, her Breeding Background (see **E:DB**, p. 158) has a rating of 6. This superb ancestry adds 6 motes to her Personal Essence pool and 11 motes to her Peripheral Essence pool. In addition, she reduces the cost of activating her anima banner by 3

and adds 3 to the roll to determine if her children Exalt. The physical signs of Legendary Breeding are patently obvious, conferring an additional die on most Social rolls with other Dragon-Blooded and mortals who respect or fear the majesty of those chosen by the Dragons. However, the distinctiveness of such breeding adds two to the difficulty of all attempts for such an Exalt to disguise herself as someone else. Characters must already have Breeding 5 to purchase this Merit.

PRESCIENT DREAMER

(3-PT. MERIT, 2-PT. FOR SIDEREALS)

A character with this Merit regularly dreams of what may be. The reason for this may be a gift from a god capable of seeing into the future or an unconscious awareness of fate's strands upon the dreamer or simply a quirk of destined Exaltation for Sidereals. Regardless of the reason, such characters always remember prophetic dreams more clearly than others and recognize them as visions, even if they do not know what they mean. The futures they see may involve events of decades hence or those of the next day, though they are usually within the dreamer's lifespan.

Deriving meaning from the vague symbolism of such omens requires an Intelligence + Occult roll at a difficulty assigned by the Storyteller to reflect the overall significance of the event. The number of successes determines the clarity of understanding. One success reveals that a great calamity will come soon, but the nature of the calamity remains shrouded, as does its location and exact timing. Five successes may unearth a plot of assassination with a timetable and visions of the conspirators. Characters with this Merit do not control their visions in any way. Such dreams come unbidden and follow the whims of fate and the Storyteller. A prescient dreamer may sleep soundly for years without an omen and then experience visions every night for a month. Once a character reveals the dream to others or takes actions based on the dream, he interferes with that destiny and decreases its overall probability. This is especially true for dreams whose content lies many years in the future.

ETERNAL VOW

(3-PT. MERIT OR 1-PT. FLAW, SOLARS, LUNARS AND ABYSSALS ONLY)

In the First Age, Solar and Lunar Exalted joined in marriages blessed by Luna and the Unconquered Sun. So strong were these vows that many endured beyond death, joining each new incarnation of Solar and Lunar Essence in matrimony. Characters with this Merit retain one of these ancient links to another Exalt. As such, each may sense the other's emotions or health across any separation of distance with a successful Perception + Essence roll. This intuition normally requires a dice action, though it

may be triggered reflexively when one of the partners experiences intense feelings. It is also possible to gauge the partner's approximate direction with the intuition roll, but this requires total concentration for a full turn and cannot function unless both partners are in the same world — Creation, Yu-Shan or the Underworld.

As a final benefit, the characters may reflexively donate motes to one another with a touch at the maximum rate of their Essence rating each turn. If either party dies, the survivor experiences a moment of overwhelming pain and grief and loses a number of points of temporary Willpower equal to her Compassion. If the survivor actually slew her spouse, this costs her a dot of permanent Willpower instead.

Creating an Eternal Vow in play requires two willing participants and a marriage ceremony jointly blessed by a Zenith and No Moon and a successful prayer roll from both presiding priests. As any sacrifices are given jointly to Luna and the Unconquered Sun, the Resource value of these offerings reduces the difficulty of both prayer attempts. Characters with wedding bands (see **BoTC**, p. 92) and an Eternal Vow find the magic combines, such that they infallibly know their partner's emotional state and health at all times without a roll.

Some Abyssal Exalted retain vows made in their previous incarnations as Solars, much to the chagrin and enmity of surviving Lunar spouses. Deathknights linked to Lunars and vice versa treat Eternal Vow as a one-point Flaw, typically coupled with an appropriate rating of the Enemy Flaw (see p. 37). The effects of the vow remain the same, as the link represents a liability rather than asset. Renegade deathknights pursuing the elusive hope of redemption — especially to be with their Lunar love — may purchase this Trait as a Merit like Solar Exalted.

UNUSUAL BACKGROUNDS

Like Merits, the specialized Backgrounds introduced in later **Exalted** supplements can help to customize unusual characters. However, Storytellers should be wary of selections intended to rob other Exalted of their proprietary advantages. It is reasonable that a First Age Lunar would have Savant (see **E:S**, pp. 109-110). However, a Solar could no more develop Acquaintances (see **E:S**, pp. 105-106) than a Sidereal could exhibit Dragon-Blooded Breeding (see **E:DB**, p. 158). Likewise, the infamous Solar pirate Moray Darktide no doubt has a fair bit of Abyssal Command at his disposal, yet the Silver Prince is his Mentor and the source of Backing, not his Liege (see **E:Ab**, p. 133). Common sense and intriguing character concept should take precedence over rigid rules, but *only* with Storyteller approval.

DAREDEVIL

(4-PT. MERIT, 3-PT. FOR MORTALS)

Fortune smiles on the recklessly brave. A character with this Merit may reflexively spend one Willpower point to double the number of stunt dice awarded to a Physical action with a difficulty of 3 or higher. This Willpower may be spent *after* the Storyteller determines the rating of a stunt and does not prevent simultaneous Willpower use for automatic success or channeling a Virtue. Note that Daredevil does not increase the number of notes or Willpower awarded for a successful stunt. Heroic mortals pay one less point for this Merit, as their daring is all the more impressive for its lack of magic. Characters with the Signature Style Merit (see p. 28) do not double the extra die awarded by that Trait in situations where both Merits apply.

BRIGID'S HEIR

(5-PT. MERIT, 4-PT. FOR TWILIGHT CASTE)

Although a character with this Merit is not necessarily a reincarnation of the apocryphal Mother of All Spells, she walks in the footsteps of Brigid. As a result, she doubles the bonus/experience cost and training time of all Charms but halves the corresponding costs and training time for spells. Ox-Body Technique is exempt from this doubling, as is any Charm that includes Terrestrial Circle Sorcery as an ultimate prerequisite or leads directly to that Charm. Only beings capable of learning sorcery may purchase this Merit, and Twilight Caste Solars pay one less point than usual. Among Dragon-Blooded sorcerers, this inexplicable attunement to sorcery is called Legacy of Hesichs.

FLAWS

PHYSICAL

UNUSUAL APPEARANCE

(1- OR 2-PT. FLAW)

For one point, the character has hair and/or eyes of a striking color, such as vivid scarlet, sea green, ashen white or some stranger hue. For two points, the character's skin also exhibits remarkable pigmentation or the colorless white of an albino. It is also possible that the character has no hair on his body at all. Regardless of the specifics, the character's appearance must deviate notably from the expected norm to warrant an actual Flaw. For example, there is nothing unusual about green-haired Haltans, though such a character might take this Flaw for a story set among the blonde and gray hues of a village in the Far North. As always, the Storyteller retains final say on whether a character's appearance deviates sufficiently. Those marked by striking colors have a harder time hiding or impersonating others and may suffer discrimination and

suspicious stares from xenophobes (losing one die from pertinent Stealth, Larceny and Social rolls). True albinos often have the Sun-Seared Flaw (see p. 31).

MUTE

(1-, 3- OR 4-PT. FLAW, 1-PT. LESS FOR EXALTED)

Mute characters may not speak or make vocal utterance of any sort. Their players may speak to describe actions, but no verbal communication is possible without writing, magic or shared understanding of a sign language. For three points, this limitation has no physiological basis. The character may have lost her voice after exposure to mind-shattering horror, forsaken speech as part of a barbarian taboo or taken a monastic vow of silence. If the character finds her voice or breaks her willing quiet, her player must buy off the Flaw at normal cost. The four-point version of this Flaw involves actual damage to the vocal cords, either as a result of injury or birth defect. Characters incapable of speaking above a faint whisper may also purchase this Flaw for one point, regardless of the reason for their quiet. Exalted characters suffering actual silence receive one less point.

STERILE

(1- TO 3-PT. FLAW)

The character is physically incapable of siring or bearing children. This may be the result of an accident, illness or simply a cruel jest of fate. This Flaw is only worth one point for characters that may still engage in and enjoy the act of procreation. Characters who are also impotent or eunuchs gain two points from the Flaw. Dragon-Blooded and mortal Dynasts gain three points from any form of sterility, owing to the expectations of children and the corresponding social stigma against barrenness in the Realm. Members of other cultures who prize fertility on par with the Realm also receive three points at Storyteller discretion.

LIMITED FORMS

(2-PT. FLAW, LUNARS ONLY)

A Lunar Exalt with this Flaw may only use her innate shapechanging to assume the form of beasts in the same family as her totem (reptiles, mammals, birds, fish, etc.). She may still drink the heart's blood of creatures that fall outside this definition, but she cannot take these forms without adjusting her totem to become a chimera. This Flaw does not interfere with a character's ability to wear a human form with Prey's Skin Disguise, nor does it interfere with partial changes wrought by other Charms.

ONE EYE

(2-PT. FLAW)

Whether resulting from injury or congenital defect, characters with this Flaw have only a single eye remaining. This imposes a one-die penalty to Awareness rolls involv-

ing distance vision or peripheral vision on the blind side and increases the difficulty of ranged attacks by one.

SUN-SEARED

(2-, 3- OR 6-PT. FLAW)

The character finds sunlight uncomfortable and suffers horrible sunburns from relatively mild exposure. This Flaw is common among albinos (see "Unusual Appearance," p. 30), especially the Dune People of the South. Some ghosts and Abyssals also manifest this trait as a Supernatural Flaw, unable to bear the light their dead or blackened souls have forsaken. A character with the two-point version of this Flaw is at -1 on all dice pools in direct sunlight and suffers one die of unsoakable bashing damage for each hour of sun exposure. Characters with the three-point version increase the penalty to -2 and suffer damage every 30 minutes. The extreme six-point form of this Flaw is rarely seen outside of the most tainted spectres, Abyssals and Demon-Blooded. Such wretches are at -3 under direct sunlight and suffer one die of unsoakable bashing damage every minute. Characters bundled in heavy clothes or otherwise limiting their direct exposure, such as under an overcast sky or darting from shadow to shadow double the interval necessary to inflict damage. Those with the six-point version only suffer damage every five minutes for indirect exposure.

CLIMATE SENSITIVE

(2- TO 4-PT. FLAW)

Characters with this Flaw experience discomfort and even take ill if they are subjected to environmental conditions substantially different than those they are accustomed to. The value of this Flaw depends on the likelihood of encountering the undesired conditions. For two points, the character responds poorly to a particular extreme of temperature (arctic, tropical) or humidity (arid desert, marsh/jungle). For three points, the character is uncomfortable in any environment *lacking* these extreme conditions, including temperate climates. Four points indicates the condition that defines the character's home environment is specific to a geographical region and may not be replicated or transplanted without considerable difficulty and expense, such as the pollen of a particular tree or something equally obscure. Whenever a character with this Flaw finds himself in an environment he finds uncomfortable, he adds 1 to the difficulty of all Survival rolls, as well as all Endurance and Resistance rolls to resist manifestations of the undesired conditions. This Flaw may not be taken to include any area the Storyteller indicates the game will never visit.

AMPUTEE

(2- TO 8-PT. FLAW, 1- TO 6-PT. FOR EXALTED)

The character lacks an arm or a leg, either as a result of a congenital defect or injury sustained later in life. Alter-

nately, the character retains the limb, but only as a useless, paralyzed husk. The mechanical effects of amputation vary. Characters missing a hand may only perform two-handed tasks with extreme difficulty, if at all. It is assumed that any character with only one hand considers that hand primary and, therefore, suffers no offhand penalty.

The loss of both hands means that tasks involving fine dexterity are impossible, though hooks or other prosthetics may allow cruder tasks at a -1 die penalty. Characters missing an arm are at -2 on most Athletics rolls due to poor balance and also suffer the penalties for missing a hand.

Characters may offset the balance penalty with carefully weighted garments, prosthetics or other innovative means (such as tying the arm in place for those suffering paralysis). Characters missing both arms suffer the same balance penalty as those lacking one but may not perform *any* tasks requiring manual dexterity without magic, stunts or other remarkable means approved by the Storyteller.

Characters missing a leg can move at half normal movement with a crutch or peg leg and are at -3 on Athletics rolls involving footwork. Those with a paralyzed leg must also use crutches as they drag the limb behind them, suffering the same penalties as true amputees. Paraplegics cannot walk at all and automatically fail any footwork-based rolls. At best, they may drag themselves painfully and slowly across the ground with their arms.

Quadriplegics may not even attempt most physical tasks. Such tortured invalids seldom live long in the harsh Age of Sorrows and make poor concepts for the vast majority of players' characters. The value of this Flaw is two points for lack of one hand, three points for a single missing arm or leg, five points for the loss of both hands, six points for the loss of any two limbs, seven points for those with only a single limb remaining and eight points for quadriplegics. As with all major physical deformities, Exalted characters receive less compensation for amputation, gaining one less point for losing a single hand or limb and two less points for amputations involving two or more limbs. Fair or not, the gods do not normally make cripples their Chosen.

DYING

(2- TO 10-PT. FLAW)

A character with this Flaw suffers from a curse, a terminal illness or another fatal condition and will assuredly perish without the aid of powerful curative magic. The character loses one dot of Stamina per interval, with the length of the interval determined by the value of the Flaw. At the lowest level, two points results in annual deterioration. This period shortens to months for four points, weeks for six points and days for ten points. Once a character reaches Stamina 0, he dies. It is always possible to avert this process by some means appropriate to the source, but not without truly heroic effort. This Flaw aids in depicting heroes who strive bravely against all odds or stories rooted

in the quest for a cure. Storytellers should feel free to disallow this Flaw without an appropriate story explanation especially for Exalted characters or a short game.

SMALL

(3-PT. FLAW)

A character with this Flaw stands only four and a half feet tall or less. She has difficulty reaching and manipulating objects designed for normal adult size, reducing her effective Strength by one dot for the sole purpose of meeting the minimum requirements of weapons and large tools. Her reduced size also costs her one -1 health level. Lunar Exalted with this Flaw appear proportionally smaller in all forms unless assuming a specific guise as with Prey's Skin Disguise (see **E:L**, p. 129). In addition to representing children or short adults or pygmy races such as the Djala, this Flaw can aid in portraying extremely gaunt and frail characters of normal height (especially in conjunction with low Stamina).

DISFIGURED

(3- OR 4-PT. FLAW)

Characters with this Flaw suffer some wretched deformity. For three points, they might bear the pitted pockmarks of a smallpox survivor, gross birth defects, heavy scarring from burns or wounds, useless protrusions of Wyld-warped tissue or something stranger still. Exalted and other magical beings may suffer deformities appropriate to their nature, such as a Lunar with a hideous Tell or ghosts with excessively prominent death marks. Characters with the lowest version of the Flaw cannot ever have an Appearance rating greater than 1 and lose one die from other Social pools in which their unsightly deformity could prove a hindrance. It is usually possible to conceal three-point deformities with heavy clothes, masks or other garb. While so attired, the character suffers no penalty and may act as though he has a normal Appearance unless the other party knows his true visage. Characters with Appearance 1 who do not have this Flaw are simply ugly, but not strikingly so.

The four-point version of this Flaw represents truly monstrous deformity: full-body scarring, the gaping pits and rotting abscesses of a leper, hideous Wyld-mutation or something more horrible still. Wretches at this level of hideousness have an Appearance of 0 that cannot be improved with bonus or experience points and automatically fail any Appearance-based roll. All but the most tolerant and charitable souls (Compassion 4+) will respond to the character with utter revulsion and disgust, resulting in a two-die penalty on most Social rolls. At best, monstrous characters can expect contempt and pity. In crueler regions, they may be run out of town or stoned for public amusement.

Abyssal Exalted may take with Flaw with Storyteller approval to represent a rotted or death-twisted visage. Storytellers may certainly default to the rules as written in

E:Ab, giving no bonus-point reward to players who choose the path of decay and putrescence. However, the game effects of this Flaw adequately represent the fear and loathing a rotted Abyssal will engender in most people.

SLOW HEALING

(4-PT. FLAW)

Mortal characters with this Flaw recover from injury at half their normal rate. Most such characters do not live long in the brutal Age of Sorrows. Exalted with this Flaw instead recover from their wounds at the rate of normal mortals, but given sufficient time, they still heal perfectly from anything less than amputation.

WEAK IMMUNE SYSTEM

(4-PT. FLAW, 3-PT. FOR EXALTED)

Mortal characters with this Flaw have a harder time fighting off illness, their players adding 2 to the difficulty of all Endurance and Resistance rolls for the characters to resist disease and infection. Exalted characters instead half their dice pools to resist or throw off such maladies (rounded down) but retain their usual superhuman resilience to the actual effects of ailments they contract. This means that Chosen with this Flaw will often experience the discomfort and distraction of illness for long bouts at a time, perhaps making them wish they were dead even if they are never in any real danger.

DIMINISHED ATTRIBUTES

(VARIABLE POINT FLAW)

Characters with this Flaw have weaker, slower or less healthy bodies than normal adults. This may be a result of atrophy induced by old age, injury or illness, or perhaps the character is a child who has not developed into full maturity. Regardless, the character receives three points for every Physical Attribute dot forfeited during character creation. Characters cannot use this Flaw to forfeit the free dot they receive in each Attribute and, obviously, may not spend bonus points to purchase Physical Attributes. Alternate versions of this Flaw apply to Mental and Social Attributes for characters who are less bright or particularly uncouth. Note that these are considered Mental and Social Flaws rather than falling into the Physical category.

DIMINISHED SENSE

(VARIABLE POINT FLAW)

The character suffers partial or total loss of a physical sense. In the case of partial loss, this Flaw adds 1 to the difficulty of all Awareness rolls based on the dulled sense. This difficulty increase also applies to other rolls determined by the Storyteller, such as Social rolls in a noisy party for hearing loss or long range attacks for vision. Partial loss of a

sense is normally worth three bonus points for hearing or vision and two points for other senses. Reduce this value by one if the character has ready access to magic or a device that compensates or corrects for this loss. Glass or crystal spectacles are not unknown in the Realm and the largest cities of the Threshold, although they are often prohibitively expensive (Resources 4 in the Threshold or the rural Realm, Resources 3 in Nexus, the Imperial City or other metropoli, Resources 2 in Chiaroscuro).

Total loss of a sense ensures that a character automatically fails any rolls exclusively dependent on that sense, especially Awareness. This loss also adds anywhere from 1 to 3 to the base difficulty of rolls requiring a conjunction of the missing sense and other senses.

The Storyteller will impose other penalties as appropriate: Blind characters cannot attack targets beyond 100 yards without magic or an extraordinary stunt and subtract two successes from all attacks and other actions dependent on sight. Deafness makes speech more difficult and requires a Perception + Linguistics roll (difficulty 3+) to lip-read others, making some sort of shared sign language useful. Numbness prevents most pain (halving wound penalties), but the character also cannot discern temperature, feel pleasure or know when she is suffering injury. The value of this Flaw is six points for blindness, four for deafness or numbness and three for loss of smell and taste. The Storyteller may adjust these costs as needed for characters who find ways to circumvent a lost sense or find the loss even more debilitating for some reason.

Exalted characters receive one less bonus point per sense for any Diminished Sense, as the gods are loathe to choose people with serious handicaps. No Exalt may have more than one sense lost in its entirety.

MENTAL

DERANGEMENT

(1- OR 3-PT. FLAW)

A character with this Flaw suffers the curse of madness. Perhaps he dallied too close to the warping energies of the Wyld or angered a wrathful spirit or maybe there is no obvious and overt cause. Regardless, his mind suffers regular debilitating bouts of its infirmity. Characters with this Flaw have one of the derangements listed on page 281 of *Exalted*. It is often possible to suppress the worst effects of this derangement for a scene for a cost of one Willpower point. However, it requires magic or lengthy counseling to actually cure a derangement. The actual game effects of madness are left to Storyteller imagination, but the character will probably lose at least two dice from most Social pools with characters who do not share the madness. Characters receive three points for their first derangement and only one point for such subsequent form of madness. Other possible derangements include:

Depression: Observing or experiencing pain or emotional distress overwhelms the character, causing him to act as though suffering from the Virtue Flaw Heart of Tears (see *Exalted*, p. 131).

Glossolalia: Under stress, the character begins speaking loudly in tongues for the rest of the scene. Only powerful magic can interpret the meaning of such verbal outbursts, assuming they have any coherence. This derangement primarily manifests in true prophets, shamans and characters with the Whispers Background.

Hysteria: Under stress, the character lashes out in blind rage as though suffering from the Virtue Flaw Berserk Anger (see *Exalted*, p. 133).

Sadism: With only minor provocation, the character behaves as if constantly suffering from the Virtue Flaw Deliberate Cruelty (see *Exalted*, p. 132). The character also has an effective Compassion rating of 1 until and unless the madness passes, regardless of her true rating.

AMNESIA

(1-, 2- OR 5-PT. FLAW)

Characters with this Flaw suffer large gaps in their memory. For one point, the character is missing a notable section of his life (such as childhood) or cannot remember a very crucial event (Exaltation, committing an atrocity). Celestial Exalted who remember absolutely nothing from any previous incarnations of their Exaltation may also purchase Amnesia for one point.

For two points, the character remembers nothing from a vast swath of her life: everything before Exaltation, decades spent as a death cultist, etc. For five points, the amnesia is recurring and prevents the character from remembering anything that happened prior to waking up from her last sleep. The character still preserves memory, but he cannot access it. Such characters may retain fragmentary memories from before they received the injury or psychic trauma that damaged their mind. Additionally, recurring amnesia prevents characters from learning or advancing Abilities unless they can somehow keep themselves awake or keep a thorough journal.

Characters with any version of Amnesia have all their Traits and capabilities, though they often do not know what they can do and certainly do not remember where and how they learned. Likewise, they may find their forgotten friends and enemies faintly familiar but may mistake friend for foe and vice versa if the Storyteller feels particularly cruel. Players of amnesiacs should consider letting the Storyteller spend most or all of the character's bonus points to create actual surprises, but this obviously requires a deep level of trust. As an optional rule to encourage suspenseful play, any "hidden" Traits cost one less bonus point each, but these only emerge when the Storyteller sees fit to reveal them.

SUPERSTITION

(1- TO 3-PT. FLAW)

Creation is a magical world where physical laws are often a matter of divine whim or are torn asunder by the encroachment of the Wyld or shadowlands. Strange local beliefs and customs are very often real and meaningful — and perhaps even necessary. Unfortunately, characters with this Flaw have a wrong or fanatical idea about something important. Perhaps this erroneous belief was once rooted in fact or a kernel of truth, but that time is long past.

The value of this Flaw depends on the deviation and danger of the character's superstitious beliefs. For one point, the custom is simply inconvenient. The character might believe that road spirits abhor travelers who walk in a straight line down their path or that a certain livestock animal is inherently unclean and therefore unsuitable for human consumption. At two points, the superstition is actually dangerous to oneself (or to others who believe it). Characters may think that garlic repels the undead or put faith in a medicine that does nothing. Three-point versions of this Flaw involve harm to others. Characters may seriously believe the year will not return from the chaos of Calibration unless the gods receive a dedicated sacrifice of a virgin, or they may believe that anyone who commits adultery must die by public stoning. Exercise of such beliefs where they are not the law of the land may get a character in trouble with the authorities or incur retaliation. Characters who discover and come to accept the falsehood of their superstitions must buy off this Flaw with experience. Characters receive one less point for this Flaw if the game will take place mostly in areas where the belief is commonly held.

VICE

(1- TO 3-PT. FLAW)

A character with this Flaw suffers a moral weakness, a particular sin or failing that tempts him above all others. A warrior of great Valor may harbor a secret fear of the undead. A monk who masters ascetic Temperance may yet fall to the lure of carnal pleasures. Those of great Conviction may find their implacable confidence shattered when they must assume a position of leadership. Deep Compassion may mask a streak of bigotry and cruelty toward a group of people or an utter disinterest in romance.

In situations relevant to the sinful condition, the character loses two dice from the affected Virtue for every point invested in the Vice. This may reduce the dice pool of a Virtue to zero, in which case the character automatically indulges in the sin and immoderation of his Vice over the better judgment of his morality. Characters may not have more than one Vice. Instead, those with deep moral deficiencies are Callous (see p. 35). This Flaw may not alter or ameliorate the Great Curse, and Storytellers should ban any Vice that obviously attempts to circumvent this restriction.

of temporary Willpower and is plagued with lingering horror for the rest of the day, resulting in a one-die penalty to all non-reflexive actions. Ghosts with this Flaw instead apply the difficulty increase to their Stamina roll to heal in Slumber. Failure inflicts an additional level of unsoakable bashing damage, while a botch results in damage and the added die penalty for lingering horror as described above.

PACIFIST

(3- OR 5-PT. FLAW)

However noble in intent, pacifism carries great risks in the violent, imperfect reality of the Age of Sorrows. Those who will not fight must find protectors who will or suffer at the hands of those less idealistically principled. For three points, a pacifist adds 1 to the difficulty of all her attacks. Even retaliation or combat in self-defense carries this penalty, as the character's peaceful nature rebels against the very notion of inflicting harm. Characters with the five-point version of this Flaw may not attack anyone without the expenditure of a Willpower point to overcome their aversion to violence for a scene. Even if they do take violent action out of necessity, such characters add 1 to the difficulty of their attacks.

UNSKILLED

(VARIABLE POINT FLAW)

Characters with this Flaw have less education and training to draw upon than most adults. They may be too young to know much yet or so old that dementia and lack of practice has robbed them of their skill. Perhaps they slept through school, or maybe they just aren't the sharpest knives in the drawer (reflected by low Intelligence or Wits). Whatever the reason, such a character receives one bonus point for every dot of Abilities forfeited during character creation. Characters with this Flaw must still meet the statistic requirements of all known Favored Abilities (one dot for Exalted; all Favored Abilities rated equal or above non-Favored for mortals) and obviously cannot purchase Ability dots with bonus points.

WEAK-WILLED

(VARIABLE POINT FLAW)

A character with this Flaw suffers gnawing self-doubt and lack of drive. She may have experienced the hunger of a Fair One or had her mind shattered by wicked sorcery. Or maybe she's simply a pathetic wretch. Regardless, the character gains one bonus point for every dot of permanent Willpower her player forfeits during character creation. This Flaw is extremely uncommon among the Chosen, as the Celestines do not Exalt spiritual weaklings. Only Exalted who suffered Willpower loss since their Exaltation may take this Flaw and only with a remarkable story

3 explanation. Exalted characters with this Flaw may not
2 begin with a Willpower rating lower than 4, unless they are
5 also Callous (see p. 35). UnExalted and Callous Exalted
1 characters may have a Willpower score as low as 2.

1 SOCIAL

1 BARBARIAN

1 (1-PT. FLAW)

1 Characters with this Flaw grew up outside the bounds
of civilization and do not know the ways of soft city-
dwellers. Such individuals lose one die from all Social dice
pools related to understanding or expressing civilized
etiquette and are not assumed to be literate unless they
have Lore 2 or higher. Characters playing in a barbarian-
only game may not take this Flaw unless they must interact
with civilization on a fairly regular basis in a capacity that
makes their upbringing a liability.

SECRETS

(1- TO 3-PT. FLAW)

The character harbors a secret that could prove embarrassing or even dangerous if others were to learn of it. The value of this Flaw depends on the severity of the secret. For one point, it is something highly inconvenient or humiliating, like a bastard child from an illicit affair. The character's reputation and relationships may suffer, but no harm will befall him if word gets out. For two points, the secret is more serious and will certainly lead to reprisal if it comes to light. Criminals who have gotten away with their crimes have this level of Secrets, as do Anathema living in the Imperial City. Three-point secrets are deadly serious affairs. If the authorities find out, it will mean death or a comparably unpleasant fate. This level is the purview of traitors, cannibals, assassins and those who commit the most heinous and depraved acts. Quite a number of upstanding members of House Cynis hide such secrets as a result of indulging the varied excesses of their orgies. Secrets of greater value may exist, but these outrageous blasphemies are left wholly to the demented imaginations of players and Storytellers.

DISCIPLE

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW)

The character's superiors have entrusted her with a student that she must train and look after. In effect, the character is the mentor of her pupil, save that she cannot abandon the relationship without permission from those higher ranking than her. The student has the potential to become as powerful as the character, given time and experience. The disciples of Exalted are usually themselves Exalted, while heroic mortals typically take on other mortals as students.

ADDICTION

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW)

Characters with this Flaw suffer an addiction to some substance, without which they suffer the discomfort — and perhaps danger — of withdrawal. For one point, this substance is relatively easy and legal to obtain, inexpensive enough that the habit will not bankrupt the character and reasonably safe barring excessive overdose. Examples include alcohol, qat and marijuana. For two points, the addiction is more serious due to higher cost, rarity or more debilitating side effects. Examples include opium, rasp spider venom and ice fern spores. Three-point addictions are expensive and/or dangerous, such as rock cocaine, heroin and bright morning. Addiction to the Wyld also awards three points. Add one to the value of an addiction if the character's Resources cannot support regular use. Add two if the character cannot possibly afford a single dose and must turn to theft or deep debt or if the addiction controls the character's entire life. Exalted subtract one from the rating of their addictions, owing to their hardier constitutions. Actual effects of addiction and withdrawal depend on the drug and Storyteller discretion but may include dice penalties, damage or rolls to remain conscious. Thorough information on the drug trade and most of the example drugs can be found in Chapter Two of **Manacle and Coin**. Rules for Wyld addiction may be found on page 205 of **E:L**.

CALLOUS

(2- TO 10-PT. FLAW)

A character with this Flaw believes in selfish pragmatism over scruples and integrity. He gains two bonus points for every dot of Virtues his player forfeits during character creation. Callous characters cannot forfeit their last dot of a Virtue and may not begin play with a Willpower rating more than one point higher than the sum of their two highest Virtues. This limit applies until such a time as the character has a total of 9 dots of Virtues, at which point the character automatically loses this Flaw at no cost. Thus, a monstrous, intemperate, inconstant coward with a rating of 1 in all Virtues could never have a Willpower higher than 3. Characters with this Flaw may not have the Paragon Nature. Exalted with this Flaw still suffer Virtue Flaws appropriate to their highest Virtue, if applicable.

NIGHTMARES

(3-PT. FLAW)

A character with this Flaw experiences horrific dreams whenever she sleeps. She may have experienced a mind-shattering personal trauma or received the attention of malefic spirits or sorcerers, or perhaps she harbors guilt over past misdeeds. Regardless, she finds little solace in slumber and adds 1 to the difficulty to regain Willpower with Conviction after sleep. If the Conviction roll botches, the character loses one point

The value of this Flaw depends on the cooperativeness of the disciple and the level of obligation/contact required. For one point, the disciple is cooperative and/or requires minimal attention. The disciple may be a child whom the character tutors in poetry once a week or an eager (and blessedly harmless) acolyte hoping to become an Immaculate monk.

For two points, the disciple requires more regular attention, probably for several hours at a time every few days. Alternately, the character may be responsible for providing food and shelter in addition to infrequent tutelage.

Three points indicates a disciple requiring daily instruction or a rebellious student seen less frequently. As the character's superiors will hold the character responsible for the rash actions of a wayward disciple, it is incumbent upon her to monitor and discipline the student.

A four-point disciple lives with the character and follows her almost everywhere, intruding on virtually every facet of the character's life. It is also possible that the character sees the disciple daily, but the student is a spoiled brat or utter fool who causes regular trouble and mishap (intentionally or otherwise).

A five-point disciple is a teacher's nightmare given form, an insipid, cloying wretch or a willfully malicious terror indulging in wanton mayhem for the sheer fun of it. Woe to the sorcerer suffering the pangs of a five-point disciple.

Should a character fail in her teaching duties, unpleasant consequences invariably follow. The character may be given a worse disciple as an object lesson or may be temporarily stripped of rank (losing dots of Backing, Command, Liege or other status-based Backgrounds as appropriate). Paid tutors will lose the income gained from that tutelage. The character may even lose the respect and attention of her own disappointed mentor.

The Storyteller should ensure that characters treat their disciples appropriately or suffer as befits the specifics of the assignment. It is possible to represent a useful disciple through dots of Followers or Henchmen (another Exalt is probably worth 3 to 5 dots worth of either), though such usefulness in no way mitigates the obligations of the character to the student. This Flaw is particularly common among Sidereals and Immaculates, both of whom depend on a rigid hierarchy for training. Storytellers and players alike should remember that this Trait is a Flaw, not a Merit. Without supplementary Backgrounds, disciples always create more work and trouble than any possible benefit they provide.

ENEMY/RIVAL

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW)

The character has earned the enmity of an individual or group. This Flaw functions like a reverse of the Allies Background, with a corresponding point value matching the power of the character's foes. Thus, two enemies equivalent to starting characters would award two points, as would a

more experienced adversary. At five points, the character might contend with the wrath of a powerful god, a Deathlord, an Exalted survivor of the First Age, a Third Circle fetich or a similarly potent being. The only difference between a rival and an enemy is that the former is a member of an organization to which the character belongs. The level of animosity and adversity remains the same, but neither the rival nor the character may openly act against the other without reprisal from their organization. Thus, a rival represents a more subtle enemy, one that cannot be overcome with brute force alone.

KNOWN ANATHEMA

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW, CELESTIAL EXALTED ONLY)

The character's Exaltation and deeds as one of the Chosen have not gone unnoticed. Even in the wake of the Empress' disappearance, such a reputation carries considerable danger. The Wyld Hunt cannot hope to match the glory and power of its past, but Immaculate brotherhoods still pose a deadly threat to unwary Exalted.

The value of this Flaw depends on how widely the character's name and true nature are known. One point indicates regional notoriety. The Wyld Hunt does not actually know of the character, but it could certainly discover him if it passed through the nation and listened to tavern gossip. Two points indicates more widespread fame. The Wyld Hunt knows the character's name and a very crude idea of his deeds, but it does not know his present whereabouts. Three points indicates the character is regarded as a great threat. A brotherhood has already been tasked with his execution, and it is only a matter of time before it finds its quarry unless he keeps moving.

Four points indicates the Wyld Hunt regards the character as a terrible demon who has likely slain the first hunters sent to destroy him, perhaps even marshaling military forces against the Realm. Such a character can expect an experienced Wyld Hunt dogging his heels or, worse yet, a Sidereal assassin of the Bronze Faction. At five points, the character is considered one of the greatest threats presently facing the Realm, on par with the Bull of the North and the Deathlords. The Mouth of Peace and Chejop Kejak personally discuss such dire menaces in order to plan their eradication. Barring exceptional story explanations, characters may not generally take more points of this Flaw than their rating in Influence or a Background granting comparable fame.

WANTED

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW)

The character is a known criminal, or her actions have somehow incurred the wrath of authorities willing to send hunters after her. Whether she is actually innocent is irrelevant. For one point, the character is most likely an escaped slave or has defaulted on a moderate loan, committed a theft or become involved in some other minor crime involving

another's property. Pursuit will be slight if at all, though the character will need to keep a low profile if she ever returns home. Three points indicates a murder or violent crime and a certainty of pursuit, with capture most likely leading to death or lengthy imprisonment. Five points indicates the character has committed an act of highest inexcusable treason: consorting with the Deathlords or fae, leading a rebellion, assassinating the king, etc. Storytellers should use these guidelines to interpolate crimes rated at two or four points.

DISTURBING (2- OR 3-PT. FLAW)

Characters with this Flaw make others uncomfortable. It's not that they are necessarily ugly or even rude, but they exude an indefinable aura of menace that discomfits those around them. For two points, this adds 1 to the difficulty of all Social rolls not based on intimidation. For three points, this penalty increases to 2. In general, characters with this Flaw can expect most people to give them a wide berth and to minimize contact even when Social rolls do not actually come into play.

CHILD

(3-PT. FLAW)

The character has not yet reached full maturity, and therefore, most adults treat him with patronizing amusement or disdain. His opinions are generally ignored in favor of those older and wiser, especially in matters for his own good. And that assumes anyone even bothers to hear what he has to say in the first place. The character's player loses one to three dice from all Social rolls involving interactions with adults, depending on the tolerance of the adult in question. Most children also have the Small Flaw (see p. 32) and a measure of Unskilled (see p. 36).

CHIMERA

(3-PT. FLAW, LUNARS ONLY)

A Lunar with this Flaw has revoked his original totem and taken another beast in its place. Traces of his original totem remain in Deadly Beastman form, giving him an oddly mutated and hybrid appearance. Other Lunars regard the character with distaste or even distrust, increasing the difficulty of all pertinent Social rolls by one. Actual chimerac — those who have lost themselves to the Wyld — should take an assortment of Wyld mutations to reflect this change. True chimerac cannot have the Renown Background.

PROPERTY

DAMAGED ARTIFACT

(1- TO 3-PT. FLAW)

One of the mystical wonders owned by the character through purchase of the Artifact Background has suffered damage, either in the distant past or since it has fallen into her

possession. The extent of this damage and the effect of that damage on the artifact's ability to function depend on the number of points invested in this Flaw. One point indicates minor damage. A weapon may lose a point of damage or accuracy or some other characteristic, while armor loses an equivalent number of points from its lethal and bashing soak or other ratings. More complicated artifacts will function correctly most of the time or with slightly reduced function all of the time (as arbitrated by the Storyteller).

Two points indicates major damage, costing six points from weapons and armor or resulting in half effectiveness or half consistency from complicated devices. Three points indicates near-total damage. The artifact is presently useless, though it may be repaired. Fixing a damaged artifact requires a proportionally complex and expensive process appropriate to the damage and the nature of the object. Repairing a shattered daiklave is considerably easier and cheaper than repairing a long-abandoned First Age warstrider.

Players may not gain more points from this Flaw than the rating of the artifact it modifies or the number of Background and/or bonus points spent obtaining the artifact, whichever is less. If so desired, characters may begin play with artifacts damaged to a degree beyond the number of points received, though they receive no benefit for doing so. Characters must have at least one more dot of Artifact than the points obtained with this Flaw.

The Solar craftsman Velgash found tattered wings of the raptor in a tomb (see BoTC, p. 95). Using the Artifact Background available to Solars, Velgash's player had to spend four points to obtain this artifact. He may thus gain the full three points from Damaged Artifact to represent a presently useless set of wings. If Velgash's player instead wished a bent and mangled daiklave, he could not gain more than two points from the Flaw, even if the daiklave were all-but completely ruined.

However, if the Abyssal tomb robber Clutching Owl began play with the same tattered wings, he could not receive more than two points from their condition, since it would cost only two Background points to obtain the wings with the Abyssal version of the Artifact Background (see E:Ab, p. 131).

DEBT

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW)

The character owes money or goods to an individual or organization of substantial power, such as a wealthy Dynast or even the Guild itself. The character must either pay regular installments with interest or promise a full repayment as of a certain date agreed upon by both parties. If the character fails to meet her obligations on schedule, unpleasant consequences will follow. The creditor may send hunters or the militia after her or worse. Wise creditors will avoid killing the character, if only to ensure they ultimately receive payment, but others may accept the loss to set an example for other debtors. This Flaw functions as

an inverse of the Resources Background with an identical rating system. Thus, a character with four points of Debt owes a sum equal to Resources 4. It is possible for characters to have both Debt and Resources, provided the former exceeds the latter. Such characters must pay small installments over time, no doubt accruing terrible interest all the while. Players who buy off Debt with Resources accumulated in play or borrowed from another lender do not need to spend experience points to do so.

SUPERNATURAL

UNBIDDEN ORACLE

(1-PT. FLAW)

At least once per story, but no more than once per scene, a character with this Flaw speaks prophetic words of ill omen without meaning to. Such outbursts invariably come at the most inopportune or impolitic moment, such as to a paranoid king who believes the speaker intones a curse against him. Prophecies obtained from this Flaw almost always come true — or would come true if the blurted warning didn't prompt countermeasures. Then, too, some prophecies fulfill themselves, and seeming flight from destiny may be the very thing that fulfills that fate. Only rarely will an unbidden oracle speak of his own impending misfortune. Players may prevent a prophetic outburst by spending a point of Willpower, but prophecies of any importance will find their way from the oracle's

mouth eventually. It is usually wiser to allow fate to speak as it wills or else it chooses an even less convenient time.

While they represent a rare and frightening mystery to mortals, characters with this Flaw are actually the unwitting minor tools of the Bureau of Destiny, a phenomenon to correct for dooms that come about as a result of ambient Essence disruption. Where it is imprudent or inefficient to send an agent of the bureau, a memorandum attached to the fate strand of a prophet can ensure a warning reaches the right ears at an auspicious moment.

DARK FATE

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW)

No happy ending awaits a character with Dark Fate. No matter how heroic and glorious her destiny and deeds, she shall ultimately suffer or bring about some great tragedy. This fate will come at its appointed time, defying the most potent sorcery, astrology and divine intervention short of the Maidens themselves.

The specifics of a given doom may vary widely in severity depending on the number of points invested in this Flaw. A one-point doom indicates a violent and painful demise or a lifetime of petty miseries. Two points indicates some serious criminal act or betrayal of a loved one. Death by slow torture can also befall those with such a fate. For three points, the fate usually extends to a broader scope: the ruination of a family business that has lasted for generations, the end of a dynasty or the impassioned murder of one's family. Fates worse than

death usually begin at this level, such as a slow descent into madness or a fall from princely splendor into utter destitution and widespread derision. Four-point dooms can lead a cursed general's army to ignoble slaughter or shatter the prosperity of a small kingdom. True damnation is also possible, be it before the sweet whispers of Deathlords or the infernal temptations of the Demon Princes. Five-point dooms bring about epic catastrophe. Entire empires may crumble in the wake of such fate. Directed inwardly, such ruin is absolute and final. A Solar champion may become a terrible scion and slave to the Void, a figure of such dread that his very name becomes a curse on the lips of all who utter it.

Death itself often seems a kindness to those who suffer Dark Fate, as few destinies match the cruelty of the broken survivor forced to live out the rest of his days knowing the horror he has wrought or become. Those fated for ruin seldom know the curse they bear, though ill portents of varying intensity typically accompany their birth or Exaltation. Any astrologer can sense the presence of doom in the horoscope of such individuals with a single success (see *Exalted*, p. 251). Identifying the specifics of a Dark Fate is much harder and never certain (minimum difficulty 5).

As always, the fate of the dead and Abyssals lies written in the stars of the Underworld rather than the stars of Creation, and not even the Maidens may change such destinies. Ironically, those cursed with Dark Fate receive the same coincidental protection as those with Destiny (see p. 25). They will survive to meet their doom, though nothing says they must meet their doom healthy and happy. As with positive destiny, players may select a particular doom with Storyteller permission or leave the curse to the Storyteller's own whim.

Celestial Exalted with this Flaw often pass similar dooms on to the next souls who bear their Essence. Sidereal Exalted are normally exempt from Dark Fate on account of their position in the Bureau of Destiny. As a result, only Sidereals who have betrayed their appointed role to serve the enemies of Creation may take this Flaw. Such inauspiciousness is its own bitter harvest.

GREATER CURSE

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW, CELESTIAL EXALTED ONLY)

Solar and Lunar Exalted with this Flaw suffer more deeply from the curse laid upon their kind by the dying Primordials. This reduces their maximum Limit pool by one dot per point invested in the Flaw, to a maximum reduction of five dots. Thus, a character with three points of this Flaw suffers Limit Break when his Limit reaches seven dots.

The Curse upon the Sidereal Exalted is subtle and hidden by design. Sidereals with this Flaw keep the nebulous Great Curse of their peers but have tried the patience of the pattern spiders with their astrological excesses. As a result, a memorandum of reprimand has been inscribed in their

strands of destiny. This reduces a character's maximum Paradox pool in the same manner as Limit described above.

UNLUCKY

(1- TO 5-PT. FLAW)

A character with this Flaw suffers an endless stream of misfortune that plagues his life. Such misfortune is not the same as a Dark Fate (see p. 39) in that it has no ultimate purpose. Chance simply dislikes the character and thwarts his enterprises. The character receives a negative luck pool equal to the points invested in the Flaw. The Storyteller may spend a point of this bad luck to force the reroll of any roll on the part of the character's player at the same difficulty and target number as the original roll. The least successful result of these applies unless the Storyteller spends additional points of bad luck to force another reroll and so on until the Storyteller runs out of luck or accepts the outcome of the lowest roll.

Alternately, the Storyteller may spend points of bad luck to negatively influence a game of chance or other *completely random* event involving the character. Used in such fashion, the Storyteller rolls one die, subtracting one from the result for every luck point spent. If this yields a result of 5 or less, the outcome opposes the character. Strangely enough, characters may be simultaneously Lucky (see p. 27) and Unlucky.

Although the two can cancel (particularly in contests of chance), the Storyteller and the player need not spend their respective luck points to affect the same rolls. A character blessed with mixed fortune experiences great highs and lows without any mediocrity, winning a king's ransom in a game and losing it the next night. Characters with this Flaw refresh their pool of bad luck at the end of every story.

PERMANENT CASTE MARK

(2-PT. FLAW, CELESTIAL EXALTED ONLY,

1-PT. FOR SIDEREALS)

An Exalt with this Flaw always displays his Caste Mark on his brow. The mark does not glow without expenditure of Essence, normally appearing as a tattoo of the appropriate color: gold for Solars, silver for Lunars and the color of a Sidereal's patron Maiden. The Caste Mark of an Abyssal is a fierce brand charred and stained to inky black. Due to the widespread teachings of the Immaculate Order, many individuals in Creation recognize the symbols of the Solars, the Lunars and the Abyssals as signs of Anathema. People who behold such marks will respond appropriately. Sidereal marks are far less known and, therefore, are worth only one point, though still unusual enough to draw attention. It is relatively easy to veil a Caste Mark, at least until it begins to glow.

BEACON OF POWER

(4-PT. FLAW, EXALTED ONLY)

Exalted with this Flaw cannot hide their divinity. Such characters have only a single Essence pool equal to the sum of their Personal and Peripheral Essence, all of which is considered Peripheral for the purposes of anima displays. This Flaw costs the same for Exalted of all types: The dangers of revealing oneself as Anathema are balanced against the destruction wrought by Terrestrial anima flux. Night and Day Caste Exalted may not take this Flaw.

WEAK ESSENCE

(6-PT. FLAW)

Individuals with this Flaw suffer stunted magical development, or perhaps they only recently received Exaltation. This circumstance reduces the character's starting Essence rating to 1, severely limiting Charm selection. If used to represent a new Exalt, the player may choose to withhold up to five Charms in reserve (typically until after the character can raise Essence in play). Withheld Charms waive their experience cost, though they still require the same training time. Other magical beings may take this Flaw, provided that they normally have a starting Essence of 2. Dragon Kings are an exception to this rule, since those with Essence 1 are feral predators unsuitable for players.

DEATH-TAINT

(VARIABLE POINT FLAW,

ABYSSALS AND GHOSTS ONLY)

Some Abyssal Exalted feel the touch of the Malfeans' displeasure and accursed power more keenly than others. This deepened taint provides four bonus points and alters the mechanics of the Abyssal Curse. Whenever the character's Resonance pool exceeds a rating of 10, her pool resets to zero, and she gains a point of permanent Resonance. Permanent Resonance is cumulative with temporary Resonance in determining social penalties and Virtue difficulties, and it also adds its rating to the power of any evoked or unintentional Resonance effects. Characters may not have a permanent Resonance higher than their Essence. Any Resonance Breaks after this limit merely evoke dark miracles with a rating equal to the excess, as with most Abyssals. Characters wishing to reduce their permanent Resonance by one dot must spend five experience points and undergo a Harrowing deep in the Labyrinth (see **E:Ab**, p. 148). If a Storyteller allows a deathknight to remove this Flaw with experience, the quest certainly involves a Harrowing and sufficient penance to appease the Malfeans responsible for the deepened curse. The base value of this Flaw assumes the character does not begin play with any permanent Resonance. Characters who

actually start with this greater taint add one additional bonus point per dot.

Ghosts with this Flaw do not contend with Resonance in any form, but instead, suffer the tainting of their Passions by the Whisper of Oblivion (see **E:Ab**, p. 284). Such characters receive one bonus point for every dot of tainted Passions they begin play with and must taint all Passions if they lack any rated above one. Ghosts with all Passions tainted by Oblivion are Disciples of the Abyss and may purchase Whispers at the standard cost for other Backgrounds.

THROWBACK

(VARIABLE POINT FLAW,

CELESTIAL EXALTED ONLY)

An Exalt with this Flaw harbors impulses and personality fragments from a previous incarnation of his Essence. In effect, his Essence has its own different Nature. If the Exalt finds himself in a situation where this Nature would feel strongly and desire a particular course of action, his player must roll Willpower against a difficulty of the Exalt's own Essence rating. If the roll fails, the character acts according to his Essence Nature, but does not regain Willpower for fulfilling its impulses. A botch means the Essence Nature takes over for the rest of the scene, replacing the character's normal personality and pattern of behavior.

While "possessed" by the echoes of their former selves, Exalted regain Willpower according to the Nature of their Essence (see **Exalted**, p. 148). If a character with this Flaw ever has an Essence rating in excess of his permanent Willpower, his Nature changes entirely to the dictates of the Throwback. The value of this Flaw depends on the degree of deviation and malice of the former self. For one point, the vestigial personality is merely inconvenient, such as a Hedonist inside a stoic Paragon (or vice versa). A three-point Throwback is more alien and dangerous, exerting love toward half-remembered ancients and reincarnations of past associates — or remembering feuds too bloody to end with death. Five-point versions of this Flaw are outright malignant or insane: remnants of demented god-kings steeped in their own arrogance and power. Their voice is an unceasing monologue of temptation and inhumanity that refuses to accept silence or death.

Storytellers may interpolate the two- and four-point versions of this Flaw if so desired. Deathknights loyal to their masters may harbor an echo of Solar glory driving them to Resonance and punishment even as it guides them toward elusive redemption, though such a Throwback is never worth more than three points. Abyssal Exalted actively rebelling against their destiny gain no points for a heroic Throwback but may harbor a wicked personality like other Exalted and profit from it.