

# IMMORTAL MILLENNIUM



## BOOK III THE BOOK OF BANES

SOURCEBOOK 3 FOR THE IMMORTAL MILLENNIUM RPG



## BOOK III THE BOOK OF BANES

Original Design  
**Ran Ackels**

Development & Writing  
**Rick Don**

Additional Development, Design,  
Testing  
**Jake Kuska, Ka'thryn Don**

Produced By  
**Paul W. Brown III**

Illustrated By  
**Ran Ackels, Jade Hammons**

Cover Model  
**Claudia Christian**

Special Thanks  
**Ka'te "Kaylin" Don, Jake "Crash" Kuska,  
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IMMORTAL is mature in its situations and themes. Parental guidance may be advisable in the case of children wishing to participate in the experience. IMMORTAL is a work of fiction. Persons having difficulty distinguishing the boundaries between fantasy and reality are expressly discouraged from reading or taking part in the IMMORTAL experience.

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**Precedence Entertainment**  
P.O. Box 28397  
Tempe, AZ, 85285, USA  
<http://www.eternity.com/>

**Immortal Support Website**  
<http://www.societyeternity.com>



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***"Curses are our reminder that this world is the only pure realm left. It is our last bastion against our ancient foes."***

-- Whisper, Court of Fate

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# Chapter I: The Outcasts

**“There must always be those who choose to stand alone. If not, unity would have nothing to maintain itself against.”**

-- Arturo the Lorekeeper

## SOLITAIRES

Long ago the Abzulim lost control of the elementals they created in the Maelstrom. In order to hunt down and destroy them, the Abzulim took the essences of nine elementals and created a set of living immortal weapons known as the Kai Ra. Their forms were based on the fundamental weapons we know today as the sword, polearm, staff, dagger, mace, arrow, axe, hammer and spear. But like the elementals they were created from, the Kai Ra eventually turned on their masters and vowed to never harm another elemental again.

The Kai Ra eventually fostered the Pride known as the Peri. After which the spear (who would later come to be called Solitaire) left the others to seek enlightenment. Ultimately she achieved Transcendence, but still remained part of the events that transpired here on Earth. She assisted the Terat in breaking free from their servitude to the Sanguinary in the Morpheum, and traveled the world at length, teaching a peaceful philosophy of coexistence to the newly developing Prides.

Eventually the Shouting War began, marking the beginning of the end for the Age of Myth where immortal and mortal kind lived side by side both as heroes and gods. The Solitaire went to Sanctuary and with many Makers forged the mantle known as Atlantis, for she had had a vision of coexistence between the immortals; a society forged of perpetual peace. As the immortals were locked away in Sheol by the Shadowen (then called the Nimrod), Atlantis grew under the guiding hand of Solitaire.

When the immortals broke free of Sheol, the Solitaire invited them to come live in Atlantis and thus the Perpetual Society was born. Here the immortals lived a peaceful life amongst each other, even allowing the Nimrod and the Terat to become part of their groupings in a truce that lasted for a thousand years.

Encryption [6]

Return Locus: <Natalia at Labyrinth>

Received By: <Albrecht at Sanctuary>

Language: Atrana-Cant [Voxtongue] no mortal transcription available

Subject: We have been called

Summary: Lead on the lost one

Keyword Search: Shade, Redeem, Oath

Date: Year of the Pale

Message as Follows:

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, SO GATHER AS MANY OF THE OTHERS AS YOU CAN AND MEET ME AT OUR SANCTUARY. SHADE HAS SENT ME WORD WHERE WE MIGHT FIND HIM AND FINALLY REDEEM HER IN THEIR EYES. OUR EVENT HORIZON IS FAST APPROACHING SO THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE! IT IS TIME TO FULFILL THE OATH.

--reddotrot

However, the immortals never ceased toiling over how they might stop the Sanguinary and its dark workings. To this end the Stratagem was developed to hone the cunning of the Prides in practice bouts against each other.

During their time in Atlantis the immortals also divested themselves of many ancient curses gained during the Shouting War. This was done through a practice known as creating a Scion; a childlike construct made solely for bearing said curses. It is a practice that the Courts of today look upon with great shame.

As time went on and the young Prides debated over how to best craft this Stratagem, internal strife and catastrophe struck. Atlantis was all but completely destroyed and it was believed that the Solitaire was herself slain. It is still not clear what actually happened, but some say that it was the Scions who started the rebellion. Or

perhaps even the Makers revolting against the immortals not heeding their needs.

The majority of the disillusioned immortals under the guidance of the newly formed Jury filtered out of Sanctuary and back onto Earth. However, many still held dear to the teachings of the Solitaire and blamed the Prides for the destruction of Atlantis and the Golden Age, as it was known. While the strong pantheons known as the Prides went about gathering up what little power remained from the Age of Myth, others chose a different path and became known as Solitaires.

## After the Golden Age

As the Prides went on to finish the formation of the Stratagem and assemble into the groups that they would be known as up to the Great Betrayal, the Solitaires would have nothing to do with the Perpetual Society. They formed their own groups known as Dynasties and lived apart from their fellow immortals involved in the Prides. Over history the Prides pointed out numerous times that the Solitaire never went against the formation of the Stratagem, however, the Solitaires maintained that it was against her teachings, and part of the reason Atlantis was destroyed.

Initially the Solitaires and Perpetual Society had little to do with one another. The Prides spent their time perfecting the Stratagem, and the Solitaires perfecting the teachings of their former mentor. Relations with the Prides were cool, but cordial, in the beginning of the Solitaire society.

The first Solitaire society spent much of its time seeking Transcendence through enlightenment, much as the Solitaire herself had. It was found that though rarer, the Solitaires could be blessed by the True Light as the Prides could and that the Transcendents patroned the Solitaires just as they did the Prides.

The conflict between the two societies was caused inadvertently by the Prides. After the Shouting War almost all the Immortals were locked away in Sheol. Aside from the Magdalen (predecessors of the Court of Secrets) there were almost no organized groups of immortals left on Earth during this time. The remaining immortals on Earth were alone in a cold harsh world of mortals who slowly began doubting and disbelieving their former Gods.

Many of these immortals, too weak to resist the Sanguinary, either became her prey or minions. These individuals were eventually named the Profane by the Prides since their time alone had changed them so. A few small groups that broke away from the Prides in the early years of the Stratagem were also given this name. The Prides felt the Profane weak and unwilling to fight the Sanguinary, and therefore little better than her own minions.

Over time the Solitaires began to take in some of these immortals. It was at this point that the Prides applied the term Profane to the Solitaires as well. Open conflict began between the two groups and the Genocide Wall was established. The Prides were very adept at outwitting their

### Setting Note: The Genocide Wall

Any Solitaire who interfered with the Prides, was listed on this wall. The Solitaire then had one year to become part of the Perpetual Society or be hunted down. Today the wall is still in use, against the new breed of Solitaires. Any Solitaire that achieves the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier of Transcendence and actively interferes with the Courts' pursuit of the Cause has one year to make amends for their actions or join one of the Courts in the Cause. If not, the Solitaire is hunted down and captured, destroyed if necessary.

Since the Transcendents have said nothing against this practice, it continues. It is felt by the Courts that with the power these Solitaires wield, they will become targets for the Sanguinary or the Abzulim, and with no one to assist them they will easily fall into the clutches of these ancient enemies.

### Setting Note: Solitary Transcendence

Though few in numbers, some Solitaires fight the darkness and attempt to carry the True Light within them. Ironically, the Transcendents patron Solitaires just as they do the Courts.

Solitaires can follow a path of Transcendence, gain power within their auras, and gain the boons that come from following the path. The Outlanders act as Lords to the Solitaires, passing on the boons as the Transcendents pass on the increased auras and spark of the True Light.

opponents using the Stratagem, and existed in greater numbers, therefore the Solitaires and their society were nearly destroyed. If not for the appearance of the mysterious Outlanders, it is wondered if the Solitaires would have survived at all.

The Solitaires did their best to hold true to what they were taught, but the world around them was dominated by the Prides now, and they were few in numbers. The Perpetual Society had deemed all the Solitaires to be Profane.

Over the eons many small groups built up into new Dynasties and alliances. Some of them began secretly working with those Prides who did not carry such a harsh view of the Profane. Of these strange alliances, the most powerful was D'Arcade, and this group helped to further the power of the Prides to a great extent until the Great Betrayal.

During the Great Betrayal, Solitaire and Pride differences were put aside in the interest of survival. When it was finally over, the immortals all gathered together into the Courts with a newfound purpose under the patronage of the Transcendents and the various groups of the Jury. With the Stratagem gone, most Solitaires now joined with the Courts. This ended the Solitaires, as they had been known throughout history. Both the Prides and the Solitaires suffered enough losses that if they had not come together as the Courts, neither would have survived much longer.

## **Solitaires Today**

With Solitaire's followers once again part of the Perpetual Society it was thought that the entire concept of the Solitaires would end, but this was not so. Within the Solitaires were some Dynasties and alliances that were not true followers of the Solitaire and her teachings. There are immortals that want nothing to do with the battle against the Sanguinary since the Great Betrayal. Thus, a new breed of Solitaire, much truer to the meaning of the word than the immortal that took the name so long ago, was born.

Most Solitaires are just those: solitary immortals having nothing to do with the Courts, the Cause, or the war against the Sanguinary and the Abzulim. Some of them make use of the war for their own ends and gain; posing as mercenaries and using their immortal abilities to solely further

their own needs. Small groups of these Solitaires have banded together in this new age, but not for the reasons they did after the fall of Atlantis and the departure of their mentor.

The Solitaires of today live in the shadowed underbelly of the immortal race. They either do their best to stay out of sight of all involved in the war, or take advantage of the war as much as possible. Those taking advantages of the situation work as mercenaries, charlatans, false gods or anything else that will gain them power.

## **The Outlanders**

These immortals remain one of the greater mysteries to the Perpetual Society. Originally appearing during the ancient conflicts that erupted between the Prides and the Solitaires, these immortals have been something of a guiding force behind the Solitaires, both past and present. The Outlanders have power that rivaled the Jury, and still rivals the High Lords of the Courts today.

Rumors persist that the Outlanders would have been members of the Jury, but were sent into the Dominions to hold the Deepwalkers at bay long enough for the young Prides to grow and survive the Shouting War. If that is true, then for whatever reason their purposes have changed due to their battles in the Dominions. Why they appeared to assist the Solitaires remains a mystery.

It is uncertain who the Outlanders once were, but they have taken great pains to protect their identities from the Courts. The Outlanders act as mentors, guardians, and Lords to the Solitaires that manage to find them. The Solitaires seem to have little trouble finding their Outlander mentors, though members of the Courts who attempt to use Solitaires to find Outlanders always meet with no success.

The Outlanders provide the Solitaires with training, protection, and for those few that choose to strive for it, a way to work towards Transcendence. The Outlanders show no favoritism, regardless of whether the Solitaire works towards Transcendence or mere personal gain. It is said that many of the Outlanders can still reach the Dominions and wage war against the forces of the Deepwalkers scattered throughout the ancient star spanning empire.

## **Life as a Solitaire**

Either by choice or circumstance, the Solitaires find themselves outside the Perpetual Society that makes up most of the immortal race. However, the number of immortals on Earth today is much smaller than before the Great Betrayal, and many Solitaires can go for quite some time without being discovered by the Courts, the Sanguinary, or the Abzulim. Either due to simple lack of discovery, or by staying a step ahead, the average Solitaire is not part of the supernatural war that rages across the planet.

The vast majority of Solitaires live their life as mortals, either shunning their abilities, or never pursuing the advancement of them. Others don't realize what they truly are and horrible tragedies tend to befall them, as some are unable to cope with the realization that they are different from humanity, but not understanding truly how or why. Many Solitaires simply live as a mortal, moving on before it becomes obvious to their community that they are somehow different from the mortals they live with. Many of these Solitaires learn through sheer instinct the abilities necessary to hide themselves and cover their true identities in the world.

There are a number of Solitaires with more self-serving goals, attempting to use their abilities to gain as much for themselves as possible. Many of these can be found in more mercenary type paths, using their talents in the employ of various mortals and immortals. Others combine efforts to form small groups of their own, using their powers toward their own ends. Unfortunately, more and more Solitaires turn down this path, forgetting and foregoing the True Light in search of more material rewards on Earth.

And yet the Outlanders patron them all. If indeed the Outlanders serve the Transcendents, then perhaps they are constantly seeking those who would turn from a more self-serving path to seek redemption through the True Light. If not, then the motives of the Outlanders remain even more of a mystery to the Courts.

Solitaires generally hide quite well in the mortal communities they have become a part of. The vast majorities of them have not been embraced by the True Light and therefore have no telltale signs that show their immortal nature. There is

no mystical way that immortals immediately sense each other unless there is the presence of a strong Anthem, taint, or some other more obvious effect in place. Though there can be subtle signs such as various boons and banes revealing themselves, this is not usually the case with the Solitaires. By living a fairly mortal life they avoid the usual detection that most immortals striving for Transcendence come under.

Few Solitaires gain worshippers over time, though some of the more self-serving ones find interesting and unique ways to gain "worshippers" for themselves. The vast majority of Solitaires live as much of a normal human life as possible. Many don't think of themselves as shape-shifting immortals, but as humans with odd powers, even the older ones. For the most part the Courts leave the Solitaires alone, but do tend to have a measure of distrust for many of them. Without proper training or anyone to turn to, many Solitaires become easy targets for recruitment by the minions of the Sanguinary and Abzulim alike.

## **Playing a Solitaire**

It is possible for a character to be a Solitaire. In order to do so the player must purchase the Solitaire boon when creating the character. This means that the Courts (and at the beginning of the game the Sanguinary and Abzulim) have no interest in your character, or perhaps none of them know about your existence. If the character is to be part of a Solitaire Dynasty, the Guru boon must also be bought during character creation. This enables the character to call upon the resources of the Outlander who patrons the Dynasty that the Solitaire belongs to.

In order for a Solitaire to rise up the Tiers of Transcendence, they must come in contact with an Outlander on occasion. This allows the Transcendents to gauge the Solitaire's progress. It is unknown if the Solitaires' path to enlightenment eventually leads them to becoming an Outlander. There are no known gatherings of the Outlanders to discuss such. It is only known that the Outlanders all have access to technology, abilities, and powers that no ordinary Solitaire or member of the Courts has access to. There are no known Solitaires that have become Outlanders to the Court's knowledge either.



Solitaires do not have any special serenades, or boons associated with them. They pay full price for everything. The greatest benefit in being a Solitaire is the anonymity and freedom of actions that one has. There are a few Transcendent Boons that are especially helpful to the Solitaires however.

## **INGENUUE**

When the weight of the long ages begins to overtake an immortal she has the option of entering into the mystical ritual known as Lethe. Invented by the Court of Death, during their days as the Pride Banjax, the ritual allows an immortal to "rebirth" herself. Book One describes the process of Lethe and the mechanics involved. Even for an elemental, the vox will begin to use surrounding materials appropriate for the type of elemental the immortal was and create a new form in its immediate vicinity. Though the process of rebirth is always the same, how it is entered can have a great impact on the new incarnation.

When the immortal uses the Lethe skill to commit the ritual, it takes but a few minutes before the body decomposes and the process begins. The benefit of the ritual is the strong bond it creates between the avatar and the new incarnation. The new incarnation will generally appear as a somewhat younger version of the avatar, similar in appearance (with changes made for the region the new form was grown in). Aside from the changes due to upbringing, the new culture, etc., the new incarnation will usually tend to be very much like the previous avatar.

As the new immortal begins to experience his immortality again, he will tend to have more flashbacks, and will begin to behave very similar to his avatar. These immortals sometimes adopt the same name as their avatar eventually and rejoin their former Pantheon. The new incarnation will have very similar ideals, attitudes, and even the same Court many times. This type of Lethe accounts for how a single culture can come to alter its views of a particular deity over time or how different cultures can have very similar deities over the ages. These

can all be different incarnations of the same immortal who has committed the Lethe ritual.

When an immortal critically fails a mortal wound check, the body decomposes and the Lethe is entered, but instead of by ritual, the vox enters it instinctually. No true bond is created between the incarnation and the avatar. When this happens, only the Calling tends to remain the same. Very little tends to be similar between the avatar and the new immortal. These immortals tend to appear as much younger children and do not necessarily look anything like their former avatar. They are distinctly different individuals, created entirely by the vox, molded by their upbringing during the time that the seeming of mortality surrounds them.

There is only one danger to the process known as Lethe. There is a brief period of time (a few turns in terms of system mechanics) during which the spark of the immortal's essence is ingrained into his personality matrix on the vox. If the vox is disturbed during this process, the Lethe is interrupted. If this happens, the immortal does not enter Lethe, but instead becomes a gossamer as described in Chapter 3.

## **End of the Exodus**

During the Age of Myth, and even up into the modern age, immortals coming out of Lethe were a great joy to the immortal race. It meant a former brother or sister was returning to the fold, with new experiences to bring to the Perpetual Society. With the numerous Believers and other immortals dedicated to taking care of and raising these immortals, there was little to fear about their time in Lethe.

But in the 1990's the many immortals that had been placed into Lethe by the Transcendents during the Great Fire of 1666 (known as the Exodus) began to resurface. Unlike other immortals, they had lived not just one life as a mortal, but many lifetimes. Somehow they never came out of Lethe and proceeded to live and die as mortals for some time. No evidence has ever been found of any embryonic states for any of these immortals. Many believe the Transcendents placed them into some special form of Lethe which forced them to literally be born, live and die as mortals for centuries.

These immortals were nothing like the rest of the Perpetual Society. They had spent so much time out of the loop that they had fundamentally changed. If it is true that this was done in order to prepare them for the Great Betrayal, it did not prepare them for the reaction of their former brethren. These immortals were met with distrust and paranoia. The Great Betrayal was almost at hand and the Prides were paranoid about anything they had no control over. Thus these immortals were given a special name: Ingenue.

Unlike other immortals emerging from Lethe, these immortals came back into their physical and spiritual powers quickly, but without the experience of one who had entered Lethe normally. Many were sought as puppets by the jaded Prides and were used and abused as pawns in the power struggles that preceded the Great Betrayal. Many of the Prides felt that these immortals harbored secret knowledge given to them by the Transcendents.

It has also been found that a number of Ingenue had been taken by the Sanguinary and her minions. The deadly truth of the Great Betrayal became apparent too late, and if there was such a secret, the search ended before it was found.

## Ingenue Today

The term Ingenue has since applied to immortals coming out of Lethe regardless of how they entered it. Ingenue are met with much distrust initially as the Sanguinary has greater power than it did before, and there are fewer to care for these Lethe-bound immortals. In short, any immortal coming out of Lethe could be a willing, or even unwitting, agent of the Sanguinary or the Abzulim. Therefore it takes some time for an Ingenue to gain the trust and respect of the Courts.

Many immortals entered Lethe during the Great Betrayal and are unaccounted for. Without knowing what happened to everyone, no one can be absolutely sure of the motives of someone claiming to be an immortal just out of Lethe. After what happened during the Great Fire of 1666, the Courts are leery that the Sanguinary may have attempted the same "trick" during the Great Betrayal.

If lucky enough to have been raised by someone associated with the Courts, found by them, or

Encryption [6]

Return Locus: <Albrecht at Sanctuary>

Received By: <Ringbearer at Labyrinth>

Language: Atrana-Cant [Voxtongue] no mortal transcription available

Subject: The forces are marshaled

Summary: On our way to meet you

Keyword Search: Lokki, Jamie, Evrin, Kos, Jenks

Date: Year of the Pale

Message as Follows:

NATALIE,

I'VE GOTTEN MY HANDS ON LOKKI, BUT NO WORD FROM JENKS, JAMIE ANNE, EVRIN OR SHAWN. WE ARE HEADING TO MEET YOU NOW. WE HAVE ALSO PICKED UP A HITCHIKER, OUR FRIEND "KOS" SEEMS TO HAVE SOMEHOW GOTTEN WORD ABOUT THIS, SO PREPARE THE USUAL GREETING.

-- Gabe

even found by a Solitaire, the Ingenue begins to take their place in the immortal society. But the Courts (and even Solitaires) do not necessarily give their trust to the Ingenue. He must prove himself time and again that he is not merely a minion of the Sanguinary in disguise somehow.

Over time the Ingenue comes under the patronage of a Lord and eventually becomes a member of one of the Courts. Though the physical process of Lethe may have ended after a short time (the Narrator grants the missing aura ranks that have yet to surface as the vox builds up basic power in the immortal's auras), the process of fully remembering one's past can take decades, even centuries. It can take years for an immortal to fully remember enough about his or her past and how they came to be this new persona. Since the previous persona is now an avatar stored in the matrices of the vox, it is not simply a matter of accessing the Ingenue's memories of who she was. The Ingenue does not have any more memories than she has learned during the game. She does not possess all the memories of her previous avatars to go through. This can lead immortals on long searches to discover how and why they entered Lethe, and who they were before it.

## The Ingenue Character

This type of character provides a wonderful opportunity to explore the very early years of one's immortality as well as provide an excellent way for a more novice player to join a group of more experienced players.

The Ingenue Bane provides some changes to the starting character. Ingenue start with d12, d10, d10 to assign to auras (even if an elemental). The additional aura ranks are held back by the Narrator until he feels that the character is ready for them. The character can have as many avatars as he wishes, but should not take skills or abilities outside of the current character's own experiences.

Some memory should be held back to buy skills and abilities as the Ingenue begins to have memories of the avatar she once was. The Ingenue may not purchase more than one serenade, and the Narrator determines when the Ingenue "accidentally" sings it for the first time. The Ingenue also has no Court, and therefore no boons, dominance, etc., until formally inducted into one. The Ingenue does start with a Calling (same as the previous avatar's), and gains the starting skills for the Calling, though some may have only just recently surfaced as part of the character's introduction into the game.

The Ingenue Bane allows the character to be just finding out about his immortality, or start the game completely unaware of it. This can lead to even more complications, as the Ingenue does not understand whom or what he is just yet. It also provides a great opportunity for the minions of the Sanguinary or the Abzulim to approach the Ingenue with all sorts of wonderful stories to play on the character's mind. An Ingenue's parents may be Believers, Bright Bloods or Immortals who have cared for the immortal while in Lethe. The parents could be normal humans who were led to believe that the immortal was their child for whatever reason. One of the most interesting parts of playing an Ingenue is the discovery of the truth of ones past. The fact that the immortal was not born as a mortal, and in fact was not "born" at all. This can lead the Ingenue to question the very fabric of her reality.

## Newborns

There are still shards of the Sanguinary in existence that have not imprinted themselves into a host. After all, she shattered into millions upon millions of pieces. It is possible for a shard to infect a being even today. An animal, wounded, crawls deep into a cave, its blood trickling upon the ground. The blood comes in contact with a shard, which liquefies. It then travels up the bloodstream into the animal and reforms as a vox. The animal is now immortal. The animal then undergoes a process very similar to what happens to an immortal while in the embryonic stages of Lethe, as it begins to quickly learn. Many of these are found by the Progeny and unfortunately are taken in by minions of the Sanguinary.

Most often the shards are discovered by unwary humans, and carried around for some time before they find a way to enter a host body. The human becomes an immortal with a human himsati, and will have natures that match (beauty, balance, immunities, mimicry, etc.). Due to the Sanguinary's connection to all immortals, the newborn could develop an animal himsati even if the newborn was a normal human. Or the immortal could develop only some animal natures. Plant himsatis and natures are much rarer, but do happen.



### **Setting Note: Newborn Elementals**

It is unclear how the Abzulim made the first elementals (known as the Primals) so long ago. Almost no fully elemental himsatis have been born in the modern age due to the low energies of Earth's aura. It is not unheard of, however, for an immortal to have some elemental natures, but would not be a true elemental. He would not have the problem with serenades, nor would the vox exist outside the body, nor would he have wish-giving. Newborns may develop some elemental-like natures due to the circumstances present when the vox infected the creature (drowning at the ocean floor, buried alive, the person or animal was on fire at the moment, etc.).

### **Playing a Newborn**

Players can take the Newborn bane and opt to play a Newborn. Newborns are generally normal animals or humans that have just been infected by a shard of the Sanguinary. The shard may be a clean shard, not imprinted with any avatars, or could be an already formed vox. If someone wishes to play an immortal that was made by the implanting of an already formed vox, they should take the Ingenue Bane instead and follow those rules.

A Newborn has no avatars and therefore does not follow the standard rules for building a character. A Newborn starts with no memory save the 10 points gained from the Newborn Bane. The Newborn starts with one d12, one d10, and one d8 (even if elemental). The d10 and the d8 can be traded down to inferior levels in order to gain extra memory. The d10 can be traded to a d12 for 5 points. The d8 may be traded to a d10 for 5 points or to a d12 for 10 points. This gives a possible total of 15 extra starting memory to buy skills with.

Regardless of whether the Newborn is an animal or a human, he will have a Calling. This is based off the characters role in society, type of animal, job as a human, place within a pack, etc., prior to becoming immortal. The Newborn does use the standard rules for starting skills from Calling and can use the optional skill choices presented in this book for Callings. Newborns are not part of the Courts and gain none of the Court bonuses. Newborns may shape-shift at will with no roll required until the Narrator deems the new shard has had time to fully form into a vox and adjust to the new host.

The Newborn may not buy any serenades to start the game and does not receive the optional 25 memory point bonus for serenades from Book II, even if offered by the Narrator to other players. The Narrator will provide the Newborn with one free serenade (no foci) at a d12 skill level, early in the game, based on the how the character initially has progressed. The Narrator

decides when the Newborn discovers this first serenade. The Newborn takes a one-shift penalty to the serenade skill roll until the Narrator deems the Newborn understands what he is doing in relation to serenades in general.

Newborns have no Avatars so they may not spend memory in mid-game, except with special permission of the Narrator (usually to remember something from before they became immortal that they may have forgotten). However, they have 0 Fugue Rating and therefore do not make Fugue Checks.

## ***MINOR PLAYERS***

### **Solitaire Dynasties**

There are a few Dynasties that have played a significant role in both the Prides and the Courts over the years. Of the Solitaires, these stand out as true organized groups with Temporal power on Earth.

### **D'Arcade (Dark Arcade)**

This Dynasty, which started as an alliance of several Dynasties during the times before the Great Betrayal, has had more influence over the Courts than any other organization to date. Originally this alliance worked well with the former Prides, providing them a number of services in exchange for immaculum and services in return. This ranged from assisting in obtaining items necessary to defeat minions of the Sanguinary, to teaching various serenades.

After the Great Betrayal, the services are somewhat different and the prices to be paid have gone up dramatically. D'Arcade is literally the black market of the immortal society, dabbling in the darkest sides of both the mortal and immortal cultures. They provide information, mercenaries, illegal substances and items, all for a price. It is also said that the Dark Arcade easily works for whomever will pay them

the most, including the minions of the Sanguinary and Abzulim.

It is said that D'Arcade maintains a mantle with physical connections to Antarctica on Earth, similar to how the Dreamtime connects to the Morpheum. This mantle, called Nivalea, is said to have entryways in nearly every major city on Earth as well. It is said that only in Nivalea can one find minions of the Sanguinary freely roaming amongst members of the Courts and Solitaires. D'Arcade permits no violence in Nivalea between its guests. This makes it very frustrating to members of the Courts who see minions of the Sanguinary and Abzulim, but can do nothing to stop them. D'Arcade enforces this policy with relative ease since they control the Makers, who control the reality of the mantle.

### **Corsair Dynasty**

The Corsairs were part of the D'Arcade alliance until after the Great Betrayal. They broke away when D'Arcade began hiring themselves out to the highest bidder. The current leader of the Corsairs is the immortal once known as Robin of Locksley, a master thief of the Merchant Calling. The Corsairs have also obtained a small number of the former members of Pride Dracul. This has only added to the legends of redistributing resources from those who have too much, to those who have too little.

The Corsairs have a heavy hand in the shipping lanes along Earth's oceans and have a standing war with the Dark Roane, followers of the fallen Transcendent known as Leviathan. Though they have no love for the Courts, they do not actively oppose them for the most part. Most of the Dynasty's efforts are spent against D'Arcade and the minions of the Sanguinary. The Corsairs are one of the few smaller groups that have successfully stood up to D'Arcade, mainly because of their intimate knowledge of how the black market Dynasty works.

### **The Oni**

Originally a group of Solitaires who remained neutral to the Prides, the Oni were the patrons of the Ninja that would later develop in mortal society. Among them was the famous mortal Sun Tzu, the general who wrote "The Art of War". Unfortunately he died before he could be made immortal. The Oni often interfere with Court politics through thievery and assassination, when it is possible that doing so will increase their own power. However, they

follow a strict code of honor and continue to fight the Sanguinary and lend their aid to mortals even today. Though many members are often viewed as modern day ninja, hiring themselves out to the highest bidder, this does not hold true for the Dynasty as a whole. Fortunately the Oni are a powerful force, and their code of honor usually keeps them from clashing with the Courts too strongly.

### **Other Groups**

And still there are those outside groups that do not truly fit the mold of Solitaire. These may be enemies of the entire immortal race, lost allies, etc.

### **Dracula and his Scions**

Long ago Dracula was a powerful Bright Blood belonging to one of the immortal Quiet Cultures. It was rumored that Halley's Comet influenced him as it passed by Earth in the 1400's. Immortal scholars believe it is a huge shard of the Sanguinary, flung from Earth into space when she crashed here millions of years ago. Dracula came to power and ruled over Wallachia, and became thought as a threat to the Perpetual Society. A Slayer was sent to kill him, but with his powerful faith, he instead killed the Slayer. He ripped out her vox with his own teeth, and made himself immortal at the age of 29.

His faith did not desert him, and armed with both it and immortality, he had become a very dangerous foe. Eventually he became heavily cursed and began to use the forbidden process of creating a Scion. However, instead of transferring the curse to the shameful creatures, it merely copied them to the Scion, along with the same hunger for blood that Dracula developed from his own faith. Oddly enough, these scions did not become mere copies of Dracula, some even being female. And to add to this, his faith has warped him so that he maintains multiple himsatis and can change to any of them at will. It is said that this came from his drinking the blood of several immortals over the years.

The hunger for blood drives Dracula and his Scions to drink the blood of human beings, which gives his Scions indefinite life spans. The Courts and Solitaires all hunt for Dracula, believing that he may be a minion of the Sanguinary, but no one knows for sure the

motives of this mysterious immortal and his minions.

### **Court of Obedience (Pride Dracul)**

Long ago the Transcendent known as Sharakai the Dragon developed a following of immortals that would one day be known as the Dracul. With a basis in honor and balance, the Dracul were a patron of much of Earth's eastern philosophies and beliefs. When the Great Betrayal came, this Pride, also having called themselves the Court of Obedience, was destroyed, having lost nearly all of its members during a gathering of the Court.

Oddly, it seemed the Court was prepared for its destruction, having hidden away its own mantles and having taken measures to safeguard its worshippers. Some say that they allowed themselves to be taken in order to somehow stop a particular faction of the Progeny, insuring more immortals survived the Great Betrayal than otherwise would have. It is said that this was masterminded by the Transcendent known as Sharakai.

After the Great Betrayal, the various surviving members filtered into different Courts. It is rumored that these survivors also form the Eyes of Sharakai. Some claim that Sharakai looks through the eyes and ears of these immortals only and works through them, allowing him to patron the various Courts in his own way.

Others say that this group has begun to set in motion plans to allow them to reform as a Minor Court. If this is true, no former member of the Dracul will verify such a claim.

### **Cerulean Order**

The Cerulean Order holds in its grasp the largest known existing shard of the Sanguinary, called the Blue Emerald. The Blue Emerald is a living shard with its own consciousness and is said to seek the destruction of all other shards of the Sanguinary including itself some day. The Courts are fearful that the Cerulean Order may one day turn upon all the immortals in an effort to destroy their voxes, but so far the Order has only sought to destroy clean unimprinted shards.

There is speculation that the Blue Emerald may be the physical component of the Sanguinary's conscience and that separated from it, the Sanguinary is purely evil now. The Order claims that the Emerald feels it cannot bring back the

Sanguinary from this darkness, and therefore the only way to stop it is to destroy any and all chances for it to physically manifest again. This means the destruction of all its shards.

Still others argue that the Blue Emerald is merely a shard large enough to allow the Sanguinary to partially manifest and attempt to deceive the immortal race. Thus the Cerulean Order has not been permitted entry into the Courts. At one time the Blue Emerald powered the Court of Making's primary mantle known as the Walk. Rumors abound that it is still hidden somewhere deep in the bowels of the Earth by the Order.

### **Sons of Loki**

While still in their infancy, several of the young Prides became seduced into rebuilding the body of the Sanguinary. One of their members, a Morrigan known as Loki, had discovered the trickery and attempted to make his brothers and sisters in the Prides realize it too. Enthralled by the work they had been doing, he was captured and tortured for millennia by his own brethren. When the rest of the Prides eventually came and destroyed the horrific creation, the enthralled immortals were set free. They also set Loki free, but his thirst for vengeance against his brothers and sisters only grew.

Over the years Loki was slowly seduced by the first of the Sanguine Avatars, the Rime (also known as the Cold Lady). At her bidding he nearly destroyed the mysterious Horned Lord, and legends say the Loki and the Rime created the first of the Drowes.

When the Immortals were locked in Sheol, he continued to plot against them. When his treachery was finally discovered, he was tied to one of the first Zuzog trees. The Zuzog are trees of darkness that are antithetical to the trees of light known as the Sunedrion. Eventually he was consumed by it and never seen again.

Eons later, a group of Immortals, rumored to be led by a mysterious Ice Elemental, now form his cult. All that join the cult are bonded with extra himsati natures of ice and carry a second motif to all their serenades (of ice). They are also gifted with the additional auras of an elemental, but they do not have the problems of playing serenades. They are hybrids, not true elementals.

The Sons of Loki are considered one of the most dangerous groups in the Immortal world. Even D'Arcade is circumspect in their dealings with them. The cult spends much of its time trying to find out if Loki is somehow still alive and exactly what happened to him. Whether they serve the Sanguinary, the Abzulim, or some other agency is unknown to the Perpetual Society. The Sons have a particular disdain and hatred for the members of the Court of Life that once belonged to the Pride Morigan.

## *Mortal Outcasts*

Looked at with awe, ridicule, and misunderstanding, the Believers walk through the sea of humanity alone much of the time. Believers know that there is more out there than the rest of humanity can see, or wants to see. Some not only know it, they experience it as well. And though their numbers grow with each passing year, they still are very much the minority amongst the mortal population. For as the number of Believers grows, so too does the number of soulless.

Many Believers are part of the war that rages between the immortals, Sanguinary and the mysterious Abzulim. Amongst them are the Bright Bloods, whose special powers place them apart from the majority of the Believers. Not all Believers side with or help the Perpetual Society. Many Believers have not truly experienced the supernatural war, and are very misguided in their beliefs. But the important part is that they believe in something. Something more than the cold harsh world the Sanguinary has helped to develop. Something that gives them hope, inspiration, and the capability to understand the truth should they find it. Many of them do help the Courts in the Cause, assisting, working with, and sometimes even worshipping those Immortals they encounter. Others serve the Sanguinary, and even some serve the Deepwalkers and their minions.

In the Age of Myth before the Shouting War, worshippers obeyed their immortal gods without question. However, as the immortals have quickly learned, the modern age does not hold humanity in such awe of the immortal race. Since the immortals remained hidden during the time between the Shouting War and today, the

Sanguinary and her minions had ample time to convince most of humanity that the Age of Myth never even happened.

In the modern age, immortals must take great pains to see to the needs of their worshippers, because even though their numbers are growing, there are still few true believers (and even fewer Bright Bloods) on Earth. And with the decreased power levels that most immortals work at in comparison to the Age of Myth, mistreating mortal worshippers is a quick way to lose them.

The ultimate goal is not for the mortals to continue to worship the immortal race as the gods they once were. Though the immortals strive for Transcendence, they strive to give humanity a chance to believe in itself and break the shackles of the Sanguinary that they wear within their own subconscious minds. This is extremely dangerous since revealing oneself to a mortal risks capture or destruction at the hands of the Sanguinary's minions. This is why the immortal race (even the Solitaires and other groups) is very careful about how, and to whom they reveal themselves to.

## **Making a Believer**

When an Immortal finds a mortal that has that special spark, the Immortal generally spends a deal of time watching the mortal without actually interacting with him. There are telltale signs that can be seen if one spends the time watching a particular mortal, signs that show the person is a Believer, or has the potential to be one. It can be seen in their home, the symbology that does not follow the mainstream. It can be seen in the books they read, the shows they watch, the friends they keep and the ones they don't. It can be read in the faces of the crowd around them, and how they react to the mortal. The way the mortal dresses, their mannerisms. These are all signs of a unique individual that stands out from the crowd, and yet the crowd does not seem to want to acknowledge. Except for Bright Bloods, the majority of Believers are held back by the sea of non-believers. Though they excel in their own special areas, they are rarely found in humanity's spotlight. This is actually a benefit to the immortals as these people can slip unnoticed through the sea of humanity that the Sanguinary is watching, and assist the Perpetual Society in secret.

Those Believers that spend their time dealing with the true supernatural spend a lot less time in what humanity considers "normal" endeavors. The Believer has to find ways to explain away the time she has spent dealing with the supernatural world. The Sanguinary constantly searches for those who do not fit in with the rest of society, those who do not conduct themselves to the uniformity that she has created in order to control humanity. These she seeks to discover if they are potential allies of the Immortals, and if so, she crushes them, seduces them, whatever she must to remove their potential threat to her plans.

Worse yet are those Believers who already thrive on the darkness within them. These are the ones that ultimately result in the destruction or capture of so many of the Immortals. It is hard to tell whether a Believer carries the darkness within them or not. This is why the Immortals must be so careful when choosing to reveal themselves to a particular mortal. And even after that, time must be spent seeing just how safe it is to reveal more. After all, it is Believers that aid immortals, join their Quiet Cultures, protect their Arks and Sanctuaries, watch over those in Lethe, etc. To allow a potential servant of the darkness is to bring a poison into the Perpetual Society.

### **Brightening a Soul**

There are those amongst the Perpetual Society, especially in the Courts of Life and Making, that attempt to increase the number of Bright Bloods on Earth. It is said by the Chancellors of the Court of Life, the Amaranth, it is possible to brighten a soul, just as the Sanguinary can darken one. Still, there have been few, very few, instances of a mortal becoming a Bright Blood. And in such cases, it is still not fully understood exactly what made the change. It is also possible that the mortal was already a Bright Blood and it was only just revealed at that point. Still, the Immortal race strives to understand these powerful humans and their role in the universe.

Encryption [7]

Return Locus: <Jenks at Term. ID 435437>

Received By: <Ringbearer at Labyrinth>

Language: Atrana-Cant [Voxtongue] no mortal transcription available

Subject: With the others

Summary: Taking secondary lead

Keyword Search: Gabriel, Shade, Redemption

Date: Year of the Pale

Message as Follows:

NATALIA,

JAMMIE ANNE HAS ALSO DISCOVERED A LEAD ON THE INGENUE, GABRIEL. WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF GATHERING INFORMATION CONCERNING IT AND CANNOT LEAVE AT THE MOMENT. IF LEAD PROVES TO BE DEAD OR YOU INSTEAD FIND CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE OF HIS PRESENCE, WE WILL JOIN YOU IMMEDIATELY.

BEST REGARDS AND GOOD LUCK.

-- Jenks



# Chapter II: Maladies

***"To be lost within ones own thoughts forever. Truly the final Fugue can be nearly as horrid a fate as to be consumed by the Sanguinary herself."***

-- Harbringer, Court of Death

## TAINT

Like an ethereal leech, taint infests in the MIND and BODY auras of mortals, sucking the life energies from its host. As the mortal ages, the taint accumulates more and more, weakening the aura. At the time of death, the remaining untainted aura ranks are consumed by the taint, leaving only the SPIRIT aura and the empty shell of the dead body. This kind of taint is harmless to an immortal.

Under normal circumstances, Taint does not invade the SPIRIT aura of mortals. It is known to happen however, usually due to strange circumstances, or interference from Progeny or other minions of the Sanguinary. This kind of invasion into the SPIRIT aura of a mortal tends to leave a permanent mark on the mortal's soul, influencing him for the rest of his living days. It can also assist the Sanguinary in "possession" of the mortal.

Through history there have been a few accounts of taint entering the SPIRIT of a mortal being, and in those accounts most are normal humans, not Believers or Bright Bloods. The majority of these accounts occur in the soulless that have no true SPIRIT to stop the invasion of the taint. It is feared with the rising number of soulless, this will happen more often now.

Taint is normally incapable of infesting in the auras of an immortal. Their ability to regenerate themselves from even death prevents it from consuming aura ranks. However, taint is capable of being twisted into a form capable of infecting an immortal's SPIRIT aura. This kind of taint is akin to a feral animal, lashing out from the immortal's SPIRIT aura to affect the world around it. The immortal race seems incapable of stopping this dark power that occurs so naturally in the cosmos, and feeds even the lowest of the Sanguinary's minions.

There are two ways in which taint can twist into the form capable of infecting an immortal. The first occurs when an immortal misplays a

Encryption [6]

Return Locus: <Modal at Failsafe [Hacker Alias]>

Received By: <Trapdoor [Location Unknown]>

Language: Oneness Dialect (Translation Provided)

Subject: Obsidian Primals

Summary: Have been sighted, leave vicinity if needed.

Keyword Search: Stigmata, Prophecy, Dark Shards

Date: Year of the Pale

Message as Follows:

OBSIDIAN PRIMALS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED IN THE AREA WHERE YOU ARE CURRENTLY SEARCHING FOR STIGMATA. IT IS POSSIBLE THE DARK SHARDED IMMORTALS ALSO SEEK HIM FOR HIS KNOWLEDGE OF SAMIEL BEFORE AND AFTER THE ABZULIM'S ENTRY INTO THE LABYRINTH.

PLEASE ASSESS THE POSSIBLE THREAT AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS. MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO SPEED UP THE RECOVERY OF STIGMATA BEFORE HE POSES ANY FURTHER THREAT. WE REQUEST THAT YOU AGAIN ALLOW MORIARTY TO EMERGE TO HANDLE THIS SITUATION.

IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF IT, WE WILL PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE OBSIDIAN AND POSSIBLE LABYRINTH CONNECTION IN LATER COMMUNIQUE.

serenade. The second occurs when attempting to take life-force from a mortal (a process known by the Courts as the Sinning). This type of taint tends to ignore the MIND and BODY aura of the immortal and seats itself into the SPIRIT aura, regardless of how it was gained. Even if an immortal were attempting to heal her BODY aura by Sinning from a mortal, the taint will slip past into the SPIRIT aura. If the SPIRIT aura is completely tainted it can slip into other auras for brief periods. This is normally caused by certain curses the immortal has. These poor immortals

are quite close to being completely lost to the Sanguinary. Before the Great Betrayal, when Earth's aura was stronger and immaculum rich, accumulating too much taint caused one to be literally thrust from Earth along the tangled Nadir to wind up at some random Dominion world.

When an immortal's SPIRIT aura is tainted, the taint acts just like damage to the aura, reducing it by the amount of taint present. However, the standard ways of healing will not remove taint from an immortal. The only way to "heal" a tainted aura is through the process known as Sinning or by finding a mortal who will willingly give up SPIRIT aura ranks to the immortal. It is for this reason that immortals are very careful about the playing of their serenades, for sinning can have far worse effects on the immortal than the taint, as well as further taint the immortal instead of heal her.

When an immortal misplays a serenade, there is a chance that the energies building up within the SPIRIT aura of the immortal will pervert (by rolling a critical failure) and twist into taint. This weakens the SPIRIT aura by one rank each time such an occurrence happens. The other way in which the taint can infiltrate the immortal's SPIRIT aura is during the process known as Sinning.

## Sinning

Immortals sometimes take aura ranks from mortals without their willing cooperation. This may be done to heal a wounded aura, cleanse taint, or (in the case of SPIRIT aura only) create immaculum. In order to "sin" the immortal must maintain physical contact with the mortal, and only one rank can be taken per attempt (which takes one full turn).

The player must announce before making any rolls the purpose of the Sinning (cleanse, heal, create immaculum), and what aura the immortal is using (the one to be healed or cleansed usually). The immortal and mortal will make an opposed roll using that aura. If the immortal rolls lower, the mortal's aura goes one rank inferior and the immortal gains one rank. The mortal will **not** heal back the missing aura rank. When the immortal creates immaculum, the rank of SPIRIT aura from the mortal coalesces into

spiritual substance that orbits in and around the immortal's own auras. Once done, immaculum cannot be changed back into normal SPIRIT aura.

### Example

Croakus wishes to heal his BODY (currently d12, normally d8). He walks up and touches a mortal while "asking for directions". Croakus rolls his d12 and the mortal rolls his own BODY (a d10). If Croakus rolls lower, his BODY increases back to d10 and the mortal's reduces to d12. Croakus can attempt to Sin again if he wishes, but the mortal is now obviously aware something is dangerously wrong and probably won't quietly sit there and let Croakus do it.

If the immortal fails, then there is a chance that he will gain taint, and possibly a curse. This is based on the type of mortal that the immortal is attempting to sin from, as described below. Most immortals are unaware except upon close inspection, just what type of mortal they are dealing with; unless the immortal is a very potent Bright Blood, which most immortals can feel when near them.

### Normal Mortals

There are two types of normal mortals, those with a SPIRIT aura and those without, simply known as the soulless. Immaculum can not be created, nor can an immortal heal or cleanse his SPIRIT aura by Sinning on a soulless. Taking control of a soulless (as described in Book II) does not help with the process of Sinning.

If an immortal fails in the Sinning against the normal mortal, the immortal does not heal, is not cleansed, no immaculum is created. If the immortal critically fails, the immortal gains taint. If the immortal was attempting to heal an aura, the aura is effectively further "damaged" as it now gains a rank of taint instead of healing. If the immortal was attempting to cleanse an aura of taint, it is now further tainted. In addition to this, a critical failure on a mortal with a SPIRIT aura generates a curse as well. Curses are explained below. The curse does not need to be based off of the system of beliefs, but could be based on circumstances at the time of sinning, the way the immortal appeared at the time, flights of fancy that the mortal has, etc.

### Setting Note: Mantle Beings

All beings created by a Maker within a mantle are treated as Soulless, though it is not readily apparent to most immortals. The Maker determines reality, and therefore it may require thorough investigation to determine the difference, and more often than not, most immortals cannot tell the difference. Mantle beings are living flesh and blood creatures. The only difference is that they cannot exist outside the mantle, and if the mantle ever fails, they die and fade. Then again, it is said the same can happen to an immortal thrust into the Blue Air unprotected. Makers and other inhabitants of mantles get very upset when they are referred to as not being "real", "constructs", etc.

### Believers

Believers are just like normal mortals with SPIRIT auras, except they have the Faith Boon. If the immortal fails it is the same as a normal mortal, no healing, cleansing or immaculum. If the immortal critically fails, it is worse than with a normal mortal. Not only does the immortal gain taint and a curse, but the Believer's Faith Boon activates as well. This warps the immortal in some way that is usually apparent to others that view or interact with the immortal, following the standard Faith Boon rules.

If the immortal also has the Faith boon, the immortal and mortal make an opposed roll. If the immortal rolls equal or lower than the mortal the Faith Boon does not work against the immortal. Narrators should decide ahead of time if a mortal is a believer or not.

It is possible to sense the Faith in a Believer by making a SPIRIT roll (cosmic awareness) against a target number equal to 12 minus the SPIRIT die of the mortal. This actually makes believers with low SPIRIT very dangerous since detecting their Faith is nearly impossible. It takes one turn to do this, which means that an immortal cannot sense and sin in the same turn, regardless of the number of actions he has. If the immortal has never felt or dealt with mortal Faith before, the Narrator may wish to shift the immortal's SPIRIT roll one level inferior since the immortal does not know exactly what he is looking for. Immortals with the Scanning Boon (SPIRIT) may use this instead.

### Example

Blood has walked up to a mortal and is about to shake hands and sin from him. He rolls his d10 SPIRIT to see if he can sense any Faith in the mortal. He rolls a 3. The mortal is indeed a believer with a SPIRIT of d8. 12 minus 8 (8 is the die value) is 4. Since Blood did roll equal or lower than a 4, he senses the Faith and decides that when he shakes hands with this mortal, he will not sin against him.

### Bright Bloods

These mortals are the **most** dangerous to sin from. **Any** failure (critical or not) results in the aura rank being tainted and the immortal gaining a curse. On a critical failure, the immortal gains a second curse, at one rank inferior to the first curse. And since all Bright Bloods have the Faith boon, this also activates as per a Believer.

### Example

Cutter, who is heavily wounded, races into the storefront and grabs the first mortal he sees and begins Sinning from her. He rolls a 7 on his current d12 BODY and she rolls a 5 on her d10 BODY. She turns out to be a Bright Blood so his BODY aura is now effectively a d20 (wounded to d12 and tainted one more rank to d20). In addition, Cutter gains a d8 curse (she has a d8 SPIRIT), and her Faith Boon activates. If he had critically failed he would have gained a second curse at a d10.

### Mortal Reactions

When a mortal willingly gives up a rank of one of her auras to an immortal, the experience is not in any way harmful to the mortal. In fact, the mortal will find it a very pleasant experience, falling into a somewhat sleep-like, almost hypnotic state for up to several hours afterwards.

Remember, only Believers and Bright Bloods are capable of giving their aura ranks willingly. Others do not have the Faith to allow such a transferal.

Bright Bloods "heal back" these missing aura ranks at the same rate as they would heal normal damage. Other mortals take twice as long (see healing rules in Book I). But when the ranks of aura are taken by force (Sinning), it takes Bright Bloods years to "heal back" this kind of damage, and normal mortals never regain it.

When aura ranks are taken by force, the mortal's aura is permanently changed and scarred. It is not damage that can be healed normally or with serenades or other powers, because it is not truly damage, but the scars left from missing aura ranks. It is an irrevocable change that only the strongest of Bright Bloods even have a chance of recovering from. It is because of this that the process of forcibly taking aura ranks is called Sinning.

Mortals do not sit idly by while an immortal drains their aura ranks. Once the immortal has begun to sin the mortal can feel that something is dreadfully wrong, as they grow weaker in one of their auras. Since sinning requires physical contact, a mortal may attempt to break free of the mortal's grasp. This is role-played as per standard combat. Since it takes an entire turn for the immortal to sin, the immortal may only attempt to maintain their grasp and physical contact with the mortal. Once begun, they may not play serenades, activate himsati natures, etc. If the mortal manages to break physical contact the sinning fails, but no taint or curses are gained since no energies were successfully transferred.

Once the immortal is done sinning upon the mortal, the mortal will remain stunned for some time as their auras attempt to adjust and rationalize that something is now clearly missing. This leaves a permanent scar on the soul and mind of the mortal. It is possible that an event like this can even create Faith in a mortal, though it would be twisted and warped. Such a thing would be very rare as well.

Most mortals (unless they are believers) cannot comprehend what has actually happened to them, they cannot come to terms with it. This can drive a mortal to make up events in his mind as to what actually happened and what it all meant.

If a mortal's MIND or BODY aura drops below d20 due to sinning, the mortal dies. Mortals that die in this way become ghosts of a sort, their remaining auras not dissipating. More on mortal spirits appears in Chapter 3. If an immortal's SPIRIT aura drops below d20, he becomes forever soulless. The Courts abhor the death of a mortal in this way, or a mortal becoming soulless in this way. Immortals who are discovered to be committing such acts are seen as no better than the Sanguinary's own minions.

These immortals are at the very least banished from the Perpetual Society.

## Sanguine Taint

Whenever an immortal sins, even successfully, some taint is created. Normally this tiny amount resides within the mortal's auras and is partially responsible for why the mortal never regains the lost auras. Some of it may float out into the world and settle where it may.

Taint is anti-energy that the Sanguinary can utilize to destroy, create droves, possess beings, place shackles of pain on its servitors, and in more rare cases reanimate the dead to do her bidding. This is yet another reason the Perpetual Society has such a dim view of those who Sin against mortals except when absolutely necessary.

Unfortunately, many immortals, while understanding the threat of the Progeny and the Droles, do not believe the Sanguinary truly exists any longer. Most of these are Solitaires, but regardless, these immortals create a large amount of taint since they have no inhibitions against Sinning.

Taint does not hinder the minions of the Sanguinary, and in fact is beneficial to them in many ways. Though not directly of the Sanguinary, immortal scholars have long speculated that there is some connection between the Sanguinary, taint, and the substance known as Darkle. It was used by the Abzulim in some of their ancient artifacts, and is said to come from a place known as the Labyrinth. This dark mystical realm is a mystery to most of the Courts, save a few members of the Shadowen, and they do not speak of the Labyrinth in mixed company.

Minions of the Sanguinary are capable of working with taint in a number of ways. It is beneficial even to the lower minions such as the Droles. Minions of the Sanguinary who carry taint do not have their auras reduced by it. Some welcome the taint and the curses that sometimes accompany it. There are rumors that the Droles are actually Progeny Scions. The Sanguinary affords its minions with many ways to work with taint, which manifest as certain Dark Boons. However, most of these are under the Sanguinary's direct control, and the Sanguinary can withhold the boon from a minion

at her whim. These are labeled (Sanguinary) in their descriptions in the new Boons Appendix. These Dark Boons are almost always reserved for those that serve the Sanguinary and not for those that stand against it. These Dark Boons have no point cost as they are given (and taken away from) the minions of the Sanguinary at her whim.

The Sanguinary is also capable of punishing those who fail to serve her well. The Sanguinary can control the taint that resides in its minions, moving it out of the SPIRIT aura and into other auras in order to inflict pain or cloud the mind of a follower. However, even the Sanguinary cannot be everywhere at once, its consciousness diffused mostly through the minds of the mortals who dream, only physically connected to its own minions. Much of this punishment happens when the minion sleeps, as they connect to the Morpheum themselves to receive instructions, or to communicate with others.

This is not to say that all the minions of the Sanguinary thrive on taint. Most Progeny are not tainted at all, while some Drones have all their auras completely tainted, making them devastating to the immortals. The Narrator should use taint wisely in her campaign, and not make it a regular occurrence for which the characters will constantly be prepared.

There are other ways in which the Sanguinary can manipulate those things that are tainted, as evidenced by the ability to easily possess mortals with tainted souls. It is said the Sanguinary can literally use taint to power a host of other abilities that most immortals dare not even imagine.

## **Mortal Darkening**

As mentioned, the type of taint found in most mortals is harmless to immortals, and unusable by the Sanguinary. However, should a mortal's SPIRIT become tainted, the Sanguinary can (at the Narrator's discretion) take temporary possession of the mortal. The Sanguinary cannot be everywhere at once, so this does not happen every day. But the Sanguinary can choose to take possession of any mortal it is focused on. This allows the Sanguinary to "issue an order" for the mortal to carry out and places

the mortal into a mindset capable of recognizing immortals and other supernatural effects.

The Sanguinary can also boost the MIND or BODY aura by one rank for one scene. However, at the end of the scene, the mortal permanently loses one rank of SPIRIT aura (though the taint remains). If a mortal dies while his SPIRIT ranks are truly tainted, he becomes a Soul Reaper as discussed later in this Book.

There is a difference between a mortal being tainted and being "darkened". All mortals are connected to the Sanguinary in that they connect to the Morpheum when they dream. Within their subconscious exists a darkness which immortals fear. It is a twisted image of the Sanguinary, thriving and plying on the darker thoughts of humanity. The Sanguinary can manipulate human belief in this way.

It is said that mythology is the story of the immortals, twisted and perverted by the influence of the Sanguinary in the human mind as the stories are told and retold. It is those mortals who begin to fall to that darkness within that the Courts fear, as they come closer and closer to becoming soulless servants of the Sanguinary, adding to the power of the Hush-Hush within the Morpheum.

## **Immaculum's Effects**

Taint and Immaculum are antithetical to one another, but can both be present within a living being that has all three auras (SPIRIT, MIND, BODY). Obviously Immortals can carry immaculum while tainted, but taint tends to cancel out Immaculum, as evidenced by Curses. In mortals this is a dangerous situation, and only powers such as the Ambrosia serenade of the Court of Life are capable of cleansing a mortal SPIRIT of taint.

Bright Bloods have an advantage over other mortals because they can sacrifice a rank of their SPIRIT aura to cleanse away the taint, just as if they had done so to create immaculum. This sacrificed rank of SPIRIT will heal according to standard rules. Bright Bloods with the Immaculum Fount Boon, will be unable to activate it until the taint is cleansed from their SPIRIT.

### **System Note: Immaculum and Sinning from Bright Bloods**

Bright Bloods can use mystic boons because they are capable of sacrificing a rank of their SPIRIT aura to create immaculum within themselves. Some have the Immaculum Fount Boon, which creates immaculum for them each day without them having to sacrifice SPIRIT ranks. Bright Bloods can willingly give immaculum to an immortal just as they can their SPIRIT aura.

While immaculum is present in a Bright Blood's aura, an immortal cannot sin against any of the auras until she has first sinned away all the immaculum. It acts as a barrier between the immortal and the Bright Blood's auras. The immortal sins away the immaculum just like sinning against the SPIRIT aura, except the SPIRIT aura does not go inferior with each sin. An immortal cannot gain curses from sinning on immaculum, but will gain taint on any failure.

*Example:* A Bright Blood with a d8 SPIRIT, d10 BODY, and 4 immaculum is being sinned against by an immortal attempting to heal his BODY aura. The immortal must go against the d8 SPIRIT four times to take the immaculum, and then can go against the d10 BODY.

Tainted minions of the Sanguinary roll a die equal to the amount of taint in their SPIRIT aura when encountering an immortal with the Transcendent Nature/Light Boon known as the Anthem. If the immortal wins, the minion suffers a +1 to all rolls made against the immortal. If there is a tie or the minion wins, nothing happens. If the minion rolls a critical failure, it cannot stay in the presence of the immortal.

## **Dark Boons**

Also included in Appendix B are new Dark Boons. For these boons to work, the immortal must be tainted. Many Progeny who choose to remain tainted carry these boons as well.

Dark Boons are a way for a Narrator to give the adversaries of the character a bit of an edge against the characters' various boons. Dark Boons function (except for the taint requirement) identically to normal boons. Some Dark Boons are under the control of the Sanguinary, and are normally reserved for Progeny and the Doves.

## **BANES & CURSES**

Just as Immortals are able to gain powers derived from human faith, it can also cripple an immortal. These effects, sometimes merely annoying, sometimes deadly, are called the banes. Banes are as common (if not more so) than boons in the modern age, as paranoia, pessimism, fear, and anguish are in greater amounts than they were in the Mythic Age. In today's world banes come much easier than boons.

Banes represent an advanced and optional system that Narrators can use to add more

detail to their campaigns. As with boons, they are not necessary for the full enjoyment of the Immortal experience. Each Bane taken grants the player a number of extra memory points to build their character with. Some Narrators may wish to grant a character a Bane during the story, granting them extra experience points during the game. Certain Banes called Curses only grant the character memory at the start of the game, and do not grant the character memory or experience if gained during game play.

Some Banes (mostly Curses) normally only affect immortals, but a Narrator may allow some banes to affect Bright Bloods who have been affected by another's faith or other supernatural effect. Some banes are mundane and can affect anyone. Entire story lines can be crafted around the characters becoming involved in supernatural battles not with minions of the Sanguinary or the Abzulim, but between factions of Believers and Bright Bloods.

## **Mundane Banes**

These banes have no special requirements, and function just like mundane boons do. Banes have a number listed with them. This is the amount of memory that the character will get to build his character with for taking the bane. Banes are usually taken when the character is first built, though the Narrator may deem that during the story, certain situations could grant the character a new Bane. If a Bane is gained during the story, multiply the value by five and grant it as experience, not memory. Banes should not be a cheap way to gain memory to spend in the middle of game sessions.

The list of Banes appears in Appendix A.

## The Mystical Curses

These are the mystical banes derived from the darker side of human faith. Older immortals refer to these as taboos. A curse is a mystical effect derived from the unique form of taint that can occur in an immortal's aura, when mixed with the delusions, faith, beliefs, etc. of a mortal being. Curses are much like banes, except they drain immaculum from the host immortal whenever they activate.

Examples of Curses could be an allergy to a substance (like silver), changing into himsati form each full moon, feeling a certain sensation whenever touching a particular kind of object, being unable to enter a home without being invited, birds calling the immortal's name as she passes by, thunderstorms always preceding an immortal's arrival into a city, etc. The choices are as endless as one's imagination.

Curses may be taken when building the character, and it is therefore assumed that the character had an intense flashback and gained the curse from one of his avatars, or failed at sinning prior to the start of the game and gained the appropriate curse.

Curses taken while building the character grant the character memory points equal to 2 memory per rank. Curses gained as a result of flashback from an avatar also gain memory points. Curses gained as a result of failing at sinning gain the character no points. The Curse is the price paid for sinning.

Narrators should be wary of allowing players to build characters with Curses strong enough to gain them more than a few memory points. Curses of that level almost never go away and force most immortals to hide in their private sanctuaries or in one of the few remaining mantles in the Sanctuary Realm.

### Working Curses

When an immortal gains a curse from sinning, it is given a rank equal to the SPIRIT aura of the mortal it was gained from. For example, if the mortal had a d10 SPIRIT, the Curse would have a d10 die value (Rank 3).

Curses activate based on the needs of the story and circumstances, though the most common is by failing a Fugue Check (but not critically,

which instead draws out an avatar). Anytime a player points out a good time for a curse to activate and the Narrator decides to have it happen, he should feel free to award a point of memory or a few experience points to the player.

Curses roll their die value when activating and subtract one from the roll for every rank of taint the immortal possesses. The immortal rolls the affected aura as at its normal untainted value. Normally the immortal will roll his SPIRIT aura but some Curses have a strong affect on the immortal's BODY or MIND aura so the Narrator can choose to have the player roll those auras.

If the immortal rolls lower, nothing happens. If the curse rolls lower or equal, the curse activates. If the immortal is tainted and has immaculum present in his halo, one point of immaculum is destroyed. If the immortal has no immaculum, the aura most directly connected to the curse (physical would be BODY, mental would be MIND, social/external would be SPIRIT) is shifted one rank inferior from where it currently is, until the curse subsides again.

This is usually at the end of the scene, though the Narrator can make it last longer if it furthers the story. The aura cannot be healed during this time, as it isn't really damaged, just being suppressed by the taint. Auras cannot be shifted lower than d20 in this manner however.

If the immortal is not tainted, than the curse activates, but no immaculum is destroyed, no auras are lowered. Taint merely causes the draining of the immaculum (or lowering of the aura), and should speed up the curse's rate of occurrences, the rate of which is at the Narrator's discretion to best fit the story. The stronger the curse (in terms of its die rank), the more often it should occur, and very strong curses (d8, d6, and d4) can affect not only the immortal, but can sometimes have effects on the surrounding environment and other nearby beings as well.

## Scions

Scions are shameful creations that immortals have used over history to divest themselves of curses gained through Sinning. In the modern age this process is almost forbidden by the Courts, who see it as a weak and cowardly path. The Courts feel that if an immortal must result to

sinning, then he should be prepared to live with the consequences and deserves to live with the scars of his failure. Only when a curse can truly harm the immortal or those around him, in such a way that he cannot function within the Perpetual Society, do the Courts see the creation of a Scion as an acceptable alternative. At times it has even been more preferable to enter Lethe as far as the Courts have been concerned.

Creating a Scion is creating a weapon, a gun that can be pointed at anyone. Scions are tormented creatures, carrying taint and the immortal's curse, used as assassination devices, instruments of punishment against those who have wronged an immortal, or ways of levying curses against other individuals. Many Solitaire Dynasties use Scions in these manners, as well as a few immortals within the Courts.

In order to create a Scion, the immortal must be in the presence of his ark and must be tainted with enough ranks of taint to equal half the rank of the curse (rounded up). As he begins the ritual, he forcibly removes the vox from his body. As the BODY begins to disintegrate, the vox is pulled into the ark, rejuvenating the immortal with whatever aura ranks are available.

However, since the vox is so close to the ark, only a single aura rank is used to transport it. The remaining MIND and SPIRIT aura ranks seep back into the body, reforming it into a childlike clone of the immortal and distributing themselves amongst the three auras to match roughly the same ratios as they were in the immortal. Housing the curse and a permanent level of taint that cannot be removed without destroying it, the Scion is now born. It is fully aware of what it is from the moment of its creation.

Scions usually look very similar to the immortal when they first came out of Lethe, and have many of the same interests. Some even refer to the immortal as their parent. The Scion never appears to grow older however, and only lives for 10 to 50 years. And while a few develop wonderful personalities, most Scions never go beyond being akin to paper copies of the immortal auras that created them. The taint that a Scion carries always plagues on its MIND and BODY aura, reaching out from the SPIRIT, causing it mental and physical problems from time to time.

An immortal is responsible for the Scion, not simply because the Courts deem it so, but the Curse can return. If they die prematurely (not via natural causes), the Curse returns to the immortal permanently shifted one rank superior. More dangerous than this however, is the fact that a scion can be controlled by the Sanguinary. It is only mortal after all, and has a tainted SPIRIT aura now.

However, the Scion can roll its MIND against the taint (which rolls a die equal to its rank) to resist. Fortunately, the immortal may telepathically communicate with his Scion while in line of sight, and can also attempt to control the Scion. The immortal and Scion each roll their MIND die, and if the Immortal wins, he can mentally control the scion. Again, the Courts look down with shame on those who create these poor wretched creatures.

Scions can wield taint in a variety of ways, based on the curse that helped to create them. The Narrator should feel free to make up interesting abilities based on the curse. The Scion rolls the level of taint any time it wishes to wield its powers against another. Scions do not normally develop any mystical boons, though some can be used (in terms of mechanics) to simulate various abilities, without an immaculum cost. The Scion usually has a number of powers equal to the number of ranks of taint it possesses.

The most famous and individualistic of Scions ever created were those by the immortal Dracula. His Scions have the ability to continue living by drinking the blood of others. They are known as the Nosferatu, the vampires. Oddly, his scions come in all shapes and sizes, even different genders.

## *FUGUE*

As described in Book I, the fugue rating determines the possibility of being possessed by avatars, or falling under the weight of a curse. As per the errata in Book II, the character gains 1 Fugue Value for every avatar she takes (also page 78, Book I). Whenever the character encounters her fugue trigger, she must make a Fugue Check. As per the Book II errata, the character rolls a 20 sided die against a target number of 20 minus the current Fugue Value.



Failure indicates the Narrator may make one of her curses attempt to manifest (appropriate to the circumstances at the time). On a critical failure an avatar can take over the immortal, up to the point of physically changing the appearance of the immortal to that of the avatar (though the avatar must use the aura ranks possessed by the current immortal).

## **Ticking Time Bomb**

An immortal is unique in that it effectively has two brains. The first is the vox, which acts as the primary brain. It records all the immortal's experiences and etches these onto itself in the form of a personality matrix. The second serves as a redundant secondary source of thought. It is the organic brain that the immortal forms in his human form that carries with him, and allows him a measure of resistance, especially when shifting back to human form after being in himsati form. Even an elemental, with his vox contained outside the physical body, follows these same basic guidelines.

The vox constantly vibrates to the hum of the celestial din that it imitates when making serenades. This constantly causes a background voice, as the vibrations continually keep the sparks of the essences of the various avatars alive and well inside the vox. This background voice is usually so quiet that it is no more than a mere whisper, and many immortals do not even notice it.

However, as time marches on, the voice can become louder as more avatars are added to the chorus of voices. During times of depression, extreme boredom, or confusion, the voices almost seem to become louder to the immortal who begins to hear them. Added to this confusion is the fact that the voices are alien, and have memories and thoughts that do not match what the immortal has within the organic brain (which has no knowledge of the avatars). This can bring on a form of madness, which we rate with the term Fugue.

## **Fugue Triggers**

Fugue triggers are incidents that are recorded on the immortal's vox as memories, which also reverberate within one of the avatar's memories, causing its spark to become active. This can cause curses to manifest, the avatar to begin to speak with the immortal from the vox, the avatar

to manifest or even for the immortal to go into periods of madness or worse yet: the fugue state known as ennui.

Sometimes, things can happen which cause one of the avatars to awaken. Usually this is the immortal perceiving an event, or being involved in a circumstance in which the avatar knew well. As the vox is recording this experience, the vibrations can strike a chord of memory within one of the older personality matrices. When this happens, the vox counter-vibrates and this can force various curses to manifest from out of the immortal's SPIRIT aura.

This can also cause the avatar to manifest in the background, not taking over, but speaking to the immortal above the other voices. In the worst case, (when critically failing a Fugue check) the avatar's spark suppresses the immortal's own spark, pushing it back into the vox while it comes out to attune to the auras.

This can cause the immortal to physically transform into the avatar. When the avatar finally is too tired to keep the immortal suppressed, the current immortal reemerges and the avatar sinks back into the vox, the spark going dormant again.

All immortals (save Newborns) have at least one Fugue Trigger. Some immortals have more than one if they have particularly strong avatars. One way to look at Fugue Triggers is to think of the Curses listed in Appendix A. Each curse has a base die value (and all die values equate to a rank as per page 36 of Book I). When a player makes up a fugue trigger think of what rank it would be equal to. If that rank is equal to the number of avatars taken, stop. If not, then suggest the player pick a second Fugue Trigger. Decide what the rank would be. Now add it to the first Fugue's "rank" and see if that matches up with the number of avatars taken.

Though Fugue Triggers don't have actual ranks this is an easy way to gauge the number and strength of Fugue Triggers amongst immortals. In this way, immortals with many avatars will have one or two very strong Fugue Triggers to represent those avatars, or many small ones. Immortals with fewer avatars will have fewer and/or weaker Fugue Triggers.

### **Setting Note: The Sanguinary and Etchings**

Voxes take over as the primary brain due to the Sanguinary's immense hunger for knowledge and self-growth. The Sanguinary has found that consuming back voxes full of knowledge and experience help it grow faster than taking back clean ones with no etchings. The Courts believe the process of Lethe also assists against the Sanguinary by fragmenting the etchings into multiple pieces (a piece for each Avatar), so they cannot be so easily consumed.

## **Influence of Avatars**

Avatars present a wealth of information and opportunity for an immortal, as well as some inherent dangers. The vox acts as the primary brain for the immortal, with the organic brain becoming a secondary, nearly redundant organ. As the immortal accumulates experiences, they are etched into the vox as a personality matrix.

When the immortal enters Lethe, the spark of his essence embeds itself into a matrix within the vox, forming an avatar. The avatar slumbers until it awakens, emerges from the matrix and takes over the current persona. This most often happens as a result of failing a Fugue Check (see page 79 Book I, and Book II errata on Fugue Checks), though the Narrator can deem other events as causing this at his discretion. The spark of the current persona recedes into the personality matrix and the avatar takes control.

For an Ingenue this can be especially troubling considering that she is still discovering the basics of who and what she is. Avatars rarely surface within an Ingenue, but when this does happen it can be an overwhelming experience, quite disastrous to them both. Many times an Ingenue and Avatar would wrestle for control in the days before the Great Betrayal, and would find themselves locked away by mortal authorities thinking that the individual suffered from multiple personalities.

Many times the Avatar emerges rather confused. Having some memories of the current persona due to the organic brain, the avatar (especially if it has not been out in many years) will be confused by the new setting and environment. Sometimes the Avatar does not fully emerge, but resides in the background of the immortal's awareness. The Narrator should assign a penalty shift to the immortal based on how strongly the avatar has emerged. Each Avatar is a unique individual, and therefore will act in accordance with his or her personality. Some may be helpful, some may seek to emerge fully and stay out as long as possible and others may seek a way to keep the current

persona submerged permanently. It is ultimately up to the Narrator to decide on the Avatar's current goals and motivations.

When an Avatar does fully emerge, even if the physical appearance changes, it uses the same aura ranks, fugue, current levels of taint, etc. that the current persona has. If the two personas are of the same Calling (which is most of the time) the Avatar has access to those skills at his level or the persona's level, whichever is higher.

Any Court boons, etc. continue to function if they are of the same Court. Other skills, boons and banes, should be those belonging to the Avatar, not the current persona. On rarer occasions, when the Avatar submerges again, remnants of a curse they had can remain with the current incarnation.

## **Avatars and Memory**

When a character is created, the persona gains a number of memory points based on how many avatars he has taken (10 memory and 1 fugue per avatar). This is not to say that the number chosen is all the avatars that the individual possesses within the vox's matrices, but this is the number that are strong enough for the immortal to gain knowledge from. This also directly affects the fugue rating of an immortal. The memories of the avatars are not stored in the organic brain of the immortal, but are instead etched onto the vox. Therefore, an immortal cannot "remember" something that one of his avatars did not experience. Narrators should remember this when a player attempts to remember a focus in Melee Weapons: Axes when his only avatar was Elvis. Narrators should discourage players from ignoring the spirit of the game like that.

Sometimes it is possible that the Avatar attempts to have cordial relations with the persona. In this case, it may be possible for an Avatar to "teach" (from the back of the persona's awareness) a character a skill or knowledge. This should be treated as a flashback and the persona should be given memory towards the purchase of the skill. This shows that over time

the character learns, but also learns from the memory of the avatar at the same time.

It is also possible that the story dictates the discovery of an avatar not part of those the player made when first creating the character. We recommend that when such a thing happens, a small amount of memory may be gained for the purposes of remembering the particular skill or knowledge pertinent to the story line and then have the Avatar recede back. If the player or the Narrator decide the Avatar to become a regular part of the immortal's accessible incarnations, then a Fugue point should be gained by the persona. More on Fugue appears earlier in this Chapter.

### **Splintering Avatars**

There are instances where an immortal and one of her avatars may vie for more permanent control over the new host body, each seeking to somehow rid themselves of the other. This can sometimes create problems within the Perpetual Society, especially if the Avatar is a particularly strong-willed one. Sometimes an immortal is discovered to have a particular Avatar important to the Courts. There is a ritual, forbidden to all except with permission by the Paragon Council, known as the Splintering. It is said a similar version of this ritual is what is used to create the shameful creatures known as Scions (see that section for more details).

The splintering is a ritual known to the Chancellor's of the Courts of Death, Life, and Secrets. Each Court holds one part of the ritual and therefore a Chancellor of each Court must be present to enact the rite. Though the exact details of the ritual are unknown, it is known that the immortal must have a Sanctuary and an Ark that can be used in the ritual. It is also known that a fresh, clean shard of the Sanguinary must be present (one that has never been imprinted as a vox or to a Maker).

The immortal and the Chancellors must be present in the immortal's Sanctuary. The immortal's Ark must have enough aura ranks in it to fully rejuvenate the Avatar as she was before entering Lethe, nothing less. It is known that somehow the immortal's vox has the personality matrix and spark of the Avatar removed and placed into the clean shard. The shard is then placed in the Ark and the aura ranks "rebuild" the Avatar's BODY, MIND and SPIRIT.

Encryption [7]

Return Locus: <Tinker at Sanctuary>

Received By: <Butterfly [Probable Alias - Emissary, Court of Secrets]>

Language: Francais (Translation Provided)

Subject: Missing Shipment

Summary: Lead on the requested items

Keyword Search: D'Arcade, Alexandrites, Voxes

Date: Year of the Pale

Message as Follows:

THE ALEXANDRITES ARE NOT IN POSSESSION OF THE MISSING "SHARD". THEY DO HAVE YOUR MISSING TOME HOWEVER. EVIDENCE POINTS TO THE "SHARD" AS BEING IN NIVALEA AND ABOUT TO COME UNDER AUCTION BY THE DARK ARCADE.

NOTE: SHADE'S FOLLOWERS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED NEAR THE AUCTION HOUSE THERE RECENTLY.

YOU MAY WISH TO BE AWARE THAT THE SORCERERS ARE POSSIBLY BEHIND THE LOBBYING OF A NEW LAW IN YOUR LOCAL REGENCY WHICH WILL AID THEM IN PROTECTING THE NEW TREASURES WHICH HAVE RECENTLY COME SO CLOSE TO YOUR COURT'S GRASP.

An elemental must have her vox present with her for this to be accomplished. If this is not done correctly the Avatar could go insane, or both the Avatar and the immortal could die and be lost to oblivion. For this reason the ritual used to do the splintering is a guarded secret. Even the immortal and Avatar are unaware of exactly what transpired to separate them.

There are some side effects to this. Along with the Ark being destroyed as with any rejuvenation, the Sanctuary's dominance transfers from the immortal to the Avatar and the immortal loses the Sanctuary boon, but does not gain any memory or experience points for it.

Second, though no memory points are lost from the immortal, he may not draw on that Avatar's memories in any way to gain skills, abilities, etc. And finally, no Fugue points are lost by the

### **Setting Note: Reentering Society for the Avatar**

Nearly all Avatars are from the time before the Great Betrayal and therefore were members of the Prides, not the Courts. These Avatars can be very upset over the full realization of what has happened since they entered Lethe. The Prides had powers and boons all their own, now lost to the Avatar.

Usually the Avatar is taken to the primary mantle of whichever Court his Pride now forms the basis of. After about a year of training and learning of the changes to the world, the Avatar is initiated into the appropriate Court and gains its boon, serenade, etc.

Sometimes the Avatar rebels and becomes a Solitaire, or worse, a Progeny. It is for this reason and others that the Courts do not allow just anyone to release their Avatars, let alone on their own.

immortal for divesting himself of the Avatar. All in all, the situation is better for the Avatar in the splintering than the immortal who contained the Avatar.

It is said that before the Great Betrayal some immortals were able to commit the ritual on their own, in a different way. Stories persist, as a warning to young immortals to respect the power of their avatars, that some avatars would emerge and use the same ritual to cast off the new immortal. And other, horrific stories, tell of a time when avatars and their current immortal hosts would attempt to literally consume one another in a terrible ritual known as the Venerly.

## **The Lash**

During the Shouting War that ended the Age of Myth, the immortals found a new threat to their existence. There are those that claim the constant eruption of serenades across the celestial din caused it to begin to backlash. When an immortal was affected by a serenade, this backlash entered into their body and caused microscopic fissures in the vox, which would act like extra memory etchings, accidentally linking avatars together.

Some claim that the Abzulim released a telepathic vibration that acted as a plague, affecting any whose minds were opened by a serenade. And still more claim that the Lash is caused by a series of immortal parasites, too small to be seen even by the keen eyes of the immortals. The vox is a fine instrument, and so refined that the average immortal has no chance of examining it to determine things such as the Lash, the number of avatars, etc.

Regardless, the Lash seems to affect an immortal's fugue in a bizarre way: by breaking down the effective barriers between the avatars, multiple conflicting memories begin to assail the immortal. Eventually the fissures (if it is indeed fissures) reach the immortal's own matrix, causing his own memories to be mixed with those of his avatars. Lost and confused, no longer sure of exactly who he is, or when he is, the immortal goes completely stark raving mad, a monster hungry for identity and unable to satisfy that hunger.

In game terms if the Narrator truly wishes to have an immortal afflicted with the Lash, as the Lash grows the immortal's Fugue Value should raise by one for each stage. We leave it to the Narrator to determine how the Lash should progress. There is only one cure known for the Lash and it is known to very few immortals.

There is a race of immortals called the Shonelkidar, whose himsati are that of a virus. It is claimed that the Shonelkidar literally infect the immortal and consume the sparks of the avatars, along with somehow removing the matrix from the vox. None know if this is truly what happens, but when finished, these strange immortals leave the body, and the immortal never again hears from his avatars, almost as if he is a newborn with no memories in the vox to draw from. Oddly, it is said that the memories released, flood into the organic brain, and the immortal may still draw a few memories from his avatars in such fashion. It is nearly impossible to find the Shonelkidar since the Great Betrayal and none have ever revealed their secret of how they remove the Lash, or even why they are willing to do.

# Chapter III: Living in Death

***"If the Blue Air is the home of the Transcendents, how must they feel each time we throw a minion of the beast into their home when slain?"***

-- Blood, Court of War

## ***IMMORTAL DEATH***

Sooner or later an immortal will come to a point where she must defend herself. And it is entirely possible that the immortal will not do this successfully. As pointed out, each time an immortal takes damage after reaching d20 in an aura, the immortal must roll a d20. This roll is compared to the highest value that can be rolled on the damaged aura die, as if it were untainted and undamaged.

If by some means the vox is removed during this time period the body vaporizes in a blaze of fiery red light and the BODY aura dissipates, leaving only the MIND and SPIRIT aura. The character is now a ghost, a gossamer spirit. The same will happen during the first few moments that an immortal begins to enter Lethe. If the vox is removed before the spark of essence can be stored within the vox, the immortal will not enter Lethe but will become a gossamer. It is for this reason that many immortals maintain Arks.

<b>D20 ROLL IS:</b>	<b>EFFECT IS:</b>
Aura + 7 or more	No Effect, aura remains at a d20
Aura + 1 to + 6	Unconscious
Equal or less than Aura	Incapacitated, can no longer fight until healed
1 on the d20 roll	Make a Lethe check as per Book I

### **Example**

Joker has a d10 BODY aura normally (no damage, no taint). It is the middle of a combat and he is already at a d20 BODY. He takes more damage. He rolls a d20 and compares it to a 10 (highest he can roll on his undamaged/untainted BODY. If he rolls a 17 or higher, nothing happens. If he rolls an 11 to a 16, he falls unconscious. If he rolls a 10 or less, he can no longer fight. If he rolls a 1, he makes a Lethe check. (He simply makes a second check and sees if he rolls a 10 or less)

An incapacitated immortal, if unconscious, appears dead to mundane examinations, but is not. If the body is left alone long enough to heal "back up" to the d20 in that aura, the character recovers with no ill effects. Mystical healing (such as through a serenade) will also assist with this. Once the immortal has had time to heal back to the d20 level, he will "come back to life" and awaken.

## **Spilling of Auras**

When an immortal either enters Lethe or becomes a gossamer the BODY aura "spills" outward. In the case of Lethe, the MIND and SPIRIT auras are used up to place the spark of essence in the vox. In the case of becoming a gossamer, they are pulled into the Blue Air. Both look nearly identical. The body will drop and decompose to a state appropriate for the age of the immortal. In both cases the vox is effectively left behind. If there was a potential struggle for the vox at the final moments, the victor may be left unsure if the immortal is now embedded in the vox or floating within the Blue Air.

## **The Cleansing**

When the BODY aura spills, it washes outward away from the immortal. These ranks can cleanse taint to those in the immediate area. If an immortal with taint is in the immediate area, every two ranks (round up) of unwounded and untainted BODY aura that wash over the immortal will cleanse one rank of taint. This is actually not of benefit to a good number of

Progeny and Drones who thrive on taint and do not wish to see their auras cleansed as such. At best, an immortal with a d4 BODY would be able to cleanse 3 ranks of taint.

#### **Example**

Blood and Croakus are fighting a Progeny with a normally unwounded BODY of d12. Blood and Croakus both have one rank of taint each. When the Progeny dies, it spills the d12 aura outwards. A d12 aura is only enough to cleanse one rank of taint, so either Blood or Croakus (whoever is standing closer) will have their one rank of taint cleansed.

The ranks will spill a distance equal to the immortal's unwounded SPIRIT rank as the BODY aura is forcibly pushed away from the disintegrated body. Though only those in the immediate vicinity can benefit from the potential cleansing, others farther away will feel the immortal's passing.

An immortal with a d8 SPIRIT will be felt for a few miles through the region. With a d6 SPIRIT the immortal will be felt for leagues, up to the size of a small country. It is said the death of an immortal with a d4 SPIRIT can be felt across the entire planet, even if in just some small way on the opposite side of the world from where it happened.

### **The Tainting**

Tainted immortals pose a greater threat to immortals when they perish and spill their BODY aura. When a tainted immortal perishes, the BODY aura carries **all** the taint that the immortal had (in SPIRIT, MIND, and BODY auras). This taint washes over all in the vicinity. All immortals in the vicinity must make a SPIRIT roll equal or less than the BODY aura being spilled.

Tainted individuals receive one superior shift on their SPIRIT die since they already have taint within them to help withstand this. If successful there is no effect. If the character fails, he succumbs to the taint and is stunned for a number of turns equal to the number of ranks of taint contained in the spill. On a critical failure, the character falls unconscious.

#### **Example**

Blood and Croakus are fighting another Progeny with 3 tainted ranks and a normally unwounded BODY of d8. When the Progeny dies, instead of being able to possibly cleanse any taint, they must both roll their SPIRIT die against a target number of 8 (the unwounded BODY die). If they fail they are stunned for 3 turns. If they critically fail they pass out until the Narrator decides that they awaken.

Amazingly, due to their connection to the Sanguinary, drones spill their taint the same way that immortals do. Many a young immortal has foolishly entered a den of drones intent on killing them, only to succumb to the spilling taint and find himself a denizen of the Blue Air as a gossamer.

## **GOSSAMERS**

When an immortal has his vox removed from the body, the immortal becomes a gossamer. The immortal is thrust into the spiritual realm known as the Blue Air. This spiritual sea composed of thought and spiritual energy is where the gossamer will reside. The immortal's only real hope of returning to Earth is to find one of the Shallows: places where the immortal may cross over into the physical world once again, and begin the arduous task of recovering the necessary BODY aura to once again become physical.

### **Corporeal Return**

Once a gossamer has successfully found its way to a Shallow, it appears as a spirit here on Earth. At this point the gossamer must seek out a being that it can convince of its plight and perhaps gain aura ranks with which to reconstruct its body. Most of the time the gossamer finds a mortal believer and begins to perform services for this "master" in exchange for the aura ranks with which to reform.

### **Finding a Master**

The first hurdle found when leaving the Shallows is that the immortal has no physical body, no vox with which to play serenades outside the Blue Air and no way to communicate with others. Gossamers have the ability to "bond" with mortal beings and mentally communicate with them since they are charged with the energies of the

Blue Air. This does not work with other immortals, whose auras are too strong to accept the bond. The gossamer may bond with a number of mortals equal to its MIND rank. Once the bond is made, it cannot be broken until the gossamer has resumed final physical form or passes back into the Blue Air.

Therefore, it is unwise to pick mortals to bond with casually. A gossamer should take time to watch and assess any mortal that she asks for help from. Once bonded, the mortal can understand and communicate with the gossamer. The bonding has no true effect upon the mortal, and the gossamer derives no special benefits other than communication.

#### **Example**

A gossamer with a d12 MIND could bond with two mortals. If he finds those mortals unsatisfactory or unwilling to assist him, he must go back into the Blue Air, find his way to another Shallow and return and try again with others.

Once the gossamer has found a "master", the process begins. The gossamer typically serves the master until the master is willing to give up a rank of BODY aura to the gossamer. This usually necessitates the gossamer teaching the master how to do this. For the gossamer it is quite instinctual, but for the mortal, it must be taught. And since only believers can do this, the master must also be a believer as well. Both master and gossamer must achieve some sort of communion or relationship in order for the transfer to succeed.

Once this is done, the gossamer now has a d20 BODY aura, but it is not stable. The gossamer can now "manifest" for brief periods. This now presents new problems. Though the gossamer and master can still communicate, the gossamer is merely a normal version of the creature he evolved from. A gossamer with a dog himsati is simply a normal dog when manifested. Since the gossamer has no vox, it takes much longer to put things in order with the new BODY rank. While manifested, the gossamer can ignore the rules pertaining to the lack of a body in the gossamer rules.

It usually takes several weeks at best for the immortal to adjust to the alien rank of BODY aura. At this point, if the master is still willing, another aura rank can be donated to the gossamer, which now becomes fully corporeal

with a d12 BODY aura. However, still not having a vox, the gossamer is physically nothing more than a normal version of the creature it derived from (making things very tricky for elementals and more exotic himsatis). There are many things a gossamer cannot do since it has no vox. It can also "die" like a normal animal, the SPIRIT and MIND being thrust back into the Blue Air. Then it must repeat the process of finding a Shallows and emerging to try and gain aura ranks to reform yet another corporeal form.

The gossamer may choose to stay with the master for an extended time, gaining a third BODY aura rank, and possibly developing a very close relationship with the "master". However, with the rate most Believers heal aura ranks, this is a process which can take a significantly long time. Without a vox the gossamer cannot go beyond the d10 BODY aura.

#### **Regaining Immortality**

Now the gossamer faces the most difficult challenge, finding a shard or vox (or perhaps finding her own vox again) and regaining her immortality. At this point, most immortals can understand the gossamer, which has limited power over human speech. It cannot speak in vox-tongue however, as it has no vox to speak with.

At this point the gossamer has merely the basic abilities that it would have as if it were in himsati form. It has the ability to use its natures fully now. It cannot shape-shift into human form, it cannot play serenades, and it cannot use skills that require the human form (unless it has a humanoid himsati).

If the gossamer somehow recovers her own vox she may forcibly implant it into her new body, reconnecting to her existing matrix in the vox and becoming immortal once again. She will probably want to regain any missing aura ranks if necessary once this is done.

If the gossamer takes on a fresh shard (very hard to find in this day and age but possible) she becomes something of a Newborn, though she still has the skills and memory she already possesses. Any unspent memory can be spent, but not during the game session without the Narrator's permission (there are no avatars to draw from any longer). If the gossamer takes on a previously used vox, she inherits all the avatars present in that vox. Fugue ratings do not

change from any of these circumstances however.

If the gossamer does not recover her original vox, somewhere out there is that vox, with all that she was imprinted upon it. If another takes the vox, everything up until the time she died becomes an avatar for that immortal. If ever splintered, there could literally be two of the same immortal with the same past up until the point where the immortal became a gossamer, and then two totally different paths taken afterwards resulting in two versions of the same immortal.

Encryption [7]

Return Locus: <Butterfly [Probable Alias]>

Received By: <Tinker; Talitha at Sanctuary>

Language: Español (Translation Provided)

Subject: Alexandrites & Centurions

Summary: Pass it on

Keyword Search: Court of War, South America

Date: Year of the Pale

Message as Follows:

THANK YOU FOR THE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE GREY KNOWN AS THE ALEXANDRITES. THE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE "SHARD" IS BEING PASSED DIRECTLY TO THE CHANCELLORS.

AS AN ASIDE, THE ARMS SHIPMENT FROM THE GREY GROUP, THE CENTURIONS, THAT YOUR BROTHER IN THE COURT OF WAR WAS INTERESTED IN IS INDEED A FACT, NOT FICTION. HE WOULD DO WELL TO BEGIN PREPERATIONS TO STOP THEM.

## Mortal Spirits

When a mortal dies, his MIND and BODY dissipate along with any Taint, leaving the empty shell of the BODY and allowing the SPIRIT to float to the One Soul. Here it mingles with the energies and becomes part of the One Soul. From this energy, new souls are created as old ones are brought in and mingled together with the others. Bright Bloods when they die go into the One Soul and are refreshed, but it is claimed they do not mingle with the other souls there. Instead they come back to Earth the same soul

and as they grow older begin to realize they are the same being they once were.

When a mortal dies with unresolved issues (unrequited love, curses, violent or traumatic death, etc.) it is possible that not all of his MIND and BODY aura dissipate. Instead a bit of each coalesces within the SPIRIT aura, increasing it by one rank. This however, holds the SPIRIT in the Blue Air, and does not allow it to travel to the One Soul. This poor soul becomes what is more commonly known as a ghost. The ghost is now trapped in the Blue Air. If the mortal had faith, the death creates a Shallow that the ghost can always find and enter or leave the Blue Air through. Occasionally other ghosts may stumble across these as well leaving the Blue Air for a time.

## Bright Blooded Ghosts

As mentioned, ghosts with Faith can do things that normal ghosts cannot. Their faith even creates Shallows. Bright Bloods can even still manifest the powers they had while living. Though the Narrator may have to adjust a few of the powers due to particular circumstances, they still work effectively the same.

For example, a Bright Blooded ghost may shift the one rank into BODY and use Faith Shape to assume the form of a physical animal temporarily. This becomes rather dangerous when a ghost starts using religarum to mimic serenades. Most uses of Bright Blood powers only last for the scene.

## Spiritual Combat

Obviously allowing minions of the Sanguinary to escape into the Blue Air does not please most immortals. Therefore many immortals remain in their gossamer form, and travel into the Blue Air to explore it, hunt down progeny, etc. Spiritual combat has a few differences from physical combat.

An immortal may use any skill in the Blue Air on another spirit there. However, if the skill is focused, the immortal gossamer rolls her SPIRIT instead of her BODY. Some skills are not usable in the Blue Air without a little help. For example, Blade Combat is unusable since the gossamer has no bladed weapons. But if perchance, the gossamer had Endue with a focus in weapons while in the Blue Air she could create a bladed



weapon out of the energies of the Blue Air and use her Blade Combat skill.

All Combat in the Blue Air is SPIRIT based and all damage (except for serenades that target the MIND) is done to the SPIRIT. If a SPIRIT (mortal or immortal) has a critical failure on a mortal wound check, a second check is made (same rules as under Immortal Death). If it also critically fails a third check is made and failure on this roll indicates final death. This is very difficult to achieve obviously.

For gossamers here on Earth, failing the second check means that the gossamer is simply shunted into the Blue Air again and will eventually heal in that ethereal realm. The only way to completely kill an immortal soul is to destroy it within the Blue Air itself.

Gossamers are unaffected by serenades that target the BODY aura while they are outside the Blue Air. Mortal Ghosts are unaffected by serenades targeting either the BODY or the MIND auras (even if manifesting these auras temporarily). Most immortals will attempt to wield the serenade directly against the SPIRIT aura where possible, which makes the serenade more difficult to play obviously.

### **Healing**

Within the Blue Air, spirits heal the same as they do in the real world, following the rules as presented in Book I. gossamers may use their SPIRIT aura to heal themselves of any damage taken if their rank is high enough. If a gossamer is shunted into the Blue Air due to a critical failure on a mortal wound check, the gossamer cannot use the SPIRIT aura to heal. Since healing must occur immediately after the damage is taken when using the SPIRIT aura and the gossamer is quite disoriented when being shunted back, there is no time to use the SPIRIT to heal oneself.

## ***Blue Air***

Like a vast endless ocean of energy and wind, dotted by the Shallows, the Blue Air is a realm composed entirely of thought and spiritual energies, with occasional chunks of physical matter floating within. The Blue Air is viewed in many ways by the immortals. Some see it as a sort of dimensional void, connecting all realms. Others see it as a spiritual counterpart to normal

space: a hyper-space if you will. The Blue Air is home of the mysterious Crucible, the "physical" aspect of the Morpheum, dotted with worlds of its own. Here the gossamers roam and the Transcendents themselves, having surpassed their own material limitations, are rumored to make their home somewhere.

The Blue Air connects the entire universe. The most common form of connection known to the immortals is called Shallows, where the Blue Air borders on Earth. Here gossamers can pass in and out of the Blue Air at will. The Blue Air also connects to mantles, the Maelstrom, the Ley, the Labyrinth, even the Morpheum has a "physical" representation in the Blue Air.

Entry into the Blue Air can be very dangerous to those with corporeal forms. Although it is a place of profound beauty, it is also a tenuous one without real substance. Like a place of illusions, the Blue Air is the loom that spins out the gossamers that haunt the world in their desire for tactile fulfillment. Any wanderer in the Blue Air finds himself in an ultimately empty, if lovely place.

The Blue Air is charged with emotion, and reacts to it as well. Some say that it is the pure essence of all thought and emotion itself. The Shallows that border Earth and the Blue Air certainly seem to draw individuals and places which have experienced an unusual intensity in emotional states, trauma or violence. Immaculum also flows freely through the Blue Air, in a raw and unfettered form that most immortals find too unwieldy to control or to place within their own auras.

Corporeal beings cannot exist in the Blue Air unaided. No being has ever returned from the Blue Air whole save for the Saturna. Those that have attempted to enter the Blue Air physically have been torn apart by the energies present there. The only true physical reality in the Blue Air is that made by thoughts. Here thoughts create landscapes and scenes and entities that only exist so long as they are thought of.

When groups of beings gather within the Blue Air, it can become a chaotic storm as thought becomes matter and each thing thought and seen merely fuels another. There is one exception to this, and these are the few Dominion Worlds that actually exist within the Blue Air itself. Wrapped in cloaks of Ley

### **Setting Note: The Saturna**

This group of immortals, belonging to the Court of Death, is the only group of immortals known to be able to physically enter the Blue Air without first becoming gossamers. It is said that long ago they were pulled into the Blue Air by the Transcendents themselves, and shown the mysteries and secrets of the realm. It is said that while some immortals learn the Blue Air focus of the Portal serenade to help them escape the Blue Air without the aid of Shallows, the Saturna use it to physically enter the Blue Air.

It is not possible to join the Saturna, either an immortal will discover that he was once part of this group and able to become one with them again, or he is not. The Saturna are also very cordial with the Court of Dreams.

### **Setting Note: Lighters**

Immortal technology has allowed the race to create fantastical ships called Lighters, capable of allowing them to travel in the Maelstrom, across the mantle filled realm known as Sanctuary, and even to other planets. But only the Abzulim were ever able to create the living Lighters. These ships were capable of entering the Blue Air unmolested by the chaotic forces present within, and could travel at the very speed of thought to distant realms where it could emerge from the Blue Air galaxies away from our own.

Membranes, these worlds are only accessible by travel through the Blue Air. Older tales claim the Abzulim placed these worlds into the Blue Air on purpose, others claim they were shunted their during the Shouting War.

## **Traversing the Spirit Plane**

Since the Blue Air is a realm composed mainly of thought and energy, physical beings simply cannot fathom how to move within the Blue Air. Ethereal winds blow gossamers about like leaves in the sky, and very few understand truly how to navigate this endless ocean. Only the Abzulim Lighters are capable of traversing the Blue Air, as they carried the saurian masters through the Blue Air to emerge galaxies away, allowing the Abzulim to maintain their star spanning empire during their supremacy.

Gossamers are thrust into the Blue Air when the immortal loses his corporeal form where they find themselves floating helplessly adrift. Those of strong enough MIND and SPIRIT can at times by sheer will alone can drive themselves to a connecting point: normally the Shallows. Since the ethereal winds are stronger near a physical realm those entering from Earth tend to be stuck near Earth (which is actually of great benefit to the immortals). Otherwise they would drift forever, helpless and to a great extent, utterly alone.

Long ago there was the Nadir: a semi-corporeal set of pathways that linked the various worlds in the universe via the Blue Air. But early in Earth's

history, the Nadir was collapsed and hopelessly tangled. This resulted in most worlds being covered by a Membrane made of these energies, which we now call the Ley. The various worlds had points where the Nadir touched them, called Na-Gates. The Abzulim used these as ways to launch their living Lighters into the Blue Air and to quickly travel and easily navigate the Blue Air. It is unknown how or who may have created the Nadir, but scholars have many theories.

## **The Crucible**

The wellspring of the energies of life, creation, entropy and time, the Crucible is the source from which all these flow. It is generally accepted that the Sanguinary was somehow exiled from the Crucible, perhaps being a gateway to another universe and time. The Crucible is the source of the Big Bang some immortal scholars believe, and it was the Sanguinary's expulsion through it that actually created this universe. Therefore the Courts believe the Crucible is the source of all immaculum, located somewhere within the vast endless expanses of the Blue Air, and that physical reality as known to the immortals is potentially a lesser state of existence. This further supports the work that most immortals undertake in their quest for Transcendence.

Nearly all immortals dread the existence of the Crucible. Though for eons the immortals impersonated divinity to control the unknowing sea of humanity, the Crucible represents a power far higher than their own. It is believed that only the Transcendents truly understand the

### **Setting Note: Tempests**

Storms of energy and immaculum roil forth through the Blue Air, like ethereal hurricanes or monsoons. These energy storms are known as Tempests, and are one of the most unpredictable forces known to the immortal race. If one of these storms builds up enough strength, it can shred spirits, and if coming close to one of the many connections to other realms, manifest partially within them. This can cause all sorts of strange and odd occurrences as things can be literally pulled out into the storm or deposited out of the storm and into the realm. A Tempest can also (due to its nature as a storm of thought energy turned matter) when manifesting in physical realms, alter that area of the realm, or any inhabitant within the area, including immortals. A Tempest's power to do so rivals the most powerful of Bright Bloods and Wish-givers, and sometimes exceeds them.

Crucible and what it is. It is also said that somehow the place known as the Labyrinth connects to the Crucible in some way and that there Samiel the Abzulim first spoke of the mysterious Prophecy that the Court of Fate is now the holder of.

### **Other Realms**

The Morpheum is a telepathic construct, and thus has a "physical" representation within the Blue Air. Here it is occasionally possible for spirits and dreamers to interact as the occasional gossamer or mortal spirit is caught in the construct and pulled into the Morpheum. Most spirits are thrust out as easily as they are pulled in. Mortal spirits trapped in the Morpheum as such use their SPIRIT for all tasks immortal spirits react as normal though their SPIRIT is now also present and can be harmed.

The Maelstrom also connects to the Blue Air, at these points of connection, elemental materials are found to be spilling into the Blue Air, pockets of strange gases and liquids, chunks of earth and balls of light and fire. These are flung into the Blue Air and slowly destroyed by the energies there.

Many gossamers find themselves inexplicably drawn to these few bits of physical reality until they are gone. The sight of these kinds of connections can be breathtaking to behold, but are unfortunately very dangerous to attempt to traverse near for most lighters let alone gossamers or mortal spirits.

Even the mantles of Sanctuary touch upon the Blue Air. Shallows may form within mantles just as on Earth, though these are tenuous and do not hold as well as the ones on Earth. Gossamers pulled into Shallows within mantles may move beyond the region in which the Shallow is located, but are unable to leave the mantle itself and are trapped within its confines.

Tempests sometimes roll in through these particular types of Shallows, causing widespread changes in the mantle that even the Maker cannot control.

### **Shallows**

Shallows are created when a mortal being with Faith dies, or when highly emotional events takes place in an area that have a lasting impact. This is usually the result of extreme trauma, violence etc. Rarely they can be created in areas that have repeated heightened levels of emotional stimuli. New Orleans in the United States of America has Shallows created from the intense celebrations of repeated Mardi Gras events for example.

Hauntings (as Shallows are called in Immortal slang) thin the barrier between the Blue Air and the Earth, allowing spirits both mortal and immortal to cross the threshold between the two realms. Even if the mortal spirit comes to some form of conclusion with whatever holds it here on Earth, the Shallows can remain for years afterwards.

Within a Shallows, mortal spirits have a great deal of power, being able to manifest their MIND and BODY auras at will at enough of a level to have a significant impact on the immediate area. In the surrounding areas near the Shallow the presence of the spirits can still be felt. Except for the soulless, most mortals can sense the presence of something otherworldly nearby, depending on the strength of the SPIRIT aura (shifted one rank inferior) of the spirit.

Immortals do not create Shallows when they spill their auras and become gossamers. This means that the gossamer has no immediate entry point back to Earth. The gossamer could be thrust into the Blue Air in Africa and several months later find himself appearing in a Shallows located in South America, or find

himself appearing a few days later in Japan even. Most mortal spirits that create Shallows tend to emerge back from the Blue Air at the same Shallows within anywhere from a week to years later. The Faith of the spirit ties it to the Shallows, so most mortal spirits stay near their Shallows unless somehow forcibly moved away from them.

### **Dark Shallows**

If a mortal dies with taint in its SPIRIT aura, it is possible to that the Shallows created can draw taint to them, creating cursed places. The Shallows develops its own curse based on the mortal that died there. This usually only happens if the mortal died in some violent or traumatic way, or by obvious supernatural means. Dark Shallows are also home to Soul Reapers.

Mortals with Faith that are possessed by the Sanguinary have the chance of slowly losing their SPIRIT aura and having it replaced with Taint. If the mortal loses his entire SPIRIT aura he becomes effectively soulless, his Faith fading away. When the mortal dies the last remnants of his MIND and BODY aura do not have a SPIRIT to cling to. Instead they adhere to the taint which then consumes these fragments. The Taint now becomes a spiritual entity with the semblance of the memories and form of the mortal it once was part of. This creates a Dark Shallows immediately.

Soul Reapers have an effective SPIRIT aura equal to the Taint level when they died shifted one superior for the MIND and BODY aura fragments consumed. Soul Reapers can effectively wield their taint as a Scion within the immediate areas surrounding the Dark Shallows, throwing the curse of the Dark Shallows out at others. Worse yet the Reaper has the ability (at one level inferior on the effective SPIRIT die) to cause variants of the curse to manifest. Soul Reapers can leave the region of their Shallows for a number of days equal to the rank of their effective SPIRIT die.

In appearance Soul Reapers look and act like Shadow Elementals made of Taint, and can access powers similar (the Narrator can give them effective himsati natures as listed for a Shadow Elemental, one nature for each rank of effective SPIRIT aura) to them. Soul Reapers are also immune to the anthem and other powers of the True Light that Tainted beings normally fear or are hindered by.

To top this off, Soul Reapers have the same ability to take SPIRIT aura from others as a Succubi has to take BODY aura from dreamers. The Soul Reaper follows the same rules except it rolls its effective SPIRIT die instead of the MIND die. Any being that dies in this way will create Shallows immediately if it had Faith. Soul Reapers attempt to lure beings to their Dark Shallow lairs. If the mortal dies in the Dark Shallows, the effective range of the Dark Shallows and its region expand based on the level of SPIRIT the mortal had before dying.

Soul Reapers have the same driving goals to finish off things left undone from their mortal life, except they are incapable of achieving that state where they may be freed as there is no true SPIRIT to free. Instead they will continually twist and pervert that which they may accomplish, their hunger for mortal life-force never satiated.

The Courts hunt down Soul Reapers with the same tenacious nature that they hunt down Succubi. It is believed the two creatures are somehow related.

## **General Spirit Rules**

The following rules apply to the various types of spirits that can be encountered in the Immortal Millennium Setting.

### **All Spirits**

In order to simulate the more common powers that all spirits have, Narrators are free to use the natures from Book I. A few natures are prevalent to all spirits however, with a few special differences to how they work. Any natures are based off the SPIRIT aura for spirits regardless of what they would normally be based on.

- ❖ All Spirits have Discorporate Form, Phasing and Gliding (some may have the actual Flight Nature instead). If the spirit is manifesting a BODY aura, these natures immediately cancel. Spirits also should be considered to be invisible to the naked eye unless using some form of power or manifesting.
- ❖ While in the Blue Air, no spirit can manifest its BODY aura, and instead substitute their SPIRIT die for their BODY die while taking any "physical" actions there.

- ❖ Spirits may not enter Sanctuaries unless the Sanctuary is also a Shallow. A spirit may attempt to force its way into the Sanctuary (if it has the Faith Boon, Faith Morph Boon, or Faith Shape Boon) by making an opposed SPIRIT roll against the SPIRIT of the immortal the Sanctuary belongs to (even if not present). If more than one immortal has paid the points for the Sanctuary, use the one with the most superior SPIRIT die. The Sanctuary's dominance should be subtracted from the immortal's roll. Without the Faith Boon, the spirit may not attempt to enter. If a Gossamer finds and attempts to enter his own Sanctuary, no roll is needed.
- ❖ If a spirit leaves the region where its entry Shallows is located it is automatically pulled back into the Blue Air. It loses any mental bonds (in the case of gossamers), and has to find another random Shallows to cross back to Earth through. All spirits can feel when they near this point. Mortal spirits will eventually make their way back to the same Shallows instead of a random one if they are pulled through.

Any spirit confined by supernatural means ignores this rule. However, if it is released outside the region, it will be pulled back into the Blue Air. The Narrator determines the size of the region.

Soul Reapers are not true spirits and can ignore this rule for a number of days equal to their effective SPIRIT rank, but if they do not return within that time, they are also pulled into the Blue Air.

- ❖ All spirits maintain their Faith boon (whether mortal or immortal) if they had it while alive/corporeal.

### Gossamers

- ❖ Gossamers have no BODY aura when first thrust into the Blue Air and when first coming out of Shallows. They cannot affect the physical world in any way, unlike mortal spirits.
- ❖ Gossamers cannot play any serenades outside the Blue Air. While in the Blue Air, gossamers may play serenades, but they may only play serenades that they have foci in and may only play those specific foci.

Example, if the character has the Gambit Serenade with a Foci of Bad Luck, then he may only use Gambit for Bad Luck, not for good luck, shadows, fog, or anything else, unless he has that focus as well in Gambit.

- ❖ Gossamers can manifest himsati natures in the Blue Air, but all natures will rely on SPIRIT instead of MIND or BODY. While on Earth they may manifest any natures that do not require having a physical BODY. They may manifest the "appearance" of natures (such as leap, gore, charge, multiple limbs, natural weaponry, coils, etc.) that require a physical BODY, but they are not actually usable.
- ❖ Gossamers cannot sin to gain aura ranks. A vox is required for an immortal to sin.

### Mortal Spirits (Ghosts)

- ❖ Mortal Spirits have a SPIRIT aura one rank higher than they had while alive as the fragments of MIND and BODY auras imbed themselves within the SPIRIT aura. This is what causes the SPIRIT to be held to earth. If it can conclude whatever affairs hold it on Earth, the fragments fade and the spirit is able to move on.
- ❖ Mortal Spirits may shift one rank of SPIRIT aura into **either** the MIND or BODY aura temporarily in order to "manifest". This ability allows SPIRITS to be sensed by mortals. It also allows beings such as Bright Bloods and Soul Reapers to manifest any particular Boons or Curses for a fuller impact. For example a Bright Blood with Faith Shape could shape himself into an animal just as when alive, and by shifting a rank into the BODY aura, could be felt, touch, smelled, etc.

## *Sanctuaries*

Sanctuaries provide the immortal with a place of rest and relative safety, where the immortal can rejuvenate from becoming a gossamer, heal from wounds, and find some peace during the many battles against the darkness. Even the Progeny maintain Sanctuaries, dedicated to their service to the Sanguinary. Most immortals take great pains to hide and protect their sanctuaries,

less they are usurped by another immortal. To this end, most sanctuaries remain hidden well, and are watched over by Quiet Culture members that work with or serve the immortal.

It should be noted we are not speaking of the Sanctuary world formed by the union of the mantles connected to Earth, but of the private places where an individual immortal or small group of immortals hold sway on Earth itself.

The Sanctuary serves many practical functions. It serves as a storehouse for the immortal for those things supernatural that he comes across during his days. It provides the immortal with a form of dominance and protection. And most importantly it houses the one item that is second in importance only to the immortality giving vox; the immortal's Ark.

## **The Ark**

An Ark is an object large enough to hold the immortal in their human form. Into this item the immortal places ranks of aura. If there is enough aura energy present in the ark and the immortal becomes a gossamer, the vox (by being attuned to the Ark) and the immortal are transported to the Ark where the two are joined together again. This is assuming that no one mystically holds the vox from traveling to the Ark during the initial aura spilling.

An immortal places aura ranks from his own aura into the ark and then needs to regain the lost aura either by finding willing Believers or by Sinning. It is also possible for the immortal to bond mortals to his ark so they may transfer aura ranks directly into the ark.

Once an aura rank is placed in the ark, it cannot be retrieved without destroying the ark and forcing the immortal to create a new one. Immaculum can be placed in an ark and removed without harming the ark however.

## **Rules for Sanctuaries & Arks**

Arks do not require Sanctuaries in order to work, but most immortals find this the safest way of protecting their ark. Therefore this section will present how an immortal sets up a Sanctuary and an ark (assuming the immortal didn't start the game with either of these Boons and needs to play through gaining them), how to maintain them, and how these two things can be taken over by another immortal.

## **Claiming a Sanctuary**

Attuning oneself to the structure that will serve as the Sanctuary usually takes but a few months of the immortal's time. During this the immortal spends about 1/3 of his day in the proposed Sanctuary, getting used to it, spending time sleeping, eating, practicing various skills, studying, working with his Quiet Culture if he has one, etc. For at least a few hours a week the immortal needs to spend time attuning his vox and the structure together, which is done rather instinctually as the immortal merely seems to be humming in vox-tongue.

If the immortal spends a great deal of extra time in the Sanctuary the Narrator may wish to speed this time up. This time can be sped up (or in place of) with the help of Believers who can spend the time there in place of the immortal or in addition to. Each Believer who spends roughly the same amount of time knocks off another day or two. If any Bright Bloods are present, the time is cut nearly in half. For every rank the immortal's spirit die is superior to d12 should also knock off a week here and there.

Once this is done the immortal gains the 1 dominance from being attuned to his new Sanctuary. If multiple immortals wish to cooperatively share the Sanctuary they must all attune during the same time period and spend the same amount of time each, it is not split amongst them like the Boon cost can be.

### **Setting Note: Standard vs. Sacred**

Sacred Sanctuaries would include places like old haunted houses, mausoleums, the bell tower of the old church, the ancient castle, the ruins, or any other place such as that. The botanical gardens, the art deco apartment, don't count as Sacred Sanctuaries. Attuning to a Sacred Sanctuary usually takes about a month longer.

It is also possible that a Sacred Sanctuary has Shallows present as part of it. Any gossamers or other spirits that come through the Shallows are not stopped by the Sanctuary's supernatural barriers. As they come through the Shallows attuned to be able to enter and leave the Sanctuary as part of their Shallows.

The immortal should choose a place for his Sanctuary that reflects his personal tastes, himsati, Court, Calling, favorite motifs for serenades, etc. The jungle parrot would fair better in a rooftop atrium than a basement for

the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary does not need to occupy the entire structure either, but may only occupy a single room as long as it can hold the immortal and a few other mortal being comfortably.

### **Building an Ark**

Once the Sanctuary is set up, the immortal will want his Ark move to the Sanctuary so it can be in the safest place possible. If the immortal does not have an Ark already, the immortal must go through the process of creating one or making an object into an Ark.

If the immortal chooses to build the Ark himself there are a few benefits, but for the most part the two ways are identical in terms of mechanics. The ark must be large enough to house the immortal. Though in some cases the item chosen as an ark, is an item designed to house a mortal human (a coffin, a sarcophagus, a phone booth, etc.) it does not have to be. It does not have to be hollow inside either.

When an immortal uses an ark to rejuvenate, create a scion, splinter an avatar, etc., the ark is broken both mystically and physically and cannot be used again. How the immortal appears from the ark as it breaks is largely up to what the ark looks like and is made from. A human statue may crumble away from the immortal, the phone booth's glass may shatter as the immortal steps out, the coffin could split as the immortal rises up inside of it, etc.

Regardless, the process of building the Ark will attune the immortal to it if the immortal does the building himself. If not, the immortal must simply spend a few days in meditation, attuning to the Ark just as to a Sanctuary.

### **Maintaining the Sanctuary & Ark**

Once an immortal is attuned to the Sanctuary he can easily leave and come back maybe once a year with no problems. Immortals with stronger SPIRIT auras (d8 and higher) can leave for much longer periods. If an Ark is present within, this increases the time, and if the immortal built the Ark himself, this increases the time by large amounts, resulting in some immortals that are still fully attuned to their Sanctuary after having been gone for decades (or in very rare instances centuries).

However, this is dependent on having Believers (souled mortals with Faith) present fairly

regularly. If the mortals are bonded to the Sanctuary, they can establish their own smaller temples or altars in other locations and by making use of those that can assist in the upkeep of the main Sanctuary. Without any Believers, a Sanctuary will begin to lose its dominance and then attunement in about half the time. The Ark never loses its dominance or attunement unless another immortal captures it.

#### **System Note: Rejuvenation**

In the case of Arks, the immortal has a few options on how to store aura ranks in the Ark for the process of rejuvenation. In order for an immortal to be instantly rejuvenated and the vox to be brought through the Ley to the Ark, the Ark must have enough aura ranks to completely rebuild to the BODY aura as it is when undamaged, plus three additional ranks. If the MIND or SPIRIT auras are damaged, these will be healed first as the gossamer enters the Ark. After this, if there is not enough to build the BODY aura plus the additional three ranks, the Ark breaks and the immortal is not rejuvenated. He has lost the extra aura ranks after the MIND and BODY auras are healed.

All aura ranks deposited into an ark are free associated, they do not belong to the MIND, SPIRIT or BODY. Therefore an Immortal could gather only SPIRIT aura and place it in his Ark and it could be used to restore the BODY aura.

The immortal can simply place aura ranks from within his own aura into the ark and then find mortals to obtain aura ranks from to replace what is now missing. There is also a SPIRIT skill called Tithing that an Immortal can teach to mortals so that they can directly deposit aura ranks into the Ark through a ritual. Immortals can always do this with their own Ark instinctually. Some Lords teach their young immortal charges this skill. That way the young charge is able to place aura ranks in the Lord's Ark in exchange for the Lord's patronage. This skill does not allow any manipulation of the Ark in any way.

The Tithing also bonds any mortals to the Sanctuary if the Ark is in one, allowing them to better defend it against invaders who would try to capture the Sanctuary or the Ark.

### **Capturing a Sanctuary and/or an Ark**

At times other immortals will attempt to claim the Sanctuary of an immortal that has not been present for some time. The invading immortal must go through the same process for the few months (usually done in hiding so Quiet Culture members do not find him). At the end the immortal makes a SPIRIT roll against the current owner. (In the case of a group that owns the Sanctuary, choose the highest SPIRIT). Every Believer that is bonded to the Sanctuary, plus any other Believers present give a -1 to the owners roll to defend the Sanctuary from the invader taking over. The Sanctuary's dominance, also gives its bonus to the defender's roll to keep his Sanctuary. If the Sanctuary has lost its dominance and there is no Ark presence, it is no longer a Sanctuary anyway so it does not need to be captured. If an Ark is present the roll is simply made against a target number of 10.

If the owner is currently a gossamer or an avatar, the target number is set to 12 less the number of Believers present in the Sanctuary when the roll is made. Again, if the Dominance is counts. If there is no Dominance, then the target number is 10 as above.

If the invader succeeds, he now gains the dominance of the Sanctuary. But if there is an Ark present, this must be captured separately. To capture the Ark the invader must meditate for the few days with the Ark. When the roll is made, if the immortal built the Ark himself, any immaculum that is currently deposited (not aura ranks) in the Ark gives the defender an additional -1 to the roll per point of immaculum, even if the immortal is a gossamer or an avatar.

Immortals immediately feel if they lose their dominance from their Sanctuary or they lose their connection to their ark. Typical invading immortals will bring their own Quiet Culture members, etc. to help physically defend the Sanctuary while they try to claim it.

### **Believers and the Sanctuary**

It can be very important unless the immortal has very strong safeguards and a well-hidden Sanctuary, to have mortals to assist the immortal in taking care of the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary then becomes a place not only for the immortal, but for the mortals who work with or for the immortal as well. Immortals need to go to

great lengths to see that the mortals are also happy with the Sanctuary as well.

Many immortals strive to find a Bright Blood to lead their Quiet Culture due to the increased benefits of having a Bright Blood in relation to maintaining, building, and helping to hold a Sanctuary against an invader. Unfortunately the number of Bright Bloods interested in this is far exceeded by the number of Sanctuaries looking for a Bright Blood. The Narrator should not have Bright Bloods littering every Sanctuary, they should be held in reserve and held in awe by the characters as much as possible.

Encryption [7]

Return Locus: <Shade [Location Unknown]>

Received By: <Natalia at Labyrinth>

Language: Atrana-Cant [Voxtongue] no mortal transcription available

Subject: Your Quest Begins

Summary: Instruct them on the rings

Keyword Search: Rings, Quest, Redemption, Murderer

Date: Year of the Pale

Message as Follows:

IT IS TIME TO TEACH THE OTHERS HOW TO USE THEIR RINGS TO TAP THE POWER OF THE RING OF THE LABYRINTH YOU WEAR. PLEASE REMEMBER TO WATCH OVER THEM CAREFULLY LEST THEY ACCIDENTALLY LOSE CONTROL.

REMEMBER THAT I AM COUNTING ON YOU AND THE OTHERS TO ASSIST ME IN MY REDEMPTION IN THE EYES OF THE COURTS AND TO FIND THE MURDERER OF MY SISTER. I HAVE DIVESTED MYSELF OF THE ITEM WHICH HAD HOLD OVER ME SOME MONTHS AGO, PLEASE IGNORE STIGMATA, HE IS TRULY INSANE. THE SKIN IS NOW GONE.

I WISH YOU AND THE OTHERS LUCK, MAY THE POWER OF THE REGIME AND THE TRUE LIGHT



# Chapter IV: A Glimmer of Hope

***“To walk the path towards Transcendence is to reach for stars. To achieve it, one might assume, is to learn that there is so much more beyond them to reach for.”***

-- Phoenix, Court of Fate

## **TRANSCENDENCE**

The first Transcendents known to the immortal race were called the Trine. The Anopheles (predecessors of the Court of Desire) used knowledge gained from their Abzulim masters to commit a ritual to call forth three entities known as Rukshasha, Sharakai, and Leviathan. Once the ritual was committed the Trine appeared before them in physical form. Whether bound by this ritual, or simply having heard the call of the Anopheles and responding it is not known.

Over the course of eons, the Trine aided the immortal race against the Sanguinary, imparting wisdom to their followers, allowing events to happen that still mystify and perplex the immortal race. It is said that one of these beings, the Leviathan, was corrupted by the Sanguinary due to the ritual of the Anopheles. This is the only time in all of the immortal race's recorded history that such a thing has happened. Other than this, the Transcendents have always been completely pure of the Sanguinary and her corruption.

It is said that from these first three the power of the True Light became known to the immortal race. Some say that the Trine came from the same place as the Sanguinary herself, others say they came from a place even beyond that. Regardless, it was these three that showed the immortal race a potential escape from the Sanguinary, from Fugue, and from the darkness of Taint. This escape became known as the Path of Transcendence.

### **What is Transcendence?**

It is a question whose answer has eluded many of the most ancient immortals since their conception. Little is known about this state of spiritual, mental, and physical evolution that some immortals can achieve. Every immortal, even the Progeny, have their own views on Transcendence. No two immortals seem to follow the exact same path to Transcendence.

The Transcendents themselves seem to encourage this variety as transcendence is a complete transformation of BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT and can differ for each individual. There are some common themes when discussing Transcendence, and are presented here.

When an immortal becomes a Transcendent, memories of them seem to fade from other members of the immortal race. Those who knew them slowly forget their name and face. Only the most powerful can even remember they once existed.

It is said that the immortal race's dependency on the crystalline shards of the Sanguinary within prevent them from remembering those who make the final embrace with the True Light. Whether this is done by the Sanguinary to prevent them from remembering how those individuals achieved the state, or whether the Transcendents do this to keep themselves safe from the Sanguinary in some way, is unknown.

It is as if they have become a new being, untouched by the Sanguinary or the darkness of a vox. It is said by those very few High Lords that manage to witness the final transformation say that a shattered vox is all which remains and the personality matrices within are wiped clean.

The Transcendents also can appear in forms far different than which they once were before achieving this state. One, Sharakai the Dragon (also called Dracul), is perhaps one immortal, or perhaps many taking a similar guise. It is said that the bodies of these beings have no physical limitations. Their minds know no bounds. Their spirits are pure and untouched by the Sanguinary, unassailable by Taint.

Regardless, these beings are said to appear to the highest Lords within the Courts, the Paragons, and yes, even to the Solitaires and the Outlanders. The Transcendents very rarely directly intervene in the matters at hand here on Earth, and it is said by some that they exist

within the Blue Air, unhindered by the limitations of that gossamer realm. Others claim that they reside in the Dominions and watch over the events transpiring on Earth.

Mostly the Transcendents work through those they have already touched, the Lords. It is said that a Transcendent can see and hear through the eyes of the Lords, though not through all of them at once. Some claim that certain Transcendents patron certain Courts or Lords while others claim that all Transcendents patron all of the immortal race which seek purity and to stop the Sanguinary and her minions.

### **A Show of Power**

Only once in known immortal history have the Transcendents truly appeared as a group before the immortal race, directly intervening in the battle against the Sanguinary. The year was 1666 and the immortals had gathered in London to stop the Sanguine Avatar known as the Dust. The city was set fire, and the battle raged on for days.

Unknown to the Pantheons known as the Prides, the Transcendents swept into the city, taking the best and brightest of the race, and placing them into a special state of Lethe. These immortals were thought to be lost and dead by the Perpetual Society until they finally emerged from this special Lethe in the 1990's. It seems they continued to live and die as mortals during that time, never regaining their immortality in the next life. It has been said that this was done to prepare them to survive the Great Betrayal.

While the Transcendents are neither omnipotent nor omnipresent, it is said they foresaw the Great Betrayal and knew that they were powerless to stop it. Their charges, the Prides, had already become too arrogant to listen or to understand. So when these particular Ingenue regained their immortality. They had been spared the 300 plus years of the Stratagem, the witch-hunts, the mistrust, the arrogance, and all else that led to the deaths of so many of the immortal race.

These survivors then went on to become members of the Courts and examples to others who would quickly follow them. But even they have had to prove themselves followers of the path of Transcendence.

After this incident, the Transcendents were once again little seen or heard from, except in rumor and myth. Only the Jury seemed to have contact with them until after the Great Betrayal. It is said that to look upon the visage of a Transcendent is to know the loving thoughts of universe itself.

### **The Path**

Besides a devotion to the Cause, the Courts (and many Solitaries) follow what is known as the Path. There is no set way to follow the Path, for this path is the one of Transcendence. Following the Path is a great part of one's status and measure within the Courts. The Path and the Cause are not one in the same, but within the Courts, they are linked tightly together.

The following of the Path is different for each individual. There is no right or wrong way to follow the Path, save for the limits set by the Narrator and Player on that particular character's development. If a character is living up to the potential and developing in a way that the Narrator and Player both find satisfactory, then it can be concluded in game that the character is "on the Path".

If the Path is a sense of enlightenment for the body, the mind, and the spirit, those things, which draw the character away from his or her true self, obviously do not progress them along the Path. It is in this way that the Sanguinary's minions can hinder the progress of an immortal, and cause them to stray from what their own true Path should be.

### **The Path, the Courts of Desire and Dreams**

The seven sins used by the Progeny are powerful, and when an immortal falls victim to them the Path can seem far away indeed. This makes it especially dangerous for the Court of Desire, who manipulate these sins within mortals to pull them away from the Sanguinary. Their Path is one fraught with peril and the chance of losing their own progression towards Transcendence.

Such is why the Court of Desire watches over its own members so closely and seems to have such a greater and more intimate relationship with one another than other Courts. It is more a measure of protection than one of lust or sensuality.

### **Setting & System Note: Solitaires and the Path**

Even Solitaires may follow the Path. The Courts realize that the Path of Transcendence is open to all immortals, even those that choose to live alone as outsiders. The Outlanders are powerful Solitaires who rival the High Lords themselves, and it is said that even the lonely Solitaires may follow the Path with the aid of the Outlanders. It should also be noted that whenever the Light Boon of Aura Increase is granted, the Solitaire may pick a normal boon from Book II as well, just as they would any other time their aura increases.

### **System Note: The True Light and Taint**

The minions of the Sanguinary fear the True Light and those who possess it. Immortals who possess the True Light fear Taint because it can temporarily sever their connection to the True Light. Most Light Boons will not operate when an immortal is tainted, just as Dark Boons **only** operate when an immortal is tainted. By the same, an immortal with a strong enough Anthem can cause Drones and other Sanguinary minions to flee just by allowing the True Light to shine through her eyes at them.

The power of the True Light is enormous, and its true nature and origins continue to elude the immortal race still. It is said that the True Light is the same as that which burns in the veins of the Bright Bloods, and legends speak of the Sunedron trees, and their seeds of True Light. All of these the Sanguinary seems to covet or want to destroy.

### **System Note: Gaining Auras**

Appendix D (Optional Rules) presents a way to increase an immortal's auras without the Path of Transcendence. Many Solitaires, Progeny, and Abzulim Predators (immortal ones) will use this optional rule. As it has been noted, one of the Light Boons is an increase in aura. The Immortal Millennium system is not designed for the average immortal to have d6's and d4's for their auras.

This can cause a Narrator serious difficulties in running his Players through episodes that can actually challenge them. The Paragons themselves have their auras at these kinds of levels, as they still themselves reach for Transcendence. Any form of aura increase should not come lightly or frequently in a game.

The Court of Dreams faces similar problems coming so close to the consciousness of the Sanguinary itself by constantly residing in the realm of mortal dreams. The unique viewpoint they seem to take on subjects may seem surreal, but it helps to protect them from those same downfalls as the close relations of the Court of Desire serve to protect them.

### **Following the Path**

It is said that through their agents (the Lords and the Outlanders), the Transcendents can feel when they are near those who are progressing upon their own individual Path. It is at this time that a Lord (not necessarily of the same Court) will usually begin to patron a particular immortal, lending him aid through the Lord's own established agents, and then possibly making the immortal an agent as well. When the time is right, the immortal is allowed to fully look into the eyes of his Lord, and is then embraced by the True Light for the first time.

It is now that the immortal is known as a true follower of the Path of Transcendence, a tiny spark of the True Light now showing within his own eyes. This is when the first Light Boon is received by the immortal, The Anthem, to show that the immortal is indeed a follower of the Path.

As the True Light consequently embraces the immortal (and this need not be done through the eyes of the original Lord that sponsored the immortal) he gains another Tier of Transcendence, and at times, another Light Boon befitting his personal progression along the Path. The exact mechanics of this are in Appendix B

Eventually the immortal is then visited by actual Transcendents, who allow the immortal to gaze into their own eyes and receive the gifts. Finally the immortal herself reaches Transcendence, and joins this enigmatic group of beings. The list

of Light Boons and how they work can be found in Appendix B

Progression on the Path is defined with by a Rating. This rating starts at 20 when the immortal is embraced by the True Light the first time. Each time the immortal is embraced, the number drops by one. At 18, 16, and 14 the immortal gains another Transcendent Nature. Starting at 12, the immortal gains a Transcendent Nature each time he is embraced. In addition, each time the numbers is equal or lower than a die value the immortal gains that die value. The die value starts at d20 and when the immortal reaches a rating of 12 it becomes a d12, at 10 a d10, at 8 a d8, at 6 a d6 and at 4 a d4. This die is used anytime the immortal needs to roll a die for a Light Boon, or against a tainted being.

### **The Eyes of the Lords**

It is customary in the Courts that those who have not yet been embraced by the True Light cannot look into the eyes of their Lords directly. This custom is simply because it becomes physically uncomfortable to do so without permission. The True Light can be stunning to look at and the euphoria and joy it can bring can actually bring a strange discomfort from the realization that such Light does not exist within oneself yet. Therefore, those who have not been touched tend to look anywhere from the area of the vox (the neck) up to the tip of the nose.

Even the Lords have the same problem when attempting to look into the eyes of those of a much higher station such as the High Lords, who share a much deeper and more intimate connection with the True Light than they.

## *Life in the Courts*

As mentioned in Book 2, the Courts operate on a somewhat feudal system. Much of this is due to the nature of the True Light that all the Lords carry. At the highest end of a Court sits the Paragon. The Paragon is the one immortal within the Court that has proven herself to be the most devout follower of the Cause within the Court. The Paragon has also proven herself to most exemplify the ideals of her Court, as well as be very close to achieving Transcendence. The Paragons sit on council to see to the needs of the Perpetual Society as a whole, directing their Courts in service to the Cause.

Serving each Paragon is a small group of advisors or council. These individuals are given the honorary title of Chancellor. Besides advising the Paragon of the status of the Court and on matters affecting the Perpetual Society, the Chancellors spend much of their time seeing to the overall needs of the Court, under the Paragon.

The High Lords are those who have shown truly exemplary service to the Cause, and have proven themselves to be true followers of the Path of Transcendence. A Lord must have shown himself to have great success in service to the Cause, and must have achieved the 4<sup>th</sup> Tier (embraced 16 times or more) of the Path before a Paragon will name a Lord to the title of High Lord. Only the Paragons can give this title. It can take centuries before a Lord can become known as a High Lord. It is the High Lords that see the directives of the Paragon and her Chancellors are followed and carried out throughout the Court.

The vast majority of those who have attained status within the Court are simply known as the Lords. The Lords oversee the day to day operations of the Court, and look after others in the Court who have not yet been touched by the True Light, as well as those who have but have not attained status as a Lord themselves. Only the High Lords may bestow the actual title of Lord upon an immortal. That immortal must have proven himself in eyes of his or her patron Lord, and been shown to be a follower of the Path, achieving the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier (embraced 6 times or more).

And the truly vast majority of **all** the members of the Courts are non-Lords, serving some Lord or High Lord and going on missions for their Courts. Other than this they spend their time honing their skills and working with other members of the Courts, or on their own, in the name of the Cause.

Other than the True Light shining within, there is no mystical formality in gaining the title of Lord. A gathering of High Lords is made and you (and your Pantheon if you have one) are invited to come to a ceremony where you are granted the title. High Lords are granted their titles only during the meetings of the Paragon Council.

## Expanding the Courts' Philosophies

Each Court operates by its own particular standards and method of work. But usually after each meeting of the Paragon Council, the Paragon of a Court will sit with his Chancellors and discuss the events of the meeting and how best their particular Court can lend itself to the needs brought forth during the Paragons' meeting.

From here the Chancellor's send out Emissaries to visit the various High Lords (whom they are not visiting personally) as needed so that the High Lords are aware of whatever new directions the Court is taking during this time period. Needs and information are passed up and down this chain of command, strategies assessed in each region where the Court has standing, and assignments are given to those within that region. Assignments that an immortal of a particular Calling may receive can come from a Lord, a High Lord, or even a Chancellor. These almost always come through an agent of such individual. When not working towards fulfilling a particular goal of their Court, most immortals are left to pursue their own betterment within their Court, Calling, and of course for the Cause and the Path.

An immortal is expected to seek out his or her own goals on behalf of the Court, and not idly sit and wait for instructions or assignments. Each immortal is expected to spend time challenging himself, putting his skills to test, and to furthering the Cause by working with other immortals, not only within his own Court and Calling, but of others as well. This spirit of cooperation and unity is part of what make the Courts so different from their predecessors, the Prides.

In order to assist Narrators and Players with adding more detail and possibilities to the various paths individuals within a Court may follow to Transcendence, we present here various additions and expanded information about the nine Courts. We hope these notes can assist Narrators who are having trouble with a particular Court and how it may work within a given campaign.

### Death

When a mortal being dies, its spirit travels to the One Soul, joining it like a drop of water falling into a pond. From this energy, new souls are

created which inhabit the bodies of the living. Some souls die darkened, and ever so slightly stain the One Soul. And still others cling to this world, unable to rejoin the One Soul due to something in life that they never finished.

The Progeny take a special interest in those with darkened souls and those spirits that cling to this world after death. These are captured and eventually are joined with the energies of the Hush-Hush, a spiritual fortress which strengthens and protects the Sanguinary within the Morpheum. Worse yet, Progeny, Solitaires and even some members of the Courts when desperate, will attempt to drain the energies of these spirits, which ultimately lessens the One Soul.

The Court of Spirits (as this Court is sometimes nicknamed) seeks to prevent all this. Though the guises of Grim Reapers and Lords of the Underworld have not been entirely abandoned by the Court, this is not what they are about. Their primary interest is in the preservation of the human soul so that it does not stain or diminish the Ka. If this should happen, it is feared the Sanguinary will be released, armed with more soul power than the Courts will be able to defend against.

The Court maintains a strong vigil over Shallows and places where the wandering dead congregate, protecting them from intrusion by the Progeny, and watching for mortal spirits there. When they find these spirits they attempt to help them finish whatever is holding them here, and to see that they are as un-darkened as possible before rejoining the Ka. Should an Immortal spirit come from the Shallows they attempt to aid those Immortals as best as possible, and if it is the spirit of a Progeny, they work tirelessly (usually with the Court of Desire) to help bring that Immortal back to cause of the True Light.

Prevalent in the Gothic Culture, members seek to protect and aid mortals, whose presence help to keep other mortals' souls from being darkened, or help un-darken them. At the same time, if a member finds a mortal whose soul is already corrupted and it cannot be un-darkened, they then seek to see that the mortal is destroyed, mind, body, **and** spirit.

The members do not casually destroy mortals however, a death before the mortal's time can

darken a spirit just as easily. Every death is important, and needless deaths or deaths where the spirit is not at peace, disturb the Court.

#### **Setting Note: The Angelic**

This group within the Court were once members of the Pride Eremite who were altered when they were touched by an artifact known as the Ark of the Covenant. They work towards helping the soulless reclaim their lost souls, and believe that through Faith, humanity can find a form of redemption for itself which can lead them to their own Transcendence.

The Court is saddened by the increase in soulless mortals on Earth in the last years. They keep a careful watch over these mortals and watch for signs of possible Sanguinary possession. The Court is aware of an entity they merely call Death. They believe it to be a projection of, or guardian of the Ka. It is possible that this entity prevents Bright Bloods from joining the One Soul. The Court feels that Death is either holding back souls in the Ka or that a large number are falling to the Hush-Hush and this is causing the rise in the number of soulless on Earth. Either is a thought that chills the members to the bone.

Famous members have included Hela, Hades, Anubis, and Rashnu among others.

Encryption [6]

Return Locus: Arturo; Lorekeeper at ShadowVale>

Received By: <Coal Crow at Sanctuary>

Language: Latin (Translation Provided)

Subject: Watcher's Penance

Summary: Retraining is complete

Keyword Search: Great Betrayal, Drove Treatise

Date: Year of the Pale

Message as Follows:

MALCOLM,

PLEASE INFORM YOUR FELLOW FATES THAT WATCHER'S PENANCE IS COMPLETE. HE ATONED FOR THE DROVE TREATISE OF THE MID-NINETIES. THOUGH HE IS NOT ALONE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRIDES' FALSE ASSUMPTIONS LEADING TO THE GREAT BETRAYAL, HE UNDERSTANDS HIS ROLE AS THE DUPE OF THE PROGENY FOR THE FALSE TEXT HE PRESENTED TO THE PRIDES.

HE IS RETURNING TO HIS BRETHREN WITHIN THE COURT OF SECRETS AS YOU READ THIS. I HOPE YOU ARE ABLE TO COME AND VISIT AGAIN SOON. IN THE MEANTIME, I HAVE FOUND ANOTHER WHO REQUIRES MY HELP AND A BIT OF A HISTORY LESSON, WISH ME LUCK.

-- Arturo the Lorekeeper

#### **Desire**

The Progeny spend a good deal of time attempting to corrupt humans into unwittingly serving the Sanguinary through the use of the classic seven sins (Pride, Envy, Wrath/Anger, Sloth, Avarice/Greed, Gluttony and Lust). There are even those mortals who come to willingly serve the Sanguinary over time, completely enthralled by their desires and obsessions as the Progeny push them to darker natures.

It is the hope of the Progeny that those that do not actively serve the Sanguinary will at least be unfit to stand against her upon her release. The

Court of Desire (nicknamed the Court of Inspiration) attempts to beat the Progeny at their own game. It is perhaps, one of the most dangerous paths that an Immortal can walk.

The Court, led by Aphrodite and her Chancellors (known as the Sirens), act as muses, guides, and emotional healers amongst the mortal population. Members of this Court can be found in all walks of life, dealing in most any type of situation imaginable. They are quite prominent in the arts, music, and other forms of mortal culture. From the peaks of mortal High Society, to the darkest recesses of the various counter-cultures the members of the Court work to turn mortals away from the thrall of the Progeny.

As part of their work, members of the Court are continually assaulted by a variety of sensations, which has given them a reputation as being some of the strongest willed amongst the Perpetual Society. The Court maintains a strong watch over

its members so they do not fall to the temptations that their predecessors the Anopheles did. The Court has found an added benefit, however, in the Stroke. They have found that by accumulating these experiences they

can turn them on another being. They work towards being able to use this on a grand scale against the Sanguinary herself, turning the best and brightest of emotions and desires against the Dark Mother.

Members will usually pick one or two specific desires, emotions, etc. to work with, though all work towards becoming versed in as many as possible in order to resist the temptations that they are presented with during their work. Each member will work with the general masses, while usually picking a specific mortal whom will benefit from their aid. This mortal becomes their current focus of inspiration. Most of the Court are versed in one or more forms of art, music, literature, etc. as well, and tend to inspire others to follow these endeavors.

The Court attempts to inspire hope, personal achievement and fulfillment, and those things that the Progeny attempt to break down in most mortals. In more daring roles, some members work with other Immortals, attempting to break them of addictions and forms of emotional corruption. And still yet, some work with captured Progeny attempting to bring them back to the cause of the True Light.

When working with a mortal, who is currently being enthralled by a Progeny, members of the Court will sometimes begin to play along with the same methods and seemingly the same goals as the Progeny. When done this way, the Progeny will not realize that a member of the Courts is working with the mortal. Then slowly, the Immortal will begin to turn away the mortal from those goals. Usually this will begin to alert the Progeny, so the Immortal will attempt to set a trap or deal with the Progeny as quickly as possible once the ruse is uncovered.

More famous members include Ishtar, Dhamballa, Bast, and Rati.

### **Dreams**

Trapped within the Morpheum, the Sanguinary tirelessly attempts to break free and re-enter the physical world, joining with its waiting embryonic body in Sheol. The anchors of the Morpheum, held by true Dreamers amongst the Believers and Bright Bloods, is all that holds the Sanguinary captive. Though she is far from helpless in the Morpheum, she still has become a captive in her own hiding place. It is here where she plots, contacts her Progeny, and

works on more directly bringing the unknowing mortals of Earth into her service.

As the smallest of the nine, the Court of Visions (as they are so nicknamed at times) has some of the most awesome responsibility within the Perpetual Society. While other Courts have Mystics, not all are able to enter the Morpheum as the members of this Court. Granted, most Mystics have the Sleeper Boon, but it is the Court of Dreams that remains on nearly constant vigil against the threat the Sanguinary poses in the subconscious mind of humanity.

Members of this Court are not limited to the Morpheum as a place where they are able to work against the Stratagem. Indeed, as the Court of Desire, these Immortals can be found in music, art; anyplace where the human mind unleashes its creativity.

Immortals of this Court push humans to be as creative as possible, sharpening and honing their minds so they can withstand the onslaught of the Sanguinary and her minions in the Morpheum. Still others serve to warn mortals of danger to themselves, or to help them achieve goals through visions and daydreams as well.

The Court understands that the stronger they can make the minds of mortals, the more adaptable they become in the Morpheum. This helps to inspire mortal creativity, which in turn helps the mortals' minds to become sharper and more capable. This aids in strengthening the Anchors present with the Morpheum and even to create new ones. By strengthening more and more minds, the Sanguinary and its power will dwindle to fewer and fewer minds, until ultimately only the Furies will contain it.

At this point it is believed that the Perpetual Society will be able to track down the Furies, who will be overloaded with power and slay them, possibly forcing the Sanguinary into the real world with no real power, or killing it.

Of course, the Court's overall primary strength lies in its ability to traverse the Morpheum, launching assaults against the minions of the Sanguinary present there. They seek a way to safely enter the Hush-Hush to directly assault the consciousness of the Sanguinary itself. Within the Morpheum itself, they fulfill the roles of almost all the Courts, since most of the

Mystics in the Perpetual Society are members of the Court of Dreams.

The Reveries (the Chancellors within the Court) take a special interest in Bright Blood Children, guiding them to the knowledge of their full heritage when possible and inspiring them to be forces of good in the waking world. All the Reveries possess the Epiphany boon. There is also a special contingent within the Court known as the Nightmares, who focus on directly combating the minions of the Sanguinary in the Morpheum. Many of these members possess the Incubus boon.

The Court also holds the remaining majority of the true hybrid himsatis left in the world. Named after the first of their kind, the Chimera are all mythical himsatis, having mixed natures belonging to many types of creatures. A small amount of chimerical Newborns were born during the vast battles and bloodshed of the Great Betrayal. There are also rumors that a number of members are True Chimera.

Famous members include Cerebus, Selene, and Njirana.

#### **Setting Note: True Chimera**

Born from the union of two immortals, where one is capable of somehow passing on a bit of their own shard, these creatures remain a mystery to the immortal race. They seem as any other immortal, but gain natures much faster than a normal immortal. They are highly sought by the Sanguinary and her minions, and are protected by the Court of Dreams when found. It is said they can also become highly unstable, since their vox is not formed from a normal shard.

#### **Fate**

It was discovered shortly after the Great Betrayal that any attempts to manipulate anything to do with Time began to fail, and ultimately no longer work. It is felt that this is perhaps not due necessarily to the decrease in Earth's Aura, but perhaps that the Sanguinary and or its minions attempted something with the time-stream. No proof is so compelling as The Prophecy.

The "Fates" (Moirai, Parcae and Nornir - the Chancellors of the Court) are the caretakers of this Prophecy. It is in the manipulation and creation of events leading to a favorable outcome for the Perpetual Society, and a future

where the Sanguinary ultimately loses, that the Court finds its main purpose. There is no nickname for this Court, they are exactly as they are called, weavers of fates.

#### **Setting Note: The Prophecy**

The Prophecy was created by the Court of Fate based on their studies of the permutations of the past and the possible outcomes of the future. At the heart of the Prophecy lies a set of events that the Court says will come to pass no matter the choices made by the various parties involved in the war between the Sanguinary, the Abzulim and the Perpetual Society. Some of these events are said to have already taken place. The trick to the Prophecy is not that the events take place, but when, how, and what affect they will have on each other and the Immortal race. It is these factors that the Court attempts to direct. Narrators are free to create minor events as part of the Prophecy. We will reveal more details on these major events in future releases.

The Court studies the past to find clues and keys to predicting future events and then creating adjustments to those events so they have the best outcome possible. The Court is relied on heavily to provide resources, achieve long-term goals, and provide favorable outcomes when possible. A great deal of Merchants, Tacticians, and Empaths make up this Court.

On a daily basis, the Court does not involve itself as heavily with individual mortals as most of the other Courts do. When they do choose to do so, the mortal usually has a heavy importance in upcoming events or is being used as a pawn by agents of the Sanguinary or Abzulim in their own plots. Normally the Court provides subtle and gentle pushes and nudges to help direct events in directions that are beneficial to the Courts. The changing of stoplight a few seconds earlier than normal can have an incredible impact on the next few minutes or immediate future of a Regency.

It is their ability to look at not only the past, but also the myriad of possible permutations of the future as well that makes them seem so enigmatic and sometimes alien to the rest of the Courts.

The Court has taken up its new refuge in the mantles once belonging to a lost Pantheon known as the Solas. Within the World Wide



Web, the Court has the ability to keep tabs on a multitude of events worldwide, as well as the raw processing power to work with the large amounts of data they collect.

Interestingly enough, the Court is not only interested in pure facts and probabilities. Legends and Lore are also part of their repertoire. It has been said that the Court only looks to what is relevant, and most forget that the machines of propaganda can be just as relevant as pure facts. The Court of Fate is known for spreading false rumors and propaganda to confound and confuse the Progeny and other enemies of the Perpetual Society, and lead them away from the plans and work of the other Courts.

Famous members include Anansi, Tyche, Pythia, and Lilith.

### Life

The destruction and enslavement of humanity is not the only key to power for the forces of the Sanguinary. The destruction and warping of the natural environment of Earth is also key. This causes great imbalances in the Earth's aura and also contributes to its diminishing. Though most animals and plants do not have a SPIRIT aura in game terms, they too have spirits of their own. The desecration of Earth's wildlife and lands fuels the Sanguinary's power and takes more inspiration, hope, and freedom from humanity as those places they may escape to from time to time slowly vanish. The wilderness also provides a place for the followers of the Abzulim to stage their own assault from.

The Court of Life is descended mainly from those Immortals (the Prides Morrigan, Tautha and Roane) who became immortal normally in the tops of the trees, the forest floor, and the depths of the ocean. The Abzulim then enslaved them as they found them. Since the Great Betrayal and the coming together of the survivors of these Prides, the Court of Life has developed an even greater affinity with the natural world. But as the natural resources of Earth have dwindled, they have also learned to adapt to the concrete jungles of the cities of man. They are also known as the Court of the Wild. All members of the Court of Life have that slightly animalistic flair to them, if not in behavior, than in look. There is also something noble about it as well.

The Court of Life stands to preserve life, not just that of the natural wilds of the world, but also that of humanity. The Court also understands (from the Court of Death) that the rampant population explosion on Earth only serves to diminish the One Soul. The Court understands with more impact however, that this causes the natural world of the Earth to diminish also, and thus harms Earth's own aura. So where the Court of Death protects the Souls of those living on Earth, the Court of Life are the defenders of Earth's own soul as it were, it's own aura.

For every member that one can picture involved in saving the whales and working in Greenpeace, there is an eco-terrorist, an outdoor sportsman, an agricultural specialist, and a corporate raider. All work towards the same goal, the preservation of Earth's aura by defending life.

This is not to say that the Court does not understand the concept of death or killing however. The Court does not judge the value of an individual life unless that life threatens the lives of others. Members hunt the concrete jungle looking for Doves or Abzulim predators entering a city, and then find their havens outside the cities and destroy them. They work to introduce programs that keep a city alive, rather than a steel and concrete prison for humanity. They have also learned to join in with other Courts who hunt those humans which have become corrupted and too dangerous to the rest of humanity.

#### **Setting Note: Bright Bloods**

The Court of Life has had a preoccupation with the Bright Bloods more than any other Court. It is said this is in large part due to the Chancellors of the Court, the Amaranth, who are somehow touched by the Bright Blood themselves. It is said this special gift allows them a rapport with the mysterious Sunedion trees that no other Immortal has. Some say the Sunedion are born of seeds from beyond the known universe, the same place the Sanguinary first came from, and that they actively oppose it. There are few of these Immortal trees left in the world, but their sap is said to have miraculous powers.

The Court is led by the Immortal Celebrant, who is said to be responsible for the various legends of Santa Claus throughout the world. Chancellors known as the Amaranth aid the Celebrant. Their himsatis are strange plants.

Famous members have included Isis, Freya, Brigit, Dagda and Susanoo.

### **Making**

The Sanguinary has spent a great deal of time making humanity dependent on the various types of technology that it has created. It has spent a great deal of time exploiting the various weaknesses in the human mind, body and soul. The Abzulim also spend a great deal of time attempting to undermine humanity so that they may be enslaved.

The Court of Making (known to some as the Court of Technology) is unique. Many of its members were once creators and artisans in the more warrior-based Prides such as the Peri, the Phoenix, and to a lesser extent the Eremites.

During the Great Betrayal, a lone group of Immortals led by Vulcan descended into The Walk. Here Vulcan successfully entered into the Foundry and retrieved weapons of power that he gave to another group of Immortals (who would eventually found the Court of War) so that they might take back the mantle known as Valhalla from the Progeny. After this they formed themselves into their own Court as others came to join them.

#### **Setting Note: The Foundry**

The Foundry was created by the Abzulim to create their biotechnology. It is the birthplace of the Kai Ra. It is here that the Court creates many artifacts and studies those they find still locked inside. Much of the Foundry is still inaccessible to the Court, and some say a few last Abzulim are locked deep away inside, still performing their strange experiments and creating devices that most Immortals could not begin to fathom. It is also rumored that the mysterious Vault of Skins may lie somewhere deep in the Foundry.

The Court understands that if the Immortals and mortals are ever to successfully ally against the Sanguinary, humanity must be strengthened just as the Immortals must be strengthened. The Court works in a variety of medical fields, both biological, technical and psychological.

Here they find ways to turn humanity away from those things the Progeny uses to weaken them. This Court is also versed in human technology, finding ways to use this to strengthen and inspire humanity in both mind and body. Still yet

there are those elementals that use their wish-giving talents to inspire humanity and aid those deserving of a brighter future. And still more attempts to enlighten humanity on a path similar to Transcendence, so that humanity may gain its own form of immortality.

The Court hunts down the various monsters and creations of the Sanguinary and the Abzulim, and have special hatreds for Drove and other Abzulim Predators. They also spend a great deal of time defending those mortals who work in the same vein as the Court, seeing that the Progeny do not corrupt such work. In addition, they have begun working with Bright Bloods as well to see if it is possible to brighten the blood of many more mortals in the coming times.

It is also rumored that this Court still knows the way to Gynnah, the mysterious garden in the Maelstrom, and birthplace of the ancient elementals known as the Primals. They make pilgrimages there in order to learn more of their own past and of the secrets of the Abzulim ancient Mystech. The Court has a very strong understanding of places like the Maelstrom, Mantles, the Ley, and other less traveled places. Some say they have knowledge of the Dominions and the fantastic living ships originally created by the Abzulim, the Lighters.

Famous members include Lug, Tlaloc, Tvashtri and Agni.

### **Secrets**

As the Sanguinary is a prisoner in the Morpheum, so to is humanity a prisoner of the mind of the Sanguinary. However, humanity tends to glean bits and pieces from their own subconscious, about the Sanguinary and the plans of her and her minions. These come out in the very works inspired by their dreams and inspirations, art, music, literature, etc.

The Court of Secrets (also known to many as the Court of Knowledge) studies all of these works for clues to the plans of the Sanguinary, and then act on them. A great number of Profilers belong to this Court, as well as the Callings of Mentor, and Chameleon. However, one should be warned that this Court has its fair share of Slayers and Guardians as well. This Court has at times gone to great and dangerous lengths to obtain materials that the Progeny would rather not fall into the hands of the Perpetual Society.

The Court also watches over those who have a high degree of natural creativity, and thus watch over many talented artists in many fields. Progeny sometimes attempt to either corrupt their talent, or to feed false information through them to the Courts, as this was done once before and was partly responsible for the Great Betrayal being so devastating.

The Court was never under Abzulim rule and does not wish to ever be so. To this end they help the Court of Making find and catalog Abzulim artifacts (and take them out of the hands of unwitting mortals or worse yet, agents of the Sanguinary) so that ways to defeat the Abzulim can be found as well.

A great deal of not only scholars, but also those possessed of alternative wisdom and trickery also populate this Court. The Court also spends a great deal of time testing the minds of humanity and sharpening them, making them hunger for knowledge of their own. To those that rise to the occasion, the Court imparts to them valuable knowledge that they will pass on to others in order to resist the Sanguinary.

It is told that long ago humanity was a telepathic race. The predecessors of the Court, the Magdalen, taught humanity the written and spoken word and thus humanity over time lost its telepathic abilities. As of late, it has been said that it was actually the Sanguinary's entrance into the human dream-state that caused this loss, and that the teaching of the written and spoken word saved humanity from remaining primitive slaves to the Sanguinary. And though responsible for the rise of the Apocrypha as the Magdalen, the Court is instrumental at keeping this group at bay in the modern age.

When the Court was formed, the wisest amongst them placed all the accumulated knowledge of the Court into the Paragon it is said. For that reason none amongst the Immortal race (save the Chancellors and the other Court Paragons) may know the identity of the Paragon of this Court. For this one Immortal carries the true history, lore and knowledge of the Immortal race, and is too great a prize for the Progeny to be known to the rest of the Perpetual Society.

Famous members include Thoth, Hermes, Athena, Ganesh, and Shoten.

### **Setting Note: The Alexandrites**

Not to be confused with the Alexandrians, this group of Grey servants to the Sanguinary has several goals: protection of the Sanguinary's One True Name, the homogenization of the world's knowledge (and therefore imagination and faith), and ingraining conformity into all current and future generations. Controlling the information in the content of books and education itself is their preferred method. The Alexandrites make their influence felt through all of academia, from kindergarten all the way up through the most respected universities.

Besides academia, this subtle and highly successful group also owns controlling interest in several book publishers, maintain a staff of top archeologists, and pay top dollar to book collectors for certain ancient tomes.

The conflict between the Court of Secrets and this group is nearly as ancient as the printed word itself, having arisen during the building of the Library of Alexandria. The Alexandrites appears teachers and librarians many times, and most are sorcerers who can use stolen voxes as amulets to focus their power. They are protected by Progeny and can easily summon one or more members of a Drove family (including their Progeny leaders) for protection.

### **Shadows**

The Shadowen have an equal enemy in both the Abzulim and the Sanguinary. Created by one, seduced by the other at the end of the Age of Myth, they did not even realize the truth of their origins and the seduction upon so many of their members until the Great Betrayal. The Shadowen are easily the smallest Court, second only to the Court of Dreams.

The Court is unique in that they almost all elementals made of thought. Even they do not understand or know the process by which the Abzulim created them, and no shadow elementals seem to come about as newborns at all. Having once been led and inspired by the Horned Lord (a mysterious Immortal with a himsati made of Sunedrion wood/sap and elemental fire they say), the Shadowen feel the spark of True Light within themselves. Thus they fight on against their former brothers and sisters, many of whom are now either Abzulim Predators or Progeny.

A strange affinity with the darker side of humanity plagues most Shadow himsatis, and therefore the Court does not interact largely with the mortal population. Like the Court of Making, the Shadowen are almost all elementals, and therefore rely on closer bonds with individual mortals rather than working in the mainstream population of humanity.

Instead, taking lessons from their own misguided past, they strive to maintain peace amongst the members of the Perpetual Society and act as enforcers of the laws of the Society. More Scourges can be found amongst the Shadowen than any other Court. The groups of three known as triads are the preferred working method of the Court when possible. The members develop close bonds with each other, as close as any mortal family would. They watch out for each other, and take care of each other. In this way, corruption by the Sanguinary or the Abzulim is more difficult.

The Shadowen also act as a police force for the Perpetual Society. It is their role to see that the laws of the Society or any given Regency are followed, to track down and investigate violations of these laws, and to assist in routing out possible traitors or spies within the Society. This is not to say that every Shadowen goes strictly "by the book", but in general the Shadowen have little patience for Immortals who claim to be responsible members of the Courts, but flagrantly violate the laws of the Society. When such a thing happens, they may hand the offender over to Mentors within the Court to help educate the Immortal on the proper laws of the Society.

They hunt down powerful corrupted mortals and have an especially strong hatred for the mortal organizations that willingly serve the Sanguinary, known as the Grey. And finally the Shadowen spend more time than any other Pride watching the Solitaires and seeing that they do not reveal too much of the Immortal race to humanity as well. Though most Solitaires are more than intelligent enough to not do this, the Court keeps a close watch on any Solitaire groups that arise, and deal with them more than the other Courts for the most part.

The Court also watches over the place known as the Labyrinth (which is where the island of Talos is located). It is said this realm holds great value and dread to members of the Court.

Famous members include Circe, Nemesis, Medea, Arshianna and Sraosha.

## **War**

One of the last major ways, in which the Sanguinary enslaves humanity to its cause, is through violence and bloodshed. Conflicts fuel human aggression, intolerance, and fear. And these are strong tools to the Progeny. With them the Sanguinary can slowly turn the human race into an army of its own, and send them after the Immortals.

Thor and his Chancellors form the War Council, and each "Warlord" oversees a different area of the world. Together they seek out conflicts and do what they can to end them as best as possible. If the minions of the Sanguinary are involved in the conflict, the Court attempts to turn the conflict into something that will hinder the Sanguinary's goals rather than further them. And sometimes, peace is the best answer to a Sanguinary driven conflict as well.

The Court has a deep-seated belief in personal freedom, and the freedom to make choices and not be influenced as the Sanguinary influences humanity through fear and manipulation. They push all mortals to stand up for themselves and not to back down.

The Court has gained the nickname of the Court of Freedom as they take the most direct and proactive hand in stopping many of the Sanguinary's plans. They are called upon to assist in destroying Drovers, Grey, corrupted spirits, Progeny, Abzulim Predators and all other enemies of the Perpetual Society.

The Soldier Callings are strong here but all Callings are needed in this Court to win its war against the Sanguinary. This Court is the most openly organized and disciplined of the Courts. Even those among the Court that some would call loners respect one another and can work together quickly when the need arises.

The members of this Court take to regular patrols, watching after mortal authorities and other official mortal offices. They become involved in any conflicts that happen in their territories. The Court is quick to lend a hand to members of the other Courts in gathering intelligence, training, decoding missives between Progeny members, hunting enemies of

the Society, or any other activity that will seek to end a plot of the Sanguinary. The Court of War is the front line against the Sanguinary, and with devotion unheard of, will sacrifice themselves if it will stop the Sanguinary from enslaving another group of mortals.

The Court also spends a great deal of time teaching philosophical beliefs, self-discipline, harmony of the mind and body, etc. They are a great force in the martial arts world and are very proactive backers of the sports and physical fitness communities. Being in good shape both mentally, physically and spiritually is important to the members of the Court. Court is fascinated and reveres Bright Blood warriors, who gain status equal to the Immortals within the Court. Few are made Immortals though, as the Court feels this would diminish their own accomplishments.

Members also keep a close eye on arms dealers, drug cartels, and other large organized groups of mortals that can be easily swayed by the Progeny. In addition, the Explorer Calling in the Court spends a great deal of time seeking out lost territories that have been claimed by the Abzulim or Progeny and conquering them, taking them back for the Courts.

#### **Setting Note: The Centurions**

The Centurions provide a constant and predictable source of fear in the form of crime and violence. They teach criminals the fine art of home invasion, gangs how to use the most modern firepower (as well as supply it), and in general work to keep as much of a given population gripped in fear as possible.

Centurions draw their membership from the highest ranks of the criminal and military worlds. They communicate with one another in a secret language, a strange mish-mash of Latin and military jargon, and identify one another by wearing Roman sigils on their clothes.

These Grey are a mix of military advisors, criminal minds, and great warriors. Many of the lesser members do not even realize who they are truly serving. Centurion commanders surround themselves with dozens of bodyguards. They have recently come into severe conflicts with the Court of War as the Court has recently begun getting more involved in conflicts on smaller, local scales.

Famous members have included Ares, Mjolnir, Caliburn, Tyr, Hachiman and Nuada.

## **Regency Rule**

Most regions in which the Courts hold sway center around a particular city or metropolis, sometimes around a sacred site or place as well. When the Courts hold sway over a region, a democratic process is established to allow the Courts to function as smoothly as possible. Any region that is controlled by the Courts in this manner is known as a Regency. A Regency usually covers the city and surrounding areas.

In order for a Court to have official representation within a Regency, at least one member of the Court living in the Regency must be a Lord. The Lords from that Court choose one of them to be known as the Regent. This Regent serves as the official representative of the Court within that Regency. Each month the Regents gather together in council to discuss the needs and issues facing the Courts in that Regency. This council is called the Scepter Council. Only Lords are permitted to be Regents due to the fact that sitting in a room full of beings carrying the True Light makes it difficult for a non-Lord to successfully get things accomplished with them.

When the Scepter Council meets, all members of the Courts are invited to attend. Even if the Court has no Lords within the Regency, they still are invited to attend. While the Scepter sits behind closed doors, the other members of the Courts gather together in festivities nearby. These festivities are presided over by the Retainers. A Retainer is the Regent's second. If the Regent is unable to attend a meeting, or needs have matters handled which she cannot handle herself, then her Retainer handles those matters.

For those Courts within a Regency that do not have any Lords present, they choose someone to act as an Emissary (usually an actual Emissary). Once the Scepter has finished its meeting, they have audience with Emissaries from the remaining Courts so that the needs of all the Courts can attempt to be met. Some Scepters allow Minor Courts, or the Solitaires (very rarely though) within a Regency (should there be a unified group of them) to send in such an Emissary as well, for the purposes of simple communication. It is up to the Scepter whether or not such individuals are permitted entry.

Encryption [6]  
Return Locus: <\$tiGMAta @ Sanctchewary [Hacker Alias]>  
Received By: <Emissary; Talitha at Sanctuary>  
Language: English  
Subject: Why is Selene crying?  
Summary: Where has my dog gone?  
Keyword Search: Prophecy, Lies, Lies, Lies  
Date: Year of the Pale  
Message as Follows:

I KEEP WONDERING WHY SELENE ISN'T SMILING AND THEN I REMEMBER IT IS A NEW MOON BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER BECAUSE SHE CAN'T SMILE BUT SHE ISN'T THE ONE WITH THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD ON HER SHOULDERS AND THE SANGUINARYS PRISON IS OUT TO GET HER BUT CAN'T SO THEY'LL TAKE US INSTEAD AND CHERRY COLA REALLY DOESN'T TASTE LIKE CHERRIES AND SHE LIED ABOUT THE SKINWALKERS BUT THAT'S OKAY BECAUSE I HAVE A LOLLIPOP AND I THINK I'LL TAKE DOOR THIRTEEN IF I ONLY HAD A RING ON MY FINGER AND THEN I'D BE THE FIFTH OR WAS THAT THE VAMPIRE IN THE DESERT SUN?

Once the meeting is concluded, the Regents join the festivities in order for all the members of the Courts to mingle and associate with one another. Minor Court members are allowed to attend such festivities, Solitaires are not (except in rare circumstances indeed).

Sometimes special awards and such are given to various members of the Courts for their work, during the festivities. After the festivities, or at least within the next few days, the Lords of each Court gather together for the Regent to discuss the Scepter's meeting and what needs to be done by that Court within the Regency for the time being.

High Lords rarely take the position of a Regent, due to the fact that they usually coordinate several Regents for their Court. Since there are few High Lords, the presence of one within a Scepter can make it difficult for the normal Lords to conduct business and have "eye-to-eye" discussions with the High Lord. Usually, the Lord

with the highest overall status and station within the Court takes the position of Regent.

If a new higher stationed Lord comes into the city, he must wait at least 3 months to get to know and understand the other members of the Court if he wishes to be taken in as the new Regent. The Scepter can also overrule and allow the current Regent to remain in power if the majority of the current Regents do not favor the new Lord. Lords cannot casually walk into a Regency and take over. High Lords can temporarily impose their will over the Regent of their court however, but this cannot last longer than one month without special permission from the Paragon Council.

The most important thing to remember is that the Regent is there to serve as a representative of her Court, and is not always fully in control of the Court in that Regency.

## *The Path of the Pantheon*

During the Age of Myth, the Pantheons held sway over most of the various populations of Earth. Their worshippers obeyed without question, and these immortals held much power. In the modern day, things have changed for the immortals. Pantheons must work much harder to maintain their power over a given area.

Immortals from different Courts will come together on various missions for their Courts. Sometimes these groupings work well enough together that the group decides to assist and lend aid to one another on a regular basis. High Lords tend to refer to these groups as Cadres. If one of the members of the Cadre is already a Lord, the Lord can petition the Paragon Council to sanction his Cadre as a legitimate Pantheon. If this is done, the Pantheon has the right to govern over regions the same as a Scepter council would.

Usually the Cadre must have acquired at least some form of group Sanctuary and Quiet Culture to show that they are able to maintain a cohesive presence. If there is no Lord, then usually a Lord from some Court will eventually take notice of the Cadre and offer to patron them. In exchange for assistance, training, etc., from the Lord, the Cadre provides the Lord services in the form of missions that the Lord may send them on. Eventually the Lord petitions

### **Setting Note: Solitaires and Court Pantheons**

A Pantheon can have a Solitaire within it and still be recognized by the Courts as a Pantheon. Though this takes a great deal more work to get this recognition, it can happen. The same can be said of those from the Minor Courts. Usually a Solitaire within a Court recognized Pantheon eventually winds up joining one of the Courts over time.

the High Lords to make one of the Cadre a Lord herself (after that Cadre member has proven her worth and been embraced by the True Light of course). Then the new Lord may begin the process of petitioning to make his Cadre legitimate in the eyes of the Paragon Council.

Just as common as the above, a Pantheon become sanctioned by happenstance. Younger immortals do not normally use the term Cadre, and simply refer to themselves as a Pantheon. They manage to acquire Sanctuary, a Quiet Culture, and find an area that has no strong Court presence. If they manage to gain enough power within the area, they come into the notice of the High Lords and the Paragons. It is then that the Paragon Council simply issues an edict that this group is recognized as a Pantheon due to their continued work and effort. However, if none of the members are Lords themselves, they must find or allow the Paragon Council to give them a Lord to patron them until at least one of them holds a measure of the True Light within and gain the title of Lord.

Regardless, once a member of the Pantheon becomes a Lord, the others in the Pantheon take the titles of Sons and Daughters of their new Lord. Unlike the standard Court structure however, most Pantheon members still treat each other as equals rather than the normal Lord to Son/Daughter relationship.

### **Pantheon Rule**

When a Pantheon has power of a region, that region is known as a Protectorate. Once a Pantheon has established this Protectorate, it can only be taken back by a Scepter through direct edict of the Paragon Council. Even a High Lord can not impose his will against an entire Pantheon's jurisdiction over a Protectorate. Other Lords moving into a Protectorate must realize that they will not be taking the place of anyone in the Pantheon as a Regent. The Pantheon serves as its own Scepter in the Protectorate.

Sometimes a Pantheon that is very small or not sanctioned will take an area within a Regency and claim it as their Protectorate. Most Scepters

do not take issue with this, and the Pantheon is invited to send one of their own to act as an Emissary to represent them as a group. However, relations can become strained should the Pantheon begin to grow too large or seem to be trying to take more control of the Regency from the Scepter.

When a Pantheon rules, they invite various agents of the Lords and the Courts to come and have audience with them. Before this audience, the Pantheon will gather in its own Scepter of all its members and have council. Afterwards the Lord of the Pantheon will have audience with those who have come and listen to requests, grant concessions, etc. The Sons and Daughters within the Pantheon will sit around the Lord and listen to the audiences. Usually one member will act to move around the Pantheon assisting in communication and bringing advice and views to the Lord from the Pantheon members during these audiences. This member is known as the Lord's Muse, something of an advisor's position.

Most Pantheons gather together to hold their own Scepter once a month or more. The Pantheon holds power over the Protectorate as theirs; it is not a democratic process among the Courts. Any Lords living within a Protectorate, by default, grant power to the Pantheon over them, and must abide by the laws of the Protectorate and the rule of the Pantheon. Quite simply put, the Pantheon rules the area. Even if the Lord is of a higher station than the Lord of the Pantheon, he still must abide by the Pantheon's rules.

However, Pantheons that abuse their power, quickly find that things do not go well for them. Unlike the time of the Prides, the unified Courts can stand up to these newer Pantheons, and will call on the aid of High Lords if necessary. While the High Lords cannot break the rule of the Pantheon without the edict of the Paragon Council, they can make life difficult for any members of the Pantheon from the same Court as the High Lord. While the age of the super Pantheons may be gone, the time of the Courts is now.

# Appendix A: Banes and Curses

## *BANES*

Banes are the opposite of mundane boons. Though some have something of a near supernatural quality to them, these character flaws are still completely mundane in nature. Each Bane lists the cost next to it. This is the amount of memory that the character receives for taking this Bane. This memory is used to build the character along with the other starting memory. If a Bane is gained during the story, multiply the value by five and grant it as experience, not memory.

### **ADVERSARY: 1 - 3**

An NPC in the game stands in opposition to you in some way. The player must describe who this enemy is (unless the Narrator and Player agree to make it a surprise to the Player) and the Narrator must approve it. For one point you have an adversary: someone who will hinder you, provide competition, hold a grudge, etc. For two points you have an enemy who does not necessarily seek your destruction, but may seek to harm or humiliate you permanently. For three points the enemy will seek your destruction and may be obsessed with destroying you. These adversaries can be mortal or immortal.

### **ARCHAIC: 5**

Perhaps you have spent the last several decades in a mantle or have a connection to a previous avatar that is very strong. For whatever reason, you are not familiar with Earth's current advancements and add 1 to rolls involving any current technology or advancements not from your era.

### **CLUMSY: 3**

You add 1 from all rolls involving raw feats of athletic ability (climb, run, jump, swim, etc.). This does not include combat skills, but does involve any use of the Agility Skill.

### **COMPULSION: 1 - 5**

You have a physical addiction (drugs, alcohol, gambling, sex, etc.), usually a holdover from your mortal life or the past mortal life of an avatar. Add 1 to 5 to any rolls involved attempting to resist this addiction when presented to you. The compulsion can sometimes be a more mentally based addiction, which can cause problems in a world where the Progeny wield the 7 sins in the name of the Sanguinary. The amount you add is based on how powerful this bane has a hold on you.

### **CURSE: 5 + 1 per die level superior to d20**

Please see Curses (below) for examples on Curses. The Narrator should keep careful watch on anyone who decides to take a Curse as a Bane when building a character. Curses are worth no points if gained during the campaign unless the Narrator specifically deems it so for special story purposes.

### **DARK NATURE: 5**

You have an inner darkness that is recognizable to the minions of the Sanguinary and the Courts. You are an outsider to the Courts, but your nature attracts the minions of the Sanguinary who continually attempt to recruit you but not harm you. This is a physical palpable aura that even humans sometimes get the creeps and such being around you.

### **DARK SECRET: 1 - 4**

You have a dark secret about your past that you do not wish revealed to anyone. It is up to the Narrator to present situations where you must work to keep your secret. If you fail to keep your secret, you lose this bane and gain the bane of Notoriety at -1 one more. Example: if you had Dark Secret at -2 and it is discovered, then you have Notoriety at -3 now.



### **DEEP SLEEPER: 2**

You sleep so deeply that any attempts to awaken due to something around you are made at a +1 to the roll, including indirect attempts such as nearby noises, someone sneaking up on you while you sleep, someone trying to shake you awake, etc.

### **DEFORMITY: 1 - 5**

You have some kind of physical deformity from before you rediscovered your Immortality. It carries with you still. Or perhaps you lost a limb in a fight and don't have the power to grow it back. This could be a hunch, a mangled arm, a missing foot, etc. Add 1 to 5 to your rolls involving the deformity, whether they are physical, social, mental, etc. The value you add to your roll is equal to the value at which you gain this bane. If taken higher than 2, the deformity is very obvious and individuals will react accordingly.

### **DEPENDANT: 1 - 3**

You have a dependant (Maker child, mortal lover, etc.) that depends on you for his or her safety, nurturing, etc. How much this dependant interferes with your life determines the value.

### **DRIVING GOAL: 1 - 5**

You have some driving goal, to find a lost love, to seek vengeance, etc. Perhaps this is due to flashbacks of something that happened to one of your avatars, a holdover from your mortal life, etc. For whatever reason this need drives you and sometimes causes you to take risks, or places you in danger. The Narrator determines, based on the player's description, how much the Goal is worth in his or her campaign. If the goal is achieved, the character must pay back the memory or have it deducted from future experience awards.

### **DULL SENSE: 2**

You may pick one of the five senses when first taking this bane. Whenever you use that sense specifically you add 1 to your rolls to perceive things with it. This can be bought multiple times. This bane does not function with the Himsati Nature: Enhanced Senses.

### **EXILED: 8 (Court/Progeny Members)**

You have been exiled from the Courts for some reason. Though they do not necessarily seek your destruction or imprisonment (that would be an Enemy added on as well), they will not treat you or think of you well, and gaining their aid will be hard. Even some Solitaires will turn a cold shoulder to you. In general, this is a strong role-playing bane.

### **HABIT: 1 - 3**

Perhaps you are bit of an anachronist, with habits out of time and date. Or maybe you have nearly bestial manners even in your human form. Whatever the reason, you add 1 for each point of habit you have, to all social rolls, where those around you may be offended by your habits. Many Immortals have no issue with this; it usually affects you the worst when dealing with mortals.

### **HIMSATI BOUND: 3 (Immortal)**

Add 1 to all rolls when attempting to shape-shift back into human form from himsati, or to avoid the Sanguinary from influencing you directly.

### **ILLITERATE: 5**

For some reason (perhaps you have been in a mantle, perhaps you are a newborn Immortal who was previously an animal or plant) you cannot read or write. You simply cannot do it. You also take a one shift penalty to any serenade that would make use of the ability to read or write as part of the serenade or its special effect, though the serenade will grant you some ability temporarily, it is still inferior due to your lack of knowledge.

### **IMMORTAL AIRE: 2 (Immortal, Bright Blood)**

Your Immortal nature shines through, even in your human form. Perhaps your eyes seem to glow in any kind of light, or have the look of your himsati, or your skin just has the slightest hint of fur, etc. This is

something you cannot hide except with the use of a serenade, and even then it can still show through somewhat. This bane also can come upon an Immortal as a Curse quite easily. Bright Bloods can take this to have unusual traits revealing their true inner nature.

### **IMPERFECT TONE: 3**

Whenever you play a serenade and do not use a foci within that serenade, you add 1 to the skill and effect roll. If you have no foci for the serenade, you have no choice but to add the 1 to the rolls.

### **INGENUUE: 5 (Immortal Only)**

All characters with this bane start with d12, d10, d10 (including Elementals) instead of their normal starting auras. The remaining aura rank(s) are held back by the Narrator until further in the story. The character may buy only one starting serenade and may not use it until the Narrator deems it to happen. The character has no Court, and is also not considered yet a Solitaire, Progeny etc. Therefore no boons or other banes requiring these may be bought when the character is created. All purchased skills must reflect only the current life the character knows. Additional memory should be held for future purchases when the Narrator deems it appropriate.

### **LUCID DREAMER: 4**

You have little control over your ability to dream or not dream. You tend to dream even when you do not want to (Narrator's discretion to further plot, etc.) and when you do dream, all actions you take are at + 1 to your rolls while in the Morpheum. You simply have trouble going against whatever dreams you encounter or have.

### **MOTIF BOUND: 8**

You are unable to use a motif other than the one(s) you have specifically purchased. If you have a motif of fire, you have to use fire as the special effect **or** foci for all your serenades. If you later purchased multi-motif, you could then use the second motif, but you cannot go outside your motifs. This can severely limit the effectiveness of certain serenades depending on circumstances.

### **NEWBORN: 10**

You are a newborn immortal, having been a normal animal, human, or plant that has just been (or is about to be) infected by a clean unimprinted shard of the Sanguinary. The rules for playing a Newborn appear on page <xx>

### **NOTORIETY: 2 - 5**

You have something about your past that has been made public. Perhaps a mentor fell to the Sanguinary, or a mission in which you cost the Immortal race dearly. Whatever, you add 1 for each point of Notoriety you have to all rolls in social conflicts with those who know of and might be influenced by, your Notoriety.

### **OVERSENSITIVE: 2**

You are sensitive to otherworldly forces, but instead of sensing them, they tend to sense you first. Gossamers will come and hinder you, other types of creatures will sense you as you sense them and will come to investigate. The character should pick what otherworldly force she is overly sensitive to (Gossamers, Shallows, Mantles, etc.). The character also takes a +1 to all MIND-based rolls (including skills) while in the presence of the force to which she is sensitive as she is constantly distracted by it.

### **SECRET IDENTITY: 3**

In addition to the Immortal everyone knows you are, you maintain a separate identity, which you use to interact with other Immortals. This is usually bought along with other boons in order to help hide who you really are. You use this to cover up certain of your activities from the prying eyes of other Immortals who are normally close to you (such as your own Pantheon). It is up to the Narrator to present situations that will endanger your secret identity and force you to protect it. The character must define how he creates this other identity, and what activities that he is hiding by using it.

**SLOW: 3**

You add 1 to all initiative rolls

**SLOW THINKER: 2**

Add 1 to all rolls whenever the Immortal is under pressure to recall facts and information from memory in a hurry.

**SPECIES ANIMOSITY: 4**

Creatures of the same species as your himsati will never obey you and gain a one-shift bonus to any attempts to resist any form of mystical control. They will also attack you if they feel the least bit threatened by you. When attacking these creatures deduct 1 to all attack and damage rolls.

**STRONG AVATARS: 3**

Add 1 to your roll whenever attempting to keep a hostile avatar from emerging.

**SUSCEPTIBILITY: 4**

You add 1 from any roll to resist general mortal toxins, diseases and illnesses (common cold, alcohol [getting drunk], flu, chicken pox, leprosy, etc.).

**WEAK: 5**

Shift your BODY die one inferior on any roll you make for feats of strength and damage, due to the fact that your physical strength is not equal to your overall BODY die.

**WEAK WILL: 3**

You add 1 from any roll when resisting forms of mental control by another character. This could include seduction, torture, serenades, natures, etc.

## *CURSES*

Curses are the opposite of the mystical boons, derived when the darker beliefs of human faith instill themselves into an Immortal. Here we present a list of sample curses, some derived from more commonly known concepts and few not so common. This list is only here to serve as examples, Narrators are free to come up with hundreds of ideas for new curses and rate them accordingly.

We give a fairly large list below of ideas that Narrators and players can use. Some of these work better at either higher or lower die values so please use them accordingly.

Please also note that the Narrator is free to give out a mundane bane as a curse also. Some of the curses listed below actually fit into the category of mundane banes. Again, the immortal gains no points for it. We have grouped some of the examples together to make it easier to find things that are somewhat related. These can make excellent material for ideas for fugue triggers as well since many fugue triggers can be related to various curses.

- The immortal cannot cross a threshold without knocking, being invited, etc. The immortal cannot leave an area if anyone is looking at him. Doors the immortal goes through lead to places other than where they are supposed. The immortals cannot open doors or pass other barriers himself. The immortal cannot pass onto holy ground.
- The smell/sight of some common thing (roses, garlic, milk, perfume, human sweat, certain symbols, food, etc.) becomes nauseating to the immortal.
- When she is passionate (or angry, lustful, extremely joyous, etc.) the immortal's eyes glow, she makes sounds like her himsati, she partially shape-shifts, etc.
- The immortal cannot be seen in mirrors or captured on film or video or audio or some combination. The immortal's image remains on mirrors for a period of time after walking away from it.

- The immortal casts the shadow of his himsati when in human form, the shadow of his human form when in himsati. The immortal's shadow pushes other shadows out of its way.
- The immortal develops a common bane deformity permanently (forked tongue, premature white hair, odd colored eyes, eyes of his himsati, an extra digit on each hand, fangs, hooked or clawed nails, etc.).
- The immortal's voice reverberates when she talks, or speaks with the combined voice of her avatars. Her voice causes pain to mortals around her who can hear her speak. Her spoken words appear as graffiti on walls nearby. The Immortal cannot speak unless asked a question or spoken to.
- Fire burns an unusual color, burns cold, intensifies, goes out, starts, dims, etc., in the presence of the immortal. Nothing will burn at all in the immortal's presence.
- Objects stain, warp, tarnish, rust, age, change colors, etc., when the immortal touches them. Alternatively they could move away when the immortal nears them, toys could animate near the immortal, etc.
- Plants wither, warp, move, flourish/bloom, or try to grab the immortal when in her presence. Food products rot/spoil/come alive again, in the immortal's presence.
- It is always darker, colder, warmer, brighter, the shadows are deeper, etc. around the immortal.
- Wherever the immortal's shadow touches, that area/thing collects a film of dust, is stained with blood, changes color, burns, etc.
- The immortal's hair and clothes are constantly blown about by an unseen, unheard wind. The immortal's hair turns to tentacles or snakes and strikes others around him at random.
- The immortal cannot eat in the presence of others or must consume amounts of food far more than normal to be satisfied.
- The immortal's shadow pushes other shadows out of the way.
- The immortal attracts certain types of animals (birds, mice, cats, etc.), mortal media, crime, plagues, children who are fascinated with his magical nature, fog or storms follow him and herald his approach into a city, etc.
- The immortal is constantly mistaken for someone else, dead loves ones, lost friends, famous people, etc.
- The immortal is magnetized, cries tears of blood, coughs up strange objects, sheds his skin like a snake, gives off a strange pungent odor, his hair turns to glass/metal when cut, etc.
- Objects fall from shelves, pictures on walls tilt at odd angles, objects become "lost", candles and wax melt into strange shapes, etc. in the immortal's presence.
- Buttons and clasps fall off of others in the immortal's presence.
- The immortal inspires jealousy in mortals, gives them "goose bumps", makes them nauseous, causes nightmares or hallucinations, etc., whenever they are in his presence
- The immortal has mental delusions (being watched, followed, hears voices that aren't there, etc.) The immortal suffers from stigmata or psychosomatic appearance of wounds that do not invoke pain.
- Dwellings the immortal enters act on their own accord (becoming cluttered, unorganized, doors slamming on their own, furniture rearranging itself when no one is looking, etc.)
- The immortal becomes fascinated with certain objects, symbols, smells, etc.
- The immortal's skin is an odd shade (bluish, greenish, rosy, etc. but not enough to truly look bizarre.) or feels like fur, scales, bark, etc. but looks completely normal, or is hot/cold to the touch.
- Knives (or other bladed weaponry) become dull in the immortal's hands, normal items become edged and cut those who handle them, including the immortal.

- The immortal's presence causes bygone radio broadcasts to repeat over radios playing in his vicinity, or scrambles television and/or radio signals, or turns non-immortal made music twisted and warped sounding, movies talk interactively with the immortal, etc.
- The immortal's reflection cracks mirrors, his voice breaks glass when he sings (or speaks).
- The immortal must shout/whisper whenever he talks, or perhaps whenever he tells a lie.
- The immortal leaves wet footprints or animal footprints in human form (and vice versa) wherever she goes.
- Liquids evaporate rapidly when the immortal is nearby. Water turns to blood when she touches it. Beverages effervesce in the immortal's presence.
- The immortal is allergic to a certain substance (sunlight, silver, garlic, wood, holy items), and takes a pain penalty when near them or additional damage when struck by them.
- The immortal must assume her himsati under a certain conditions (full moon, when in water, etc.) or can only change back and forth during certain times or conditions.
- Mortals she's thinking of can hear the immortal's thoughts.
- The immortal may not directly tell a lie, or may not directly tell the truth.
- The immortal cannot abide the presence of blood (even a menstruating woman), or great beauty.
- The immortal's heartbeat is faintly audible, even if she is invisible.
- Electrical devices in the vicinity of the immortal experience surges, brown out, or begin to act wildly and strange. Machines will not work for the immortal without the use of serenades such as Gremlin.
- The immortal is a plague carrier, be it mortal or technical (a computer virus for example)
- Things run backwards (watches, drains, running water, etc.) in the immortal's vicinity.
- The immortal assumes the form of one of his avatars on the avatar's birthday and cannot change back until the day has passed. The immortal changes into one of his avatars at random each night and changes back at dawn. The immortal assumes the form of a child in the presence of mortals.
- Animals cry out whenever the immortal's name is mentioned, birds speak his thoughts aloud, thunder cracks whenever the immortal is struck, and other odd sources of sound can occur.
- The immortal's breath coats objects in frost.
- The immortal only gains nutrition from certain things or can only eat certain things (raw meat, flesh, drinking blood, liquids, plants, sex, etc.
- The immortal's sense of sensations are reversed (experiences pleasure as pain, etc.)
- The immortal's presence causes animals to fight one another.
- The immortal may not use serenades during the day.
- The immortal cannot refuse a request for her aid.
- The immortal can only sleep surrounded in earth or in some other circumstance.
- Anyone the immortal kills reanimates and hunts for her.
- The immortal has the overwhelming urge to kill his sexual partners, the immortal cannot play serenades for 24 hours after not being chaste, the immortal gains sustenance only from intimacy, anyone the immortal loves becomes a magnet for danger.
- Mortals age in the immortal's presence.
- Printed words the immortal reads become scrambled on the page.

- The immortal's kiss is poisonous, his touch causes orgasms or pain or some other sensation in immortals and cannot be stopped.
- Sunlight causes the immortal to turn to stone, burn, etc. The immortal glows under moonlight.

## **Himsati Specific Curses**

We provide a small number of example ideas should the Narrator deem that the curse be related to the immortal's specific himsati. This can be the case if the curse was gained while the character had himsati natures active during the gaining of the curse.

### **INSECTS/ARACHNIDS**

- Buzzing insect sounds accompany the immortal, the immortal makes insect sounds while sleeping
- The immortal is afraid of birds, spiders, etc.
- Things the immortal touches become covered in webbing
- The immortal has compound eyes
- Alcohol harms the immortal or the immortal cannot abide it
- The immortal is inactive in colder temperatures
- The immortal's blood turns into stinging/biting insects that attack all around the immortal (including the immortal) when it is spilled.
- Insects double in size and become aggressive around the immortal
- The immortal undergoes a complete metamorphosis of his human form each season
- The immortal's touch leaves painful insect bite marks on those he cares for

### **REPTILES/AMPHIBIANS**

- The immortal's eyes turn reptilian or he makes reptilian or amphibious noises when angry, lustful, etc.
- The immortal leaves a slimy coating on anything he sits on (like a frog)
- The immortal is attracted to water
- The immortal snores by croaking like a frog when asleep
- The immortal is completely hairless except his head
- The immortal has a set of retractable fangs or forked tongue
- The immortal's hands and feet are webbed, or shaped more like a slender lizard.
- He sheds his skin, eats insects, smells like a reptile, can't breathe air
- His tongue is elongated and sticky and gives him a speech impairment
- Makes rattlesnake noises when about to attack (even when trying to be stealthy).
- Tadpoles spontaneously generate in any water the immortal touches, drinks, etc.
- Is fascinated or afraid of reptiles, considers human prey
- His hair is transforms to snakes, is legless in water, becomes too stiff to move in cold temperatures

### **BIRDS**

- Feathers appear in the area after the immortal leaves
- Casts a bird shadow, his reflection in human form is that of his himsati
- Only four digits on each hand, sleeps standing up
- Makes a goose honk sound when startled
- Migrates each fall, is fascinated by high places, builds a nest out of handy materials to sleep in
- Must swallow small stones to grind food up
- Part of his body is feathered
- Can only see well at great distances
- Can't speak but must sing like a bird
- Causes females he touches to become pregnant and lay an egg that hatches into a bird
- Is fascinated with small and/or shiny objects

### **MAMMALS**

- The immortal is hairy, has unusual ears, pants like a dog when hot, has whiskers
- Becomes exceedingly territorial

- Acts like he has fleas all the time
- Must sleep outdoors
- Head only changes into himsati form at specific times or circumstances
- Is a carrier of rabies
- Has hooved feet and animal like legs
- Sleepwalks in himsati form during full moons
- Presence in an area sends mammals into killing frenzies

### **AQUATIC HIMSATIS**

- Leaves wet footprints
- Fresh water turns salty near the immortal
- Bleeds salt water instead of blood
- Smells like brine
- Has no eyelids
- Must keep skin wet or loses youth and beauty until the skin is made wet again.
- Has barbels (fleshy whiskers around the mouth like a catfish).
- Can only see in shades of green, blue and violet like a fish
- Has gill slits
- Presence causes rip tides, high winds, large waves
- Body becomes encrusted with barnacles
- Arms turn into tentacles
- Must submerge self in water to turn into himsati or to turn back

### **ESOTERIC HIMSATIS (Elementals and Plant Himsatis)**

- Fire burns weird colors near the immortal
- Rooms get darker when the immortal enters
- Plants touched suddenly bloom
- Metal tarnishes around the immortal or at his touch
- Ice melts into strange shapes
- Flames burn cold in his presence
- His voice just shatters glass
- His human shadow bites anything in the area, painful but causes no wounds
- Touch cracks stone
- Must remain in the sunlight to digest his food
- Touch causes frostbite
- If the immortal shouts, lightning strikes nearby. His voice is as loud as thunder.
- Sunlight burns the immortal

# Appendix B: New Boons

## *TRANSCENDENCE BOONS*

When a character is "embraced" by the True Light for the first time, he gains the Anthem boon. He now has a Transcendent Rating (known as a Tier) of 20. Each time the immortal is "embraced" through the Eyes of a Lord, this rating lowers by one point. At 18, 16, and 14 the character receives another boon. Starting at 12, the character receives a boon for each embrace. This gives the character a total of (including the initial Anthem at 20) 16 Transcendent Boons that he or she will receive. All characters also gain a die value equal to their current Tier Rating or inferior. This die value starts at d20 and shifts to d12 when the character's rating reaches 12. It goes to d10 when the rating reaches 10, and continues to d4 when the rating reaches 4 or less. Any Transcendent Boon that requires a roll by the immortal uses the Transcendent die value. The duration of most of these boons is one scene unless obviously instantaneous effect or listed otherwise. For purposes of determining a "transcendent rank", compare the die to the chart on page 36 of Book I.

Please note that some of these boons are enhanced versions of normal mystic boons, and other mundane/mystic boons may be taken as Transcendent Boons if the Narrator desires. Mystic Boons taken as Transcendent ones usually have a reduced or zero immaculum cost (See Third Eye for example). Transcendent versions of Mundane Boons usually give a slightly better advantage than the standard version of the boon (a -1 to a type of roll can become a -2, or a single shift can be a single shift plus a -1 for example). Die Value Boons (such as Mighty) might receive an upgrade to the next die level as a Transcendent Boon.

Some boons are better suited to particular Callings or Courts, and those should be gained early on in the character's rise through Transcendence. Other boons should be saved until the character reaches higher levels of Transcendence, based on Court, Calling, personality, himsati, motifs, etc. Other than Anthem there are no restrictions about when and to whom certain boons should be given however. Narrators are also encouraged to make up other Transcendent boons on their own. The following list is a sampling of various boons that Narrators can use as ideas. You are free to come up with your own as per the needs of your own campaign and storylines.

### **ANTHEM**

This is always the first Transcendent Boon an immortal receives upon gaining his first touch of the True Light. This also gives the immortal the Transcendent Nature at a d20, and allows the immortal to roll his Transcendent Nature's die to power all his Transcendent Natures that require a die roll. This die cannot be upgraded through memory or experience. The anthem itself is akin to an aura of power that other immortals can feel when they are near someone who possesses it. Normally the anthem cannot be hidden once gained, except via serenade or by the Chancellors and those directly representing them. The anthem has a strong reaction against tainted creatures as noted in the section on taint.

### **ASCENSION (Aura Gain)**

This increases one of the immortal's auras by one superior shift, permanently. The player should then also choose a new himsati nature for the character, which the Narrator must agree to.

### **MORTAL COIL**

This boon allows an immortal to understand a being's relation to death much better. With it the immortal can roll against the SPIRIT of the being and know if it has killed someone/thing recently and how it happened. Looking into the eyes of the dead will reveal how they died by rolling against a target number set by the Narrator (based on how long ago they died). The immortal can even tell the general life expectancy of the being. This boon will react slightly differently depending on the being looked at and the Court the immortal belongs to.



## **SPECTRE**

This boon allows the immortal to free his MIND and SPIRIT from the BODY aura and temporarily become a gossamer here on Earth. The immortal must follow standard gossamer rules and must find a Shallow if he wishes to cross into the Blue Air.

## **ACUMEN**

This enhanced version of the Scanning Boon allows an immortal to make a Scanning roll and determine other factors about the target. These include general health level, true himsati form, transcendent/fugue ratings, etc. The immortal must succeed on the Scanning roll, and uses his Transcendent die to do it.

## **SERAPH**

You are feared and loved by spirits. No normal untainted spirit will, of its own will, attack you while in its presence. This ability does not influence gossamers or Soul Reapers, which are not normal spirits. You may also communicate with the spirit if a mortal human. Members of the Court of Life have an added benefit that they may communicate with the spirits of animals as well. Spirit Lords also can sense when they are near Shallows if the Shallow is strong enough.

## **INVIBE**

You may make a roll (contested) against the SPIRIT die of other spirits. In the case of mortal humans, you may enhance one skill you possess, which the spirit possesses as well, by one shift. Alternatively you may take a d12 in a skill the spirit possesses that you do not. In the case of animals you would enhance or gain natures instead. Any natures gained would start at their base die value.

## **THIRD EYE**

(Prerequisite: Sleeper Boon)

The immortal need only pay one half the immaculum cost (rounded up) to activate the Sleeper Boon from now on. However, if the immortal decides to pay the full immaculum cost, he may make minor changes to the dreams he travels in and may step outside of the dream cocoons to walk on the anchors and pathways of the Morpheum. Each time the immortal than pays another point of immaculum, he can make significant changes to the dream's setting and/or characters.

## **EBBTIDE**

This boon allows the immortal to roll his Transcendent die when resisting the effects of taint spills.

## **NUANCE**

This boon allows an immortal to hear the thoughts that spill out of shadows. This boon allows the immortal to roll her transcendent die along with her MIND die (like a focus) to listen to ambient thoughts if she is in contact with any shadow in the vicinity. The Narrator determines if the shadow is significant enough to permit use of the boon. The thoughts of those whose shadow touches the one she is currently in contact with become clear. She can tell which beings are thinking which thoughts that she picks up. This is not telepathy and she will not pick up full and distinct lines of thought. This generally tends to reveal more of beings darker thoughts rather than a balanced stream of dark and light thoughts.

## **MILLIEU**

This boon allows the immortal to roll his transcendent die in place of his MIND die when his normal perceptions are clouded by any penalties. This boon grants a form of spatial awareness that will not pick up the full details present (shades of color, exact distances, timber/bass of sounds, etc.) but functions well enough that the immortal can ignore any penalties due to impaired perception.

## **MAESTRO**

Allows an Immortal to perform a serenade meld (combine two serenades together) but using one serenade of his own and the other serenade being played by another Immortal. It allows the Immortal to effectively perform a Chorus with two Immortals playing two different serenades.

## **AEGIS**

While nude and in human form, the immortal gains armor equal to the rank of her transcendent die, shifted one rank inferior. The immortal may wear personal jewelry or other similar accoutrements, but no other form of covering can be worn (including being covered by items such as bed sheets) or the boon will not function.

## **SONATA**

If the Immortal kisses a mortal, the Immortal can choose to allow the mortal to gain one superior shift in any one skill that the mortal possesses. The shift lasts a number of days equal to the transcendent rank of the immortal. The mortal will receive an inspirational vision that plays in the back of his mind while the shift is in effect.

## **INNER SANCTUM**

The immortal can appear completely dead to all examinations save mystical ones. The immortal will feel pain, but will not betray the fact that he is alive. The immortal must remain perfectly still (though others are able to move the immortal). The immortal can remain this way for a number of days equal to his transcendent die rank.

## **PIOUS**

By releasing any stored immaculum whirling around his auras (and carrying no objects which house it) the Immortal can appear completely human to all forms of examination (including the Scanning Boon). While leaving this boon active, the Immortal cannot hear serenades or play them however, and must take an action to end the boon before being able to do so. Shifting to any himsati natures ends this boon immediately. It should be noted that a number of Solitaires have this boon as well.

## **DAUNTLESS**

The immortal is immune to any fear effects caused from a source with a die value inferior to the immortal's transcendent die.

## **REVERENCE**

By making a contested roll against the target's SPIRIT, the Immortal can sense the presence of True Faith in a mortal or another Mortal. If the Immortal rolls a 1, he can tell what the faith is based off of and how strong (strength of the SPIRIT aura)

## **TONGUES**

This boon comes in two levels though the immortal does not have to take both. The first time the immortal receives this boon, he may pick one mortal per episode and that mortal will clearly understand anything the immortal says, regardless of language barriers, even deafness. The second time the boon is granted, the immortal may not understand anything the chosen mortal attempts to communicate back to the immortal. Some immortals are granted a variant that allows them to use this with mortal animals instead.

## **FORBEAR**

The immortal may roll his transcendent die along with his MIND die when attempting to shift out of himsati natures.

## **VISAGE**

(Prerequisite: Lord Status)

The Immortal can pass on a glint of his own anthem to anyone in his Pantheon or directly serving him. Whenever the target is engaged in activities directly related to his Lord's purpose, he acts as if his Anthem were one die level higher.

## **PROVIDENCE**

Whenever the immortal must make a critical failure check on a social skill, she may roll her transcendent die as well.

## **STRATAGEM**

The immortal may roll his transcendent die just as if he had the Scanning Boon. However, if successful, the Narrator can reveal one weakness about the being the immortal is dealing with. Anytime the immortal has any interaction with the immortal gains a -1 to any rolls that take advantage of the weakness. This bonus will last for one scene, and the same advantage can never be used against the same target again.

## **EPIPHANY**

The Immortal can force a mortal to "daydream", effectively connecting the mortal to the Morpheum and allowing the Immortal to use any and all boons and powers that would normally be used in the Morpheum, just as if they had entered the mortal's dream normally. The Immortal must keep the mortal in line of sight during this.

## **REKINDLE**

After sitting vigil for 48 hours with a soulless human (who has lost his soul to the Hush-Hush) the immortal makes a transcendent die roll against the original SPIRIT die of the soulless. The immortal's roll is modified depending on how long the mortal has been soulless. If the immortal is successful the spirit returns, but usually has Doves, Progeny, etc. hot on its heels. The soulless may also be possessed by the Sanguinary during the vigil, so the immortal best be prepared.

Within the scene	0
Less than a day	+1
Less than a week	+2
Less than a month	+3

Less than a year	+4
Less than a few years	+5
Less than a decade	+6
Centuries or more	+7

## **SECLUSION**

The immortal may join with a mundane version of his himsati and become invisible to any form of detection save supernatural ones such as serenades. The mundane version must be sizeable enough. A water elemental could join with a bucket of water, but not a single drop. A plant himsati would meld in to become part of a garden, but could not hide within a single flower. If the himsati is an animal, it can join with any animal of its species (wolf to canines, lion to any large cat, etc.). It should be noted that mundane animals joined by a himsati start to act rather odd to sudden change. The immortal takes no damage from the joining and neither does the mundane version of the himsati.

## **HONE**

The immortal may choose to ignore any one distraction which is causing him a penalty when attempting to accomplish a task, be it mental or physical. The penalty is no longer in effect so long as the immortal continues working on the task at hand, or until the end of the scene.

## **VERACITY**

By looking into the eyes of another being, the immortal can ask one question and receive an honest answer. If this knowledge is a secret of importance to the target, the immortal must make a contested roll of his transcendent die against the target's MIND die. This will only work once for an immortal with any given target, ever. If the immortal must roll and fails, he may ask another question however.

## **FERAL**

The immortal can pass a himsati nature she possesses to a mortal at will. The immortal still has full use of the nature as well during this time. If the immortal wishes to pass the nature to another immortal she must roll her transcendent die against a target number equal to the target's SPIRIT aura. The nature will

manifest with the same look and feel as it does for the immortal who passed it.

### **WINKLE**

The immortal may make a transcendent die roll against a target number equal to the target's BODY aura. If successful, the target enters a state of suspended animation. The more the immortal beats the target number by the longer the target will stay in suspended animation. The immortal that placed the target into this state can end it whenever she chooses.

### **THE BLOOM**

The immortal can cause inanimate matter that was once alive to begin to grow again. In general this does not work very well against matter that was once animal in origin, but works very well on inanimate matter made from plant matter. Wooden tables begin to grow limbs again, flowers and lichen can begin to grow on stone surfaces (even highly sanitized and polished ones). The immortal controls the rate of growth and can fill an entire room with a jungle in a matter of mere hours.

## ***DARK BOONS***

These Dark Boons are found normally in the Progeny, though some Immortals in the Perpetual Society and Solitaires may possess them as well.

### **SHROUD**

This boon allows a being to hide taint within his aura. Many infiltrators into the Perpetual Society that serve the Sanguinary wield this boon. The immortal may hide one rank of taint for every point of immaculum he currently possesses within his auras. This can only be spotted with the Acumen boon who are specifically using it to seek taint within an individual.

### **DARK ANTHEM**

Wielders of this boon roll a die equal to the total rank of their taint against any immortal with the Anthem Boon. If the wielder has two ranks of taint, he would roll a d12 against the immortal. For tainted minions of the Sanguinary, this adds to the normal effects when encountering immortals with the Anthem. If the wielder of the boon wins, the immortal with the Anthem suffers a +1 to all rolls made against the wielder. If the immortal critically fails against the wielder, the immortal cannot remain in the wielder's presence. Some Solitaires and many Doves have this Dark boon.

### **SLIVER TONGUE (Sanguinary)**

This boon allows a Progeny to sacrifice a rank of taint to increase the effect roll of a serenade by one level. This will warp the serenade however as the Narrator sees fit. The serenade should still have its main intended effect, but it will either do it in an unexpected way, or create side effects (which do not normally hinder the player of the serenade).

### **BLACK ART (Sanguinary)**

The being is capable of sacrificing a rank of taint to power any other boon possessed, regardless of the cost. Those who wield the Black Art are also able to gain boons which they normally would be unable to possess, and sometimes use this to mimic some of the Court Boons in order to pass themselves off as Court members. Many Doves also possess this in order to power various boons that they have gained.

### **DARK SCION (Sanguinary)**

This gift is available only to the Progeny. A number of Progeny sacrifice one rank of tainted aura (each one participating must have this Dark Boon) and one curse. This creates a drove complete with himsati natures mingled from the Progeny that created it, and a number of curses. This special drove may use these curses as weapons, with the Narrator twisting how the curse works to make it beneficial to the Drove. These droves are completely loyal to their Progeny "parents", are far superior in intellect to a normal Drove and do not suffer the same agony as most standard Doves and Scions.

# Appendix C: New Abilities

## (Natures, Skills, etc.)

Here we present various new abilities that mesh with the material presented in Books I - III. These are optional skills and abilities that Narrators are free to introduce into their games.

### *Natures*

(X) = Roll alongside appropriate die (usually BODY)      \* = Limited Duration as per Book I

#### **Hyper (X) (Mammals, Birds, Air Elementals)**

The immortal rolls this die alongside the BODY die for all movement tests where the character has no penalty. In order to use this nature underwater, while climbing, or in the air, the character should possess Aquatic, Balance, or Gliding/Flight. This nature will not work if the character is under any kind of movement penalty.

**UPGRADABLE      DEFAULT: D20**

#### **Mesmerize\* (Reptiles, Insects, Fire Elementals)**

The target must make an opposed MIND roll against the Immortal's Mesmerize die. If the immortal rolls lower than the target, the target takes a one-shift penalty to all actions. If the target critically fails, the target can do nothing but stand and stare until someone "snaps him out of it". If the immortal critically fails, the immortal instead becomes mesmerized by the target.

**UPGRADABLE      DEFAULT: D12**

#### **Musk\* (Mammals, Reptiles)**

The target takes a one shift penalty when in close proximity to the immortal (weapon reach). The Musk nature can only be used once per scene but will work on any individuals who come within weapon reach during the scene. The immortal's SPIRIT die determines duration.

### *Skills*

#### **Lethe (SPIRIT Skill)**

This skill is necessary if the immortal wishes to form the proper bond between him and the new immortal he will become. The Immortal rolls against his MIND, BODY or SPIRIT (opposed roll), whichever is superior. The immortal will continue to make the roll until he succeeds or critically fails, however the optional +2 to all successive rolls should not be used with the Lethe skill. On a critical failure (or if the process is stopped) the Lethe fails and the immortal becomes a gossamer thrust into the Blue Air. There are no foci for the Lethe skill.

#### **Tithing (SPIRIT Skill)**

This skill is normally taught to Believers so they may bond with an immortal's Sanctuary and deposit aura ranks (or in the case of Bright Bloods if they choose, immaculum) directly into an Ark present in the Sanctuary. Some immortals learn this skill in order to be able to deposit aura ranks and immaculum directly into the Ark of a Lord or High Lord that patrons the immortal. This skill has no foci. Once aura ranks are passed into an ark, they are not retrievable. Immaculum stored can be retrieved without damaging the ark or releasing the aura ranks.

In order to tithe to an Ark, the character must roll the Tithing skill against a target number equal to their own SPIRIT aura die (a d10 SPIRIT aura would be a target number of 10). If successful a rank of aura or point of immaculum (in the case of Bright Bloods with the Fount Boon or immortals) can be passed into the Ark. On a critical failure the Believer passes out from the strain and may not attempt to tithe again for roughly a week.

# Appendix D:

## Optional Rules and Errata

This section deals with advanced and optional rules systems that can be used for the mechanics presented in Books I and II. Errata appears in this section as well.

### *General Optional Rules*

#### **Auto Success Rule**

A character can opt to just take a basic level of success if the target number is higher than the target's base skill die can roll. For example, if the target number is 9 and the character's base skill die is a d6, he can take a base success without having to roll. If the character wants any higher level of success he must roll.

A base die is the skill die alone (or in the case of a straight aura test, the aura die). Other dice from natures, boons, or serenades, should not be counted. For example, on a strength test using only the BODY die, if the character had the Mighty Boon, the Mighty Die would not be used for determining a possible auto success.

A Narrator can rule that this does not apply to serenades however, as they must work against Earth's aura each time if not working directly against a living target with a soul. But this decision should be made for the campaign as a whole, not on an individual basis.

#### **Gaining Auras without Transcendence**

It is possible for Bright Bloods and immortal characters to gain increases in their auras by simply spending memory or experience. The cost to go from a d12 to a d10 is 10 memory (or 50 experience or equivalent combination of memory and experience). To go from a d10 to a d8 is 20 memory (100 experience or equivalent combination). To go beyond a d8 requires a special ritual and only immortals may go beyond a d8.

In order to gain aura ranks beyond a d8 the immortal must be in physical contact with his Ark. It must have enough aura ranks to rebuild the immortal's auras as they normally are unwounded. In addition it must have either five extra aura ranks to go to a d6 or ten extra aura ranks to go to a d4. Anything less will just result in the normal rejuvenation of the immortal and the remaining aura ranks will be lost to the Blue Air.

The immortal must know the Lethe skill in order to perform this ritual and will make a Lethe skill roll. This also involves the rather violent act known as Kenoshia and therefore many immortals are rather leery of attempting this feat. If the immortal fails the Lethe roll he is merely rejuvenated and the remaining aura ranks are lost (there are no re-rolls or second tries, there is only one roll allowed). If the immortal critically fails, he is thrust into the Blue Air as a gossamer, his Ark broken and the aura ranks that would normally rejuvenate him lost to the Blue Air.

Increasing an aura just to d10 from a d12 represents years of physical, spiritual and mental training for any normal human. Most humans (save Bright Bloods) cannot even reach a d8 in an aura. Going beyond to a d6 or d4 is the realm occupied by the more legendary immortals and can take several immortals centuries to achieve in just one aura.

Kenoshia is an instinctual process, by which the immortal forcibly removes his vox from this throat, thrusting himself into the Blue Air as a gossamer. If the immortal's ark has sufficient aura ranks, the vox

and gossamer will rejuvenate there. If not the vox hurtles through the Ley to appear in a random location somewhere else on Earth and the immortal must now find a Shallows, he is a gossamer. Some immortals use this as a last ditch effort to avoid capture by Drones, Progeny, or even some mortal enemies.

## *Book I*

### **Starting Skill Changes - Optional Rule**

Currently a character's starting skills are based off the Calling that is chosen and each skill is granted to the character at d12 and at no cost. With this optional starting rule, we now add one additional skill to the list of starting skills for each Calling. The player may pick three of these skills as free starting skills. Two of these will be at a d12, and one (the player's choice) will be at a d10. The player also gains one free focus in one of these three skills. The focus does not have to be in the skill taken at the d10. We list each calling below and the new set of four skills (of which the player again, will pick three):

**Tactician** - Close Combat, Military, Society and Observation

**Explorer** - Observation, Survival, Vehicle and Close Combat

**Merchant** - Business, Observation, Mechanics and Persuasion

**Profilers** - Language, Observation, Persuasion and Occult Sciences

**Emissary** - Animal, Language, Persuasion and Society

**Mentor** - Artistry, Persuasion, Society and Physical Science

**Chameleon** - Dodge, Observation, Performance and Agility

**Empath** - Performance, Persuasion, Social Sciences and Artistry

**Mystic** - Artistry, Occult Sciences, Survival and Language

**Guardian** - Blade Combat, Close Combat, Observation and Survival

**Slayer** - Performance, Survival, Blade Combat (or Missile Weapons) and Vehicle

**Scourge** - Language, Observation, Society and Persuasion

### **Skill Notations - Advanced Rulings**

#### **Observation**

This skill (and others like it) is only rolled if the character is actively using it. When the character is not taking an action to observe, research, scan, etc. the target number should be made more difficult and a MIND roll should be made instead.

#### **Assigning Skill Ranks**

Characters that stand roughly a 50/50 chance of accomplishing a task when it begins to get difficult, probably do not have an actual die rank (d12 or better) in that skill. Many characters in the world of Immortal can surf the web and send email, but they do not have a computer skill. When things become tricky they roll a d20 like anyone else. The same could be said for someone that "knows" how to drive. In the world of Immortal, like most people, that person probably only stands the same rough 50/50 chance to avoid a minor accident like anyone else (represented by a d20, not a d12). The person really doesn't have a Vehicle skill, but can drive a car and probably has a license.

#### **Martial Arts Foci and Damage**

Characters with a focus in Martial arts may roll both their Martial Arts die AND their Body die (picking the lowest) to determine damage. This can only be done if the attack was made using a maneuver appropriate to the focus. Someone with a focus in strikes would only roll either the Martial Arts die OR the Body die if he used a kick against someone (unless he also had a kick focus as well).

## *Book II*

### **Simple Serenade System - Optional Rules**

This section presents simple conversions to customize the Serenade System in multiple ways to best-fit individual campaigns. Not all of these optional rules can work together, and the Narrator should inform his players of which optional rules he will use and stay with them throughout the campaign.

### A) Simpler Primary Effects

Simply use the Chart on Page 36 of Book I. Compare the difference between the SPIRIT roll of the attacker and the DEFENSE roll of the target. Take that number and match it up with the RANK column and find the appropriate die, distance, duration, or level of influence you wish to apply. This is a more story-based way of doing things.

### B) No Defense Roll

With this option, if the attacker succeeds in his serenade skill roll, he will still roll his SPIRIT die to determine the effect. However, the defender will NOT roll the affected aura. Instead, the attacker will roll and compare his or her roll to the highest value on the defender's aura die. For example, if the attacker rolls his SPIRIT die to determine his Abbadon damage against an opponent with a d10 BODY, the attacker's roll is compared to a 10, the defender does not roll. This makes serenades more powerful overall.

### C) Removing Defense completely.

By using Option A above and reversing the numbers in the RANK column on Page 36 of Book I, you can eliminate Defense completely and work the serenades like the basic damage system as presented in Book I. Whatever the attacker rolls on his SPIRIT die would be compared to the reversed RANK Column and that is the level of effect. Removing Defense entirely can provide very unpredictable results and Narrators are warned to monitor serenade use carefully in their campaigns with this option.

As a side note, if this option is used, any attacks made against things with no auras should not be made against the standard target number of 12 for the Earth's aura. Instead, when attempting to affect inanime, complexity and/or esoterics, the Defense Tables for them should be used as the skill roll's target numbers to succeed.

### D) Combined Defense Tables

Rather than presenting a separate table for Inanime, Complexity and Esoteric, we present one table with target numbers already preset. If the target combines more than one of these elements, the Narrator can adjust the target number by averaging the two quickly (such as using Allure on a body of water to make it look and feel like ice [complexity and esoteric]). The target number is what the attacker compares his SPIRIT rolls to, after a successful skill roll.

T#	Inanime	Complexity	Esoteric
12	Padlock, Bicycle	One sense, minor and static	Dust, a light scent
10	Toaster, Flashlight	Two senses, some mobility	Smoke, flavor, quiet sounds
08	Microwave, Ceiling Fan	Three senses, full mobility	Light, Normal Sounds, Air
06	Computer, ATM Machine	Four Senses, Minor Interactive	Heat, Cold, Water
04	Eyz Units, Vehicles	All senses, Moderately Interactive	Fire, Mass, Electricity
02	Mystech, Major Systems	Fully Immersive Illusion*	Gravity, Earth, Radiation

\* The target will not see anything of the real world, the illusion completely surrounds and interacts with the target, the target will only be interacting within his mind and will make no real physical body movements. Very similar to immersing someone in virtual reality.

### E) Removing Secondary Effects -- Story-based

Simply remove all Secondary Effects from all Serenades. Assume that durations are instant/one turn (whichever is most applicable), the scene or permanent. Most damaging serenades would be instant/one turn, enhancements and/or controls one scene, and things such as Nostrum's healing would be permanent. Assume most areas of effect are either a single target or an area equal to a weapon reach in radius (10 foot radius usually works well). Assume that any other secondary effects are now determined by the primary effect.

If the player wishes to alter standard durations, areas of effect, etc., the Narrator can just assign +1 to the roll, or a one or more inferior shift to the skill die.



### **F) Removing Secondary Effects -- Detail-based**

Simply remove all Secondary Effects from all Serenades. Assume that durations are instant/one turn (whichever is most applicable), the scene or permanent. Most damaging serenades would be instant/one turn, enhancements and/or controls one scene, and things such as Nostrum's healing would be permanent. Assume most areas of effect are either a single target or an area equal to a weapon reach in radius (10 foot radius usually works well). Assume that any other secondary effects are now determined by the primary effect.

If the player wishes to alter areas of effect, standard durations, etc. he can "trade off" points of primary effect to change them. By the Primary Effects Chart, an Action and a Session are 4 points apart. By removing 4 points from the Primary Effect (before comparing it to the chart), the character can make a serenade that normally only lasts one Action last an entire Session. However, the serenade will obviously be much weaker. The same can be done for distance, level of influence, area of effect, or any other secondary effect to the serenade.

### **G) Retrying Serenades**

Since Serenades affect the Aria, once a serenade has been played and the Aria has been affected with it by a particular vox, it can be more difficult to reattune it again with the same vox, especially if it was not done correctly the first time. In other words, if a character attempts a serenade again (that has failed) before the Narrator deems the Aria has had a chance to settle from the first one, a +2 (or one die shift) cumulative penalty is imposed to each attempt. Once the Narrator deems the Aria has settled back from the failed attempt(s), then the character, at no penalty, can retry the serenade.

### **H) Serenades and Shape-shifting**

The Narrator should reserve the right to immediately cancel the effectiveness of a serenade against an immortal if shape-shifting into himsati (or partial himsati or back to human form) would logically negate the serenade's effects. An iron grate will stop the human form, but not the snake himsati that slips through the bars unscathed. A breastplate of ice will protect the human, but probably shatter when he turns to an elephant. A paper bag will trap the ant himsati, but not likely stop him when he returns to human form.

## *Errata*

### **Book II**

#### **Conflicting Immaculum Costs in Boons Section**

If the paragraph text directly conflicts with the Immaculum cost listed in the bold cost summary, the cost summary is correct. Example: Stroke costs 10 Immaculum for Immortals, but only 2 for Empaths and 1 for the Court of Desire. The paragraph states that the character must spend 5 Immaculum, the paragraph is incorrect; the amount should be 10, 2, or 1 depending on which Court/Calling the Immortal is.

#### **Incorrect Boons**

The paragraph under Court Boons detailing the Shadowen and Court of Death Boons (shadow hearing and soul rekindling) are not Court Boons, but are Transcendent boons as presented in Book III.

#### **Memory Cost to increase a Serenade**

Though it costs 10 memory to buy a serenade initially (unlike the 5 memory for BODY/MIND skills), serenades are increased at the same cost as BODY and MIND skills. It takes 4 memory ( or 20 experience) to increase a serenade from a d12 to a d10. It then costs 5 memory to increase a serenade from a d10 to a d8, etc.

#### **Bright Blood Religarum Ability**

The example is incorrect, Tom should have paid 20 memory, not 10. And for that 20 memory, he also gets to pick his first serenade and foci absolutely free. Other ones after the first are 15 points (10 for the serenade and 5 for the focus). And yes, 1 Immaculum must still be spent in order to use the serenade each time the Bright Blood wishes to use it.

### **Critical Successes on Serenade Primary Effect**

A Critical Success check should always be made if the attacker rolls a 1, even if it is not 7 or more points of difference.

### **Book I - Further Errata**

#### **Absorb**

There is no Absorb Nature in Immortal Millennium, this is a typographical error.

#### **Incorrect Punctuation**

In certain areas (such as pages 52 and 53 of the book) there are incorrect punctuation marks in the Natures section. If you see a ";" or a ":" they should be commas in any listing of natures. Therefore statements like "Multiple Limbs: Blood Drain" should read "Multiple Limbs, Blood Drain"

#### **Communication Nature**

Is actually Commune with Species.

#### **Elementals and Serenades**

The penalty shift to an elemental playing a serenade is applied **only** to the serenade skill roll, not the effect roll.

#### **Die Shifting and Multiple Dice**

If a character is rolling multiple dice (due to a focus, boon or nature that provides another die to roll with the skill/aura), any die shifts from penalties/bonuses are applied to the most superior die only, not all the dice.

# Appendix E: The Dustlight

This adventure is designed for 4 - 6 players and one Narrator.

## *SYNOPSIS*

Adventure Synopsis Here