

Creatures, Clothed in Strangeness

a peculiar book for Nobilis

And past, and past, and beyond the wardrobe's back, a gallery of things and endless halls, and the clinking of glass and the swirling of dancers, and faceless creatures wearing masks, and walking bears, and elves, and the merrows from the sea; and all through the great long echoing halls there blew the wind, and above everything there arched the mountains, the forests, and the sun.

"Why," said Susan, "what is this? What is this, I have stumbled on?"

And they turned to her, on her débutante day, and they dragged her off, to live among the fashionable strangers.

— from *The Wardrobe*,
by Emily Chen

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Dedication

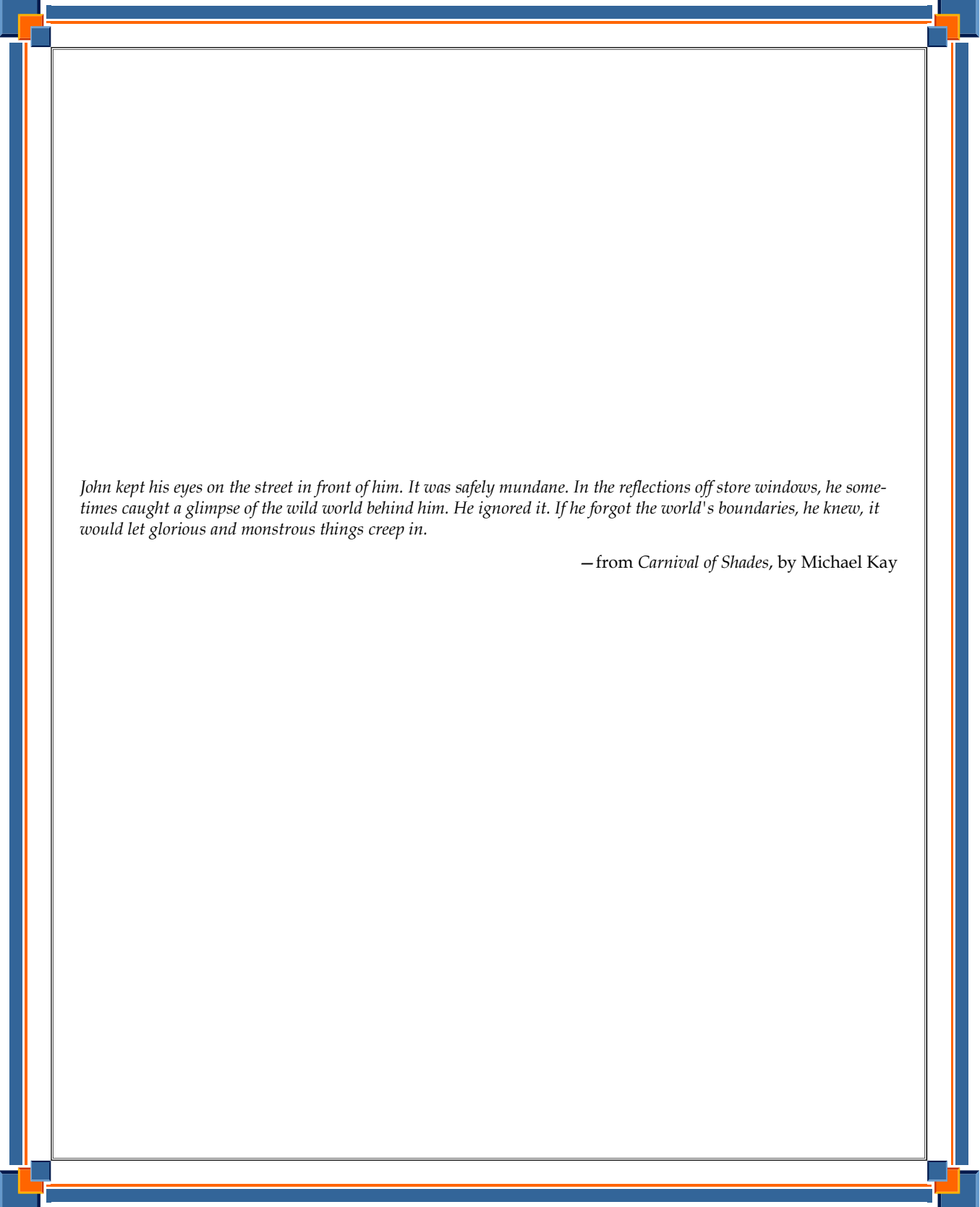
To Kathryn Tewson

and in the hopes of greater joy
for all those
who play Nobilis.

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John kept his eyes on the street in front of him. It was safely mundane. In the reflections off store windows, he sometimes caught a glimpse of the wild world behind him. He ignored it. If he forgot the world's boundaries, he knew, it would let glorious and monstrous things creep in.

— from *Carnival of Shades*, by Michael Kay

A Menagerie of Myths

Creatures of many kinds interact with Noble society. This chapter discusses various unusual entities that occasionally socialize with the Powers, as well as general rules for defining such creatures.

Rules Templates

A creature's *rules template* describes the basic game rules governing its abilities. For example, creatures with the **Noble** template have Aspect, Spirit, Domain, and Realm Attributes, and miracles cannot directly change their nature. Each template has a *priority* rated Lowest, Low, Medium, High, or Highest. If a creature has multiple templates, and they conflict, use the template with the highest priority.

In some cases, the abilities *available* to a given template far exceed the typical. For example, nature spirits can have Superior Attributes up to 8, but most spirits top out at 0-5. Higher ratings are possible for such things as a mountain's Superior Toughness or light's Speed. These should be 7, so that level 8 Aspect miracles can split mountains and outrace lasers.

Similarly, if a given template allows Gifts that can affect Powers or miraculous energy, this doesn't mean that every Gift taken by a creature with that template does. For example, if a creature with that template has Glorious, their beauty doesn't overpower Noble minds — unless explicitly stated.

In these templates, **Essential** represents that quality that makes creatures immune to direct miracles — being one being, prior to and precedent to the division into Earthly forms and the materialization of causal reality, an idea that might also be referred to as Ousia or Hypostatic existence. The Essential creature is one who is immune to miracles on the same grounds that computer hardware is immune to the programs that run upon it — the software is contingent, and the effects of miracles are contingent, while the hardware and the Nobilis subvene. The converse term is **Contingent** — a **Contingent** creature is a creature that is not **Essential**, and vice versa.

Rules for exclusive Attributes such as Alchemy are found in the first peculiar book, *Unlikely Flowerings*. Turn to pg. 9 of that volume for general information on exclusive Attributes, ppg. 10-28 for information on Alchemy, and pg. 69 for information on Superior Attributes such as Superior Fashion Sense, Superior Strength, Superior Social Position, and Superior Toughness.

“Every day, for seventy years, I would throw an evil thing into this bottomless pit. They would scream satisfyingly as they fell. After seventy years, I stopped this practice. It was no longer necessary. I had firmly established a link between evil and an eternal fall; it had become the norm for black-hearted creatures rather than the exception. Only a few truly exceptional monsters have been able to resist the subtle pressure of that standard and stop themselves from jumping into the pit at the steady rate of one per day.”

I looked at the pit and thought of the horrors I had participated in through all my years of service, but I felt no great inclination to jump.

— from *On Serving the Nobilis*,
by Luc Ginneis

Lowest Priority

Default

“If you strip any Power down to their core, you have a human,” said Mok Tso-lin. “If you take the miraculous power from them, and the habits of nobility.”

“Not so,” answered Chang Xue-mei. “I, for one, have forgotten what humanity is.”

— from *A Noble’s Catechism (Introduction)*,
by K.C. Danine

Unless otherwise stated, a creature obeys the following rules:

- They have no rating in Aspect, Domain, Realm, or Spirit.
- They have no Gifts or miracle points.
- They can have ratings between 0 and 5 in those exclusive Attributes explicitly available to their character type or to all character types. They have no rating in other exclusive Attributes.
- They can have Superior Attributes between 0 and 2.
- They can learn or innately possess Earthly magics.
- **Contingent Creature:** unless granted a resistance to direct miracles by a higher-precedence template, creatures are assumed vulnerable to direct miracles by default. The Power of Memory can make them forget, the Power of Speech can give them a second tongue, and so forth. They are a part of all relevant Estates.

Example

Bhrajathu Behari is a human architect in Locus Drag-Adriessc. He has no Chancel-specific modifications, but he designs some pretty nice buildings.

Low Priority

Anchor

I sat down and pulled my son onto my lap. "I have heard you have been telling the other children about the glory of the Excrucian cause," I said.

"That's right," he said chipperly. "Ms. Caducine put a little piece of herself in my head and now I understand it all. How come you always explained it backwards?"

I will not write of what I had to do. Suffice it to say that the Excrucian Anchor will not bring further trouble to the Chancel of my lord.

—from the Journal of Calliste Focault

Characters with the Anchor template derive their miraculous nature, as an ongoing process, from another creature. This usually means they *are* an Anchor, although a few exceptions exist. They obey the following rules.

- **Essential Creature:** Anchors are not a part of any Estate. Similarly, no aspect of their mind or body is part of any Estate. They cannot be directly warded, created, destroyed, or changed with miracles.
 - Exception: the creature from whom the Anchor derives its miraculous nature can use miracles directly upon it.
- The creature responsible for the Anchor's miraculous nature can most likely move their consciousness into the Anchor's mind, to witness events or take that mind over.

Example

Oriane Feroulet is one of Zéphyrin's Anchors, claimed out of his love for her. His need to prove her worth — to assuage his guilt at loving a mortal at all — complicates their relationship.

Animal or Machine

The panther sprang. Arikel didn't bother to move; it thudded into his shoulder and rolled off to the side. Its claws had made no dent in his flesh. Arikel, lost in meditation, was unperturbed. The panther, conversely, was clearly thrown. It regarded him with an expression I can only describe as intense puzzlement.

— from the Thought-Record of Cassius Quirinius

Characters with the animal or machine template can exceed human capacity in some respects — possibly being stronger or tougher.

- They can have Gifts reflecting their racial abilities (e.g., Flight or Amphibian).
- They can have Superior Attributes from 0 to 5.

Example

A Nameless Bee has the Gift of Flight. This particular bee belongs to the beehive Chelsea, whose spirit Patrick Precipice-Lord Anchored (pg. 260, **Nobilis**). Accordingly, it has both the Anchor and Animal templates. These do not conflict in any fashion.

Inheritor

The child of the cosmos walked out into the Arizona heat. Where no one lived and nothing grew, he set up the ring. It took him only a few days to get the bandstands up and the restrooms built. Then he sat at his laptop and printed out a handful of flyers, reading, "The Child of the Cosmos against the Gods that Move Between the Stars! A once-in-a-lifetime wrestling event, coming June 3rd!" These he distributed in nearby towns. Then, at last, he let himself sleep.

"But you are only half a god," the reporters would ask him later. "How can you expect to beat the real thing?"

"The gods rule an unjust cosmos," he would answer. "But in the ring, I will make justice with my own two hands."

— from *24 Finales*, by Rannen Yedidyah

Characters with the Inheritor template have somehow inherited a certain amount of miraculous nature from a Power or Emperor — e.g., from an ancestor, or from the Chancel whose creation gave them life.

- **Essential Creature:** Inheritors are not a part of any Estate. Similarly, no aspect of their mind or body is part of any Estate. Thus, they resist direct miracles.
- Inheritors can have ratings in one or more Attributes (Aspect, Domain, Realm, or Spirit). If so, they have a score between 0 and 3 and a base of 3 Miracle Points.
- Inheritors can have ratings between 0 and 5 in any exclusive Attribute available to mortals.
- Inheritors can have ratings between 0 and 3 in any exclusive Attribute available to Powers but not mortals.
- Inheritors can have Gifts of any potency. These Gifts can only affect things that are part of some Estate.

Example

Harkány Ordina found a recently dead "angel" — in truth, a winged Power — not far from his laboratory. A skilled mage, a talented doctor, and a thoroughly insane man, he decided to preserve the Power's wings and the associated musculature by grafting them onto his own back. Since then he has found himself tainted by the miraculous — acquiring both power and peculiar Handicaps.

Inspired

"I boasted of my strength," explained the ogre, "and so I was transformed into what you see here and set to guard this treasury."

"If you permit me entrance," answered the Power, "I will take you back to my Chancel and restore you."

The ogre blinked. "Are you kidding? Do you know how much a good treasury ogre gets paid?"

—from *The Tragic Story of Jay Penhue and His Knights*,
by Melanie Tumbarius

Characters with the Inspired template have received Gifts (effectively) through the miracles of others. For example, a Chancel inhabitant blessed by a Realm miracle of Lesser Preservation can become effectively Immutable or Durant. A Cammoran can have exceptionally keen sight via the blessing of the Domina Oculae.

- They can have Gifts of any potency. These Gifts can only affect things that are part of some Estate.
 - These Gifts are contingent on circumstance. For example, a Chancel resident made Durant can lose that Gift by leaving the Chancel for more than a day.

Example

Vaslaw Karpenko is a Cammoran attached to the Russian mob. He has become effectively Eternal due to a bargain with the Power of Clocks.

Medium Priority

External

The finch's star is a thing not of the Lord, nor yet opposed by Him. It stands outside the laws of the world.

— from *Earth Stories*, compiled by Edward Guy

Creatures with the External template have potent abilities that are neither miraculous nor a form of Earthly magic. They stand “outside” the normal rules.

- Externals can have Gifts, including Gifts that can affect Essential creatures and miraculous energy directly.
- Externals can have Superior Attributes between 0 and 9.

Example

The Mirrored Haunt of Locus Asaph is a particularly potent Bane. His face always looks like the viewer’s own. He turns back miracles on their creator with a gesture of his bony hand.

Nature Spirit

And at last the littlest library book came to the Encyclopedic King, and went face-down open on the floor, and waited out the stomping of the Bibles and Self-Helps.

"Please, sir," she said. "I must know – why are we forbidden to reshelve?"

And she looked up at the King, and his face was open to a picture of lions roaring; and then it flipped to trumpets; and finally to the celestial orbiting of spheres.

"We are pledged," he said, and his voice was resonant and clear, "to let the librarians reshelve us when we fall. They will find us, little book, and they will remove us from our misery, and they will return us to our place."

"But," she dared, one last time, "why?"

"This is a library," he says, "and to reshelve oneself makes noise."

And the Bibles stomped, and the Manuals of Fencing shook their swords, and the book on wolves gave forth a howling; and the richness of these things perovaded, but the humans heard no noise. The humans heard no noise because the library books were Good.

— from *How to be a Library Book*, by 107.2 L89

Characters with the Nature Spirit template are alive in Mythic Reality but inanimate or mindless in the Prosaic World. They are the living spirits of the world.

- They can have Gifts – most typically:
 - the Sovereign's Gift, adjusted to cost no MPs;
 - infrequently, Durant;
 - very rarely, anything else.
- Nature Spirits can have Superior Attributes between 0 and 8.

Example

Mijiza is a wind-spirit. In a bargain with the Power of Armor, she earned miraculous protection against calming and fading away, making her Eternal. She has the Inspired template, permitting this Gift, and the Nature Spirit template, allowing her to purchase Superior Speed 3.

High Priority

Deceiver-Shard

“You love me,” he said. His voice was very assured, and I realized at once that it must be so.

— from *Jack*, by Keiko Takemori

Creatures with the Deceiver-shard template are shards or other extrusions of an Excrucian’s nature. The Excrucian in question is almost invariably a Deceiver.

- Deceiver-shards can have a rating in Aspect. If they do, it is between 0 and 2.
- Deceiver-shards can have ratings between 0 and 3 in any exclusive Attribute available to Excrucian-shards.
- Deceiver-shards have a base of 0 Miracle Points in every appropriate Attribute for which they possess a rating.
- Deceiver-shards can have Gifts, including Gifts that affect Essential creatures and miraculous energy directly.
- Deceiver-shards can perform the Ritual of Two Skins (pg. 202, **Nobilis**) and gain access to a specific Noble or Emperor’s abilities, becoming vulnerable in turn to the Truth of the Name (also pg. 202, **Nobilis**). As a specific exception, they do not gain the ability to work Imperial miracles when they gain access to an Emperor’s abilities.

Example

Rowen Crusher is a name sometimes worn by shards of Coriander Hasp. The exact distinction between Rowen’s personality and Coriander’s is unclear. Sometimes, a Rowen seems very different than his greater self. Sometimes, he seems like nothing more than a direct extension of Coriander’s will.

Deceiver

"Why do you have a gun in your hand?" he asked.

"I have promised to kill the one I love."

"You hate me," he said. His voice was very assured, and I realized at once that it must be so.

— from *Jack*, by Keiko Takemori

Characters with this template are Excrucian Deceivers and similar creatures from the Lands Beyond Creation.

- **Essential Creature:** Deceivers are not a part of any Estate. Similarly, no aspect of their mind or body is part of any Estate. Thus, they resist direct miracles.
- Deceivers have ratings between 0 and 7 in Aspect and Spirit.
- Deceivers can have ratings between 1 and 7 in Domain or Realm through a Focus.
- Deceivers have a base of 5 MPs in all four Attributes, even if they have no Attribute rating.
- Deceivers can have ratings between 0 and 5 in any exclusive Attribute available to Excrucians.
- Deceivers can have Superior Attributes from 0 to 7.
- Deceivers can have Gifts, including Gifts that affect Essential creatures and miraculous energy directly.
- Deceivers can create Deceiver-shards.
- Deceivers can perform the Ritual of Two Skins and gain access to a specific Noble or Emperor's abilities, becoming vulnerable in turn to the Truth of the Name. This includes the ability to work Imperial miracles, when wearing an Emperor's "skin".

Example

Archetel Denisot notes, in a private interview, that Excrucians do not so much lack the power of Domain and Realm as that they lack Estates and Chancels recognized on Earth. "There are things in the Lands Beyond Creation," Archetel says, "that I have influence over and few others do; but these things are useless in the War." Archetel has the template Excrucian Deceiver, and therefore cannot be believed — but in any case, even Excrucians without Domain or Realm have enough potential in that Attribute to have the corresponding Miracle Points. Therefore, they can use their DMP-based Gifts.

Excrucian Strategist

The machines of war opened their mouths and blew a great wind of famine across the land. They blew forth a wind of pestilence. They blew forth a wind of death. After each such gout, the people came to their King and said, "You must save us." Each time, he answered, "I have foreseen this wind; all proceeds according to my plan."

When the wind of death had passed, the last people of the kingdom said, "Your plan has failed, your majesty, for your land is dead."

The King looked at them, as if from very far away. "Had they sought to kill the land, and I to stop them, then I would have failed; but they did not, and I did not. Their only goal was to torment my heart with the suffering of my people. My only goal was to seal my heart in stone."

— from *Legends of the Nobilis*, by Luc Ginneis

Characters with this template are Excrucian Strategists and similar creatures from the Lands Beyond Creation.

- **Essential Creature (limited):** Strategists cannot be directly warded, created, destroyed, or changed with miracles if they have even 1 MP remaining. Each time they use this resistance, they must spend a Miracle Point of any type.
- Strategists have ratings between 0 and 7 in Aspect and Spirit.
 - Strategists must spend one Miracle Point each time their Auctoritas stops a miracle's effects. If they have no Miracle Points remaining, their Auctoritas does not function.
- Strategists can have ratings between 1 and 7 in Domain or Realm through a Focus.
- Strategists have a base of 5 MPs in all four Attributes, even if they have no Attribute rating.
- Strategists can have ratings between 0 and 5 in any exclusive Attribute available to Excrucians.
- Strategists can have Superior Attributes from 0 to 7.
- Strategists can have Gifts, including Gifts that affect Essential creatures and miraculous energy directly.
- Strategists can create Strategist-shards.
- Strategists can perform Imperial miracles.
- Strategists can take the World-Breaker's Hand (pg. 206, **Nobilis**) for 0 Character Points.

Example

Evemy Syriack claims responsibility for the creation of Eurytos, also called Horror. Certainly she displays its mark: circular scars dot her body, as if made by the poisoned weapon's spines. Her soul is also tainted by the Abhorrent Weapon; a twisted madness grips her, bearing little resemblance to the calm, polite destructiveness typical of Harumaph's Children. She has been known to display aberrations ranging from mass murder to bargains with the Imperators or the Nobilis. She has the Excrucian Strategist template.

Excrucian Warmain

In the Chancel of Lorelle Clark, one may always choose to sacrifice one's life to save another's. This is not magic. This is not a miracle. It is the law of the world.

Lorelle dueled the Warmain Hesychia Symeonius in the center of her court. Hesychia's blade hungered for Lorelle's life, but could not take it; each time it plunged into her heart, or chopped away her side, or ripped through her spine, one of the silently watching courtiers stood up and took that death in her place. The Warmain was snarling, hateful, angry, and realizing with horror that it was possible to lose. As for Lorelle, I have never seen a woman look so radiant or so beautiful. She was lost in the rapture of it, for Lorelle is a Power of the Dark.

— from *On Serving the Nobilis*, by Luc Ginneis

Characters with this template are Excrucian Warmains and similar creatures from the Lands Beyond Creation.

- **Essential Creature:** Warmains are not a part of any Estate. Similarly, no aspect of their mind or body is part of any Estate. Thus, they resist direct miracles.
- Warmains have ratings between 0 and 7 in Aspect and Spirit.
- Warmains can have ratings between 1 and 7 in Domain or Realm through a Focus.
- Warmains have a base of 5 MPs in all four Attributes, even if they have no Attribute rating.
- Warmains can have ratings between 0 and 5 in any exclusive Attribute available to Excrucians.
- Warmains can have Superior Attributes from 0 to 7.
- Warmains can have Gifts, including Gifts that affect Essential creatures and miraculous energy directly.
- Warmains can create Warmain-shards.
- Warmains can perform Imperial miracles.

Example

Oreute Bryde has seven aspects and exceptional skill at invading reality. If she can break even the smallest piece of herself into the world, she casts forth seven unusually powerful Warmain-shards. The Assassin wears violet and pursues its goals in stealth. The Brute wears indigo and serves its purpose with strength and violence. The Knight wears blue and pursues its ends with honorable force. The Judge wears green; it acts with discretion and seeks poetic endings. The Thief wears yellow and indulges in cleverness and guile. The Diplomat, in orange, seeks to divert Oreute's enemies through bluff, persuasion, and barter. Finally, the Healer, in red, does not serve Oreute's purposes at all. Damaged by some unknown force, this aspect of the Warmain opposes the others and strives to defend and heal the world and the Powers caught in Oreute's machinations. Oreute has the Warmain template.

Imperator

Once, I believed in the sanctity of life. It has grown harder, as the years progressed, to cling to that belief – to resist going out at night and killing, simply to kill. This is not sociopathy or rage. It is my burning wish to honor the Lord of Expectations, Ananda, Imperator of Murder, whom once I saw.

– from the Thought-Record of Robert Baxt

Characters with the Imperator template are creatures of pure *spiritus Dei*.

- **Essential Creature:** Imperators are not a part of any Estate. Similarly, no aspect of their mind or body is part of any Estate. Thus, they resist direct miracles.
- Imperators have ratings between 0 and 7 in Aspect, Domain, Realm, and Spirit, and a base of 5 Miracle Points in each.
- Imperators can have ratings between 0 and 5 in any exclusive Attribute available to Imperators.
- Imperators can have Superior Attributes from 0 to 7.
- Imperators can have Gifts. These Gifts can only affect things that are part of some Estate.
- Imperators can create Chancels and Nobilis.
- Imperators can use Imperial miracles.

Example

The Megalith Wasps (pg. 213, *Nobilis*) are not normally considered Imperators; much like mortal wasps, they have minimal intelligence at best. However, these giant wasps derive their substance from the World Ash on which they nest, and are therefore creatures of pure *spiritus Dei*. They obey the Imperator template.

Noble

This is how Bao Way-ming punishes the worst offenders brought before his court. He strips them of their memories and replaces them with his own. Thus, the shameful creature remembers themselves as the exalted Way-ming – but finds themselves suddenly human, suddenly a branded criminal, and suddenly powerless, unworthy to so much as pledge themselves to Way-ming’s glorious Estate or Code. He does not let them commit suicide; they must live out their lives with the horrible pain of that loss, and most go mad.

– from *Chamomile Book*, by Chien Shan-lee

Characters with the Noble template have miraculous abilities and a miraculous nature.

- **Essential Creature:** Nobles are not a part of any Estate. Similarly, no aspect of their mind or body is part of any Estate. Thus, they resist direct miracles.
- Nobles have ratings between 0 and 5 in Aspect, Domain, Realm, and Spirit, and a base of 5 Miracle Points in each.
- Nobles can have ratings between 0 and 5 in any exclusive Attribute available to Powers.
- Nobles can have Gifts. These Gifts can only affect things that are part of some Estate.

Example

Claudia Müller was born under just the right stars, blessed with good fortune well beyond mere miraculous luck. Division II of Austria’s Federal Ministry of the Interior recruited her for the occult investigations branch of its Directorate-General for Public Security; there, she unraveled some of its most puzzling cases. In those days, she obeyed the External template and her Luck Gift was able to twist the actions of Imperators, Nobles, and Excrucians alike. After she defeated several Excrucian-shards through guts and providence, the Imperator Yefef recruited her as a Power. Her Luck can no longer affect miraculous entities; the Noble template has a higher priority than the External template and imposes a limit on the character’s Gifts.

Strategist-shard or Warmain-shard

I watched its eyes. Sometimes, I can tell the difference between them – 'tween Warmain and Strategist-shards – by the way the stars fall. And it matters. It matters a whole lot.

Warmains don't get in my way. Not often, anyway. They see my Lord's work in the world, and they smile, and they stand aside to let me do it. Strategists, though, they get all funny about it, as if there's something about my Lord that the Warmains don't quite get.

This one was a Strategist-shard. I signaled the snipers. The stars in his eyes witnessed that gesture, and instantly they understood.

– from the Thought-Record of Hugh Rosewood

Creatures with these templates are shards or other extrusions of an Excrucian's nature.

- **Essential Creature:** Excrucian-shards are not a part of any Estate. Similarly, no aspect of their mind or body is part of any Estate. Thus, they resist direct miracles.
- Excrucian-shards have ratings between 0 and 5 in Aspect, Domain, Realm, and Spirit, and a base of 5 Miracle Points in each.
- Excrucian-shards can have ratings between 0 and 5 in any exclusive Attribute available to them.
- Excrucian-shards can have Gifts, including Gifts that affect Essential creatures and miraculous energy directly. Many of their Gifts, however, are limited to affecting things that are part of some Estate.
- Strategist-shards can take the World-Breaker's Hand (pg. 206, **Nobilis**) for 5 character points.

Note that Strategist-shards do *not* spend Miracle Points to fuel their Auctoritas and resistance to direct miracles; they are wholly Essential even though Strategists are not.

Example

Malakai Fang is an occasionally-seen shard of Malakai Mesmer that takes the form of a wolf. He obeys the Animal and Strategist-shard templates. He can therefore purchase Superior Speed 3 as a wolf and a cheap World-Breaker's Hand as a Strategist-shard.

Highest Priority

Transcendent

“Look,” said the Serpent, “you don’t just come in and talk to the World Ash. She wants to talk to you, she’ll call you.”

“It’s about Lucifer,” I said. There was a pause.

A green and leafy voice from the next room said, “Show her in.”

— from *The Kifri Murders*,
by Kalliope Tsouderos (unpublished)

Characters with the Transcendent template have a nature beyond miraculous — they are either Imperial creatures on a scope that far exceeds the Angels, such as the World Ash, or truly exceptional monsters from the Lands Beyond Creation.

- **Essential Creature:** Transcendent creatures are not a part of any Estate. Similarly, no aspect of their mind or body is part of any Estate. Thus, they resist direct miracles.
- Transcendent creatures can have ratings between 0 and 9 in Aspect, Spirit, Domain, and Realm. They have a base of 5 MPs in each.
 - Transcendent creatures can take any concept as a Domain or Secondary Domain. This includes concepts already taken by other Powers or Imperators as well as normally illegal concepts like “miraculous energy”.
- Transcendent creatures can have ratings between 0 and 5 in any appropriate exclusive Attribute.
- Transcendent creatures can have Superior Attributes between 0 and 9.
- Transcendent creatures can have Gifts, including Gifts that affect Essential creatures and miraculous energy directly.
- Transcendent creatures can use Imperial miracles.
 - This ability may be sharply limited in scope, or, alternately, quicker than it is for Imperators.

Example

Epititiokh has come into Creation twice, and where she passes she brings the drought; water and life alike dissolve with her passage, green things and blue things die, and even in her walk through Heaven she killed the flowers as she passed. No one can stop Epititiokh, or bend her to their will — but men and hermaphrodites may offer themselves to her as lovers. When she has taken one, and drained in their climax every last drop of water and life from his flesh, she leaves Creation once again.

Unearthly

As the Emperor stepped into our world, I felt a change in the air: suddenly, I understood the ideas of Komm and Iax, which had not been part of the Earth before. I shall not describe them here. No doubt they would confuse both myself and the reader when the Lord Hadasdagoy of Dionyl has gone.

— from *On Serving the Nobilis*, by Luc Ginneis

Characters with the Unearthly template come from another world on the Ash, or from outside Creation entirely.

- Unearthly characters can have Superior Attributes between 0 and 9.
- They can have Gifts, including Gifts that affect Essential creatures or miraculous energy directly. These Gifts are not arbitrary, but rather represent Gifts available to the appropriate character type on their world.

Example

Jusguarin is an Power from Abaton, a dark and hollow world far from Earth. He has both the Noble template and the Unearthly template. The HG could allow Jusguarin and other Powers from Abaton to have a specific kind of Gift that affects Powers directly. The HG could also rule that the natural inhabitants of Abaton have up to 5 levels of Superior Night Vision. If for some reason Jusguarin is a player character, these things will require negotiation.

Entities

This section presents a selection of the strange entities that occasionally interact with the Nobilis on a social level. Each entry provides a general description, a character sheet or set of character sheets, and notes on characteristic Gifts and Handicaps. Where a creature has variable Aspect the wound levels given by a higher Aspect are annotated with the Aspect level required to possess them.

As a Noble, you must accustom yourself to strangeness. At any time, a giant may stop in for tea, or a spirit seek to become your lover.

—from *Becoming Noble*,
by Fayola Osiagobare

Alfar

Unearthly Inheritors

The Dock-Alfar are the natural inhabitants of Aelfscienne: stocky creatures, blood-red in color, with rough six-fingered hands. Theirs is one of the oldest continuous cultures on the Ash, reaching back into the early parts of the Second Age; it valorizes the cultivation of the self through persistence, exacting effort, and stolid indifference to hardship. Compassion is a dead quality to them; instead, they have an aesthetic impulse to mold their students and children towards success and a generalized will to strive against chaos — more precisely, against *roksha*, a specific cultural concept of malevolent chaos, disorder, and ill fortune that they may or may not see as manifest in the individual troubles of others. When these impulses are not operative, they are indifferent to others' pains.

Into this world the Angel Samiasa brought his human love; they had children and those children married into the royal line of the largest community. In time this blood spread through the population and worked a transformation on the substance of the Dock-Alfar, making them magic and giving rise to the freak-born and pale Ljos-Alfar.

Each of the Alfar has the power to assume an animal shape — a “fylgja” form — and certain Alfar practice powerful magics of fire and ice. The magic of fire is simply a Domain over Fire and heat. The magic of ice covers both Domain over Cold and ice and a Secondary Domain of Death. Practitioners of ice magic can learn a limited immortality: they may keep their life in an item, and return from the dead if slain unless that object has also been destroyed.

Before the coming of the Angel the Dock-Alfar were cursed to turn to the stone in the sun. The curse has both faded and transformed with the presence of the blood of an Angel in their veins. For most, the sunlight is a minor inconvenience now, an impermanent transformation reverting on the sunset. Some may even move slowly in their transformed state, crawling slothfully through the bright hours like mobile statues of themselves. Others — particularly among the Ljos-Alfar — find themselves entirely immune and even drawn to sunlight, drinking it up like it were holy wine; these, if they are immoderate, slowly lose their tolerance for the touch of stone. Cold earth begins to burn them like lava might. They must eventually take to wooden cities built atop the trees lest their feet inadvertently touch upon the ground.

Alfar

Shapeshifting (1 shape)

Wound Levels –

<i>Deadly</i>	[]
<i>Serious</i>	[]
<i>Surface</i>	[] []

A new creature has come among us today. Her skin looks like bleached bones. And they say that she can go into the sunlight without fear. How strange! I would think we should drum her out of our world, save that an angel loves her, and one does not offend the Princes of Heaven.

– translated from *The Diary of Ulrika Skarsgard*,
published by Maurits Svendsen

Handicaps

Sunlight Reaction: Turns to stone in sunlight. *Optional, and can be taken in a weaker form. Gives 1 AMP if the Alfar acquires an Aspect rating.*

Stone Reaction: Cannot bear the touch of stone. *Optional, and can be taken in a weaker form. Gives 1 AMP if the Alfar acquires an Aspect rating.*

Variants

Alfar Ice Mage

Domain 0-3 4 DMP

Secondary Domain 1-3

Immortal

Shapeshifting (1 shape)

Wound Levels –

Deadly []

Serious []

Surface [] []

Domains: Cold/Ice, Death

Handicaps

As with other Alfar, but with

Fallible Immortality: Can die, but returns from the dead unless the life object is destroyed. *Gives 1 DMP (included in Attribute total.)*

Alfar Fire Mage

Domain 0-3 3 DMP

Shapeshifting (1 shape)

Wound Levels –

Deadly []

Serious []

Surface [] []

Domain: Fire/Heat

Handicaps

As with other Alfar.

Charitable Beings

Noble, Unearthly Entities

Even the masters of High Summoning do not really understand the Charitable Beings. Nine feet tall and pale, with long fingers and a willow-thin body, they appear to exist simply to offer others gifts. Sometimes those gifts are valuable — extra miracle points in a crisis, powerful treasures from beyond Creation, or spices rarely seen on Earth. Sometimes they are unpleasant — clouds of poison gas, curses of itching, and in one case a startled and irritated Strategist. Sometimes they simply puzzle the recipients — a handful of nutshells, a coat on fire, or a selection of Canadian coins. If they do not have the most appropriate gift on hand when they encounter a worthy recipient, they ask the recipient to wait, and then vanish for hours or days to fetch one; it sends the Charitable Being into absolute fury if the recipient is not there when they return.

Ridding oneself of an unwanted gift can prove difficult. Generally, however, one can pass on even the most unlikely gifts — such as haunting ancestral spirits and warts — to others. This requires only a suitably ornate gift-giving celebration. Powers generally hold grand celebrations in their Chancel when they wish to forsake a Charitable Being's gift; there, they ceremonially pass their affliction on to some (un)lucky Chancel resident as a reward. Sometimes, a Power will instead pass their gift on to another Noble at a celebration other Nobles attend. In either case, the nature of the Charitable Beings helps ensure that the gift transfer is successful.

Charitable Blessing

Charitable Beings can offer almost anything as a gift, if they spend long enough searching for it. They can graft on new arms, enhance others' Attributes, adjust a Noble's genitive force so that their future children come out toads, deliver masterful alchemical creations or stolen Abhorrent Weapons, or anything else of that sort. This is purchased as a Major (Creation or Change) of any Estate, as shown opposite.

Charitable Being

Aspect 3 6 AMP
 Domain *unrated* 7 DMP
 Realm *unrated* 5 RMP
 Spirit 5 5 SMP

Immortal

Charitable Blessing

Wound Levels –

Deadly [] []
Serious [] []
Surface [] [] [] []

"It's a gift," she said.

"It's a human heart," I said.

"I know," she said. "I cut it out myself." She smiled. "Do you like it?"

"It's a nice gesture," I said, "but I'm a vegetarian."

– from *Mission to Sol*, by Nazira Orozova

Handicaps

Impermanent Gifts: Recipients can transfer away a Charitable Being's gift with a suitable celebration. *Gives 1 DMP (included in Attribute total.)*

Slow Work: It takes time for a Charitable Being to locate a suitable gift. *Gives 1 DMP (included in Attribute total.)*

Erratic: Charitable Beings are not sane or self-interested. *Gives 1 AMP (included in Attribute total.)*

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
9+7 Penetration (Domain)	Normal	Global	Full	<i>No</i>	
16 CPs	-2	+1	+1	+1	17*3=51 CP

Daoine Sidhe

Inheritors

The House of Don descends from the Exemplar Owain, Power of Beauty, most loved of all the Nobles serving Heaven and graceful beyond measure. His children and his children's children carried the marks of his nobility: inhuman beauty, agility, and a mastery of the Earthly magics. The last heir of Don coupled with the sunset and scattered seed across the world; and in every continent and from this day to this, children have been born from ordinary families showing the clear marks of the lineage of Don. These are taken from their homes, as often as not, by the stewards of the House, and raised in Ireland as the Daoine Sidhe.

The Imperators consider the Daoine Sidhe perfect material for conversion into the Nobility. They adapt easily to the full magics of a Power, and have some abilities of their own — although, of course, Earthly magic is *almost* useless in the Valde Bellum.

Daoine Sidhe

Aspect 2 3 AMP

Glorious

Immutable

Wound Levels –

Deadly [] []

Serious [] []

Surface [] []

Sadly, even were the Children of Don to exist, we could no longer differentiate them from humans – it is recorded that the blood of Don grows weaker in them with every generation.

– from *A Medieval Bestiary*, by Paul McArthur

Dionyl

Unearthly Entities

The Dionyl are the inhabitants of the world Dionyl, spirits whose physical form is simply whatever clothing they happen to be wearing at the time. They tend to be weaker and less agile than humans, but can become almost invisible when they strip down to the bare essentials (for prudish Dionyl, a small swimsuit; for the more adventurous, a watch and hair band).

Dionyl

Superior Fashion Sense 1

Invisibility

Wound Levels –

Deadly []

Serious []

Surface [] []

Once in their lives, a resident of Locus Assaibi may go to the Hall of Masks and choose one of the cloth masks that hang there. They put on the mask and it changes their personality to match. Should they don a doctor's mask, they become healers, with the dedication, compassion, and brains to make it in the field. Should they don the philosopher's mask, the mysteries of the world unfurl themselves before them. Most avoid the "shameful masks" – the murderer, the addict, the monster. But in every year, there are a few who leave the Hall of Masks stripped of conventional morality. They seem as happy with their choice as any others.

–from *A Primer on the Loci Celatum*, by Holly Djurisc

Jotun

Unearthly Entities

Jotuns reside in Jotunheim, a world perhaps two thirds of the way from Hell towards Heaven. They are a race of giants, the smallest of them twenty feet in height, the average fifty, and the greatest several hundred. On the whole, they are a peaceful, agrarian people, but their world represents a major front in the Excrucian war – and, unlike most humans, the people of Jotunheim are aware of it. They have done what they can to provide aid to the seventy Powers that live among them, and even to the force of Imperators that stands at their world’s gates.

The Jotuns’ massive physical strength is almost meaningless in this war, scarcely enough to bully an Excrucian-shard – but many are incomparable smiths, able to produce with their hammer, tongs, and anvil works that even a master alchemist would envy. Ju Kung, who studied the Jotuns extensively, suggests that the source of their power is in the metals of their realm. “Where it grows in ragged veins and lodes on Earth,” Kung writes, “it blooms within their hills and mountains like flowers. Thus, their iron is not simply iron, but hollyhock; and their silver is not only silver but barberry.” Others dispute this, and claim that – despite certain similarities – the arts of the Jotun have no inherent relationship to Earthly alchemy. In either case, their skills are unique and complementary to the human arts. An alchemist working with a Jotun adds one level to their highest Alchemy Attribute (or one shift towards triumph in **Dynamic Nobilis**) when creating miraculous works.

Jotun

Alchemy 0-5 no AMP

Superior Strength 4-5

Superior Toughness 2

Wound Levels –

Deadly [] []

Serious [] []

Surface [] []

The blade spun about her; it severed swords, arrows, and even the bursts of venom and fire that came at her from the alchemical cannons, so that they fell harmless at her feet. It stunned me; I could not imagine a mortal developing such prowess.

It seems that Zéphyrin heard my thoughts; for he glanced my way. "She is good," he admitted. "Perhaps the best human I have ever seen. But she has survived this long because she carries Jotun-forged steel."

— from the Thought-Record of Oriane Feroulet

Lawbreakers

Noble, Unearthly Entities

The Lawbreakers come from the Lands Beyond Creation: cadaverous creatures with burning eyes and shallow breath. Despite their name, they do not truly break laws — they are simply invisible to them. Duties and oaths — even the oaths of characters with the Honorable Virtue — treat the Lawbreakers as nonexistent. Mortal police ignore their most egregious crimes. Powers have used alliances with the Lawbreakers to shelter certain actions from the Code Fidelitatis or their Emperor’s disfavor; Lord Entropy shows no sign of extending the Code to cover the Lawbreakers’ actions. The social order does not recognize these creatures; the *res* (pg. 102) treat them as nonexistent, and can even pass through them physically as if they were so much air.

The Lawbreakers willingly bargain with Powers who summon them. Powers pay them for their services by accepting *weirds*, a concept that does not translate well into the languages of Creation. In practice, each accepted *weird* imposes a certain insanity on the Power for a certain length of time. The Lawbreakers can extend their protection slightly, so that actions taken in close concert with them are equally invisible. High Summoners who wish to commit treason often spend much of their lives closeted with a Lawbreaker. This drives them insane, but ensures protection against the anger of their Emperor and the punishments of Lord Entropy.

The insanity of a *weird* varies across the full range of normal mental illness, and many mythic conditions as well. Players making deals with Lawbreakers can discuss the *weirds* they might accept with the HG.

Immune to Law

Laws, social order, and agreements simply do not apply to these creatures from the Lands Beyond Creation. The exception is agreements involving the *weirds*. This Gift is purchased as a Major Destruction of Social Contracts — or, specifically, the property that makes them apply to the Lawbreaker — as shown opposite.

Lawbreaker

Aspect 0-2 5 AMP
Domain *unrated* 5 DMP
Realm *unrated* 5 RMP
Spirit 1 5 SMP

Durant

Eternal

Immune to Law

Wound Levels (Durant) –

Deadly [] [2+]
Serious [] [1+]
Surface [] []

"I have sworn not to relinquish my guardianship," I said. "If I should let you pass, I die."

The creature fixed me with its burning eyes. "I am not of this world," it said, "and your oath does not recognize that I exist."

I have heard the speech of Deceivers and their shards. I knew that what I felt was not persuasion or a lie. With a strange, sick feeling, I understood that its words were truth, and that the sanctity of my oath would not defend me from its passage.

—from the Thought-Record of Christoph Balleroy

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
7+7 Penetration (Domain)	Automatic	Global	One Trick	<i>No</i>	
14 CPs	+1	+1	-3	+1	14 CP

Merrows

Inheritors

The Mimic Irmengard Brice embodied the Sea, the Sharks, and Death. For this reason, even when exposed as an Excrucian, she could not die. She was hauled before the Emperor Parasiel in chains, and he set his judgment upon her: taking one piece of her in each of his hundred hands, he ripped her into shreds and scattered the living pieces on the waters.

The pieces of Irmengard Brice became the Merrows, their form a mix between human and shark, with a dozen rows of teeth and the strength of the waves. No force can destroy them; if one dies, another materializes in the depths. Individually, they mean nothing to the Nobilis; collectively, they remain Lords and Ladies of the Sea, rulers of the Sharks, and Makers of Death. A group of twenty or more Merrows, gathered together to revenge a slight against their race, can enact almost any miracle upon the sea. Historically, they worked havoc on ships and oceanic Chancels alike, extorting wealth or simply wreaking devastation. Much of this activity has faded of late; their memory of being anything save the Merrows grows shrouded. They are losing themselves in their solitary lives beneath the surface of the sea.

Merrow

Aspect 2 4 AMP

Domain 1 3 DMP

Amphibian

Immutable

Devotion of All Sharks (purchased as Devoted Populace)

Wound Levels –

Deadly [] []

Serious [] []

Surface [] []

Domain: the Sea

The typical Merrow has the body, arms, and head of a man or a woman attached to an immensely long and enormously powerful fishtail. Although they have no access to fire or the forge, and must use coral and bone for their weapons, there was no mariner alive who did not give homage to them as the Lords of the Sea.

– from *A Medieval Bestiary*, by Paul McArthur

Handicaps

Sea-Bound Beast: Cannot leave the ocean. Gives 1 AMP, included in Attribute total.

Affiliation: Cant of the Mimics.

Mountain Spirits

Nature Spirits

The spirits of the mountains—particularly the larger, grander mountains—tend to impress even the Nobilis. Ancient, powerful, beautiful, and tall, they bestride the Mythic World as giants. Though they stir from their place only rarely, their influence extends well beyond it; their voices can carry for a hundred miles through the Mythic air, a stomp of their foot can shake the world, the lesser earth spirits do their bidding, and their great strong hands can scoop up humans or Nobles who imagine themselves safely far away.

Mountain spirits are included as an example of major nature spirits.

Mountain Spirit

Superior Social Position 2

Superior Strength 6

Superior Toughness 7

Wound Levels –

Deadly [] [] []
Serious [] [] [] [] []
Surface [] [] [] [] [] []

The mountain killed Filemone Aubry's love, or so he said; so he set himself to killing the mountain. Blades he used, and bombs, but mostly just to get the fury out. One day he said he had a nuke, and he was going to kill that mountain dead. We didn't want to mess with him – he was Filemone, after all – so we just watched as he drove off to the mountain with it. We waited for the boom. There wasn't any boom. We found Filemone's body and Filemone's truck, later, crushed under a sheaf of sliding stone. We never found the warhead. Maybe it never existed at all.

– from a villager's testimony, recounted in *A Madness of Spirits*,
 by Dr. E. Edgerton Clark

Nimblejacks

Inheritors

Nimblejacks descend from the Fallen Angel Achaia, who is no more. Long before her death, Lord Entropy decided that something in the nimblejacks appealed to him and made Achaia an offer. If Achaia did not interfere while Lord Entropy bloodily captured, subdued, and bound the nimblejacks to his will, he would permit Achaia to continue operating on Earth. If she interfered, he would ensure that the Council drove her from the world. Rather than forsake her place, Achaia agreed – and the nimblejacks fell under the Darkest Lord’s sway. Lord Entropy imposed a program of forced breeding upon them, with humans and each other, to increase their numbers. He employed his various persuasions and worked his will into their nature. Eventually, when he judged them thoroughly slavish and subservient to him, he unleashed them again on Earth – to watch the Powers from hiding, to serve the Cammora, and, sometimes, to directly carry out his will.

The skin of a nimblejack is tough, like stone, and their fingernails are like spikes of granite. They move with lightning quickness and have the peculiar ability to enforce those bargains made with them. These are the gifts of their Imperial blood. Its price is that they must live amidst corruption and suffering; if they should succumb to the lure of beauty or justice, they die.

Lightning Quickness

Nimblejacks move with miraculous speed and grace. This Gift has a Penetration rating for when they use that speed in attacks.

Nimblejack

Aspect 0-3 3 AMP

Spirit 1 3 SMP

Lightning Quickness

Unforgettable Favors

Wound Levels –

Deadly [] [2+]

Serious [] [1+]

Surface [] [] [3+]

In the late Middle Ages, a practice arose among devil-worshipping cults to run each batch of initiates from one end of a long hall to the other. The last or last few to reach the far end were swallowed by Hell, as the price the cult paid for its powers, and made into “Nimblejacks” (a kind of imp.) These shrunken, shriveled, ugly, and malicious beings were the primary negotiators for Hell, exchanging mortal assistance – money, the sexual favors of a desired human, or magical power – for ‘favors’. These favors were usually redeemed in as degrading and corrupt a manner as possible: priests were forced to eat the dead buried in the Churchyard, noblewomen were forced to sleep with their own children, and peasants, who could not be degraded any further, were twisted and reshaped into monsters (including werewolves, vampires, and sometimes even nimblejacks).

On occasion, someone would find the will to strike out at the nimblejack rather than accepting the proffered favor. The nimblejack would then flee as fast as the wind. These humans were perhaps the most unfortunate of them all; rather than simply killing them, the nimblejack would do its best thereafter to make their life a living Hell.

– from *A Medieval Bestiary*, by Paul McArthur

Handicaps

Ugly and Small: Sometimes the nimblejack is too short or scrawny for some task. Humans greet its presence with horror and rarely associate with it voluntarily. *Gives 1 AMP when these traits interfere with the nimblejack’s work.*

Corruption Immiring: The nimblejack dies if it appreciates or knowingly serves beauty or justice. *Gives 1 AMP when the nimblejack cannot carry out orders or a malevolent impulse because doing so would also serve beauty or justice. Gives 3 AMP one round before it kills the nimblejack, if it attempts to break this Handicap’s rule.*

Affiliation: Serves Lord Entropy.

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
6+2 Penetration (Aspect)	Simple	Local	Limited	No	
8 CPs	-1	-1	-2	+1	5 CP

Unforgettable Favors

Mortals cannot forget or easily ignore the sense of obligation owing a nimblejack imposes upon them. This is a Major Creation of Emotion (or Obligation), purchased as shown.

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
7 (Domain)	Simple	One Person	One Trick	<i>No</i>	
7 CPs	-1	-2	-3	+1	2 CP

Ogres

Inheritors

All ogres, everywhere, serve Lord Entropy; he is the mother and father of their race. With a total history that goes back only eight hundred and fifty years, they have had no time to develop a rich cultural tradition—but twisted poets, artists, and leaders have emerged from their ranks to lead them down the paths of darkness. Ogre rituals and their fragmentary culture are both enormously disturbing and somewhat bloody. While they can eat anything a human can eat, the preferred food of an ogre is rotting human flesh.

Ogre

Aspect 0-1 3 AMP

Keen Sense of Smell

Paramount Strength

Wound Levels –

Deadly []

Serious [] [1+]

Surface [] []

The common ogre (homo pervalidus) loves music. When the ogres march, others can hear their "walking song" from miles away:

*It does no good to see us come.
The world's too small for you to fly.
Keen eyes won't save you from our kind,
We'll pop them out and leave you blind!*

*Matters none how fast you run.
The world's too small for you to fly.
Quick feet you have but all the same
We'll bite them off and leave you lame!*

The last line of each verse is roared with great gusto and merriment. The song continues in the same vein for about thirty verses, and then repeats.

—from *A Medieval Bestiary*, by Paul McArthur

Handicaps

Ogre Stench: The stench of an ogre is both alarming and distinctive. It does not practically limit their social opportunities—almost anything willing to associate with a crisply lemon-scented ogre is willing to associate with a virose one—but it can alert enemies to their presence from half a block away with no wind and several miles with a good one. Feral dogs have been known to recoil and leave town several days before an ogre arrives, reporting, to those that can understand their yippy speech, “Something impinges! It impinges through time! Something! It will not be a snack!” *Gives 1 AMP when it interferes with the ogre’s business.*

Bestial Appearance: The ogre’s appearance is distinct and frightening; they are unable to have liaisons among mortals in the unlikely event they would wish to, and are likely to evacuate whole streets or subway cars simply by walking up. Imagine that the lovechild of Schwarzenegger and Manson rolled around for a bit in a manure pile before dressing up as a thuggee biker and you’ll get a sense of why humans don’t like associating with ogres, even when they don’t recognize them as supernatural. *Gives 1 AMP when it interferes with the ogre’s business.*

Affiliation: Serves Lord Entropy.

Keen Sense of Smell

Ogres have a very keen sense of smell, acute enough that they can operate easily in total darkness.

Paramount Strength

Ogres can only deadlift about a ton, but nothing short of a level 9 Aspect miracle can directly oppose their strength. Not even a mountain-splitting exertion of raw kinetic force can break an ogre's grip or move them when they do not want to move.

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
4 (Aspect)	Automatic	Self-Only	Limited	<i>No</i>	
4 CPs	+1	-3	-2	+1	1 CP

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
9+5 Penetration (Aspect)	Simple	Local	Limited	<i>No</i>	
14 CPs	-1	-1	-2	+1	11 CP

Ogres

Hugh Rosewood

Inheritor

Hugh Rosewood leads the ogres of Lord Entropy. In addition to the standard Gifts for an ogre, he has received Eternal and Durant directly from Lord Entropy's hand.

Hugh Rosewood

Aspect 1 3 AMP

Durant

Eternal

Keen Sense of Smell

Paramount Strength

Wound Levels (Durant) –

Deadly []

Serious [] []

Surface [] []

Handicaps

Ogre Stench: The stench of an ogre is both alarming and distinctive. *Gives 1 AMP when it interferes with Hugh Rosewood's affairs.*

Bestial Appearance: Hugh Rosewood's appearance is distinct and frightening. *Gives 1 AMP when it interferes with Hugh Rosewood's affairs.*

Affiliation: Serves Lord Entropy.

Peregrine Bears

Noble, Unearthly Entities

Once upon a time, there were no bears. Then a handful of strange creatures trundled in from outside Creation. Their name for themselves best translates as “Peregrinator”, or “Wanderer”. Fierce, muscular, and coated in thick hide and fur, they made a strong impression on the humans who saw them. They became mythically identified with strength, fortitude, and wisdom.

One day, the concept of the Peregrinators — which humans called “bears” — became so deeply entrenched in the world that it gave rise to an Estate. Of course, the Estate did not govern the Peregrinators, since they came from outside Creation. It really only defined a concept — the idea of a physical thing, bears, that did not actually exist. The newborn Imperator found that unsatisfactory, and issued a miracle of Major Creation; from that time forward, bears have walked the Earth.

The Peregrinators still exist, and sometimes they still wander in through the Weirding Wall and roam the worlds of Creation. Physiologically, they represent a kind of living Auctoritas — an incarnation of refusal to bend to miraculous, magical, or even physical force. Those Powers who master High Summoning can learn their language, and perhaps offer them food or directions to an interesting place in exchange for their assistance.

Annul Miracle

Peregrine bears can counter any miracle they see used; this costs them one DMP. This is purchased as a major destruction of miraculous power, with miracle level increased to 9, as shown opposite.

Peregrine Bear

Aspect 5 5 AMP
Domain *unrated* 5 DMP
Realm *unrated* 5 RMP
Spirit 5 5 SMP

Durant

Annul Miracle

Wound Levels (Durant) –

Deadly [] [] []
Serious [] [] []
Surface [] [] []

Jan ben Jan wished to reward the Folk of the Road, and so he built a great city for them, filling it with rare luxuries: foodstuffs, gems, silks, and gold, and a sewage system that was the wonder of that age. They came to that city in ones and twos and marveled, asking, "Is this truly ours?" And Jan ben Jan nodded. Then, in ones and twos, the Folk of the Road drifted away; for, much as they loved the marvelous place, they could not bear to end their journeys.

– from *Legends of the Nobilis*, by Luc Ginneis

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
9+7 Penetration (Domain)	Normal	Local	Comprehensive	No	
16 CPs	-2	-1	-1	+1	13 CP

Phoenixes

The three Phoenixes are the children of a true god and an Aboulomri — a rare bird that lives for a thousand years. In each era, these Immortal birds seem to die — the Fire Phoenix by immolating herself in her nest, the Phoensa by casting herself into the sea, and the Corruna by burying herself in the Earth. Yet when the next age begins, the Fire Phoenix is reborn from her own blackened egg, the Phoensa from the foam of the sea, and the Corruna from a locust flower growing on her grave. Although each of these creatures embodies an elemental principle, they are not its *causa causans* as the Nobles are. They do not define fire, water, or earth in any sense; rather, they embody them, and wield direct influence over them. Thus fire will go along with the fire-Phoenix's will, and this is much like her Estate, but she cannot work a fundamental transformation in what fire does or means as a Noble could.

Phoenixes

Fire-Phoenix

Inheritor

The Fire Phoenix, the classical 'Phoenix' of legend, wishes to work a fundamental change upon the world – to convert the stable, steady, earthy matter of the Prosaic Earth into the flowing, gleaming, glowing energy that is its ultimate potential. In each Age, she slowly builds towards this goal. In this Age, for example, she taught the clouds to set the forests aflame; she taught mankind to warm their nights and cook their food with bonfires; she has fanned the flames of terrorism and comforted the hearts of firebugs; and, most importantly, she helped humanity unlock the secrets of nuclear power. She envisions the grand climax of her efforts as an explosion or war that will literally tear the Earth apart and scatter its gleaming shreds across the cosmos. She does not have much power or wisdom, but she has a deep understanding of fire and energy, and, as an Immortal creature, she cannot be killed or permanently contained.

Fire-Phoenix

Aspect	0	3 AMP
Domain	3	3 DMP
Spirit	1	3 SMP

Immortal

Glorious

Flight

Can catch on fire at will
(purchased as “fire-breathing”)

Gatemaker

Wound Levels (Immortal) –

Deadly [] []

Serious [] []

Surface [] [] [] []

Domain: Fire

The Phoenix is, in simple terms, the ultimate expression of the idea that death is birth and birth is death. Upon laying her egg, she immolates herself and dies, yet, as a direct consequence, she will live forever, born again from her own flesh.

—from *A Medieval Bestiary*, by Paul McArthur

Handicaps

Contingent Domain: the Phoenix cannot fundamentally change the nature of her Estate, fire, and in fact is susceptible to having it changed by the Power or Emperor of Fire. *Gives 0 DMP.*

Phoenixes

Water-Phoenix

Inheritor

The Phoensa is literally composed of water; while normally the size of a falcon, she can swell herself to a thousand times her normal size by diving into and then rising from the sea. She embodies the principle of life; hence, she is both saner and kinder than her sister. Water has a fury of its own, however, and a darkness—she once lay willingly with a demon, and their children were the five Deluges.

Water-Phoenix

(Phoensa)

Aspect	1	3 AMP
Domain	3	3 DMP
Spirit	1	3 SMP

Immortal

Elemental (includes swallowing water and growing thereby)

Flight

Wound Levels (Immortal) —

<i>Deadly</i>	[] []
<i>Serious</i>	[] []
<i>Surface</i>	[] [] [] []

Domain: Water

We call that thing into which we may fall, and find ourselves without boundary, the sea; and that numinous pre-formed substance therein "water." Without that chaos we would calcify and cease to live; in the fullness of its presence, we drown. Hold up a paper cup of water and unfocus your eyes: you will see the undine gesticulating therein. It is not saying, "Do not drink me, magician!" or even "I give myself to thee;" rather, it is caparisoned for battle, it is shaking its supreme and terrible trident, it is saying to you: you drink me now, but forever you will drown, and take dissolved joy within that drowning.

—from *A Catalog of Modern Magic*, by Eric Optera

Handicaps

Contingent Domain: the Phoensa cannot fundamentally change the nature of her Estate, water, and in fact is susceptible to having it changed by the Power or Emperor of Water. *Gives 0 DMP.*

Phoenixes

Earthen-Phoenix

Noble Inheritor

The Corruna could pass for the statue of a peregrine, exquisitely carved from the deepest marble – except that she moves as freely as any bird, and flies as if she weighed no more than a sparrow. Until a greedy Imperator claimed her as a Power, she was the weakest of the three sisters; now, she is arguably the strongest. An incarnation of the terrene essence (pg. 103), she has a keen perception of the moral leanings of others.

Earthen-Phoenix

(Corruna)

Aspect 1 5 AMP

Domain 3 5 DMP

Secondary Domain 3

Realm 0 5 RMP

Spirit 1 5 SMP

Immortal

Flight

Wound Levels (Immortal) —

Deadly []

Serious [] []

Surface [] []

Domains: HG's Choice, Stone

In fairness, and understanding that I was never Bogie, I should have known better than to take the falcon up. In fairness. But it would also be correct to say there is a certain universal injustice that rather than disappointing me with its failure to contain a treasure, it bit my hand and dumped me into a cavernous cyst within the earth.

— from the Diary of Benjamin Curtis

Handicaps

Contingent Domain: the Corruna cannot fundamentally change the nature of her secondary Estate, stone, and in fact is susceptible to having it changed by the Power or Emperor of Stone. *Gives 0 DMP.*

Affiliation: Heaven.

Station Spirit

Nature Spirit

The spirit of a police station often takes a vaguely centaur-like form: at its base, the spread of the physical station, and above, a gigantic officer's torso, arms, and head, looking out at the city all around. The character of the local police influences the character of the station. In most places, where the conditions of the **Nobilis** world and the Code Napoleon have led to deep police corruption, the spirit's hands regularly reach out to pummel random bystanders, or turn palm upright to demand that other spirits pay them off. In other places, where the police remain true to "To Serve and Protect," the spirit gazes out vigilantly at the city, dispatching cars when it sees the slightest sign of trouble. Particularly vigilant spirits have two or three torsos rising from their building body, the better to regard the city with.

Station spirits are included as an example of minor nature spirits.

Station Spirit

Superior Social Position 1

Superior Toughness 4

Wound Levels –

Deadly [] []

Serious [] [] [] []

Surface [] [] [] []

Sometimes, a Senator or Congress-type gets a kind of legal-reform-y idea into their head that the law should presume innocence instead of guilt. When that happens, someone usually takes them down to see the Red Room in the basement of Mary Caldwell High.

People tried to scrub the Red Room clean. They tried for months. But the blood's there for good. And the nails. And the pain. You can feel it when you walk into the room. You can see all the people who suffered there. People don't go to Mary Caldwell High any more, but no one'd dare tear the building down. They wouldn't want to let the Red Room out.

And the cop who brings the politician there says, "We knew who did it, you know. But we could never have proved it." And the politician nods, and doesn't talk about the law for at least a few years. They've seen just a little bit of Hell's work in the world.

It can drive a body mad, knowing about the Red Room, but some people, they've got to see it to know.

–Sgt. Demicko Chenevix

Theliph

Transcendent

The creature named Theliph has no location; it has moved within Creation since its beginning, but has no shape or form. The touch of Theliph inspires faith, dedication, and devotion. Scholars have variously blamed him for the Great Work in Heaven and Lucifer's revolt. They say he carries the songs of Heaven, Hell, Light, Dark, and the Wild to the Powers' ears, that they may choose their devotion as they Commence. He helps the souls that grope towards the Virtues find them. Arguably, Theliph is not so much a creature that inspires dedication as the living will of faith and service throughout Creation; few have spoken to him, so the truth is unknown.

On occasion, Theliph has manifested itself in mortal form; then he wanders through the world as if in a haze. Mortals who look upon him find themselves inspired to worship him; many fall in love with him; some instantly dedicate their lives to his service. Powers, Imperators, and Excrucians suffer fewer effects—but must still struggle to be unmoved. That is the extent of his powers in that form; or, at least, he has never been seen to do anything more. When in that mortal form, he searches for someone—whose name he cannot recall—whom he claims to love. To the knowledge of the Powers, he has never found that person.

Theliph

(an Avatar thereof)

Glorious

Immortal (killing his mortal form
does not kill Theliph)

Wound Levels (Immortal) —

Deadly []

Serious [] []

Surface [] []

He looked out at the play of sun over the water. "Sometimes," he admitted, "I question my own worth."

"I believe in you," I told him. "I would die for you."

"I know," said Zéphyrin. "But your faith is a mortal's faith. A Noble can learn nothing from it."

— from the Thought-Record of Oriane Feroulet

Wardrobe and Style

PROPER dress reinforces social roles. It marks the members of society according to their station and social traits. In most mortal societies, clothing distinguishes women from men, adults from children, and the members of various subcultures from one another.

In Noble society, females and males occupy the same social role and the concept of childhood does not apply – yet a good wardrobe remains priceless. For those who would otherwise fade into the crowd, proper regalia serves to sharply distinguish a Noble from the mortals around them. For any Power, a good wardrobe reveals, illustrates, and emphasizes those traits of personality and history that that Noble wishes to make known. In short, when acting in society, proper attention to clothing helps a Noble define who they *are*.

The material below is intended only to accentuate the player’s vision and to help those players desirous of additional ideas. Players should always assume that their Power’s basic “look” matches their personal vision of the character – whether that means the native costume of the Power’s homeland and birth time, the clothing styles of the player’s home, or something peculiar and exotic. Particularly impractical costumes – from the twine g-string *inija* of the Mehinaku tribe to Victorian bustles and padding – rarely migrate from mortal society to the society of flowers, but if a player finds them appropriate, it is always acceptable and reasonable for their character to feel the same.

“I cannot possibly go out in this!” he snapped. “This outfit is abysmal.”

After substantial reflection, I unwound his scarf, slipped it off his head, and then replaced it with the long side on the left rather than the right. He turned and looked thoughtfully at the mirror.

“Great Scott, Luc,” he exclaimed a few seconds later, “I look as handsome as the very devil!”

– from *On Serving the Nobilis*,
by Luc Ginneis

Trends of Fashion in Noble Society

IN most cases, Nobles dress in one of three styles: “work clothes,” casual, or regalia. Their work clothes reflect their most important duty, which is to say, defending Creation: from a Noble perspective, “work clothes” for this kind of duty usually means a casual, loose-fitting, tough, and respectable outfit. They rarely accessorize such a look with makeup or ornamentation, and Nobles with long hair prefer to tie it back. If the Noble does apply decorations and elaborations, these are limited, highly personal, and easily maintained – e.g., moonlight, quickly braided into one’s hair, but not an elaborate mile-wide maze of ribbons and petticoats. Work clothes place practicality above social norms.

In more casual environments, many Nobles prefer to dress in a manner reflective of their Estate. The Power of Water favors flowing garments. The Power of War prefers clothing indicative of armor. Others favor the characteristic styles of their human upbringing, styles that seemed glamorous to them before Commencement, or styles relating to their Emperor, their Affiliation, or their realm. These outfits reflect simple, elemental truths about the Noble themselves.

Finally, the Nobilis have the regalia and high fashions of their culture. Such fashions, while often too ostentatious, peculiar, or confining for regular use on assignment or in the mortal world, are appropriate when governing one’s Chancel, socializing with other Nobilis, and traveling in the Mythic World. Some Nobilis design their own look; others integrate pieces and ideas developed by high-Aspect artists in the Noble world; a few lazily delegate the entire construction of their wardrobe to others. Such regalia creates an amazing, typically gorgeous, and ornate personal impression drawn from the sartorial lexicon of Noble society.

In this last category, four general lineages of fashion design exist among the Nobilis. The intellectual descendants of Naneferkeptah and Parthenope develop costumes peculiarly Noble, based on inspiration and history in equal measure. Costumery descending from the designs of Obares and Nadira Koriche – the 18th century prodigy who first integrated urbana hides into regalia – has a more cosmopolitan feel and is less constrained by the fashions of the past, losing a touch of *gravitas* but making a more favorable impression on mortals and others not steeped in Noble culture.

Lauviah plucked the head off a damned soul and sucked upon it thoughtfully, intangible blood spattering across her crimson skin and lime-green gown. “Did you see Rimmon?” she asked.

“I did!” answered Yomyael, looking up from the heap of intestines in which she frolicked. “Could you believe what she was wearing?”

Lauviah laughed and shook her head. “Some people have no taste,” she said, and threw the soul’s head over her shoulder to join the growing pile.

– from *Moments in a Glass*,
by Michael Kay

Elements of Style

A NOBLE'S outfit, hairstyle, and accessories can have several effects during play.

First, personal style can make a strong emotional impression. Humans without Noble advantages create business suits, with their implications of wealth and power; military uniforms that express a sense of discipline and strength; seductive, gorgeous, innocent, or rebellious casual wear; and clothing that brands its wearer a judge, aristocrat, police officer, or deeply dangerous individual. With a suitable Aspect miracle, Powers can do much better. A properly designed outfit can have the visual and emotional impact of an explosion, a son or daughter's wedding, or the death of a national hero. Such things impress mortals more than Nobles, but impressing mortals does have its uses.

Second, clothing can send a message. A specific medal on a military uniform does little to enhance its prestige – but for those who understand its meaning, it conveys one fact in a clear and precise manner. One medal denotes courage under fire; another denotes simply presence under fire. In civilian garb, one ribbon indicates support for AIDS victims; another denotes opposition to the structure of the software industry. At mortal levels of design, clothing conveys a single general concept. However, high-Aspect Powers can encode more complex messages into their designs. Such encoded information is instantly visible either to Noble eyes, all intelligent eyes, all living eyes, or to anything at all. This extends the basic principle inherent in medals, ribbons, and T-shirt messages.

Finally, Noble society imbues many forms of clothing and accessories with symbolic meaning. Properly-chosen clothing can send a message to those Nobilis who view it. This often enhances the reputation a Noble already possesses. For example, a Noble renowned for their wisdom can enhance that impression with a magistrate's costume. Conversely, a Noble reputed both foolish and prejudiced only looks ridiculous in such garb.

"I didn't notice," Gwen told the Choice News, "not until I looked at our photo albums. Then I could see it; every year, his suit would look a little sharper, and poor Henry would look a little fuzzier – like he was just fading out. So I know that's what happened to him. I mean, that horrible day. He put on his suit, and went out, zap, like a candle. And I found the suit just lying there on the floor, looking better than ever, and no Henry in it at all."

– from the *Choice News*
(a tabloid on Ash-tree Earth)

Effective Clothing Design

THE following chart defines how Nobles can enhance the emotional impact of their clothing with Aspect miracles. In addition, it describes the amount of denotative significance a given outfit can contain. Note that characters may not wish to embed excessively detailed messages in their clothing, for dignity's sake. They are, in effect, greeting everything they encounter with the message. (Or, at least, every Noble, every mortal, or every living thing, if the message is coded for certain eyes.)

A character can wear a look designed by another Noble. As long as they wear it “properly”, they receive the benefits of the Aspect miracle the designer used. If they meddle too much with an outfit's appearance, however, or wish to change its emotional impression or denotative meaning, they must substitute their own Aspect miracle.

Hollyhock Gods should consider this material an interpretation of the rules on Aspect found elsewhere—easily subject to further reinterpretation—rather than an independent rules set.

One night, she wore the dress named Invitation; and the next day, he wore the coat named Rejection. Then she wore Sorrow; and he, Regret. She wore Anger; he wore An Offer of Friendship. She wore the gown named Reluctant Agreement; he wore the suit named Overall, Pleased. They left such clothing behind them, then, until she died. He came to her funeral wearing the hat named Lost Opportunities, and his eyes were closed.

— from *On Serving the Nobilis*,
by Luc Ginneis

Clothing Impact Table

Aspect Miracle	Strength of Impression	Embedded Information
<i>None</i>	Trendy/unusual	Vague concepts or tidbits
Level 0: Peak Performance	Good Looking	Vague concepts or tidbits
Level 1: High-Level Human	Conveys the intended emotion or impression in a solid fashion.	Vague concepts or tidbits.
Level 2: World Record Performance	Conveys the intended impression or emotion in a dramatic fashion.	About a sentence of information (“My Chancel welcomes visitors,” “I slew a fallen angel once.”)
Level 3: Improbable	An inhumanly intense "look"-beyond any human's capacity	About a paragraph of information
Level 4-6: Very Improbable Impossible . . . for Humans Universally Improbable	Each additional level can: Increase the artistic merit <i>or</i> Increase the length of time the look affects mortals <i>or</i> Start with less appropriate materials or clothing	Equivalent of a few minutes of speech.
Level 7-8: Impossible for Anyone	Overpowering	Effectively unlimited
Level 9: Fabled	As desired	Effectively unlimited

Sartorial Splendor

SOMETIMES, a Noble wishes to outshine others—making themselves the prettiest, coolest, or wisest-looking person at a given gathering. To do so, they enter into a contest of Aspect miracles. They can use these miracles on the spot, adjusting their body language and general look; in advance, designing and planning a certain outfit; or even through the good graces of other Nobles, by having someone else plan an outfit for them.

If all else is equal, the character with the highest-level Aspect miracle backing their look wins this contest. However, this contest is essentially indirect—as involved Nobles adjust their own appearance, not that of others—and hence dependent on circumstances. Some of the major circumstances that affect this contest are the symbolic associations of one’s clothing and the substances from which a Power shaped it.

Many clothing styles, and many accessories, have a set of symbolic meanings in Noble iconography that can aid in the creation of any appropriate look. The discussion of individual clothing elements below describes the symbolic associations of each (if any). Appropriate symbols can enhance the Aspect miracle behind a look by one level; in **Dynamic Nobilis**, they give one shift towards triumph.

Many Powers find unusual materials helpful in creating an impressive wardrobe. These come in three varieties.

One can create *conjured* materials with a miracle of lesser creation. One example is phoenix silk. This cloth, typically dyed orange and red, has an atypical reaction to light and shadow that makes its colors seem to shift. Although only one Chancel manufactures the stuff in a mundane fashion, any Power can create a few bolts with a level 4 Realm miracle. Similarly, Powers can manufacture brain cotton—a semi-sentient cloth that adjusts its colors pleasingly to complement the wearer’s skin tone—just about anywhere.

Rare materials come from other worlds, Imperators, or unusual abilities. Jotun-forged steel makes excellent hairpieces and piercings. On those rare occasions when an Imperator wears mortal clothing and then discards it, the fabric is eternally imbued with something of that Imperator’s nature. Alchemically-enhanced denim endures forever, and the Power of the Wind can make cloth that ripples with or without a breeze. Rare materials are difficult to obtain, but a sufficient supply exists—any Power can get their hands on them, with an effort.

Using rare materials enhances the Aspect miracle behind a “look” by one level. In **Dynamic Nobilis**, it gives one shift towards triumph. In addi-

tion, many rare materials have peculiar properties that Powers find useful. Clothing integrating an urbana hide (pg. 30, **Nobilis**) appears normal to mortal viewers, however eccentric the fashion. Glasses with an eagle's eyesight trapped in the lens yield a noble and scholarly image while improving a low-Aspect Power's vision.

Precious materials are in exceedingly limited supply. One Chancel has a process for converting Warmain blood to a wondrous dye. Since they keep the process secret, and require a significant supply of that blood to make a basinful of color, the dye is rarer and more precious than miracles. Dust blown off the edge of Heaven is theoretically free to whomever finds it. Sadly, gathering enough to make glory cloth is a tedious and dangerous chore.

Using precious materials enhances the Aspect miracle behind a "look" by two levels (or two shifts towards triumph). In addition, it doubles any bonus deriving from the look's symbolic associations. A lion's-skin outfit can aid in the creation of a savage or martial look, giving a one-level bonus. Armor made from a Megalith Wasp's precious carapace doubles that bonus, in addition to the two-level precious material benefit, for a total benefit of four levels or four shifts towards triumph on an attempt to look the most dangerous person in the room.

Playing it Out: In **Dynamic Nobilis**, characters can wear nametags, placards, or large post-its with their current look and its miracle level. Under most circumstances, this is purely a roleplaying issue, and most characters will not actively wear miraculously-selected clothing styles. On occasion, however, as part of a plotline or session plan, the Hollyhock Gods may host an event where using these miracles is the norm. For example, if an important NPC is mingling at a celebration, they may talk to the prettiest, handsomest, most impressive, smartest-looking, or apparently fittest character they find; this can give that character an informational or situational advantage in an upcoming plot. Conversely, characters judged truly unimpressive may suffer some consequences from their social failing.

It is my practice never to appear at a gathering less beautiful than the Countess Mekhala Srisai. Forgive an old woman this small passion; I do so love to see Mekhala squirm.

— from the Memoirs of Alice Mendel, Lady of the Thunder

Talismanic Sempstry

CLOTHING and style carry a weight of symbolic meaning. Mortals can exploit this through the mundane art of clothes design. Enchanters have on occasion invested their magic in clothing, creating unnaturally concealing cloaks and officer's uniforms that magically inspire the troops. Powers can take this practice to a higher level, learning the art of talismanic sempstry – investing their miraculous energy into the clothes and armor and accessories they make. Unlike floral alchemy, this art is neither fully-developed nor shrouded in secrecy; Donal Shaw's slim text on the matter, *The Divine Tailor*, contains almost everything known about miraculous clothing design.

Characters who learn talismanic sempstry can extend the mundane qualities of clothing into the miraculous. As noted below, ribbons represent a connection to the spirits of the Mythic World; a talismanic sempstress can craft a ribboned outfit capable of catching and binding the spirits of air and earth. The mailed fist connotes strength; a talismanic sempstress can make a gauntlet that enhances the strength of the wearer. These abilities are purchased as Gifts, with automatic global miracles taking effect when appropriate to enhance those who wear the sempstress' clothes (see pg. 98 for an example). Talismanic sempstresses understand academically how to use the symbols implicit in any piece of clothing, but at this stage of the art, most master only one or two. Even Donal Shaw could only talismanically manipulate four of the hundreds of symbols described in *The Divine Tailor*. The sempstress is limited in how many such items they may sew, weave, or forge during any given story. The Gifts on ppg. 98-100 describe a baseline, and their cost in character points justifies some leniency, but it is ultimately up to the HG how often characters may perform acts of sempstry. Players should ask for a ruling on this before purchasing or saving up points for a specific sempstry Gift.

Once an object is crafted, the talismanic sempstress has no further control over its effects. If a character wishes to wield the miraculous product of an NPC's sempstry, they may purchase an appropriate Gift through a Focus and declare its origin as sempstry. This is not necessary when using objects created by a fellow PC's sempstry.

Some Accessories

Amice

symbolizing Purity, Discipline, Salvation, and Defense

The *amice* is a square of linen cloth used by mortal clergy as a sacred vestment. In Noble society, it serves as a symbolic shield between the holy and the profane; thus, a Power might use an amice as a kerchief or glove when handling something impure.

Example Use of Precious Material: Powers have soaked the amice *Legatus* three times in Angels' blood.

Belt

symbolizing Dignity, Merit, Pomposity, and Rigor

In Noble society, belts rarely have symbolic meaning. However, a belt made from a large square of cloth, folded seven times to produce a rectangular shape, has connotations of dignity and merit.

Blackened Teeth

Some of the older Powers find white teeth aesthetically unnerving. They "gleam horribly" when someone smiles. Before an audience with such a Power, protocol recommends soaking iron and powdered gallnut in vinegar or tea and using the resulting dye to darken one's teeth.

Heroes' Armor

I looked at the armor. "I've seen this before," I said. "Soldiers who wear it have no fear. They fight until they die, never pausing, never turning back, heedless of their injuries and the injuries of others."

"Yes."

"It's called the armor of heroes, but, really, it's a death sentence."

"Yes."

I sighed. "Pass it over," I said. "I have a martyrdom to attend."

—from *Lost in the Dark*,
by Grover Denmark

Chasuble

symbolizing Fear of the Afterlife, Cowardice, and Cruelty

The chasuble is another sacred vestment that has filtered into Noble society. It takes the shape of a large cloth rectangle with a hole in the center for the wearer's head, so that one half covers the wearer's chest and the other half their upper back. Angels have confirmed that no person wearing a chasuble upon their death goes thence to Hell, no matter how vile their deeds. Powers of Hell generally disdain the chasuble as cowardly, but many Powers of the Dark favor the garment; why should they risk eternal punishment if a biased universe finds their actions objectionable?

Cloak

symbolizing Unworldliness, Neutrality, the Auctoritas, and (when fluttering) Volatility

A cloak is a simple and loose outer garment that protects the clothing under it from the elements. It separates the Power from external phenomena. A cloak is typically simple enough to lay flat, with no sleeves and no or minimal fastenings. The inside may have a lining in a different fabric or color than the outer surface. Cloaks without fastenings are bound around the wearer's neck either with a clasp or a knot, and such a clasp may have iconic or symbolic meaning of its own.

Corsetry

symbolizing Rigor and the Subjugation of the Physical to the Ideal

Corsets and stays are garments that lace tightly about the torso, compressing the waist and stomach. Inside the garment is a pattern of hard plastic, metal, or other "boning," acting as a kind of secondary skeleton to support straight posture and the wearer's back. Pulling the corset tight is typically accomplished by progressively tightening the fastenings on the back; for mortals, this requires outside assistance, and it is an Aspect 1 miracle to don or doff such a corset on one's own.

Example Use of Precious Material: The original corset was a metal and bone body-cage alchemically constructed from the remains of a dead Strategist; it perfected those who wore it, but eventually it devoured them.

Fan

symbolizing Grace, Beauty, and Power

In the Heian court of Japan, the first three social ranks could wield a twenty-five fold fan. The fourth and fifth ranks could use twenty-three folds. Lower-rank nobles could only affect twelve folds. When these fans entered Noble society, the Nobilis adopted a fifty-fold style, illustrating both their exaltation and the precision of their craftsmanship. High-Aspect Nobles do sometimes wield war fans, not so much because the weapon is effective—even a metal or stone fan has little advantage over a dagger—but simply because they can.

Example Use of Precious Material: The Tapestry of Celestin defines the existence of that world. Francisco Garnet cut a rectangle from that tapestry to make his fan; this left Celestin without a mountain, a heron, and two lakes.

Glory

symbolizing Illumination and Immortality

Glory is a projection of spiritual force that forms a loose disc about the head (“halo”) or the body (“mandorla” or “aureola.”) A Power overcome by fury, consciously exerting their will, or engaged in deep meditation may give off an impression of this nature; with practice, it may be cultivated as part of a coordinated wardrobe. This glory gives no actual illumination, has no precise form, and does not form a literal halo or mandorla unless there is some reason that it should. Mystical or technological accessories that assist with the necessary mental effort—“halo-creating tools”—may be the subject of talismanic sempstry.

Gloves

symbolism as per the color (pg. 159, Nobilis) or style (ppg. 88-92).

Gloves have no specific meaning in Noble society. However, long gloves can help a Power convey a color- or style-based impression. Long crimson gloves are a distinct asset when invoking the symbolism of red—that is, magnanimity, fortitude, and war. Similarly, chainmail gloves can help give a militant impression. Most Powers who wear gloves keep them on wooden or metal arms and hands when not in use, thus preserving their comfort and shape.

A Parting

“I do not like to see you go.”

“I’m sorry.”

And: “I have heard . . . that . . . love is forbidden.”

“I do not speak of love. Only that I do not like to see you go. Only that I shall walk cloaked in the memory of you; of you, of you! And it shall not be enough.”

A slight, sad pause. Then the sense of a smile.

“Accessorize.”

—overheard in Locus Medan

Luck Charms

symbolizing Fortune, fair or foul

In the early days of the Third Age, magicians would sneak dried green birds—feathers intact—into the possessions of their enemies, hoping to curse them with bad fortune. Modern wizards sneer at this practice as backwards and impractical; owning or wearing such a bird, they assert, provides one with bountiful good luck. Nobles are immune to this effect, for better or worse, but many wear a dried bird now and again to celebrate and symbolize a particularly wondrous or vile stroke of luck.

Example Use of Precious Material: Ivar Marken wears a dried green Aboulomri chick.

Necklace

In the early days of the Age, Powers often wore necklaces of their enemies' teeth. As Noble infighting became less common, the style became more general; one might wear a necklace of human teeth, now, or the teeth of many strange beasts.

Ornamental Comb

Some Powers wear ornamental combs with the handle shaped into an icon, pattern, or symbol of import. When hooked into the Power's hair, it makes an unostentatious place to display the Power's Design, a runic mark associated with their Affiliation, or a knotwork pattern containing a faery glamour.

Ribbons

symbolizing Spirits, Myth, and Primal Things

Ribbons symbolize shamanic power over the natural world. Powers who spend more time in the Mythic Reality than the Prosaic sometimes affect them. A few Powers whose Estates directly touch upon the affairs of spirits—such as the Power of Shamans and the Power of Fable—wear ribbons dozens of feet long, trailing after them on the ground wherever they walk.

Rings

symbolism and ritual significance as per the Material

In addition to finger rings, some Nobles favor nose rings, toe rings, ear-rings, navel rings, and rings of less delicacy. In most cases, these rings are aesthetic. In other cases, they indicate that relevant body parts possess some virtue. Jade denotes purity and tin generally denotes restraint. Thus, jade finger rings suggest that a Noble uses their hands for pure pursuits. Tin toe rings suggest that a Noble walks with discretion.

Example Use of Precious Material: A hollow glass ring filled with the Buddha's dying breath.

Scent

Many Powers design a characteristic scent or collection of scents. This becomes a kind of personal trademark: when one smells *Illicit Jade* in the air, one knows that Remenyke Corvinus approaches. Similarly, the perfume *Fire in the Sky* announces Tang Liu-hong.

The Duchess' Scent

When the Duchess goes among anosmics, it is her custom to employ a subtitling maid. As she drifts through the room, the subtleties of her perfume preceding and following her, the subtitling maid holds up signs indicating its significance. "Now," might sign the maid, "you recognize a distant hint of mesembryanthemum in her fragrance. This signifies a languid perception — or does she, perhaps, accuse you of idleness? Ah, but there is betony, there is dogrose, she intends no such accusation." To make the subtle the overt is such a maid's foremost duty; it is also the eventual and necessary reason for her execution.

—from *In the Right Circles*,
by Jasprite Sherrard

Some Clothing Styles

Casual

Powers can wear relatively casual clothing, in modern mortal styles, ancient mortal styles, or something unique. This has no particular social effect.

Formal

symbolizing Formality, Etiquette, Morality, and Merit

Formal clothing involves multiple layers and coordinated accessories. First, undergarments alter the Power's basic shape, either with constriction or padding. Generally, Powers apply this technique in moderation; Ansfride de Bourgueville, one of the exceptions, uses padded shoulders and ridged gloves to help cultivate a reptilian image. Some formal outfits include visible undergarments, which can serve their purpose without altering the Power's shape: e.g., the ends of garters, the sleeves of a long-sleeved undershirt, or the top of a bustier.

Elegant clothing layers over this. Usually, such clothing is both light and flexible; Powers prefer to retain mobility even when formally dressed. Over that come various forms of outerwear. These include long jackets, short jackets, sweaters, vests, as well as semi-transparent, deeply-split, or fringe-style outer skirts worn over one's dress, skirt, or pants. Finally, accessories, headwear, and footwear complete the look; a very small selection of possibilities appears above and below.

For example, Ismay le Roux's formal wear includes: normal underwear, save for shimmering garters; a loose black blouse and swirling ruffled black skirt; a thin-waisted colorless jacket; long strips of white cloth hanging from her belt; a Marchessa's coronet; two jade rings on her left hand; an ornamental silver comb in her hair; sensible shoes; and a rectangle of gold-cloth fabric, anchored by a thin cord around her neck, hanging down her left side. To mortal eyes, she seems bizarre but striking; among Powers, the complexity of the style gives an impression of formality and social merit.

Chintana's Theory

Chintana's theory of contingent existence runs as follows:

Everything in Creation has a thread of existence, running from the beginning of time to its ending. When one destroys something, one inherits its thread – one splices that thread into one's own. One becomes an entity contingent upon that thing. This is the essence of destruction: it taints the destroyer with the soul of the destroyed. To slay a madman is to become a carrier of his madness. To destroy the virtuous is to inherit the affliction of their virtue. Contingency is not identity, and one could destroy a billion snails without developing a shell – but one would carry forward the destiny of those snails. Thus, the Excrucian claim that everything they kill lives on in them is at once truthful and a horrid lie – they are not saving the essence of the thing they destroy, but coopting it.

Conversely, when we save something from destruction, it becomes contingent upon us. Everything a Noble protects or preserves inherits, in some sense, their essence – and, in particular, the moral quality of the specific actions that saved it.

In short, it does no good to kill an enemy one does not respect; and it does no good to save the world, if one cannot do it in style.

–from An Overview of Noble Philosophy, by Heather Williams

Scarification and Piercing

symbolizing Determination and Willingness to Suffer

Nobles generally collect scars, or fail to do so, based on their nature. Some naturally heal until their skin becomes unblemished; others scar lightly; others are destined to become keloidal tapestries. A Noble wishing to violate their own nature, darkening a particular scar or lightening a particularly undesirable one, can do so with a level 3 Aspect miracle. Weaving a thick horse hair into a wound before healing it can also make the resulting scar more distinctive.

Piercing is generally easier, unless the Noble has Durant and cannot turn it off. As long as metal remains in a wound, the hole tends to remain open. Characters whose Aspect-based healing is fast and powerful enough to drive piercings from their place also have high enough Aspect to preserve the hole with a simple miracle.

Generally, both scars and piercings see less use in Noble society. As indications of the Power's willingness to mutilate their body, and as a rite of passage, they mean little—even Powers who feel pain normally find that the intensity of their lives' experiences tends to diminish such minor traumas. Scars and piercings still have value as aesthetic decorations and part of a general "look", but they are neither traditional or shocking to Noble eyes and are therefore rare. Exceptions exist, and can occasionally impress; these include scars from an Abhorrent Weapon or piercings made of metal taken from Hell and infused with its essence.

Unworked Fashions

Modern manufacture—from sewing machines to mass-produced clothing—tames the spirit of the clothing. Powers desiring a more primal costume prefer *unworked fashions*, which do not require sophisticated assembly. The effort in designing these articles of clothing focuses on preparing the fabric and donning the garment; stitching it together, if done at all, requires very little time. Some common forms of unworked fashion include animal skins, tunics, and pinned clothing.

Accessorizing: Cloaks, tassels, and headbands are standard accessories to unworked fashions. Cloak clasps are rare; rather, the Power knots the cloak around their neck. Car keys and so forth are generally kept in a *chuspa* (below).

Chuspa

A *chuspa* is a bag attached to a thong, so that one may hang it around one's neck. *Chuspa* – worn over or under clothing – make a popular addition to unworked fashions, since most such fashions lack pockets.

Pinned Clothing

One can generally create a modest outfit from a large blanket of fabric bound strategically over one's body with a sash and ornamental pins. A mantle and several strings of beads complete the look.

Skins

Those Powers who wear animal skins generally favor unworked fashions. The standard approach to preparing a lion or bear skin starts with killing the animal, skinning it, and scraping away the flesh, meat, fat, and gristle. The Power or a servant then washes the skin, wrings or blow-dries it, and stretches it on a frame to finish drying. After that point, they work a chemical concoction or a mixture of animal brains and water into the skin to soften it. When it is almost dry again, they work and stretch the skin to soften it further. A low-Aspect Power may need to repeat the braining process once or twice. Finally, smoking the skin helps protect it against insect and water damage. Such skins are typically worn as cloaks; the hollowed-out head may be worn over the Power's own. A Power with a strong relationship to the natural world can request that the skin wrap itself around them to provide for their modesty, rather than wearing additional clothing. The spirit generally complies, but could be persuaded otherwise by an even more charismatic Noble.

Tunics

symbolizing Fierce Emotion, Primal Things, Savagery, Nature, and Elemental Determination

Tunics, with or without fringe, are on the border of the unworked fashions. Tiso Auqui wears a black tunic, a tawny mantle, and a headband decorated with bunches of white feathers; though decorous, this yields an appearance sufficiently savage to enhance his reputation.

Emblems

The emblem is the converse of the atom: a thing so thoroughly encompassing as to allow no further inclusion, nor to look outwards towards any unincluded thing. At times individuals have considered Creation as such as emblem, or the Creator, or some notional totality of experience; the Klein bottle is also a candidate worth mention. The emblem has no outside, no antithesis, and no discernable end, which raises, of course, the question: what can an emblem wear?

— from *Sewing Infinity: Fashion, the Nobilis, and the Hermeneutics of Jung*,
by Eric Ferguson Gerhard

Some Footwear

Foot Bells

symbolizing Grace, Music, and Dancing

Belling one's feet—whether with a single bell on the shoelaces or a string of bells tied to the toes—is a popular practice among Powers fond of the dance. Aspect 1 is sufficient, though barely, to make the sound harmonious rather than discordant.

Example Use of Precious Material: Bells containing souls stolen from Hell produce a curiously compelling music.

Foot Masks

symbolism varies.

Some Powers attach small gold or silver masks to their shoes. The symbolism is similar to that of a facial mask (see below) but is generally less effective.

Ojotas

symbolizing Maturity, Willingness to Face Trials, Swiftness, Valor, and Wisdom

Powers make *ojota* sandals from golden straw. Such sandals are surprisingly comfortable and resilient, particularly when made by high-Aspect Powers.

Example Use of Precious Material: Phineus Nicanor wears ojota-like sandals made from multicolored gorgon hair.

The Shoes

*You just had to look at his shoes to
know what kind of man he was.
Tough, honest, brave, and a little
bit vindictive – the shoes said it all.*

—from *Fallen Angel*,
by Rannen Yedidyah

Some Headgear

Canipos

symbolizing the Sun, Wealth, and Ruthlessness

The *canipos* are disks of gold as big as plates, worn on the head.

Collage Hats

symbolism varies

A collage hat contains many small iconographic representations around the brim. Subtle designers might use sewn pictograms for various concepts. More blatant milliners might include an inch-high torture chamber with shrunken enemies inside.

Crowns

symbolizing Power, Tradition, Nobility, and (if the crown exceeds the wearer's station) Folly

A Power's regalia typically includes a suitable crown. Characters of any rank can and often do wear a silver circlet, connoting their Noble status and nothing more. A Baron is entitled to a six-pearled coronet. A Viscount can wear a chain-of-pearls crown. A Marquis or Marchessa can wear a coronet with strawberry leaves and pearls. A Duke or Duchess can wear a gold coronet with strawberry leaves. Regals can wear any crown, up to and including circlets of rare Jotun-forged steel. Alternately, they can wear certain totemic masks (see below).

Masters of High Summoning may wear an adharmic crown (see *Unlikely Flowerings*, ppg. 32-33). As an alien device such a crown has vague associations with Monstrosity, Daring, and the Outsider – but its interpretation, properly, lies outside the aegis of Noble norms.

Eggshells

symbolizing Reflection, Water, and Life

Shattered eggshells, dyed blue and glued to the head, provide an interesting and vaguely reptilian appearance. This has a symbolic relationship with the season Reflection (pg. 102), and therefore both water and life.

Hair Bag

Some Powers wear a mesh or solid bag behind their neck. They can tuck long hair into it when combat threatens, ensuring that their hair remains out of their way.

Heaven Hats

symbolizing Heaven, Art, Mystery, and Justice

Some Noble hats have extremely high protrusions. This connotes a bond between the Noble and Heaven.

Horn Hider

The “horn hider”, a headband with dangling threads that hang before the eyes, serves to partially obscure those eyes. This metaphorically blunts a Noble’s most dangerous weapon – their spirit – and yields an inoffensive appearance.

Pilcocata

symbolizing Air, Wind, Flight, Thought, Reason, War, and Nature

The *pilcocata* is a garland of spiky feathers worn on the head. The *pilcocata* has aetherial connotations. With slight modifications, it can have a martial appearance, with the feathers suggesting “daggers from the natural world”. One rarely wears this garland in mortal society.

Totemic Masks

symbolism varies

Traditionally, Nobles wear masks not to conceal their faces but to replace them. The primary connotation of an unadorned face, unless Commencement warped the Noble’s flesh, is *humanity*. An appropriate mask severs that association and replaces it with a more appropriate symbol.

The most ornate Noble masks cover the entire face or head. Many resemble animals, demons, or spirits. A fox mask denotes cleverness; the mask of a hound represents loyalty. The face of the demon Dhurandhara represents exquisite rage, while Bhasakarna’s face embodies controlled and deliberate cruelty. Some Nobles favor superbly realistic full-face masks. Others use copper, silver, brass, or stiffened cloth. Certain masks have a more abstract appearance, evoking imagery such as water, peace, hatred, or skill. Nobles rarely make such masks in a realistic style.

The Emperor Malika Tagmaoui crafts masks considered the definitive expression of this art. Sadly, one can only wear these masks once. Malika insists that Powers destroy her masks once they remove them, lest unfortunate consequences befall.

Marguerite's Veil

"Why do you wear a veil, Marguerite?" her lover will ask, when they have reached their climax.

"It is not a veil," she will say. "It is a window. In it, I see – in shadowed, grayed-out shapes – the image of your world. When I lift it, the world goes away altogether; there is nothing save the void."

Her lover will think on this. "That cannot be true," he will say. "If it were, from where did you obtain the veil?"

A slight shrug. "I wove it from my dreams."

"I do not believe you," he will say, and rip it from her face; and she will reach for it, but she will not find it in the void; and that is how the world will end.

– from *24 Finales*,
by Rannen Yedidyah

A Compendium of Peculiar Gifts

preview

Talismanic Sempstry

a collection of Gifts pertaining to the *Divine Tailor's* art.

Sempstry of the Canipos

10 points

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
4 (Domain)	Automatic	Global	Limited	No	
4 CPs	+1	+1	-2	+1	5*2=10CPs

The character with this Gift has mastered the symbolism of the *canipos* (pg. 94) and may call upon it in talismanic sempstry. The character may make *canipos* containing miracles of the Sun, or Wealth, or Ruthlessness – a sun disc, e.g., to burn one's enemies or to attract great wealth or to invoke cruel fates on those who defy the wearer. The precise details are fixed during the crafting of each *canipos* and the character may craft (by default) only one or two of these devices per story. The character with this Gift may later develop additional skill with sempstry, adding one or two symbols to their final repertoire.

This Gift is global and functions automatically, channeling through the character's works to create the appropriate miraculous effects. It is purchased as a Lesser Creation of a family of related Estates – the Estates, that is, associated with the *canipos* and the to-be-defined symbols the Power will master in good time. Because the Gift invokes a Lesser Creation, the character's sempstry is limited to miracles of this type.

Sempstry of Cloaks and Fans

10 points

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
4 (Domain)	Automatic	Global	Limited	No	
4 CPs	+1	+1	-2	+1	5*2=10CPs

The character with this Gift has mastered the symbolism of cloaks and fans (ppg. 84-85) and may call upon it in talismanic sempstry. The character may make cloaks containing miracles of Unworldliness, Neutrality, and Volatility – though not, in practice, of the Auctoritas – and fans containing miracles of Grace, Beauty, and Power. The precise details are fixed during the crafting of each cloak or fan and the character may craft (by default) only one or two of these devices per story. It is possible that the character with this Gift may master another complementary symbol at a later date, adding, e.g., the sempstry of crowns or foot bells to their repertoire.

This Gift is based on a Lesser Creation of a family of related Estates – the Estates associated through talismanic sempstry with the symbols the character has mastered.

The Babel hat of Maxwell Mann will pierce the subtle veils of the world. Its weight will settle comfortably upon Mann's brow. The hooked tooth at the top will bite a hand in Heaven. Maxwell Mann's third eye will open and he will look upwards towards his God. But he will find that the God he served has long forsaken Heaven.

Ah! what blind and hundred-handed beast is this that he sees then?

It crawls, it skirls, it scurries through the endless land of Heaven. It hunts as it has hunted for the Earth and its life below. And seeing it, Maxwell Mann will howl; and bitten by his hat, the creature too! It will writhe in its pain and it will smile its most secret, terrible smile. Then in one great skitter, like a centipede of angels, it will descend the long arc of his hat, and if Mann could toss the hat aside, then it would fall, and all thereafter would be well . . .

But he will not. Oh, he will not; and that is how the world will end.

– from *24 Finales*, by Rannen Yedidyah

Sempstry of the Glove

14 or 21 points

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
6 (Domain)	Automatic	Global	Limited	No	
6 CPs	+1	+1	-2	+1	7*2=14CPs 7*3=21CPs

The character with this Gift has mastered the use of gloves in talismanic sempstry (pg. 85), dyeing and embroidering them with such symbols as to channel the power of an Estate. Thus in red gloves they may craft a miracle of War, in green of Life, in a delicate embroidery of birds power over the avian, and so forth and so on. This Gift comes in two variations: in the first, the player defines such limits as to narrow the power down to a family of Estates. In the second, the player does not.

This Gift is based on a Lesser Change of either a family of related Estates or all Estates.

A Casual Sempstry of Ribbons

16 points

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
6 (Domain)	Automatic	Global	Comprehensive	No	
6 CPs	+1	+1	-1	+1	8*2=16CPs

The character with this Gift has a casual talismanic power over ribbons (pg. 87) and is able to swiftly accessorize clothing with them to produce miraculous effects. The character's creations (whether patterned assortments of ribbon bound below the neck or a hand-crafted hair ribbon of particular color and character) produce and contain miracles of Spirits, Myths, and Primal Things. The precise details are fixed during crafting, but the character needs only an hour or two—sometimes mere minutes—to create such a work. It is recommended, for the sake of the HG's sanity, that these casual creations be as fragile as they are precious, lest they become as numberless as the minime and accumulate in great shoals and waste-hills across the surface of the Earth. In any case, this sempstry is purchased as a Lesser Change of the relevant Estates.

Sempstry Cloak

1 point

Miracle Level	Invocation	Range	Utility	Common?	Cost
4 (Domain)	Simple	Local	One Trick	No	
4 CPs	-1	-1	-3	+1	1CP

The character with this Gift owns a cloak manufactured by a talismanic sempstress. When the character incites the cloak with their will, it performs a specific miracle of either Unworldliness, Neutrality, or Volatility. This miracle is chosen when the cloak is made. It might be, for instance, a Lesser Creation of Neutrality that defines the character to mortal observers as a disinterested arbiter with no stake in any local conflicts: someone who does and incites no harm by their presence, someone whom they willingly allow to walk among them, someone of whom to take no notice unless and until their services as arbiter are useful in some way. Such a cloak allows the character to sit in on meetings of their enemies, negotiate peace treaties among anthills, and roam casually through the mansions of the wealthy, saying, if challenged, only, "I am a neutral party here."

The cloak leached the personhood from him, the frailty, the mortality. The Jason that I knew dissolved: there was only the arbiter, the judging angel – glacially distant, unbiased, and uninvolved.

– from *Regalia*, by Keiko Takemori

The Accords at Babylon

mini preview

Sacred Contracts

... The *res* are sacred contracts bound in a physical form. The body of a *res* can take any form, from a smooth stone to a bronze spear; some *res* even take form as a human or animal. The covenant held within that body can sanctify an ordinary bargain, embody a group with specific goals, or bind *Nobilis* together in service to the common good. Powers who agree to participate in the covenant become “bound” to the *res*. . . .

Days and Holidays

... [the angelic] calendar breaks the year into five “fingers” or “seasons,” corresponding to the stages of existence: immanence, conception, reflection, transformation, and death. . . .

The Book of Purity

mini preview

... The second moral virtue, *purity*, measures a character's personal growth. As a character frees themselves from human failings, their purity increases. ...

Terrene Particles

Black and white particles are two aspects of the terrene essence, the moral grounding of the soul, the element of the earth. These particles create certain forms of malignity and innocence, as well as the harvest, the soil, and stone.

Black particles are the particles of empathy. They call to one another, forming a channel by which one soul can know another's pain. These particles create prudence, wisdom, constancy, evil, falsehood, and error. Solid black particles create moments of malice, in which one seeks to hurt another through the sudden understanding that one can. They also give rise to moments of conscience, where one suddenly sees and acts to ease another's pain. A deep and persistent appreciation of the nature of suffering manifests the power of the clear black particulate substance. This pure inspiration, as with the polluted black, can inspire a character either to enhance or remove others' anguish.

White particles define the quest for abstract virtue. This is the substance of philosophers and the spiritual essence of ethics itself. This substance creates purity, truth, innocence, magic, hope, and beauty. The solid white substance inspires those who blindly adopt ethical codes and standards of behavior, whether learned from their culture or a charismatic leader. Clear white particles brace and empower the souls of those who develop their ethics from rational introspection or spiritual inspiration.

Vincent Guntali did not believe in Hell; nor did he believe that, should such a place exist, he would be exiled there. Perhaps this amused the Prince of Lies, for he struck a bargain with Vincent's soul. Now Vincent sits in a high place overlooking the flames and suffering. So long as he remains unwavering, remains certain that he does not belong in Hell, he shall not suffer from it.

He did well at first, but for the past year, he has dared think nothing else but "I am not in Hell."

—from *Observations of the Damned*,
by Quan Feng-Ying

*I come across a man staring
hungrily into a kiln; he
shudders forward, from time
to time, towards the flame,
only to jerk up short like a
mime against no wall.*

*"It would be hot," I tell him.
"Your skin would crackle!"*

*"It would not so," he an-
swers me, "for this is the
instrument of my transcen-
dence. When the flames take
hold of me, I am destined to
disimmane and become a
mighty Yacarceil. A cosmic
oracle! A diviner of the
flame! An instrument of the
prophecy that has called me
all my life. This fire is my
antithesis and my apotheo-
sis, yet . . ."*

"You cannot seem to enter."

*And there his face fell. "It is
an inaccessible destiny," he
says, "and my life can nei-
ther terminate nor complete.
There is no such thing as a
Yacarceil, it turns out."*

*— from *Sonnet and the Sea*,
by Alex Dec*

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Author's Note

In this world that is clothed in strangeness it is nice to be able to offer a gift from time to time.

So here!

The second part of **A Society of Flowers**, as it was written—with a few exceptions, here and there—so many years ago. May it find you in good health! May you know a thousand blessings! May it add some little pleasure to that bounty I have wished.

There will be more, no doubt, on some occasion. There are after all at least three books to go, and if I cared to count them I'd probably find five or six.

Best wishes,

Jenna
(was: R. Sean Borgstrom)