

IN NOMINE

B. Williams

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Inspired by the game of the same name from Steve Jackson Games

From the thrilling crescendos and crashing cymbals of a joyous reunion to the somber dirges of a final farewell, from the rapid staccato of a military mission to the gentle lullaby of a snowy night, all of God's creation is a grand Symphony.

The Lord is its conductor, but as the Symphony unfolds, it is composed in real time by the mortals whose lives are its instruments, and the Angels and Demons who move among them. Angels move through the Symphony, in harmony with it, guiding it and allowing it to guide them. Demons subvert it to their own narcissistic vision. Humans follow its ebbs and flows in broad strokes, but don't perceive the grand design of it, except in flashes and fragments.

Politicians and businessmen oversee deals and trades, parents drive their children to school, lovers marry and raise children and divorce, the garbage truck comes once a week—but underneath the mundanity there is a secret conflict that plays out in little moments. A sobbing woman holding a bottle of pills receives a knock at the door from a kindly neighbor, a doctor cheats on his husband with a handsome stranger, a lawyer misplaces an important document and a killer goes free.

Some of these moments are happenstance, instants of pure chance of the vagaries of human kindness and cruelty, but others are intentional plays for the fate of the world, moves in a struggle that dates back to the Garden of Eden.

The War

The angels and demons refer to the plays to advance their goals, the missions to thwart their opponents, and the stakes to be won and lost as The War. The War is older than the written word, and is constant and ceaseless.

Demons, under the loose guidance of Lucifer, seek to corrupt God's plan, to further personal goals, and to ultimately draw human souls to Hell, where they will be squeezed of their essence in order to fuel further corruption. In Hell, Lucifer's ultimate goals are unknown, but the tides are slowly turning in his favor. Before mankind left Eden, when the first angels fell and became demons, the angelic host outnumbered the demonic forces two to one. Now, demons near the same numerical advantage, and pious souls are diverted to Hell at ever-accelerating rates.

Both God's angelic host and the demonic horde of Hell have reasons to keep their existence, and their conflict, hidden from humanity.

The old saying about the Devil's greatest trick is true: Lucifer and the Princes that serve him know that openly flaunting their presence would strengthen mankind's belief in God, and cut them off from their greatest source of essence: sinners.

Angels and their earthly allies maintain their secrecy, on the other hand, in accordance with God's plan, and those who overtly display their divine natures are hunted down quickly by the angelic servitors of the Archangel Dominic.

But the secrecy of The War is matched only by its intensity, and its conflicts consume the lives of nearly every angelic and demonic servitor on Earth. In every major city across creation, the tension is stifling. From drunken squabbles in biker bars to the debate states of gubernatorial elections, to the UN troops deployed internationally, there are angels and there are demons, sizing each other up, laying and thwarting plans, and waiting for the tipping point—that perfect moment to make the decisive strike.

Heaven

At the top of the celestial order is God, the creator of the stars and the sun and the skies, the Heavenly Father who sculpted the beast of the air and the sea. God resides in Paradise, a sequestered garden fortress within Heaven where the souls of the pure and just are called when they die, to rejoice in His unfathomable presence. Even for the

Archangels, the highest-ranking among the host, it is exceedingly rare to enter or leave Paradise. Outside of the angelic Trisagion Chorus, who sing eternally the praises of God in His presence, almost no angels have seen Paradise from within.

While the human souls of Heaven reside in Paradise, the archangels oversee the remainder of Heaven, as well as the host's actions in the corporeal world. While Heaven continues to function relatively smoothly, the relations between archangels is not always friendly, or even cordial. There are even archangels who openly despise one another, but they manage for the most part to restrain themselves to debate and occasional counter-operations on Earth, rather than bringing their disdain to outright war in Heaven.

In Heaven, the host speaks the celestial tongue, an ancient sung language that predates any human language.

Only beings in celestial form can sing the celestial tongue, and it can be heard and understood clearly only by those who can perceive the Symphony, save for when an angel makes himself known and visible to mortals. The celestial tongue is an artistic and incorruptable language, incapable of expressing intentional lies. It can tell fictional stories, allegories, or parable, but the tone and cadence make it unmistakably clear that the words are meant as such. It is also possible for a person to speak things in the celestial tongue that are not true, so long as they believe them to be true. It expresses the true heart of the speaker, not necessarily the absolute and immutable truth, which is known only to God.

All creatures who hear the celestial tongue spoken can understand it instinctively.

Heaven is a gleaming garden-filled metropolis of unfathomable size, all of which is visible from the towering golden Council Spires in the center of the Eternal City, there the Seraphim Council oversees arbitration within Heaven, where divine purviews known as Words are assigned and indelibly woven into the natures of angels, and where the eldest of the seraphim, as well as the Archangels (with the exception of Eli, who still roams the Earth) vote on matters of celestial importance.

Throughout its unfathomable reaches, Heaven contains bustling exchanges overseen by Marc, and gardens where angelic musicians compose supernal music. Novalis occasionally journeys from her place in these gardens to the treeline where they meet the groves of ancient redwoods where Michael trains his elite warriors. Here she watches disapprovingly, or sometimes with resigned sadness, or sometimes she debates with Michael about the merits of peace versus conflict.

Far outside the eternal city, Jordi oversees a vast savanna containing the souls of animals who ascend to Heaven, and the angels in his service who take animal forms and live simple lives as beasts. No buildings mark this landscape, and the archangel of Animals swims in its rivers, soars through its skies. Jordi is hunter and prey. They are the alligator quietly observing, and diligent worker ant bringing food to their queen.

In the mountains beyond the savanna, where Janus and his servitors race and convene, when not on missions for their own archangel, or on loan to others, a towering volcano smokes eternally, and within it, sobbing, cackling, pacing, or catatonic, is Gabriel. Her servitors rarely leave the lava tunnels of the volcano, except when they are needed on Earth, their loyalty to their mistress is so great. They protect her, tend to her, and sometimes suffer for her instability, but all who have pledged their Hearts to her understand the burden she bears, the favor she holds in God's eyes, and the pivotal role she will play in the final days of The War.

Ives' Great Library is less a landmark and more a network that runs throughout the Eternal City and the cathedrals, fortresses, and abbeys beyond it. It runs parallel to the libraries of Earth, and any place where angels or humans store information, thought, or art are part of it. Because of this, it is all but impossible to locate specific information in the Great Library without intimate familiarity with it, and those few angels who know its limitless halls are usually busy answering to the archangels, and not available to guide would-be researchers to specific information. The Library is unmistakably linked to Jean's Halls of Insight, where the archangel's and their servitors develop new tools and technologies to aid in The War, and where they monitor and map the progress and

innovations of humans on Earth and the demonic opponents of God's plan. There are even those who hypothesize that the Great Library may be connected, in its deepest recesses, to Kronos' infernal well of dark secrets in Hell.

Where Heaven nears the Marches, a shifting maze of dream and imagination, Blandine stands vigilant and mournful in her tower, protectively eyeing the mortals who slumber under her guidance, and forlornly watching the twisted mockery of her home that lies across the sea of shifting dreamscapes, in Hell.

There are sadder places still in Heaven. The homes of some of the former archangels—the dead, the lost, and the fallen—have been repurposed and reinhabited by new celestials who resumed their duties, but some homes still stand empty. The Halls of Creation, once the greatest theater, concert hall, and art gallery in the Symphony, is now mostly desolate, tended by a few remaining angels and relievers in Eli's absence. The barracks where Uriel mustered his angelic crusaders are now watched over only by hunting trophies: the dragons, ogres, and behemoths that the Archangel of Purity slew in his war against the creatures of the Marches and the monsters of the Earth, before being called to Paradise to reside with God. Laurence replaced the archangel in his station, but she commands Heaven's troops from an undecorated office in the Eternal City.

Perhaps the most haunting of all Heaven's abandoned strongholds is the Cathedral of Light, where Lucifer shone before the Fall. The stained glass of incomparable luster and vibrance remain, but without the Archangel of Light there to illuminate them, they are more haunting than welcoming. Without his servitors to attend him between the platinum pillars, the mirrored metal feels cold and somber. Since the day that Michael drove Lucifer back to his sanctuary and finally defeated him, casting him into Hell, those few servitors who did not join him in their rebellion were slain, their hearts destroyed, and their forces scattered. In the apse where their hearts once gleamed and where their forces were wrought apart, the silence itself seems to say, "Remember what happened here. Remember what we fought for, and remember that we failed."

Hell

When God cast Lucifer and his followers from Heaven, they found themselves exiled to a silent waste of smothering darkness and suffocating heat. Outside of Heaven, filled with God's light, outside of Earth and the cosmos that He had created. Lucifer and his wounded allies huddled where nothing had ever been. Over the millennia, they have built clamoring cities to push back the darkness and the silence.

These fallen, former trusted servitors of God, found themselves cut from His glory. Their very souls, which once hummed in tune with the Symphony, now clanged noisily against it. Their ability to hear the Symphony at all was dampened by their own soul crying out proudly in their minds. While they could still understand the celestial tongue, they could no longer speak it, save for broken words choked out painfully.

Over years of stilted and difficult communication, the demons, as these fallen came to call one another, developed their own language. One that could sing into the Symphony as easily as with the mouths of men. Perhaps most importantly for the forces of Hell as they began to develop their own society, one that could express lies. This infernal vernacular, sometimes simply called "the argot," is wholly unlike the celestial tongue. It is not understood instinctively by those who hear it, and it cannot be translated by magic such as the Song of Tongues.

The ringing silence of the abyss that was is gone. Today, in Hell, the demon princes vie ruthlessly for status and traction. They form alliances where beneficial, or manipulate one another into furthering their goals, but they are unified, more than anything, by mutual distrust. It is their need to monitor and stifle one another that keeps them bound together. Lucifer wanders through Hell and across the Earth, but doesn't rule the infernal realm directly. He allows Hell to be what it is. He acts as a guide and an arbiter to the demon princes, but not as their despot. Lucifer appears only when it suits him.

There is a degree of cunning in Lucifer's laissez-faire attitude. Despite Lucifer's extraordinary power—he could best any demon prince in nearly any contest of individual prowess—he has neither the definitionally unmatched power of God, nor the loyalty of his princes in Hell that God has of His archangels. Were he to assume

the same almighty-ruler stance that God takes in Heaven, he understands that the princes would grow unhappy and overthrow him. By allowing the principalities of Hell to war and compete with one another, he keeps the princes relatively weak and fragmented. And so he wanders creation, observing, scheming, and delighting sadistically in any misfortune that he stumbles across...or causes.

Hades is Hell's largest city, a dense and bustling slum. Whereas souls in Heaven are sequestered away in Paradise to be in the presence of God, souls in Hell are shuffled from principality to principality. They are tormented, tempted, corrupted, and sometimes torn apart entirely, to wring them of the essence of the divine that is in every human. God created man in his image, and a flicker of that truth still exists in each soul. Angels can pull essence directly from the Symphony, but the fallen must wring it forcefully from God's creation.

Before souls can be allocated, traded, and exploited, they pass through Hades. They enter into Hell under the watchful eye of two towering seraphim, who stand against the throngs of souls screaming and clamoring to enter into Heaven, or at least escape from Hell. Asmodeus and his demons rule this infernal metropolis. They navigate labyrinthine contracts and ever-shifting trade agreements to divide the dead into the care of the various princes. While Hell's legalisms themselves are built atop a rotten core and riddled with dishonest deals, Asmodeus does not tolerate deviancy from its principles. Bribery and corruption do occur, but those caught disobeying the letter of Hell's tangled laws do not survive long to enjoy the fruits of their indiscretions.

Some of the dead are shuffled to Gehenna, where Baal reenacts the greatest atrocities of human warfare with her human soul-puppets. She mismatches time periods and regions into a collage of violence and corpses. Baal's demons train against one another and against the tormented souls, taking roles as soldiers and generals, and wielding weapons designed in Vapula's workshops.

The volcanic principality of Sheol brings the poetic lakes of fire to their horrendous realization. Belial first cracked the charred bedrock of Hell to bring forth the molten stone and flowing fire beneath, and he rules Sheol now. Here, souls are tortured with unbearable heat. Demons literally burn them away for their essence, pull them from the rivers of flame, and allow them to heal, before unceremoniously tossing them unceremoniously back into the liquid, bound in chains or impaled on hooks, once their spirits have scarred over.

Some lucky souls from Hell can manage to bargain with their demonic tormentors for passage to Shal-Mari, a glittering casino overseen by Andrealphus and Haagenti. In this city of buffets and pimps, those souls are milked just as effectively as in Gehenna or Sheol, but few try to escape. In Shal-Mari, the dead willingly chain themselves to their own torment, indulging in excess and pleasure as their spirits erode, until they are passed as payment to some other prince.

The final stop for many are the catacombs of Stygia. Saminga collects the souls too damaged and ragged after decades or even centuries of torment, and her servitors pick apart their damaged forces. It is exceedingly rare for a soul to be removed from Stygia once sent there, but there is almost a measure of relief from its dead. There are few screams of pain or pleas for mercy. The end is met, usually, in resigned silence.

Although one of the dead could theoretically escape her bondage, hiding out in Hell or the Marches, or even use a tether to escape to Earth, the princes of Hell and their servitors keep keen watch over their dead, and Asmodeus' hounds would discover a soul long before it managed to reach an exit.

Earth

The War originated in the celestial realm, but the conflict spills into the physical world as its primary battleground. Most people live their lives unaware of the divine and infernal agents that move among them. They work their jobs, they raise their children, they love, fear, toil, and die without knowing that the forces of Hell are kept at bay daily by angels and their human soldiers.

On Earth, most angels and demons wear human vessels, natural-seeming bodies constructed of essence. Some have vessels that resemble animals, or other special vessels granted by attunements, such as the stone vessels that

the Archangel David can grant. Others possess human or animal hosts, such as the multifaceted kyriotates or the singularly wicked shedim. A few even navigate the world in their true celestial forms, invisible to most humans around them (page XX).

For the most part, celestials in the corporeal world do what they can to remain unnoticed while pursuing their goals and the agendas of their superiors. They wear modern clothing, they use mortal names, they speak human languages. Some even secure jobs, homes, or regular social engagements (see Roles, page XX).

Tethers

The archangels can manifest on Earth as they need. Wherever their Word is manifest, wherever God needs them to be, they can be. For lesser angels, and for demons, stepping between celestial and corporeal reality is trickier.

A tether ties the physical world to the supernatural one. When significant or persistent themes play through the Symphony, an angel or demon of sufficient might can use those refrains to tie a bridge between the physical world and Heaven or Hell. Thousands coming together for a single goal that leaves its mark on the world, a century of dutiful mortal dedication to a cause, even some single moments of extraordinary import such as the cracking of the Liberty Bell, these are the sorts of circumstances that create the conditions necessary for a tether to be tied between worlds.

Because the bond must be strong and deeply integrated into the Symphony for the tether to hold the weight of the angels or demons who will cross it, only events that occur without demonic or angelic interference can create tethers. The actions of angels and demons on Earth disturb the Symphony because they are not of the world, and so the plans and actions that they orchestrate do not run deeply enough in the Symphony to create a tether. This means it is not possible for angels or demons, even by the most subtle and gradual of manipulation, to intentionally create the conditions necessary for a tether to be possible.

Once those conditions **are** met, would-be tethers are often quickly found. An archangel or demon prince will assign a servitor to act as the seneschal of the tether, a sort of overseer and custodian, who will protect the tether from opposing forces, act as a guide to the celestials using the tether, monitor activity in the area, and maintain peace between servitors of the various superiors within the tether's perimeter, who often have conflicting goals, personalities, and ideologies.

While seneschals are often very competent in their own right (the overwhelming majority of them are Word-bound angels or demons, themselves) these duties keep a seneschal occupied. They cannot usually spare essence, songs, or resources, or leave the tether to assist in matters on Earth or in Heaven or Hell. Even the most multiplicitous kyriotate won't split her attention away from her tether, lest it be seized by the forces of Hell, or used by her superior while she is away.

Because the maintenance and protection of a tether requires the full-time attention of a notable angel or demon, some potential tethers go unused, especially if they are in inconvenient places or too close to other tethers, rendering them redundant. On rare occasions, however, a position is independently useful enough to two superiors that they both claim a single tether that is related to their respective words, each assigning their own seneschal. The site of the Purity Distilling Company in Boston, where the cities great molasses flood originated, is a tether both to Kobal and to Haagenti, who are close companions in Hell as it is. The Western Wall in Jerusalem is a tether both to Creation and to Stone, despite the fact that Eli and David are barely civil with one another.

There is nothing preventing, in theory, a tether from being held by both sides of The War, but such a site would be a logistical nightmare to create, and an excruciating tightrope-walk to maintain. The senate chamber in Washington DC was once held by a seneschal in service to Ives, and another in service to Malphas, until the angelic forces were driven out by the Noble of Factions in the early 1950's, and the angel who was its seneschal in service to Destiny was killed.

Civilians

The overwhelming majority of humans cannot perceive the Symphony, cannot learn Songs, and have no idea that The War permeates the globe. It was first Michael who referred to these blissfully unaware mortals as ‘civilians,’ and both sides still call them that today.

While civilians are not the leading forces in The War, they are still crucial to it. In many ways, they turn the tides of war in an area with their capacity to chose compassion or avarice, patience or malice. In addition to being instrumental in what celestial plans come to fruition and which stumble into obscurity, their future is the spoils of the war. Those who achieve their destinies (page XX) further God’s plan, while those who succumb to their fates (page XX) plummet into Hell, where they are wrung of their humanity and become fuel for greater atrocity on Earth.

Despite their importance, civilians cannot consciously spend essence, but they do store it within their souls. Civilians can only spend essence subconsciously, when they exert themselves in pursuit of their greatest passions, or in their times of greatest need. Generally the only use for which a civilian can spend essence is to gain an edge on a skill roll (page XX).

Civilians neither have nor need roles or vessels, they cannot be granted Words, they cannot have more than two forces in a single category, and they **never** disturb the Symphony with their actions.

Soldiers

There are humans who, knowingly or not, fight in The War. Soldiers are humans who have been recruited, usually by an angel or demon, to act as agents, allies, and liasons on Earth. Any human can be tapped as an informed ally, occupying an uncomfortable middle ground between civilian and soldier, but only the most dedicated, accomplished, or unfortunate are selected to serve as soldiers. All soldiers ultimately act in service to an archangel or a demon prince, usually by way of an intermediary servitor, and only archangels, demon princes, and Lucifer have the power to bind the extra force into a mortal and turn him into a soldier.

Soldiers of Heaven are generally informed of the basics of The War, or at least not actively decieved. They will generally know words like “Symphony” or “Choir” as they relate to The War, and will understand what role they are expected to play. Hellsworn soldiers rarely know the name of the demon prince they are serving, or sometimes even the name of the demon acting as their direct contact. And all this assumes that the Hellsworn even understand that they are dealing with demons.

All soldiers possess at least 5 forces, one of which they receive when they are selected, and can have up to 3 in a single category. This does mean that only a civilian with 4 forces has the spiritual strength to become a soldier. All previous attempts to turn a three-force human into a soldier, to imbue a human with a fourth force in a category, or to raise a second category to its third force, have failed fatally, with the exception of Lilith (page xx).

Soldiers can perceive the Symphony, so long as they have at least 2 celestial forces, and they can learn and use (though not teach) Songs. Soldiers can spend essence consciously, and they disturb the Symphony only through use of Songs. In all other regards, after all, they truly are humans, and harming one disturbs the Symphony as normal.

Soldiers in The War, like any soldier, can abandon their station, attempting to return to a normal life, pursuing their own interests, or even seeking out a new superior to serve, on the same side of The War, or on an enemy’s side. Dominic’s justicars and Asmodeus’ demonic wardens ensure that soldiers who defect tend not to live long, though securing protection under another superior might save such a soldier’s life, if they can do so before being eliminated. Other than their allegiance and how they are treated by their superiors, there is no practical difference between a soldier to Heaven and a soldier of Hell.

Some very powerful ethereal spirits can also create soldiers. Such soldiers are generally not trusted by either side of The War, and must be extraordinarily careful to either never be discovered, or to ingratiate themselves to the prevailing celestials in an area.

Many soldiers who do serve ethereal spirits are defectors from the War. In some cases, the prevailing thought in the area is that a soldier of a spirit is better than a soldier of the opposing side, but some celestials will always see ethereal soldiers as enemies.

Saints

There are those who devote themselves so fully to the Lord's vision for the Symphony, intentionally or not, that they are called even in death to acts as guides and protectors for humanity. Saints are human souls in Heaven who are called by the Seraphim Council to return to Earth in human form to act as agents of Heaven.

Saints are extraordinarily rare. Whereas soldiers on both sides number in the thousands, there are fewer than 200 saints on Earth at any point.

Once a saint returns to Earth at a tether, they are unable to re-enter Heaven until the death of their vessel. They cannot abandon their vessel in the way that an angel can, but their vessel, like an angel's, is not their body. They do not require food or sleep, they do not need to breathe, they do not become ill, and they age at a drastically lowered rate.

All saints can perceive The Symphony, and do not disturb it with their actions, except the use of songs. Saints can consciously expend essence and recover it as angels do.

Finally, every saint has an additional attunement: they are *blessed*.

Any time a demon targets a saint with a resonance, song, or attunement, the saint is allowed a resistance roll with their celestial forces. This resistance roll always requires only 1 success in order to prevent the resonance or attunement from working. If the ability would normally allow a resistance roll with another force, the saint may use either that force or their celestial forces, but always requires only 1 success.

Sorcerers

Perhaps the unluckiest mortals involved in The War, sorcerers serve Hell thanklessly and often unwittingly.

Each sorcerer has intentionally sought out power—poring over texts, sharing rituals on social media, and piecing together a working framework for magic through trial and error. For every ritual that works, there are ten thousand frauds created by hopefuls, liars, lunatics, and even genuine sorcerers attempting to obfuscate their true practices.

Those few unlucky mortals who do manage to piece together even a single genuine ritual become infernal pawns.

When a sorcerer performs a ritual, they broadcast their desires through occult infernal channels. Nearby demons can hear the intents of the sorcerer and for 7 days after the ritual, any sorcerer who attempted their magic cannot resist the resonance or songs of any demon who heard their plea, whether or not they chose to respond. Additionally, all rolls made to manipulate the sorcerer mentally or socially gain an edge.

Finally, any actions taken in answering a genuine sorcerer's ritual do not disturb The Symphony, for reasons that even the archangels do not fully understand, but many suspect Kronos of having a hand in.

While they are in no way obligated to, often demons *will* attempt to fulfill the wishes of sorcerers, both because it keeps that sorcerer practicing, and because it means a chance to affect the world without disturbing The Symphony.

Often multiple demons pull at a sorcerer's strings, usually without the sorcerer even being aware, and most sorcerers end up dying in gruesome ways.

A sorcerer cannot perceive The Symphony, cannot learn songs, and cannot consciously expend essence.

The Marches

A shimmering and frightful expanse lies between Heaven and Hell, where mortals nightly come unknowingly close to the infernal and the divine in their dreams and their nightmares. When most celestials talk about the Marches, this is what they are referring to: a roiling landscape of creativity, possibility, and primal emotion that stretches from Blandine's tower in Heaven to Beleth's fortress on the outskirts of Hades.

Each of these superiors controls roughly half of this expanse, with the exact borders shifting constantly as each side presses against the other on the border. When Beleth dominates the Marches, fear echoes across Earth and mortals turn fitfully in their sleep, while Blandine's victories claim more dreamers into her realm of hope, imagination, and joyous memories.

While they dream, the spirits of mortals exist only in mental bodies and are immune to both corporeal and celestial damage, unless acted upon with a power that explicitly states otherwise. These dreamers (humans and all other animals visit the Marches while they dream) cannot exist outside of their own dreamscapes, which manifest around them as they move. These constructed realities jostle against one another in the Marches, blending at the edges, pushing against one another, and collapsing to fill empty spaces as the scope of their inhabitants' perceptions shift, granting dreamers fleeting and nonsensical glimpses at other dreamscapes pressed against their own for brief moments throughout the night.

Angels and demons cannot create their own dreamscapes, but can move freely between the dreamscapes of others, and even exist in the surreal spaces between them.

The Deep Marches

There are areas beyond (to the extent that "beyond" is a meaningful concept in the Marches) the dreamscapes of mortals. The vistas of the Deep Marches are somewhat more stable than the matrix of impermanent dreamscapes that most consider the Marches proper. These are the shores of ancient myth where dreams wash up and accumulate on inscrutable shores.

Here, the remaining gods dreamt up by humanity oversee fantastical palaces, starry forests, and misty cliffsides. Themes and stories and fears that repeat over centuries settle and coalesce here. Primordial desires and fundamental horrors find form and dominion in these strange lands.

The Deep Marches were once dense and rowdy with spirits and deities, ruling their spiritual domains and overseeing their servitors. These ancient gods and legends ventured forth into the dreamscapes proper to speak with their worshipers or court new ones, to treat with angels and demons, and sometimes even to find their way into the corporeal world through tethers.

Now, the Deep Marches are quieter. The spirits there receive less essence through ritual, and they number far fewer in the aftermath of Uriel's Purity Crusade. Whole pantheons were decimated by the armies of the Archangel of Purity, and their centuries-old homes were ransacked or razed.

Denizens

Mankind was created by God, but the denizens of the Marches were created by mankind. The pagan myths of the Marches were mostly wiped out by Uriel's forces, but scattered ersatz deities survived until the zealous archangel was called into Paradise by the Lord. These lucky survivors hid in the furthest reaches of the Deep Marches, or cowered, pressed fearfully against the base of Beleth's tower.

As Uriel's servitors returned begrudgingly to Heaven to await reassignment to other superiors, the surviving ethereals surveyed their destroyed home.

Today, some of the remaining denizens of the Marches eagerly request permission from Beleth's demons to speak with mortals, smiling sycophantically at the servitors of Nightmares. Others lurk in the Deep Marches, plotting revenge. A few slink cautiously into dreamscapes to subtly influence mortals, and pry at what essence they can from curious mortals. Fewer still roam the corporeal world in ragged, centuries-old vessels, hoping to live undisturbed in what comfort they can manage.

The surviving denizens of the Marches vary wildly in form, in power, and in motive. The Egyptian Thoth, the Norse Freya (and a handful of Valkyries), and the Japanese Susanoo, at least, are known to have survived the destruction of their brethren. Other denizens are younger than the crusade, or are less well-defined and fit into no specific pantheon or mythology.

Death is perhaps the oldest of the spirits who owe allegiance to no mythos or culture. It has no allies in Heaven or in Hell (even Saminga quietly hates it for the essence and attention it diverts from her Word), and has survived as long as it has mostly owing to the vast number of names and faces by which it is inadvertently worshiped by the living. Centuries of fearful dreams have granted it a vast domain in the Deep Marches, which it nearly never leaves, for it knows that both sides of The War would destroy it if they could.

On the other end of the scale, in regards to power and infamy, there are countless fairies, sprites, wisps, hags, and boogeymen. Nameless creatures who form their own identities and absorb fragments of fancy and story, braiding them into forces and wrapping themselves in echoes of human desire, fear, and rage.

Baba Yaga presides, in an unofficial but rarely-questioned sense, over many of these lesser goblins and brownies.

Ethereal spirits are natural extensions of the nature of the Marches, and while they can don vessels and manifest in celestial or corporeal form on Earth, they are most at home when they are within their own realm. Additionally, the most powerful ethereal spirits have domain forces, which are a fourth kind of force similar to the Word forces that angels and demons may possess. They offer similar benefits to a word force, and are used in all calculations of total forces, and as free successes on related rolls, but in all of their uses, they work only within the Marches. Domain forces are not granted by a higher power, and instead are forged very slowly by the denizens of the Marches and delicately sewn into their souls. Domain forces can only be bound into the spirits of ethereal beings, or at least all attempts to do otherwise have failed.

Ethereal spirits do not regain essence naturally, but are able to trade it amongst themselves or with celestials, and can receive it from human dreamers. In addition, human and animal sacrifice performed at a properly sanctified tether to an ethereal's domain can proffer essence to its target, generally one essence per force of the sacrificed creature. While in the Marches, ethereal spirits may hold twice their total forces in essence.

The denizens of the Marches cannot truly perceive The Symphony, but many can vaguely sense when something disturbs it. They can also perform, learn, and even teach songs, but many don't conceive of them as songs and don't sense The Symphony as music. Many denizens use different words to refer to songs for this reason, although celestials correctly perceive what they are truly doing as the performance of songs.

Blandine has no personal vendetta against the denizens of the Deep Marches, but tolerates no bullying, intimidation, or heresy from them. Where they are allowed into the dreamscapes of mortals, they are kept under strict watch. Those who sneak unchaperoned into the dreamscapes to meet with worshipers must do so clandestinely and peacefully, lest dream become nightmare. Rapid movement of a dreamscape into Beleth's territory is monitored closely by Blandine's servitors, after all.

The Symphony

The Symphony is figurative, a metaphor for God's perfect design, but also literal, a music perceptible to the senses of the divine and infernal hosts. Themes and sounds repeat throughout: the clashing percussion of violent conflict, the trills of human joy, the crescendos of passion and excitement, the woodwind moans of melancholia.

The Symphony is playing constantly in the heads of the angels, who hear it clearly, and in special ways owing to their respective choirs, and of demons, whose perception of it is clouded by an internal cacophony—a knowledge of what The Symphony could and should be that drums and clashes inside their souls.

Some young angels may posit that The Symphony is the material and fundamental *truth* of God's creation, and the corporeal world simply emanates from it. One of Heaven's soldiers might imagine The Symphony as a reflection of the Corporeal world, after all changes made to the physical world affect the music of The Symphony. Most seasoned celestials hold that neither outlook is wholly true. The Symphony, and the corporeal world, and Heaven and Hell, and the expanse of the Marches, are all facets of the same truth, perceived by each as God intended. The whole of the truth, which comprises these and likely other aspects hidden even to the archangels, is knowable only to God.

Forces

Every angel and demon, as well as every mortal human and animal, is composed of a woven knot of forces. The overwhelming majority of these fall into three categories: corporeal, ethereal, and celestial. Some powerful celestials have additional forces (see Words, below) and some ethereals have domains that grant them extra forces (page xx), but all thinking creatures have at least these three.

Some forces are relatively trivial. A creature whose forces in a category are inferior still has forces in that category. An ant for instance, has no mechanically significant forces, but is still a living being and technically has thin, delicate corporeal, ethereal, and celestial forces.

A mortal's forces are tied to their body.

The bodies of angels and demons are impermanent and artificial. A celestial's forces instead are tied to his heart.

Hearts

An angel or demon's heart resides, usually, in Heaven or in Hell, respectively, and is under the protection (or shrewd ownership, in some cases) of the superior whom they serve. This archangel or demon prince can use the celestial's heart to perceive them, no matter where in The Symphony they may be, and the superior can communicate with any celestial whose heart they possess.

Touching the heart is the same as touching the celestial for the purposes of songs, resonances, or attunements.

Angels and their superiors may move their own hearts, although taking your heart out of your superior's care generates a note of dissonance, and removing an angelic heart from Heaven is impossible.

Demons' hearts, in line with their selfish nature, are more flexible in theory, but the harsh authoritarianism of most demon princes makes the practical reality much less forgiving. A demon with access to his heart may move it anywhere, even taking it to the corporeal realm, wherein it manifests in some fixed form appropriate for its owner. The princes and princesses of Hell, however, keep the hearts of their servitors constricted in barbed, impenetrable cages, even forbidding their own servitors from touching their own hearts.

It is possible for a demon to willingly sever the connection to her own heart from anywhere, with 10 successes on a celestial forces roll (a feat which will always require the expenditure of considerable essence). Whether successful or not, an attempt depletes what is left of the essence reserves of the demon, and deals 5 soul hits.

Words

Angels and demons may exhibit a fourth kind of force. The Seraphim Council in Heaven, or Lucifer in Hell, may fine-tune a force in The Symphony, harmonizing it with a concept or theme, and tie it into a celestial. These forces are called Word forces, and the concept they represent is now that celestial's Word.

Receiving a Word changes a celestial permanently and fundamentally.

A Word may be sweeping or specific, it may evoke something vitally important to the universe or something relatively trivial, but even the Demon of Stubbed Toes or the Angel of Clean Laundry is afforded a measure of awe and respect by virtue of their Word.

All archangels and all of the princes and princesses of Hell have Words, as do many other angels and demons. It is not possible to grant a mortal a Word, not even a soldier or saint.

Creation is Eli's word, and Haagenti is the Princess of Gluttony, but countless other words exist. Hadarath, the Angel of Springtime, serves Novalis, and Baal commands Ixnehu, the Demon of Terrorism.

A celestial's being needs to contain at least 12 forces before he may be granted a Word. A weaker being would not be able to handle the spiritual pressure of containing a Word force, and would be undone.

No celestial may have more than one Word; the conflict within them would rip their forces apart in seconds, and words cannot be removed or changed intentionally. Words CAN be altered, slightly however, but the fall or redemption of a celestial, or can change over time as the cultural or physical context of the underpinning concept evolves. The Demon of Isolation may become the Angel of Solitude upon being redeemed for instance, though some words remain unchanged by this transformation. Beleth, before her fall, was already the Angel of Nightmares.

Each Word force grants an edge to any roll to act in line with or promote that Word. This includes skill rolls, songs, resonances, and attunements. Additionally, an angel or demon regenerates one additional essence per day per Word force.

Word bound celestials may begin to develop unique abilities, and, additionally, gain a measure of control over their own appearance in their celestial forms, deviating from the form for their choir or band, if the desire. This accounts for Michael and Lucifer's human forms, Asmodeus' fearsome size, and David's earthen exterior.

Rules

The rules presented in the book form a platform on which players and storytellers can build their campaigns.

The primary purpose of these rules is to provide a shared understanding of action and consequence within the world of the game and its stories. These rules should empower and guide the telling of stories, but not restrict them. If the game master and the involved players in a campaign agree that something makes good narrative sense, then that's what happens, regardless of what the rules say.

Dice

Dice are used to introduce uncertainty to the narrative of In Nomine, and to create tension and drama. Generally, players will be asked to roll dice only when that uncertainty heightens the experience of the game and the story. If failure on a roll would stop the progression of the story, and if success is reasonably attainable by a competent person, then the attempted action succeeds without a roll.

Only when both success and failure would further the story being told at the table (albeit in different directions) are dice rolled. TO the end, a failed die roll never means that *nothing* happens, and failure does not always mean that the task was not completed, just that it wasn't completed *as planned*. Failure to pick a lock may mean that the lock comes unlatched but not before a patrol of guards in a compound spots the infiltrating angel. Failure to climb a jagged cliff doesn't leave the climber sitting on the ground, but may mean that the climber misses some important event, or that they slip partway up the surface, catching themselves on a jutting rock and injuring themselves as they slam against the sheer surface.

When you *are* called to roll dice, you will roll three six-sided dice—the kind you would find in a standard board game. The storyteller will tell you whether the roll relies on your corporeal forces (which are invoked for tasks that rely on strength, speed, endurance, balance), your ethereal forces (which govern wits, intelligence, and reasoning), or your celestial forces (which represent resolve, empathy, perception, and spiritual might). After rolling, count the number of individual dice that show numbers equal to or lower than your relevant forces. These dice are called “successes.”

One success is needed to complete a task satisfactorily, and additional successes represent exceptional skill and luck, and may provide added benefits. Several things can increase or decrease the final success count of a roll, even above 3 or below 0.

Edges

When making a roll, a character may call upon edges. These represent advantageous situations that a character can bring to bear to increase the likelihood and extent of their success, and every edge adds one success to the roll's total.

Sources of edges include:

- ❖ A relevant skill or passion
- ❖ Assistance from helpers
- ❖ A relic
- ❖ The special traits of a vessel
- ❖ An attunement
- ❖ Songs
- ❖ Resonance
- ❖ Advantageous in-world circumstances
- ❖ Essence
- ❖ Word/Domain Forces

To gain an edge from assistance on a roll, you require 4 helpers, and each helper with a relevant skill or passion counts as 2. It must make sense narratively for your character to be receiving that help. A character with the endure skill could help lift a heavy rock, but could not provide assistance in resisting a poison. If a character offers help with a task and that task fails, any assisting characters are also susceptible to any downsides of that failure.

Essence spent on edges must be spent before rolling at a rate of one essence per edge. When a character is receiving assistance on a roll, any character providing assistance on a roll can spend essence on it for edges.

Opposition

Some tasks are particularly difficult, either inherently or because another character is actively hindering the attempt. In these difficult situations, a roll may have opposition.

Opposition that comes from inanimate or impersonal forces is said to be passive opposition. This represents the inherent difficulty of a task or the circumstances surrounding it. The icy roads of a Montana February may oppose Drive rolls with a 2, or the noisy chatter of a busy diner might oppose rolls to eavesdrop with a 1. Passive opposition removes successes from your roll equal to its severity, reducing your success total to 0 or less. Final results less than 0 are not worse the lower the result—all negative results are equal.

When opposition represents one character intentionally acting at odds with another, this is called active opposition. The opposing character will usually make an appropriate roll of their own based on how they are interfering, or what opposed goals they are pursuing, and the character with the highest success count after edges and passive opposition accomplishes their goal, with additional successes equal to their surplus successes over their opposition.

When a roll faces opposition, the storyteller should usually let the players know before rolling. The exception to this is when the player characters would have no way of knowing about the complications or additional difficulty they are facing. These unforeseen oppositions should always be shared after rolling.

Skill and Passion

All sentient beings are capable of honing skills. These are broad and fixed categories, in game terms, and all player characters will have multiple skills. A skill's primary function is to provide a constant edge on all rolls related to its scope. A list of skills and their uses can be found on page xx.

In addition to skills, human beings (including saints, soldiers, and sorcerers) have interests that fuel and sustain them, and often develop talents in line with those passions, outside of the skills marked on their character sheet. Passions have two major benefits.

The first of these is that a passion can be substituted for a skill in order to provide an edge or allow for assistance on a roll. A man with a passion for baking could use that passion instead of the Create skill to make a souffle, instead of the Endure skill to survive grueling kitchen shifts, or instead of the Sense skill to pick out unique flavors or spices by smell. This benefit does not stack with actually having the skill—the character gets one benefit or the other on a given roll.

The second benefit of a passion is that when a mortal works meaningfully at their passion, they regain one essence, up to once per day. When a mortal accomplishes a notable goal in line with their passion, they instead regain *all* of their essence (page xx).

The sort of accomplishment required to benefit from this greater regain happens to most people once a month or less, and is proportional to the sorts of actions they are expected to perform normally. An established executive with a passion for business could be reaffirmed by The Symphony and recover all of her essence by closing a major international deal. When she was a new hire, she might have recovered all of her essence by leading her first successful meeting.

Intervention

If the three dice rolled all show 1's or all show 6's, a unique turn of events occurs called an intervention, wherein greater powers influence the outcome of a roll.

Divine interventions occur when all three dice show 1's (with the three singular manifestations together representing the Trinity), and the intervention favors the forces of Heaven. All dice showing 6's (666 representing the number of the beast of the book of Revelation) invoke an infernal intervention, and the results favor the goals and methods of Hell and Lucifer.

In either case, the character whose actions triggered the intervention is not relevant to its manifestation. A demon can roll a divine intervention just as readily as an angel, and the same goes for angels rolling infernal interventions.

The specifics of what this entails will be highly tailored to the situation in which the roll occurred. Generally, more important, higher-stakes rolls will have more drastic interventions, and more routine rolls will have more subtle interventions, but there should always be some added effect beyond just what rolling well or poorly might entail.

A demon swinging a sword at a soldier of Heaven who rolls a 111 on his attack might be blinded for just a moment by light glinting off a passing car outside, providing the soldier a moment to escape. The same demon bringing his blade to bear against a Word-bound angel at the climax of a long story arc might instead be thrown back by radiant light into a far wall, taking an injury and driving his sword into a stone wall, leaving him unarmed until he can dislodge it.

Resonance

All angels and demons have a resonance based on their choir or band. God created each choir of angels for a purpose, and their resonance is the manifestation of that purpose. The resonance of a demon is the twisted corruption of the same purpose as their angelic counterpart.

Mortals, ethereal spirits, the dead, and animals *never* have a resonance, under any circumstances. It is simply not their nature within The Symphony.

Each choir or band's resonance is described in the section for that choir or band. Except where noted otherwise, invoking a resonance does not cost essence, requires no roll, and does not disturb The Symphony.

Attunements

Attunements are gifts granted by a superior (the archangels in Heaven or the princes and princesses of Hell). Each superior grants a specific attunement to each choir or band, but it is possible to earn the attunements of other choirs or bands, or to earn special attunements that do not relate to any specific choir or band.

Essence

All conscious beings, from angels to demons to humans to mice, have essence within them. It is the spark that causes a living being to hum within The Symphony. It is the breath of God in the lungs of Adam, and the heat of infernal fire in the chest of every demon.

A being can contain essence equal to their total number of forces at any time, unless noted otherwise. Some beings, such as angels, demons, and soldiers, can intentionally spend essence, whereas most mortals and all animals only spend it unconsciously and instinctively.

Expending essence and releasing it back into The Symphony can improve a character's ability to interact with the world around them. Songs cost essence to perform, and essence can be spent to grant edges on die rolls. Some attunements and other special abilities cost essence to invoke or activate.

Angels and demons regain essence in pursuit of their duties. Once per day, a celestial can draw essence from The Symphony by spending a few hours performing actions that reaffirm their Word, their superior's goals or the goals of Heaven or Hell, as appropriate. What this looks like will vary significantly from celestial to celestial. A demon in service to Andrealphus might walk the street and take a John back to a motel. A particularly pious seraph might spend two hours in deep prayer at a local church. An angel of Ives could volunteer at a community center mentoring children.

Many angels and demons take roles (page xx) which put them in positions to frequently reaffirm their devotion or their ambitions.

Particularly grandiose, brave, dangerous, or impactful expressions may allow a celestial to regain their essence without the usual restrictions. A demon in service to Belial would undoubtedly regain his essence by burning down a hospital. A cherub who prevented a school shooting would regain essence in that moment. When essence is regained in these ways, it does not require any particular minimum time, and bypasses the once-per-day restriction.

When an angel or demon regains essence, they regain essence equal to 1+ the lowest of their celestial, ethereal, and corporeal forces. A celestial with Word forces regains an additional number of essence equal to their Word forces.

Humans and animals regain one Essence every day when they wake from a restful sleep, and humans may gain more from their passion (page xx).

Songs

Essence empowers celestials and mortals alike to impact the world in great ways, and resonances can guide The Symphony, but through songs, it is possible to add new refrains and interludes to the Lord's great work.

Songs are magical arias and dirges that take advantage of the mutual interrelation between the world and The Symphony. By playing their own souls like instruments, angels and demons (and, rarely, soldiers and saints) can influence the world in ways that other actions alone cannot.

Using a song costs essence and disturbs The Symphony. When a celestial or any creature who can perceive The Symphony is in the presence of a song as it is being performed, they will recognize the song if it is one that they know, or make an ethereal forces roll to intuit its vague effects, if it is not. The exception is the Song of Thunder, which every angel and demon can recognize based on its percussive bursts and extraordinary volume.

Most songs have 3 forms, which are learned independently of one another.

When a song is performed, its performer's player rolls three six-sided dice, as normal, using the relevant forces (for instance, the Celestial Song of Tongues) is rolled with celestial forces. These rolls are unlike normal die rolls in a number of distinct senses.

Firstly, songs cost essence to perform. Each song has a base cost listed in its description.

Secondly, the use of songs cannot benefit from edges except from sources that explicitly effect songs. Additional essence cannot be spent to add more successes. Skills and resonances do not add successes.

Thirdly, songs may be sung in unison. This rule replaces the normal rules for assistance when performing songs. One character acts as the cantor, leading the performance, and paying the normal essence cost. Each additional performer (who must know the song, himself) may join in, committing the essence before a roll is made, and then all performers roll and the successes from all rolls are totaled.

Finally, a character using a song may continue the song beyond a single roll, repeating the refrain in order to accumulate more successes. Each continued refrain requires that the performer (and any singing in unison as above) spend the entire essence cost yet again. Successes between multiple refrains are cumulative, and others singing in unison may join or leave the performance at any time, so long as the cantor sings every refrain.

Singing a song in combat is usually an action, and generally a single action can account for any number of refrains, due in part to the mutable pacing of combat actions. Some songs are explicitly reactions, and some songs take a set amount of time to sing. The description of a song will note any special timing rules, if they exist.

Optional Rule: Humming

Characters who are capable of performing songs, but who do not know a song being performed, can still contribute to a performance by “humming” along to the song. This must be done in the immediate presence of the performer of the song, or the cantor of a song sung in unison. Humming costs 1 essence each action spent performing, and every character humming along generates one success, IF the performer or cantor generates at least one success.

Relics

A relic is a physical item that grants benefits to its holder. Every relic has a unique story, which may be tied to history, real or imagined. Joan of Arc’s cross is a relic, as is the desiccated hand of St. Francis, but not all relics are tied to such singular and renowned figures. There is a demon in service to Vapula who fights with a signpost wrenched from the ground on the outskirts of Hiroshima, and at least one angel of Eli carries a tool used in the construction of the Hagia Sophia.

[[Okay, so my old relic rules suck. I need new ones. I’m not even gonna bother rewriting them here. Core features are that the power of relics should be subtle, they should be easy to call to hand, and they should be recognizable with a Know roll. Maybe provide some samples to use as a base.]]

Vessels

A celestial’s true body is abstract and inscrutable. It may be perceived by humans as a winged serpent or a cloud of limbs and faces, but these are merely the intersections of divine or infernal nature and human understanding. When a celestial needs to move among humans, to operate a machine, or simply to touch the world around him, he needs a vessel.

Vessels are living (often human) forms that angels and demons create from matter and essence. They aren’t people, in the sense that they don’t have histories or desires or families. They do not exist when a celestial is not wearing them. A vessel does not age unless the wearer desires it to. It does not need food, water, sleep, or even air. Vessels do not become ill (although they can be poisoned).

A vessel’s appearance and physical properties do not *necessarily* reflect the capabilities of the celestial wearing it. A malakite with 5 corporeal forces may inhabit the vessel of a frail elderly man, and a weak, graceless habbalah may don the sinewy, imposing form of a power lifter.

The majority of celestials, however, will favor vessels that reflect their sensibilities.

How a vessel moves, acts, dresses, and carries itself, however, will tend to reflect the personality of the angel or demon who wears it, unless the celestial intentionally misleads other.

Nonhuman Vessels

A vessel can be modeled after any animal from an ant to an elephant, and there are some attunements that allow botanical or even nonliving vessels. Nonhuman vessels are often particularly inclined to disinclined for

certain tasks. For instance, a monkey is an excellent climber and has a prehensile tail, a dog has a keen sense of smell and can hear ultrasonic frequencies but its paws limit its ability to operate tools, and a bat can fly and echolocate but has poor eyesight.

When occupying such a vessel, assume a celestial can perform any task that a competent animal of the appropriate type could perform, similarly to how celestials in human form can drive a car or write an email without a roll. If a roll is required, for instance because the attempt faces opposition, the celestial gains an edge on the roll.

Things that a vessel is unsuited for instead take one opposition, when a roll is required, and may call for rolls when otherwise they would not.

Roles

Whereas a vessel is the physical disguise of a celestial's true form, a role is their Symphonic disguise. A role grants recognition from mortals, as well as the trappings of their social and legal life. An angel or demon with a role will have the appropriate tools, documents, clothing, and perhaps even a home a mortgage, fitting their life on Earth. Each role has a name and specific nature, such as "Ralph Combs, cashier at the corner store," or "Melissa Lee, obstetrician."

Roles also help mute disturbances in The Symphony by integrating the celestial into its motifs, so long as the action that disturbs the symphony falls into the reasonable expectations of that role. A well-maintained role reduces all Symphonic disturbances by one level. A major disturbance becomes moderate; a minor one is muted entirely. A therapist may mute their Ethereal Song of Restoration, for instance, but would fully disturb The Symphony if they were to get into a back-alley knife fight.

Some celestials are tempted to take roles as wealthy CEOs, in order to afford private jets and yachts, while others may consider roles as serial killer in order to help mute their more violent actions to The Symphony, but their superiors remind them that roles are, by definition, integrated into society. With extreme wealth comes recognition, making it harder to move among mortals, and easier to track by enemies in The War.

A demon with a role as a killer will have police after them, profilers trying to work out their identity, grieved families longing for justice, and an address that the demon can ultimately be tracked to. And that's all on top of the angels who will doubtless be after them.

Dissonance

Angels and demons are bound by their natures. They are the Lord's instruments (or perversions thereof) and to disobey their purpose undermines their very existence.

When a celestial acts against its nature, as defined by its choir or band, and by its superior, it generates dissonance, an imbalance within its spirit. The more a celestial violates its nature, the more dissonant it becomes. Each choir and band, and each archangel, princess, or prince, has a dissonance condition, and each violation of that condition causes the celestial to gain one note dissonance.

It is difficult, although not impossible, to remove dissonance. Generally, spending a month in complete service to your Word (should you have one) or the Word of your superior calms one note of dissonance.

Every note of dissonance that an angel has also reduces the number of essence regained by 1, to a minimum of 1.

In each moment that a note of dissonance is gained, there is also the possibility that this was the moment where the celestial's spirit was pushed too far. In that moment, the celestial also rolls three six-sided dice, as if making a standard skill roll. If all three dice show successes, then the celestial's spirit cannot abide the disharmony. Demons and malakim gain a discord (see below) but lose all of their dissonance, as their spirit fractures to vent the tension within them. For all other angels, see Falling (page xx).

Discord

Dissonance represents temporary unease within the equilibrium of a celestial. Discord is permanent and lasting damage to their soul. It can manifest as anything from consuming paranoia to bleeding stimata to debilitating lethargy to a faintly glowing halo that slowly bleeds divine light, but is always present in every vessel and in the celestial's true form. Most celestials, and especially Dominic's angels and Asmodeus' hunter-demons respond poorly to discord in their own kind, seeing it as a sign of straying from the path.

Demons and malakim take one discord as described under dissonance when they roll all three dice equal to or less than their dissonance on a dissonance roll. In addition, any celestial with dissonance may chose to take a discord, venting their dissonance by permanently disrupting their soul. Generally, this is done to prevent enough dissonance to risk falling (in the case of an angel) or to mitigate the reduced essence regeneration that dissonance causes.

Some humans or animals may experience things that resemble what angels or demons experience as discord. This, importantly, is not true discord. In humans, blindness or bouts of rage are not caused my mangled forces, but are simply part of The Symphony and the countless stories and forms that a life may take. Effects that sense or soothe discord do not interact with these traits in any way.

Some sample discords are listed here.

Addiction

You hunger for something (alcohol, blood, holy water, etc), and this craving consumes you. It is assumed that you are able to secure enough of your desired substance to function normally, but if you are separated from your supply, or if you are unable to partake for any reason, you begin to generate dissonance. You generate your first note of dissonance after twelve hours, and then an additional note every twenty four hours after that.

This is a particularly brutal discord, as it can generate more dissonance and ergo more discord, but if you manage to survive for one week without falling or becoming to riddled with discord that you are put down, you cease to generate dissonance from this discord, and no longer crave the substance until you next partake of it, restarting the discord at full force.

Blindness

You cannot see in any corporeal form you take, and have diminished senses in your celestial form as well, being unable to make out visual details of the world around you.

Cowardice

You are quick to buckle in any tense or threatening situation. While engaged in physical combat or in any imminently dangerous situation, you cannot benefit from edges from any source except essence. Because of this, you are particularly unlike to initiate a fight.

No matter which side of The War you find yourself on, this is likely to earn you the open disdain of many of your peers.

Delusion

You carry some major erroneous belief that occupies a significant portion of your time, or else meaningfully interferes with your goals.

Disquieting

Animals react poorly to you. Cats will hiss, dogs will bark or cower, and rats will scuttle panickedly about in your presence. This remains true regardless of what form you are in, and animals can always sense your presence, even in celestial form.

Feebleness

This discord permanently twists one of your forces. Pick a force category, and mark that one of your forces in that category is feeble. Your total in that category counts as one lower for all purposes while this discord remains, and it may be taken multiple times in the same or different categories. Having entirely feeble forces in a category is mechanically equivalent to losing your last force in that category (page xx).

Halo

When you are very stressed, or spend 2 or more essence at once, a faint glowing light surrounds you, or a subtle aura of heat, or a gentle sound of angelic voices just at the edge of hearing, or an eerie echo of distant screams, or some other supernatural manifestation. When you spend 5 or more essence at once, it becomes glaring and obvious.

Rage

Your temper gets you into trouble. When confronted or inconvenienced, you begin escalating the conflict until your opponent backs down or you are throwing punches. Only your would-be opponent capitulating or an ally calming you down can keep you from reaching physical violence eventually in those circumstances, and even when you can prevent the worst outbursts, you still make a scene, shouting threats and punching walls.

Stigmata

You manifest unusual wounds. These may be the conventional open punctures of the crucifixion and the crown of thorns, or perhaps burns that seem to simmer just below the skin, or maybe you cry blood uncontrollably.

You may be able to cover your stigmata temporarily, but they will always bleed through eventually, often at the most inconvenient times.

Symphonic Deafness

You cannot perceive disturbances in The Symphony. If you are an angel, use of your resonance requires a roll of your celestial forces to use for a scene, and if you fail this roll you cannot use your resonance again for twenty four hours.

Vestigia

You have some twisted feature that marks your divine or infernal nature—small or broken horns, perfectly white unblinking eyes, fangs, or tiny feathered wings. These provide no benefit, and will tend to draw very unwelcome attention to you unless meticulous care is taken to hide them.

Vulnerability

Some relatively mundane substance or circumstance is anathema to your vessels. Sunlight, crosses, salt, or silver are common vulnerabilities. When exposed to a vulnerability, you take 2 body hits of damage. Constant or repeated exposure deals an additional body hit every minute.

Falling

When an angel other than a malakite rolls all three dice equal to or lower than his dissonance score on a dissonance roll, his heart in Heaven cracks and then shatters under the weight of his internal turmoil. The angel loses any attunements granted by his superiors, and if he had a Word, it may subtly shift to a related Word befitting his new nature.

The angel is now a demon. His band is the band corresponding to his previous choir, and he has no heart in Hell and serves no demon prince. As a small consolation, any remaining dissonance is vented in the fall. Discords are unaffected.

The new demon must quickly find a demon prince in Hell to sponsor him, or he will be killed by angel or one of Asmodeus' wardens.

Outcasts and Renegades

There is a step in between the devout angel and the fallen demon. When an angel has grievously angered their superior, or their heart is destroyed by any means, they become an outcast. A superior casting out an angel is generally reserved for the most heinous of betrayals or disappointments. The superior simply renounces the angel and their heart shatters as if they had fallen, but they do not truly fall.

Outcasts lose all attunements granted by archangels, and cannot use their hearts to return to Heaven, but are still technically angels. In celestial combat, their forces are not protected by their heart (page xx), and so often casting out an angel is a precursor to hunting them down and killing them. Some archangels, however, may simply cast out an angel out of unfathomable sadness or disappointment, and consider the casting out to be punishment enough.

Outcasts can attempt to find a new superior in Heaven to sponsor them, *if* they can get into Heaven and secure an audience with an archangel before being discovered and killed. Even if an outcast secures an audience with an archangel, most superiors are unlikely to take in an angel that so profoundly disappointed their previous superior.

Some outcasts take the surer but more tragic route, and seek a demon prince or princess to take them as a servitor, falling and becoming demons in the process.

The demonic equivalent of an outcast is a renegade. A renegade demon has been disowned by their superior, or has shattered their heart, and is subject to many of the same problems as outcast angels. As a notable exception to their similarities, a renegade demon who finds, against all odds, an archangel sponsor, does not become an angel.

At least, not right away.

Redemption

It is possible, in principle, for a demon to become an angel. The specifics of redemption are so varied, and the cases are so rare, that outlining rules or general methods here would be fruitless.

The redemption of a demon will always require significant hardship, both in order to prove loyalty to a potential archangel, and to heal the fundamentally broken nature of the demonic spirit.

Redemption, if it is possible in your game, should be the culmination of a major story arc. It should come at significant cost and risk, and at no point should a happy ending be guaranteed. Most attempts at redemption for demons end in the demon's backslide or death.

Disturbing The Symphony

Mortals move seamlessly through The Symphony. Their actions, moods, and perceptions are echoed in it, and emanate from it, in ways that some celestials can sense, but without the interference of the supernatural, everything they do is in harmony with it. These individual actions are often too delicately intertwined to weed out specifics from The Symphony, except for angels who resonate with a concept due to their choir, but when something goes *wrong* within The Symphony, angels and demons can hear it.

The actions of angels, demons, ethereal spirits, and the performance of any song by anyone can disturb The Symphony. These disturbances vary in volume and severity, with some guidelines provided below.

Often, determining the exact radius of a disturbance is not important. Most radii are relatively small, and there aren't a massive number of celestials around to hear them.

When the disturbance is caused by a song, anyone who hears the disturbance and knows the song recognizes its performance. Those who do not know the song can make an ethereal forces roll to recognize it or piece together its general purpose. Some lesser-known songs might face opposition on this roll.

The Song of Thunder is always immediately recognizable by anyone who has ever even heard of it.

Tiny Disturbances – audible to a few feet

- ❖ 1 essence spent by a celestial or spirit to gain an edge on a roll
- ❖ Destroy a small inanimate object, larger than a teacup but no larger than a house door
- ❖ Perform a blatantly supernatural act in front of a mundane mortal (not counting soldiers, saints, or sorcerers)

Minor Disturbances – audible to about 50 feet

- ❖ 2 essence spent on edges by a spirit or celestial
- ❖ The performance of a song
- ❖ A celestial or spirit causing an extreme emotional state (genuine mortal fear, emotional torture, absolute euphoria, etc) in a humans
- ❖ Physical harm to a human (1+ body points)
- ❖ Killing a nonhuman animal with at least one proper force (very small animals such as mice and spiders do not count)
- ❖ Performing a blatantly supernatural act in front of 5 or more mundane mortals
- ❖ Significant damage to major inanimate objects (bursting through a wall, wrecking a car)

Moderate Disturbances – Audible to 500 feet

- ❖ 5+ essence spent at once on edges by a spirit or celestial
- ❖ a crowd of 5 people are brought to an extreme emotional state as above by a spirit or celestial
- ❖ The performance of a song for 5 refrains*
- ❖ Significant damage to a human (3+ body points)
- ❖ A celestial enters the corporeal world
- ❖ A blatantly supernatural act before 20 mortals
- ❖ Huge destruction of inanimate objects (an explosion in an unoccupied home or office building)

Major Disturbances – Audible to a mile

- ❖ Death of a human at the hands of a celestial or spirit
- ❖ A song sung for 10 refrains*
- ❖ Performing a blatantly supernatural act in front of 100+ mundane mortals
- ❖ Monumental destruction of inanimate objects (the complete demolition of an office building)
- ❖ A Word-bound celestial enters the corporeal world

Catastrophic disturbances – Audible for 10 miles

- ❖ An archangel or a demon prince or princess enters the corporeal world
- ❖ Death of 5 mortals in a single moment

*When determining the severity of disturbance caused by a song sung in unison, each member singing in unison with the cantor (page xx) counts as an additional refrain for each refrain they sing. For instance, if a cantor performs a song for three refrains and for two of those refrains has two other angels singing in unison, then there have been a total of seven total refrains: three from the cantor, and two from each of the two who sang in unison with him.

These examples are meant to act as guidelines, and storytellers can extrapolate other values. For instance, a song performed for 7 refrains might be audible for half a mile, or a blatantly supernatural act before 18 mortals might be audible for 400 feet. Larger events still, such as the death of 20 or more people or the simultaneous manifestation of multiple superiors, will disturb The Symphony on an even greater scale. The horn that Gabriel will blow during Armageddon will resonate all across the Earth.

In areas where The Symphony is calmer and quieter, disturbances are also easier to hear and travel further. A disturbance in the dusty deserts or rural Nevada is going to be heard at a much greater distance than the numbers listed here.

Celestial Form

Celestial in Heaven and Hell exist only in their celestial forms. They have appearances based on their band or choir, with superiors and Word-bound celestials having more diversity in their appearances. Although there may be differences in color, shape, size, and configuration, all ofanim are burning wheels, and all elohim are hairless humanoids with placid faces.

On Earth, celestials tend to occupy vessels (page xx) or hosts (pages xx, xx), but it is possible to exist in one's true celestial form in the corporeal world.

When a celestial first arrives on Earth at a tether, they always do so in their celestial form. This form may overlap with the corporeal world, but it is not of it. A celestial in their true form cannot interact physically with the world, although songs, attunements, or resonance that affect the physical world work normally.

In celestial form on Earth, angels and demons are plainly visible to anyone other celestials (including familiars, page xx), to saints, and to soldiers who can perceive The Symphony.

Any other being will overlook the subtle presence of an angel or demon in their celestial form, unless they are specifically scrutinizing an area, and sometimes the celestial will remain unseen even then. If it comes to rolling dice, vigilant a mortal can roll their celestial forces in order to see the true form of the angel or demon.

Sometimes, humans who are half-asleep or delirious from sickness or injury will spot a celestial without specifically looking for them. This is handled purely on a narrative basis. Some animals also seem to have a sense for the presence of celestials and will react to their presence. This is separate from the Disquieting discord (page xx).

A celestial on Earth (other than kyriotates and shedim) can occupy a vessel that they own effortlessly, alighting within material reality. This takes only a moment. In combat, it can only be accomplished when a character could take an action.

To intentionally return from a vessel to celestial form on Earth, a celestial must spend 1 essence, which can also only be achieved when a character could take an action. Celestials with hosts do not spend essence to leave their hosts.

In the Marches, angels and demons can only exist in celestial form without a power that says otherwise.

Travel between Realms

With the exception of specific circumstances such as losing one's last force in celestial combat (page xx), the only way to arrive on Earth from Heaven or Hell is via a tether (page xx).

As noted above, when a celestial first arrives on Earth, although most will quickly don a vessel or find a host.

Returning to Heaven or Hell at an appropriate tether requires that the celestial is in their true form. This journey requires no roll and costs no essence, provided the celestial is returning to the realm where their heart resides. When they do so, they may chose to manifest in the domain of the superior who controls the tether, or beside their own heart.

Without a tether, it is possible to return to your heart in Heaven or Hell as well. This requires that the celestial has a heart to begin with, of course, and that they are in their celestial form. Then, with the expenditure of 1 essence and a successful celestial forces roll, which is an action in combat, they abandon the corporeal world and manifest next to their heart.

Without a heart in the appropriate realm, it is still possible to reach Heaven or Hell by following another angel or demon there, either at a tether or when they return to their heart. This also requires that the celestial is in their true form, and costs 1 essence and a celestial forces roll with a passive opposition of 1. This method can be used by renegades and outcasts to enter the celestial realms, but also can be used by angels to enter Hell or, more rarely, for demons to enter Heaven.

In addition to fighting back the servitors of Michael and Laurence, demons who follow angels to Heaven are seared by its holy light. The light of Heaven deals 1 soul hit every 10 minutes to any demon who enters the realm, starting with the first hit immediately upon entering Heaven. Conversely, angels in Hell need only contend with the demons and normal hazards therein, and take no special drawbacks from entering Hell.

Entering or leaving the Marches from Heaven or Hell is as easy as crossing the gardens surrounding Beleth or Blandine's towers. Here, the Marches directly abut Heaven and Hell, even to the extent that, given patience and a little luck, a demon could walk from Hell to Heaven through the Marches. A demon on Blandine's side of the Marches does not need to worry about the light of Heaven, which reaches only so far as the tower itself.

There are no known tethers connecting Heaven and Hell directly, though the natures of Ives' and Kronos' libraries hint at a direct connection that neither has confirmed (and that certainly each would be unlikely to use).

Tethers to the Marches, including the Deep Marches, still exist on Earth, but they are very rare. Most of the major ones, such as Stonehenge, the Parthenon, and Uluru, were sieged and severed during the Purity Crusade. Some have resurfaced as either divine or infernal tethers (Stonehenge and Uluru now belong to Beleth and David, respectively).

However, less obvious tether to the Marches do exist, scattered across the globe, and are in use by the spirits who inhabit the ethereal realm. These hidden connections allow them to slink to and from Earth to accomplish their goals, attend their worshipers, or just enjoy the modern world.

Combat

While most of the conflict of The War is subtle in nature, it is inevitable that direct, physical conflict erupts, both between celestial warriors and the human and animal inhabitants of the world.

Timing: Action and Reaction

In Nomine has no set or predictable order of turns, as you may be used to from board games or some other tabletop roleplaying games. Action ebbs and flows organically and unpredictably, with a fluid progression of one moment to the next. Maintaining the upper hand in a scenario will grant greater control over how things turn out. As any boxer will tell you, it's not just about who can punch the hardest, it's about controlling the flow of the spar. The character who currently holds this circumstantial advantage changes every time they act, but how it changes and to whom will depend on what happens.

When a combat first begins, whomever initiated the hostilities has the upper hand in this way, and they take the first turn. Combat is broken into actions, reactions, and flourishes. Actions are possible on a character's turn, usually one per turn, and set the parameters for what happens in this moment in a fight. Reactions are limited by what action was performed and to whom, as well as and the current situation. Flourishes are small, additional acts like reloading a gun, or calling out to an ally, or leaping off a low balcony. Flourishes can usually be performed at any time, regardless of whose turn it is. Actions that require a die roll are never flourishes, unless the storyteller and players agree otherwise.

Once a character whose turn it is has performed or attempted an action, their turn ends, and a new turn begins, with a new character holding the upper hand. How the next turn is decided will depend on what actions and reactions were taken, and how they resolved.

There are 5 actions:

- ❖ Attack up close
- ❖ Attack at range
- ❖ Perform a song
- ❖ Wrestle
- ❖ Attempt a feat

There are 5 reactions:

- ❖ Clash
- ❖ Return fire
- ❖ Defend
- ❖ Wrestle
- ❖ Interfere

Only one character may react to any given action, unless a specific ability says otherwise, but other characters may assist both actions and reactions. If multiple characters wish to react, the player of the character targeted by the action, if any, selects who may react.

Actions and reactions in In Nomine are not beholden to any particular time structure or duration. Sometimes, an action will be as simple and instantaneous as “I fire a gun at Elizabeth, aiming to strike between her eyes.” Sometimes it will be as complex and extended as “I trade blows with the soldier, swinging and blocking one another as we inch across the bar, where I grab the bowling trophy off the shelf and bring it down over his head.” Just as in real fights, there are bursts and lulls in action, rather than a steady staccato of attacks from all participants at equal intervals.

Because not only are turns of unequal lengths, but actions are not passed around evenly, there may be times where one or more combatants are not taking any actions mechanically, but that does not mean that they are idly standing still waiting to act. They may be exchanging blows and parries with another combatant, neither landing a solid hit, they might be swinging intermittently at one of the acting or reacting character, they might be racing across the room, or they may be panting and circling, catching their breath and waiting for the time to strike.

When focus switches back to characters like these, players may add details hinting at what happened while the focus was elsewhere. Their fight may have moved from the interior of an office to the scaffolding outside, or the furniture around them may be broken and jagged.

Who Acts Next

After an action, to find out who gets control after an action and possibly reaction take place, read the descriptions for the actions taken. A player may usually not choose someone who acted, reacted, or assisted the most recent action or reaction to act the following round.

There are two major exceptions to this rule.

First, if the reaction was a defend, then the defending character *MAY* choose themselves to act this round.

Second, if *every* character involved in the combat has acted, then the action may be passed to any character, including the decider.

Actions

There are, as mentioned above, 5 major actions. A character may only take an action on their turn, and the action they take will determine what reactions are available, to whom, and who acts next.

Attack up Close

When you use fists, swords, chair legs, or switchblades to attempt to harm another, you are attacking up close. Describe what you do, and feel free to include descriptions of the environment and the general flow of the scene.

What to Roll: Fight (with corporeal forces, unless you are in celestial form, in which case roll celestial forces)

Who Acts Next: The person who reacts decides (but see below). If nobody reacts, you decide.

Available Reactions: The target of your attack may defend or clash. If they cannot react or choose not to, another character may interfere

Results: If you roll at least one success before opposition, deal your weapon's damage to the target of your attack. If you roll more successes than your target rolled on their reaction, extra successes may be spent on these effects:

- ❖ Deal one extra damage
- ❖ Takes one less damage from any clash reacting to this attack
- ❖ Grant someone an edge to attack your target on their next action
- ❖ Determine who acts next, rather than allowing the reacting character to determine
- ❖ Use your weapon's special ability, if any
- ❖ Some other effect approved by the GM

Attack at Range

To attack at range, you can throw a knife, fire a pistol, shoot a bow, or chuck a rock at someone. Tell the table who you are attacking and how.

What to Roll: Aim

Who Acts Next: The person who reacts decides (but see below). If nobody reacts, you decide.

Available Reactions: The target of your attack may defend. They may Return Fire if they are holding a ranged weapon, or may clash if they are close enough to hit you with an unarmed attack or a weapon they are holding. If they cannot react or chose not to, another character may interfere

Results: If you roll at least one success before opposition, deal your weapon's damage to the target of your attack. If you roll more successes than your target rolled on their reaction, extra successes may be spent on these effects:

- ❖ Deal one extra damage
- ❖ Takes one less damage from any clash reacting to this attack
- ❖ Grant someone an edge to attack your target on their next action
- ❖ Determine who acts next, rather than allowing the reacting character to determine
- ❖ Some other effect approved by the GM

Perform a Song

Most songs are actions to perform in combat. If you perform multiple refrains (page xx), you may still do so over the course of one action.

What to Roll: The forces appropriate for the song

Who Acts Next: You decide

Available Reactions: No character can react to a song without an ability that explicitly allows it, unless the song's description says otherwise

Results: The effects of the song transpire according to the song's description and how many successes you accumulated.

Wrestle

If you want to pin, hold, or restrain your opponent, rather than injure them, you may chose to take the wrestle action.

What to Roll: Fight (with corporeal forces, unless you are in celestial form, in which case roll celestial forces)

Who Acts Next: The person who reacts decides (but see below). If nobody reacts, you decide.

Available Reactions: The target of your attack may defend or wrestle. As a special rule, defense against a wrestle action can be made with move, fight, or endure. If they cannot react or chose not to, another character may interfere.

Results: If you roll at least one success before opposition, select an option from the list below. If you roll extra successes above your opponent, you may select one of these effects per extra success:

- ❖ Slam, wrench, bite, or throw your opponent for 1 damage.
- ❖ Until you or your opponent takes the wrestle action again or you release the hold, your enemy cannot move from their current location
- ❖ Until you or your opponent takes the wrestle action again or you release the hold, your opponent cannot benefit from corporeal skills or the aim skill
- ❖ Until you or your opponent takes the wrestle action again or you release the hold, all attacks on your opponent have an edge
- ❖ Until you or your opponent takes the wrestle action again or you release the hold, your opponent may not clash or return fire
- ❖ Determine who acts next, rather than allowing the reacting character to determine
- ❖ Some other effect approved by the GM

Attempt a Feat

Sometimes you wish to perform an action during combat that is not strictly combative. This action is a catch-all for any act that would require a roll and could reasonably be done in a few moments while people are fighting.

What to Roll: Varies

Who Acts Next: The person who reacts decides (but see below). If nobody reacts, you decide.

Available Reactions: Interfere.

Results: If the roll succeeds (overcoming passive opposition and active opposition, if any), then it resolves as it would normally.

Reactions

Clash

When someone attacks you in close range, you may chose to clash with them, meeting their aggression head-on with a fist, or weapon of your own. Describe your response to the attack.

What to Roll: Usually Fight (with corporeal forces, or celestial forces in celestial form)

Who Acts Next: You decide, unless the acting character used an extra success to decide.

Can React To: Attack up close, attack at range (so long as you are close enough to respond with a non-ranged attack)

Results: If you roll at least one success before opposition, deal your weapon's damage to your attacker. If you roll more successes than your target rolled on their reaction, extra successes may be spent on these effects:

- ❖ Deal one extra damage to your attacker
- ❖ Take one less damage from your attacker
- ❖ Grant someone an edge to attack your target on their next action
- ❖ Some other effect approved by the GM

Return Fire

When someone is shooting at you with a gun or a bow, or is throwing knives or stones in your direction, and you are armed with a ranged weapon of your own, you may return fire. You cannot return fire on attacks up close because you are too vulnerable to the blows of your opponent to steady aim.

What to Roll: Aim

Who Acts Next: You decide, unless the acting character used an extra success to decide.

Can React To: Attack at range

Results: If you roll at least one success before opposition, deal your weapon's damage to your attacker. If you roll more successes than your target rolled on their reaction, extra successes may be spent on these effects:

- ❖ Deal one extra damage to your attacker
- ❖ Take one less damage from your attacker
- ❖ Grant someone an edge to attack your target on their next action
- ❖ Some other effect approved by the GM

Defend

By parrying with a weapon, dodging out of the way, or ducking for cover, you may defend from incoming attacks.

What to Roll: Move to dodge or Fight to parry. If defending against a wrestle action, you may also defend with Endure to brute-force your way out of the hold

Who Acts Next: You decide, and as a special exception you *may pick yourself*.

Can React To: Attack up close, attack at range, wrestle

Results: If you roll at least one success before opposition, your attacker may not spend additional successes on their attack for any benefits. If you roll more successes than your attacker, you may use them to:

- ❖ Negate all damage from the attack
- ❖ Grant someone an edge to attack your target on their next action
- ❖ Some other effect approved by the GM

Wrestle

The wrestle reaction works exactly like the wrestle action. If a character reacts to a wrestle with a wrestle of their own, both participants roll fight, and both participants select one effect from the list, with the victor selecting one additional effect per extra success.

Interfere

This reaction can only be used for actions other than songs that would otherwise go unopposed. If multiple characters wish to interfere with an action and cannot decide amongst themselves who will be making the roll, the GM should decide based on proximity, circumstance, and ability, prioritizing the most capable and best-situated to interfere.

Describe how you are interfering.

If the roll you are interfering with is an attack, and you succeed, you will take damage instead of the target.

What to Roll: Varies

Who Acts Next: You decide, unless the acting character spends an extra success to decide.

Can React To: Attack up close, attack at range, wrestle, attempt a feat

Results: If you roll at least as many successes as the acting character, you prevent any feat they were attempting. If you interfere with an attack or wrestle, and roll successes equal or less than the attacker, the attack it hits the intended target with any additional successes. If you roll equal to or more, it hits you instead, and you may spend any additional successes to:

- ❖ Deal one damage to the attacker
- ❖ Take one less damage from the attack

- ❖ Grant someone an edge to attack your target on their next action
- ❖ Some other effect approved by the GM

Damage and Dying

An unavoidable reality of violence is harm. Damage in In Nomine is represented numerically, and the base damage of an attack is generally dependent on the weapon used.

Unarmed attacks do 1 base damage, unless an ability says otherwise.

Most weapons do 2 damage, and some weapons additionally have a special ability that can be activated with an additional success on the attack up close roll. For instance, whips, chains, and sai can disarm, wrenching a weapon from an attacker, but doing no damage. Staves can trip, knocking an opponent prone and doing only one base damage.

Many supernatural attacks do 3 damage, some as some songs or many of the natural weapons granted by Numinous Corpus. Some powerful attacks such as hitting someone with a wrecking ball or mounted heavy firearm also do three damage.

When a character takes damage, the amount of damage taken is marked against that character's body points. Unless noted differently because of an attunement or relic, all of a celestial's vessels have the same number of maximum body points, which they start with at the beginning of a game. A vessel's maximum body points equals the celestial's total forces plus twice their corporeal forces. All vessels track their remaining body points separately.

The hosts of a shedite or kyriotate use their own body points, regardless of the abilities of the celestial possessing them.

When a vessel (or a host or a mortal) reaches 0 body points, they begin dying. The next time they take damage, they will die. Even without taking further damage, they will die if they do not receive medical attention urgently. What sort of time frame they need care within, and what that care will look like, will depend on the nature of the injuries and the discretion of the storyteller, but in general if nobody begins to apply even basic first aid in 15 minutes or so, things will look bleak. This medical attention does not restore any body points, and further damage will still kill them outright, but it will keep them from bleeding out or dying from infection or complications.

A dying character only counts their lowest-rolled die for purposes of determining successes, before adding any edges. Interventions work normally.

Luckily for angels and demons, their vessels are not their bodies, but a vessel's death is still a horrifying experience. The death of a vessel causes trauma (see below). When a vessel dies, its connection to the celestial who owned it is severed, and it cannot be occupied again. Erase it from your player's character sheet, as well as any roles that that vessel held.

Armor

Wearing sturdy armor reduces incoming damage by 1. A sturdy leather jacket is not enough to provide a mechanical benefit. The minimum would be something along the lines of chainmail or a military vest reinforced with ballistic plates.

Heavy, solid armor that covers the majority of the body, such as medieval plate or full SWAT gear reduces damage by 2.

In either case, damage can be reduced to a minimum of 0.

A shield can be used as well, which gives an edge to all defend rolls.

Trauma

When a celestial's vessel dies, or the sole host of a shedite or kyriotate dies, that celestial is sent into trauma, a state of spiritual catatonia. Her forces coalesce in Heaven or Hell around her heart, provided she has one. Outcastes and reneages have it worse. Their celestial form enters trauma right where their body died, unresponsive and vulnerable to celestial attack.

A celestial in trauma spends at least seven days unable to respond to any stimulus or communication, and can do nothing but silently confront the horror of death.

At the end of those seven days, the celestial may attempt to emerge from their catatonic state.

Recovering from trauma requires a roll of the celestial's lowest forces (not counting Word forces), and requires 3 successes. Luckily, waiting longer can lower the difficulty notably. After 8 weeks, the difficulty is only 2 successes, and after a year it is 1. After a decade, no roll is required.

If a celestial attempts this roll and fails, the timer starts over again with the 1 week of unresponsive catatonia, and the difficulty is once again 3. In addition each failed attempt costs the celestial once force in a category of their choice.

When a celestial loses their last force in any category, the light in their heart dims, and they will never recover from their trauma.

Even in the silence of trauma, celestials are tied to their place in The Symphony. After the initial week, they will feel a subtle pull when their close allies need them most, or when their Word is at a critical juncture, or when some major crisis requires their attention. Distant echoes far too faint to make out for a conscious celestial will reach the edges of the mind of a celestial in trauma.

Malakim are immune to trauma, and when their vessel dies, they may choose to stay in celestial form or return to their heart, if they have one.

Kyriotates in multiple vessels are not traumatized with the death of a single vessel, although they do take a point of dissonance.

Celestial Combat

Given that they have celestial true forms, it is inevitable that angels and demons will occasionally end up fighting in those forms. Celestial combat works similarly to corporeal combat, save for the forces used and the differences in stakes.

Celestial combat is possible in any realm, but only when both participants are in their celestial forms. The skills are the same, but the Fight, and Endure skills are used with celestial forces, and the move skill is used with ethereal forces.

Damage in celestial combat is dealt against soul points rather than body points (page xx), and if the celestial has a heart, that heart protects their forces, no matter how far they are from it, providing 1 armor against soul hits. When a character runs out of soul points, they do not die or go into trauma, but rather they permanently lose one force. The player of the damaged celestial chooses which force is lost, and recalculates their character's new soul points total, which refreshes to its new maximum immediately.

Losing the last force in a category comes with terrible effects. Their spirit is held together with only frail, trace forces in that category, and many celestials never recover. They cannot succeed on, or even attempt, rolls of the relevant forces, including songs, and each force comes with an additional drawback.

A character with no corporeal forces is the most likely to recover, but for as long as they have no corporeal forces, they cannot manifest a vessel or take a host at all.

A character with no ethereal forces is disoriented and confused, lacking reasoning and memory. He may continue to fight, through sheer momentum alone, but once the fighting is over, he will be directionless and amnesiac. Even after recovering an ethereal force, he will not regain the memories lost.

Most tragically, a celestial who loses their last celestial force snags in The Symphony irreparably. If he has no vessel, or is unable to take one, his forces manifest on Earth, unbound, and unravel into The Symphony.

Celestials with a vessel instead, upon losing their last celestial force, become remnants.

A remnant cannot perceive The Symphony, save in isolated and confusing glimpses—scattered startling notes creeping in on the edge of their senses. She does not know that she was once an angel or demon, but carries a terrible ache, half-remembering that they have lost something very important. If the celestial had a role, all that remains are the memories, real or imagined, of that role, and hazy confused fragments half-remembered when the remnant closes her eyes to do what passes for sleep.

Heaven, generally, allows angelic remnants to finish out their soulless existences in peace, protecting them from demons and occasionally visiting their hearts to see them. Demons may kill their remnants or cast them aside, even the infernal throngs find remnants unsettling—a stinging reminder that they too can be undone. When a demon kills an infernal remnant, their personal twisted symphonies, cacophonous with pragmatism and petty cruelty, often carry a single note of genuine mercy.

Ethereal Damage and Mind Hits

There is no ethereal combat. Angels and demons manifest in the Marches in their celestial forms, and dreaming humans and animals simply project their minds—damaging their dream-selves in their sleep does not inherently damage the dreamer in any way.

There are a handful of songs and attunements that can be used to deal mind hits, or that have effects that can be mitigated or ended by taking mind hits. In the latter case, if a character has insufficient remaining mind points, but still has at least one, they may still take the mind damage to mitigate the effect, dropping to zero mind points.

When a character runs out of mind points, they become immune to further mind damage, but any effects that would allow them to bypass the effect by taking mind hits cannot be bypassed until they recover their mind hits.

Healing

Angels and demons recover their celestial forces in points of body per day. This healing is applied to on all of their vessels simultaneously.

Humans and animals, including saints, soldiers, and sorcerers, recover at the same rate if they rest, or else every two days if they remain active.

Soul hits heal at a rate of one per week, or one per day for angels in Heaven, if they spend the time in prayer or contemplation with their heart.

Mind hits fully heal when a character takes time to relax, ground herself, and reaffirm her purpose and direction. Mind hits can be recovered in this way no more than once per day.

Character Creation

These rules cover the basics of making an angel or demon in the game of In Nomine. It is possible for players to create other types of characters, and some common examples can be found starting on page xx. Note that the rules here are for creating starting characters for players to use, and plenty of characters that appear in the narrative will have very different looking character sheets.

Character creation can be broken into steps. These steps do not necessarily have to be taken in this order, but this is the order that the rules recommend and should be used by most players, especially new players.

Come up with a Concept

- ❖ Determine who your character is within the universe. What are they good at? What do they look like? What is their role in The Symphony? What is their outlook? What was a defining moment in their past?

Choose a Choir or Band

- ❖ Angels choose a choir, and may be a...
 - Seraph, holy angels of truth
 - Cherub, protective guardians
 - Ofanite, speedy agents of action
 - Elohite, perceptive and impartial observers
 - Malakite, righteous warriors of Heaven
 - Kyriotate, multifaceted and flexible hive minds
 - Mercurian, friends of mankind
- ❖ Demons choose a band, and may be a...
 - Balseraph, suave liars
 - Djinn, obsessive demons of singular fixation
 - Calabite, born of chaos and destruction
 - Habbalah, provocateurs of emotion
 - Lilim, children of Lilith
 - Shedite, formless corrupting whisperers
 - Impudite, emissaries to humanity
- ❖ Record the resonance of your choir or band, and your choir/band's dissonance condition.

Select a Superior

- ❖ Angels select an archangel, and may serve...
 - Blandine, Archangel of Dreams
 - David, Archangel of Stone
 - Dominic, Archangel of Judgment
 - Eli, Archangel of Creation
 - Gabriel, Archangel of Fire
 - Ives, Archangel of Destiny
 - Janus, Archangel of Wind
 - Jean, Archangel of Lightning
 - Jordi, Archangel of Animals
 - Laurence, Archangel of the Sword
 - Marc, Archangel of Prosperity
 - Michael, Archangel of War
 - Novalis, Archangel of Flowers
 - Outcast, serving no archangel
- ❖ Demons select a prince or princess...
 - Andrealphus, Prince of Lust
 - Baal, Princess of Attrition
 - Beleth, Princess of Nightmares
 - Belial, Prince of Fire
 - Haagenti, Princess of Gluttony
 - Kobal, Prince of Mirth
 - Kronos, Prince of Fate
 - Malphas, Noble of Factions
 - Nybbas, Prince of Media
 - Saminga, Princess of Death
 - Valefor, Princess of Theft
 - Vapula, Prince of Progress
 - Renegade, serving no prince, and lilim can choose to be free (page xx).
- ❖ Select an attunement from your superior and record your superior's dissonance condition.

Assign Forces

- ❖ Split 6 forces between your corporeal, ethereal, and celestial forces. At least one force must be assigned to each category.
 - Corporeal, representing speed, strength, balance, physical control, and endurance
 - Ethereal, representing memory, knowledge, reasoning, sensory perception, and precision
 - Celestial, representing willpower, charisma, emotional awareness, resolve, and spiritual might

Choose Skills and Songs

- ❖ Select two skills and mark them on your character sheet, choosing from...
 - Aim, the ability to precisely hit a target with a ranged weapon

- Create, the ability to build, sculpt, write, repair, act, construct, and express yourself through art
- Convince, the ability to persuasively relay information, either accurate or deceptive
- Discern, the ability to read a person's emotional state or motives
- Drive, the ability to operate any vehicle in difficult circumstances
- Endure, the ability to lift, carry, toil, resist hardship, or exert yourself
- Fight, the ability to dangerously wield weapons, throw punches, block strikes, or grapple foes
- Infiltrate, the ability to pick locks, bypass security systems, slink past guards, and locate good hiding spots
- Know, the ability to recall obscure facts, understand scientific truths, and recount stories from history
- Move, the ability to climb, swim, leap, run, dodge, tumble, or fall safely
- Sense, the ability to catch details in your surroundings, thoroughly search an area, or spot something hidden
- ❖ Select one song from the list starting on page xx and record it on your character sheet. The different versions of a song (corporeal, ethereal, celestial) count as different songs

Chose an Identity on Earth

- ❖ Select a vessel, briefly describing it on your character sheet

Define One to Four Relationships

- ❖ Choose people or beings you are close to according to the rules on page xx. The types of relationship are...
 - Contact, a source of information or equipment
 - Mentor, a trained and knowledgeable expert who has some authority over you
 - Rival, one who competes with you for recognition or resources
 - Enemy, a foe who works towards opposite goals to you and holds hostility to you
 - Ward, one who relies on you for safety and guidance
 - Companion, a peer with whom you are very close, and who you have a long history of working with
 - Servitor, a subordinate who reports to you

Calculate Derived Values

- ❖ Body points for each vessel begin at their maximum, equal to the sum of all your forces plus twice your corporeal forces.
- ❖ Mind points are equal to the sum of all your forces plus twice your ethereal forces.
- ❖ Soul points are equal to the sum of all your forces plus twice your celestial forces.

Spend Extra Points

- ❖ Spend 6 additional points according to the chart below. A single discord may be selected (in addition to the automatic one for calabim, if applicable) to gain two extra points.
 - Each additional skill costs 1 points
 - An additional force costs 6 points
 - Each additional song costs 2 points
 - A relic costs 3 points
 - Each additional vessel costs 2 points
 - Each role costs 1 point
 - An additional attunement costs 4 points

Acquiring Attunements

Each superior offers multiple attunements, some related to choirs and bands, some not. The attunement corresponding to your band or choir is granted automatically simply from serving your superior but others may be granted as well.

Angels and demons may select choir/band attunements or general attunements from their own superior at character creation by buying them with their extra points, or can earn them through play, and can even eventually earn attunements from other superiors (who will usually only grant the appropriate choir/band attunement to celestials not in their service). Other superiors will only grant attunements to celestials who serve superiors that they are on good terms with.

Attunements marked as “restricted” can only be acquired if they correspond to a celestial choir or band.

Relationships

Angels, demons, and mortals alike form relationships with those around them. At character creation, you may define a few relationships your character has. Between one and four of these relationships may be chosen, with three being the recommended number.

Most relationships fall into one of these categories, but players may suggest their own, subject to GM approval.

Contacts can be called upon for information and/or tools related to their fields or circumstances, be they experts in history, firearms smugglers, paparazzi, or spies on the opposite side of The War. Contacts generally require little from you, and see you as a friend, or a person worth helping based on shared ideals, but they won’t put themselves in danger for you or provide direct material assistance.

Mentors are more likely to provide aid in the form of actions in addition to advice. A mentor may help to decipher ancient texts, answer questions when you are stuck, or pull strings to get you out of trouble, but mentors also have a measure of authority over you. They will expect your help with their goals, which may range from small odd jobs to dangerous assignments, on any given day.

Rivals and **enemies** both work at odds to you, but the scope and motive is different. A rival generally pursues goals similar to yours, and competes for resources, recognition, or power. An enemy seeks goals antithetical to yours and hopes to undermine, harm, thwart, or even kill you. Either may be on the same side of the war as you, or the opposite. By defining your enemy, you get a measure of control and spotlight in the adversaries of the campaign—a foe whose narrative path is intertwined with yours, and whose motives, methods, and demeanor you know well.

A **ward** is someone who you are bound to protect, by orders of a superior, a promise to a peer, or your own moral sensibilities. Should anything happen to your ward, and something inevitably will, it is your responsibility to protect, rescue, or soothe them.

Companions are those with whom you have a closely bonded history. You know one another well and can anticipate what the other needs or what they intend to do next. A companion will always be by your side when you most need it, and you will always be by theirs.

A **servitor** is an underling who takes orders from you directly. He may be a soldier of Heaven or Hell, a blackmailed spirit, or simply a sympathetic mortal who had devoted themselves to you. Familiars and relievers are possible servitors, as are imps, gremlins, and sorcerers. Servitors provide direct assistance and take orders, even dangerous ones that put themselves at risk, and require nothing in return. However, their occasional inexperience can make them a liability if they are called upon excessively. A foe who realizes a servitor’s weakness may interrogate, seduce, or capture your agent.

Advancement

Steel is tempered in the conflicts of The War. Fledgling relievers become seasoned angels, and the lowliest demon might grow to earn a Word.

After each chapter (usually, every three or four sessions), each player has an opportunity to improve their character. Advancement is done, ideally, while the group is together. There are several ways that a character can advance, outlined below.

Gaining a Skill

The most basic way for a character to improve is by learning a new skill. Their player selects a skill that their character does not currently have, and explains why they have learned it over the course of the chapter.

Gaining a Role

If a character spent notable time during a chapter establishing a false identity, that has existed over the course of at least two chapters, she may use her advancement to solidify that identity into a role.

Gaining a Relic

If a character has come across a relic over the course of a chapter and hopes to keep it, they may use their advancement to do so. Otherwise, relics are lost, relinquished to superiors, or otherwise find their way out of a character's hand.

Learning a Song

If the character has made an ally who knows a song they wish to learn, or has done some favor for someone who is willing to teach one, the character may learn a song as their advancement for the chapter. Remember that while many characters might know a song, only angels, demons, ethereal spirits, and Lilith can *teach* songs.

Gain a New Vessel

A character may petition a superior for a new vessel, or make one themselves with the Song of Form (page xx). Vessels are usually only granted when a character has done something noteworthy for their superior, or when a character has lost their only vessel, and has earned the trust to deserve a new one.

Gain an Attunement

Much like a vessel, attunements are only granted by superiors following notable success beyond what was expected, or at the end of significant and extended assignments. See Acquiring Attunements, above, for more information on what attunements a celestial may have.

Gain a New Force

To gain a new celestial, ethereal, or corporeal force, a character must have at least two skills in the category he wishes to raise, and must have demonstrated some significant moment of prowess in the appropriate category. He can then spiritually work his learned skill into raw potential. Forces can only be gained while an angel or demon is in their celestial form, and when the force is gained, three skills are lost and turned into the force. Two of these skills must be ones associated with the forces improved.

Angels

Seven major choirs of angel serve Heaven. Every true angel in Heaven serves an archangel, by law as established by the Seraphim Council and maintained by Dominic's servitors in accordance with God's vision. Angels who do not serve an archangel, either because of abandoning their duty or being disavowed by their superior are outcast, and unwelcome in Heaven until or unless they redeem themselves and are once again sponsored by an archangel.

In addition to these seven major choirs, there are other beings native, or formerly native, to Heaven.

Relievers are lesser angels who belong to no choir and who may or may not serve an archangel. Relievers have no resonance, although some in service to a superior may have a choir attunement for that superior. Some relievers will eventually become proper angels, earning the requisite six forces, and joining a choir. Others are destined to remain lesser agents of Heaven.

Relievers cannot don true vessels in the way that angels can, but they can be sent to Earth bound permanently into animal forms known as familiars. A familiar cannot return to its celestial form until or unless its physical body is killed, or is it released from its form in a tether by an archangel or Word-bound angel with authority over it.

The grigori were once the eighth choir of angel, the watchers, who dwelt on Earth with humanity, rather than in Heaven with the Lord and the rest of the angels. The grigori acted as teachers, advisors, and helpers, at God's

command, but in time they drifted from His vision. Some lay with mortals and produced terrible offspring, the nephilim, riddled with discord from birth and wielding fearsome power. Some grigori grew tired of humanity imperfectly heeding their advice, and took direct rulership positions.

Ultimately, the grigori were shunned by Heaven and gradually hunted down over centuries. Of course, neither any watchers nor their children survive today, the archangels remind the host whenever the grigori are mentioned.

Perception and Angelic Resonance

Many angels' resonances and some attunements require that the celestial can perceive a person—seraphim, Elohim, malakim, and mercurians notably have this limitation on their resonances. For the sake of these abilities, this perception relies on direct sensory input; the celestial must be able to see, hear, touch the target, or must be able to see or hear them through a reasonably real-time medium. A phone call, a live broadcast, or a Zoom video conference provides the kind of immediate input required for these resonances to work. A text message, photograph, recording, or letter is not sufficient for the use of resonances or attunements that require perceiving the target.

Seraphim

The Holiest

The Holiest are God's most favored angels. The first beings that God created, aside from Ives, and perhaps the most perfect. When Ives looked upon his Creator the Lord, in the beginning, and gave Him a name, the seraphim were born.

The seraphim are massive, noble serpents, often with multiple pairs of eyes and glistening, feathery wings. They are the angelic choir most favored by God—elegant, dignified, and unwavering.

The seraphim understand their status, and most prefer distinguished vessels befitting their station, and roles that afford them the authority they are accustomed to in Heaven. An individual seraph's attitude to humanity may range from haughty contempt for their inherent imperfections, to detached stewardship, to a genuine, almost pitying interest in nurturing these base creatures, but regardless of how a seraph feels about humanity, their choir is the furthest removed from it.

A seraph's nature is pure to the point that falsehood pains it. They are manifestations of the truth of God, the light that He created in Genesis, and even skilled and subtle lies twist The Symphony in ways that a seraph can detect effortlessly.

Resonance

Symphonically, you resonate with the concept of truth. All lies are obvious to your ears. This works for any target who you can perceive making a statement in person or via some reasonably live medium such as a telephone call or live TV broadcast (see Perception and Angelic Resonance, above). This only reveals lies told knowingly; it is the sinful nature of deceit that is obvious to you, not simple and genuine misunderstandings.

By spending one essence directly after hearing a false statement, a you can pry into the nature of the lie, and get a vague concept for what the speaker believes the truth to be.

Singularly, it is important that the demonic balseraphs' lies are invisible to the seraph resonance. A balseraph is not lying to the audience, she is lying to herself by constructing a false reality around her, and then speaking the truth within the context of that reality.

Dissonance

Owing to their connection to honesty, it is antithetical to a seraph's nature to knowingly utter a falsehood. Seraphim may allow others to lie (although most find it distasteful), but to actually speak, write, or otherwise communicate a knowing falsehood will create dissonance in a seraph.

It is permissible to direct conversation away from answering questions, and seraphim are under no obligation to share information unprompted or when asked, but even lies of omission or technical truths can generate dissonance if relied upon repeatedly.

A seraph asked her name, for instance, may reply with a technically-accurate “you can call me Cherie” without a problem, or a question like “where are you from?” can be answered with “out of town,” but when the angel begins engaging in verbal gymnastics to tell the technical truth, the storyteller should warn their player when they are close to the threshold of generating dissonance.

This can make it very difficult for seraphim to maintain roles (page XX), further distancing them from humanity.

Cherubim

The Guardians

The cherubim are Heaven’s protectors and the protectors of man. With vehement dedication, they are called to patrol holy sites, to defend righteous mortals, and to preserve relics and institutions in line with the Lord’s and with their archangel’s plans for the Symphony.

A cherub’s form is that of a powerful animal such as a lion, crocodile, or bear. Often, this form is adorned with wings, fine embroidered silks, golden crowns, diamond-tipped talons, or other embellishments denoting the cherub’s status.

Corporeally, cherubim tend to favor either powerful and imposing bodies as a display of their might, or gentle and nurturing ones that bring comfort to those whom they guard. Some opt for physical strength, others dress in sharp suits that display their social or economic prowess. These displays are not proud or vain, they are *warnings* to those who would interfere with a cherub’s charge.

More kindly cherubim may take vessels and roles as childcare workers, middle school librarians, or unassuming custodians. These forms allow them to keep an eye on the vulnerable, and catch potential threats unprepared.

Resonance

Your resonance is for protection. You may touch an item or being to harmonize with it and declare yourself its sentinel. At a point thereafter, you can pick out the subtle echoes in The Symphony that reveal the direction, distance, and relative state of anything to which you are attuned.

If something to which you are attuned is in immediate danger, you will know that.

Because of this extraordinary sense for the safety of anything to which you are attuned, you gain an edge on any rolls to protect something to which you are attuned. This has noncombat uses, and in combat this means that any roll to interfere with an attack on your charge gets an edge. If your charge is defending or someone else is interfering with an attack against them, you grant one edge by assisting, in lieu of the normal assistance rules.

You may be attuned to up to your celestial forces in people or things at a time.

It is not in a cherub’s nature to abandon things. Ending your stewardship over someone or something takes one hour and costs an essence, or else is immediate and generates one dissonance.

Dissonance

A cherub generates dissonance when prematurely ending her dedication to protecting a charge, as explained above. A cherub also generates a dissonance when a target of her protection is killed or destroyed. This does not include natural death, such as by old age or mundane disease.

Ofanim

The Wheels

The ofanim are the messengers and couriers of Heaven, rushing across the sky in their true forms—whirling wheels of fire and gold—and through city streets in sports cars or on motorcycles, to deliver tidings, stop disasters, or transport relics.

Corporeally, ofanim prefer fit bodies, either lean and toned or thick and strong. They may be identified by their nearly-hyperactive movement, or by the way they maintain those vessels. Some ofanim put comically little thought into aesthetics, leaving their hair unwashed and disheveled, and their clothing torn and fingernails grimy. Time spent maintaining their vessel is time not spent *doing*.

Other ofanim may adopt styles chosen to maximize sleekness, shaving their heads or wearing their hair in tight buns or slicked back.

Still others have pragmatic approaches to their fast lifestyles. Biker leathers and racing jackets both signal their passions and protect them from the occasional wipeout (often intentional...it can be faster to crash a bike than to safely park it).

Resonance

Ofanim are not faster simply because of stronger legs or better reflexes (although many do have both). Ofanim *understand* motion like no other angels can. Every nuance of balance, every split-second shortcut, every variable of every path races through the wheel's mind. With the slightest moment's consideration, an ofanite sees all possible paths to his destination. He knows what moves where, and how to get to each landmark. He can see and weigh each path, finding shortcuts through homes and offices, racing through doors just as residents open them to let their dogs out back, racing past a startled man and then leaping out a window on the other side of the home. Any landmark in a city, or any known location, an ofanite can reach, sensing where there is traffic and where there are clear paths, but notably *not* where there is danger.

In addition to granting the ofanite a clear route to any non-hidden destination, faster and with greater accuracy than any GPS or maps, an ofanite wins all ties in rolls related to motion, except those made against other ofanim, and for any roll related to rapid or precise movement, they may roll their highest forces. To understand motion is to perform it is be it for the ofanite, there is no line between mind, body, and soul when it comes to movement.

This In addition to this, ofanim can never lose their footing or balance, and never fail Aim, Drive, or Move rolls, unless antagonized intentionally by a creature with forces.

Ofanim in celestial form move at up to 400 miles an hour. Their celestial bodies themselves thrum with The Symphony's motif of movement.

Dissonance

It is dissonant for an ofanite to not act in pivotal moments. To plan when time is of the essence, to refrain from action in order to maintain a facade, or to allow something important to go unaddressed wears at the ofanite nature, even if it is not important to the ofanite herself.

This is the only choir's dissonance condition that can be forced upon the angel. An ofanite restrained can be made to accumulate dissonance in this way. Fortunately for ofanim, they are difficult to restrain.

Elohim

The Thrones

Diametrically opposed to the ofanite obsession with action, the thrones are placid and detached, fascinated but not invested. Elohim are angels of reasoning and understanding, attuned to the workings of the Symphony, and most notably, it's most complex components, the hearts of man.

In their celestial glory, *elohim* are graceful, hairless humanoids with large, glossy eyes. Their skin ranges from a pale icy blue—almost white, really—to a dark midnight black flecked with stars or mottled with vivid nebulas of color, from the overcast gray of an autumn morning to the radiant orange-red of a sunset. They tend to speak only when prudent, and give their opinions only when asked, if then.

On Earth, *elohim* place little importance on the age, body shape, sex, or other traits of their body, but all move with deliberate grace and rarely exhibit passions or anger. They may be spotted for their tendency to forget to blink, or for their gaze, either settled intently on a single target, or moving methodically through a space, scanning those around them.

Elohim are often the most dedicated maintainers of their roles within the Symphony. They understand the value in integrating into the mortal world in ways that grant them access to others. Therapists, social workers, legal aides, private investigators, diplomats, nurses, and spies, the roles of *elohim* allow them effortless proximity to humanity.

Resonance

The thrones are analytical in general by nature, and do not allow emotions, positive or negative, to interfere with their analysis of the world. The emotions of others, however, are plainly laid before them. They see how emotion interferes with the decision making of others, and use that information to help form their own opinions.

Perfectly, and with a glance, an *elohite* can know the emotional state of anyone that it sees. Once per scene, after at least 10 minutes of interaction, they may also divine how a subject would react emotionally to any given event. This analytical foresight does not grant information on what **actions** a character would take in response to an event, only how they would feel.

Dissonance

While *elohim* are tasked with perceiving the Symphony objectively and without allowing emotion to interfere with their observation, they are not without emotions of their own. God gifted the *elohim* the same capacity for joy and despair that every angel possesses, and commanded them not to act upon it.

When one of the thrones acts in a way that influenced by any emotion, from compassion to rage to despair, he generates a note of dissonance. Similarly, allowing emotion to distract an *elohite* from a mission or goal generates a note of dissonance as well.

The GM of your game may ask the player of an *elohite* to rationalize any seemingly-emotional action or reaction as being in line with the Lord's plan, or with the Word of the Archangel, and the GM has final judgment on what counts as emotional (players should generally be allowed to rescind actions that the GM deems emotional actions).

Malakim

The Virtues

Malakim are Heaven's swords. They are joyless, fearless, and ruthless, perfect agents of retribution, punishment, and divine displeasure. Malakim value honor among all else, and are tasked with delivering the wrath of Heaven and of the divine host.

Malakim are the youngest choir of angels, crafted by God after Lucifer's defeat and exile. They differ from other angels in key ways. They are immune to the trauma of corporeal death (page XX), and, lone among the choirs, cannot fall to become demons (page xx).

On earth, a malakite vessel is minimally adorned. They may wear only enough clothing to escape notice, or they may dress in military uniform befitting their roles (a malakite would never wear a uniform that he did not earn the right to wear through training and service), but little to no attention is paid to accessories or frivolity. When a

malakite owns a relic weapon or divine armor, she must often be convinced by her companions not to bear them openly.

Their purpose on earth, as it is in Heaven, is singular, and so they are unlikely to maintain roles, except as soldiers or officers.

In their true forms, malakim are imposing even to other angels. As severe and awesome as the seraphim, and as frightening as the kyriotates, a malakite appears as a shadowy silhouette with fearsome wings. Within its outline, one sees not human features, but the horrifying inevitability of destruction as it appears in nature. The cracking lightning and reverberating thunder of the hurricane, the ripping brutal tides of the ocean, the churning magma that roils beneath the surface of the planet, the features of the malakim are the features of nature at its most wrathful. The ire of God, given form.

Resonance

The essence of the malakim is honor and justice. Honor to the malakite is a personal endeavor, with each of these angels living by a personal code breathed into them by God's will and in service to His vision of the Symphony. They are able, then, to understand the personal codes of others. Unerringly and with a glance, one of the virtues may know what is the loftiest ideal and the basest sin in the eyes of any sentient being, and generally how well that being would judge themselves in relation to their *own* moral code.

This does not inherently allow a malakite to determine an angel or a demon upon seeing one, but few mortals have moral codes as severe as the divine host or the infernal horde.

A malakite can also exert their judgment upon another forcefully, which requires direct and obvious confrontation and hostility. It need not be violent threats—shouted accusations in a subway station or firm and forceful interrogation on a witness stand will do the trick—but it must make it clear that the malakite is no friend of the questioned. When questioned in this way, the victim of the malakite's inquisition is compelled to confess one wrongdoing. The angel has no direct influence in what they admit to, although steering the conversation toward certain topics may increase the chances that a given transgression is revealed, and it should be something that genuinely weighs upon them, in relation to all of their sins. A murderer may admit to torturing a victim, rather than the murder, but an angel can be relatively certain that a confession of stealing from a bookstore means that the person is not also a serial arsonist.

Resisting this urge inflicts Mind hits equal to the malakite's celestial forces, and once the malakite has imposed their judgment in this way, they cannot do it again until they could regain essence.

Dissonance

The malakite affinity for honor is not just about judging others. All malakim have personal codes of honor to which they adhere: four vows that define their place and their mission.

Two of these are universal for all malakim, and the other two are chosen by the player of the angel.

First, a malakite must never surrender or show mercy to a wrongdoer. Not all conflicts must be to the death, and the malakite is not obligated to physically attack every wrongdoer that he sees, but once conflict has started, it must be seen through to the end.

Second, a malakite must never abandon a duty, either self-imposed or assigned by her superior.

The other two vows should be recorded on the character sheet, and cannot be changed under any known circumstances.

Malakim have special rules regarding dissonance, and cannot fall.

When a malakite rolls a dissonance roll, and would normally trip or fall, he instead loses all of her dissonance and gains a discord instead. The angel has no control over what discord she gains, but the storyteller and the angel's player should discuss and agree on a discord that fits the circumstances or the nature of their dissonance.

Kyriotates

The Dominations

Kyriotates appear as colorful, pulsing clouds of limbs, organs, and facial features. Some favor human parts, others animal appendages, and some show no preference, manifesting clacking mandibles alongside human eyes and beating hearts, ringed with chubby baby arms and flicking cats' tails. For all kyriotates, these features are in constant flux, forming from and dissolving back into their churning bodies.

They are angels of subjectivity, of experience. They are God knowing His creation. Kyriotates hunger for new sensation and new perspective, positive or negative. Some do so with abandon, gleefully throwing themselves headlong into any new circumstance that arrives, others are meticulous, choosing their place on Earth carefully to maximize the novelty of their situation.

The dominations, alone among angels, cannot manifest vessels. In order to experience, or to interact with, the world, they must inhabit living hosts, subsuming their minds and wresting control of their bodies for Heaven's purposes.

Resonance

Kyriotates resonate with themes of perspective and subjectivity, and as a result are capable of inhabiting and experiencing multiple viewpoints at once.

The dominations require living hosts to interact with the corporeal world, and their resonance allows them to take those hosts. A kyriotate in celestial form or inhabiting a current host can touch a potential new host and bleed a portion of their forces into them. An unwilling host may resist this attempt with a roll of their celestial forces, requiring at least two successes to reject the mental incursion.

Celestials, familiars, and other non-mortal creatures cannot be possessed in this way, and a kyriotate, having failed to possess someone, does not inherently know whether the failure was because of a successful resistance or because the target was not a valid host.

If one of the dominations fails to possess a potential host for any reason, they may not try again against that host until the angel would be able to regain essence. The host may make another attempt to oust the angel whenever he wishes, though not more than once per 24 hours.

A kyriotate may possess up to his corporeal forces in hosts *simultaneously*, and human beings count as 2 for this purpose.

While possessed, a kyriotate has no access to his host's memories or skills (though it does use the host's corporeal forces for all rolls and takes damage against its Body total). The host's mind retreats to the Marches, and will remember none of what happened to his body, except perhaps as half-heard fragments that escaped into their dreams. Most humans will excuse away memory gaps. The daily lives of mortals can be uneventful and repetitive, and it's not out of the question that a day or two slips by unnoticed, unless something remarkable occurs.

So long as the angel has at least one corporeal force more than is needed to possess their hosts, they may also exist in celestial form.

Dissonance

While kyriotates often seek positive and negative experiences with equal gusto, they are forced to be mindful of the fact that they are experiencing those moments in a borrowed body.

It is dissonant for a kyriotate to leave a host in equal or worse overall condition than when he took possession of it, physically emotionally, financially, or in any other way.

For some hosts this may be as simple as restocking their pantry or leaving a hundred dollar bill in their pocket. For hosts badly injured during the domination's stay, or whose relationships became strained due to strange behavior, it may be impossible to avoid dissonance without serious effort, and potentially miracles.

Mercurians

The Friends

The mercurians are the angels furthest removed from God's glory, but are nevertheless a crucial part of His design. The least holy of the host, and the closest to humanity, mercurians relate to humanity in a way that other angels simply do not.

Their resonance is for the ways in which humanity relate to one another. In any circumstance where human interactions with nuance and compassion are required, a wise archangel will send a mercurian.

Even in their true celestial bodies, mercurians appear as human figures, often with soft downy wings and warm gentle halos.

When selecting roles on earth, mercurians tend to craft identities with a focus on approachability and with access to those who most need God's love: the relatable face at an AA meeting after you relapse, the smiling cashier at a convenience store frequented by homeless teenagers, the nurse holding your hand at the abortion clinic.

While the loftiest seraph may sneer at the base nature of the mercurian, only a fool would doubt their impact on the world.

Resonance

The mercurian resonance is for connection, for human interrelationships, for the histories that bind people together or separate them from one another. With a glance, a few words of a person's voice, or a gentle touch of their hand, the mercurian sees the way that a person fits into their surroundings.

They can instantly tell a person's name (demons and angels existing in roles will tend to reveal their roles' names in this way, while those without roles or in their true forms will reveal their actual names). Beings with multiple names will reveal the name that they most want to be called, that at least one person knows them by.

In addition to their name, the angel learns their most important relationships, and, if there is something that the divine friend could do to gain someone's trust or respect, they know what that is, at least in general terms.

This is not the same as knowing someone's desires. Some people will become more friendly or trusting in exchange for favors, of course, but others will warm up to someone if they learn that they are a firefighter, or fellow veteran, or that they have a shared interest in collecting seashells. It is then up to the angel to organically demonstrate, honestly or not, whatever would improve their standing in this way.

Dissonance

Mercurians love of humanity is fundamental to their place in the Symphony. It is dissonant for a mercurian to meaningfully harm a human, either by physical violence or severe emotional distress.

There are some exceptions, such as cutting a human to perform surgery, or informing a mortal of a lover's infidelity, hurting them emotionally to prevent further distress. The player and GM should try to reach consensus as to what qualifies, but the GM has final say in determining what actions are dissonant for the angel.

Archangels

Every angel within Heaven's good graces either is an archangel or serves one. Each archangel is bound to a Word (page XX), and all oversee a broad and often multifaceted aspect of the Symphony, directing their servitors in Heaven and on Earth to further their Word and to uphold God's plan as they understand it.

It is important to note that the line between Archangels and the remainder of the host is a firm one. While they retain a choir (with the exception of Ives), they are a fundamentally different thing than other angels, even other Word-bound angels. When an archangel is granted this status by God or by the Seraphim Council, they are permanently and unmistakably altered in that process.

Blandine

Archangel of Dreams

Blandine never leaves her tower on the edge of Heaven, overlooking the Marches and the dreaming souls that splash color and thought across it. The few remaining pagan gods that lurk between dreams are careful to stay out from underfoot of her angels who patrol her domain and fight back the demons who would encroach on her territory from the nightmare across the expanse.

She has built her duty to the dreaming around herself like a fortress, impenetrable and isolating. None have seen her face directly in centuries, save for her most trusted personal aides, but all who look to her tower feel her eyes upon them, and also gazing across the Marches to the matching tower that mocks hers in the distance.

Through her Word, which touches on Eli's creative spark, and Ives' vision of the brightest futures, Blandine brings the hope and optimism to humanity that she can no longer find within herself.

Choir Attunements

Seraphim

Seraphim of Blandine always immediately recognize intruders in any dreamscape they are in.

Additionally, they can use the fundamental truth of Heaven to cut through the fancy of the Marches. They have an edge on all rolls within the Marches, so long as they have a full reserve of essence *or* are closer to Blandine's tower than Beleth's.

Cherubim

The guardians' protection of their charges extends into their dreams. With this attunement you always know the exact location and state of well-being of anyone to whom you are attuned or who you are touching, while they are in the Marches. In addition, those you are touching or attuned to will remain on Blandine's side of the marches, unless there is direct demonic interference, which you will immediately know about.

Non-cherubim who take this attunement gain all the same insights and protections for those they are touching, and additionally *elohim* and *mercurians* gain it for those they use their resonances on, and *Kyriotates* gain it for the dreaming minds of their hosts.

Ofanim

Blandine's ofanim move unhindered through the Marches, flitting from place to place as easily as stream themselves. Within moments, they may get to any location within the same side of the Marches where they are currently located, and with the expenditure of essence, can evoke even greater feats of movement. For one note of essence each, they ofanite can:

- ❖ Cross from one side of the marches to the other, or from either side into the Deep Marches
- ❖ Bring along a mortal and their whole dreamscape (this requires that there are no unwilling celestials present in the dream)
- ❖ Transport up to 5 willing celestials with them

It is technically possible to use this ability to bring a dreamscape into the deep marches, although doing so is not recommended, both because Blandine disapproves of the action, and because the results are often unpredictable and dangerous.

Elohim

The thrones can touch or use their resonance on a sleeping mortal, and see into their dreams. With a roll of their ethereal forces, they can also interpret those dreams to determine what thoughts, worries, and hopes are dwelling within the sleeper.

Malakim

Blandine charges her Malakim with punishing those whose happiest fantasies are cruel, it is not dissonant for Malakim to harm a sleeping mortal, either in their dreams or a sleeping mortal, and they gain an edge on all clashes and return fire rolls made in the Marches.

Additionally, if they damage a sleeping mortal in the Marches, they can deal Mind hits to that mortal.

Kyriotates

Blandine's kyriotates can manifest a number of bodies in the Marches equal to their Ethereal forces, and distribute those bodies across the Marches as desired. If they also inhabit hosts on Earth, they must have one of those hosts remain asleep to act as a bridge between the realms, and if the host wakes, the kyriotate either loses all ethereal bodies or drops all corporeal hosts.

Non kyriotate angels who take this attunement cannot split their consciousness between the corporeal and ethereal realms.

Mercurians

Within the Marches, identity is malleable. A Mercurian of Dreams can wrap himself in a dreamer's perceptions of another person within a dreamscape. If the mercurian knows the name that a dreamer knows someone specific by, he may choose to appear exactly at that person within a dreamer's dreamscape. Otherwise, he may choose a relation like "the dreamer's brother" or "the dreamer's boss" or "someone whom the dreamer hates."

Any roll made to convincingly portray that role within the dreamer's dream gains an edge.

Dissonance

It is dissonant for an angel of Dreams to harm a sleeping mortal, either their dream selves or their physical bodies. Blandine expects her angels to conserve their essence to protect the marches. It is ergo dissonant for an angel in her service to spend essence on edges to skill rolls in the corporeal realm. Spending essence on songs and attunements is still acceptable in any realm.

David

Archangel of Stone

Staid and stoic, David is an angel as unyielding as granite. Even as early humans carved stone and worked the earth, David was molding and honing early humans. He feels a personal connection to humanity, and considers it a key aspect of his Word to ensure that mankind is steadfast in the face of adversity.

At times, his methods can seem callous to the other archangels, as he hardens hearts through hardship and strife or works his angels to the point of exhaustion and beyond, but David believes the opposite. It is his compassion, as he sees it, that motivates him to expect so much from his servitors and from mortals. The survival of humanity in the face of Hell's meddling and the senseless vagaries of the world is imperative, and David seeks to harden them like marble under endless pressure.

In mortal form, David prefers to be nude. He is unabashed, muscular, and imposing, whether staring down a demon with flint-cold determination, or beaming with silent pride when humanity labors in unison toward a common goal.

For all of their differences in demeanor and outlook, David has a silent respect for Gabriel, and her strength in the face of the inner turmoil of her Word. Dominic sees this admiration as David's primary flaw.

Choir Attunements

Seraphim

Since humans first carved their thoughts into clay tablets and onto standing stones, seraphim have been attuned to the written idea, thoughts given stable form.

David's seraphim can determine if any written statement is true, or if any photograph, recording, or written work has been altered, or if an illustration was faithful to the best of the artist's understanding, or if a recorded message is true. Essentially, they bypass the need for live medium to use their resonance.

Non-seraphim who acquire this attunement can only use it to determine if media or a written message has been tampered with.

Cherubim

The gargoyles and icons in classic churches are not always simply decorative. Cherubim of David may delegate watchfulness over an area to any representation of a person or creature made of earthen materials (stone, clay, metal, etc). By attuning then to this effigy they attune to the whole structure, and are able to use their resonance on anyone or anything within the building, so long as it is near or under the gaze of any statue or icon within the building. The first building protected in this way does not count against the total number of attunements for the cherub, but each subsequent building does.

Non cherubim who take this attunement may only key their senses to one such structure, and can see within the structure through the eyes of any of its stone watchers for the cost of one essence. Elohim, seraphim, and mercurians are able to use their resonances to affect anyone whom they can perceive in this way.

Ofanim

David's wheels may move slowly through stone or earth, at a rate of approximately 3 feet per second. This allows movement through unprocessed metals or any impurities within the ground, including roots and burrowing animals. Moving through processed minerals or earthen materials (such as metal or glass) costs 1 essence per second. Artificial or non-earthen materials such as plastic or treated lumber are impermeable to this ability, except where they occur incidentally within a permeable substance.

If an ofanite ceases to use this ability while within stone for any reason, he is ejected instantly to the nearest viable point, taking 1 Body hit of damage per foot traveled in that ejection.

Elohim

Elohim of stone have their uncanny perceptions tied to the earth itself. They always know their exact location within the corporeal realm, which way is north, and the precise time and date at their location.

Malakim

David's malakim may plant their feet firmly on the earth or any earthen material and become nigh immovable. In this state, they cannot be knocked down, pushed back, moved from their location in any way, and has +1 armor, which stacks with other armor as a special exception to the rule.

Activating this ability can be done at any time, and costs 1 essence. It lasts until the malakite ends the effect.

Kyriotates

David's kyriotates, in addition to their normal resonance and ability to take hosts, have one vessel, a stony statue or effigy, which they can assume at any point when they are in celestial form.

This vessel has 2 armor, deals 2 damage with its unarmed attacks, and is not damaged by environmental concerns such as heat or cold.

These vessels are slow, however, being able to move only about as fast as most humans walk, and do not heal except by magic or active repair from a sculptor.

This vessel takes two forces to occupy, and the kyriotate does not gain dissonance if it is damaged or destroyed, though she will have to petition David for a replacement, usually carved by a mortal sculptor or procured from the vaults of some cathederal.

Non-kyriotates who take this attunement do not need to separately pay for this vessel, and replace a broken vessel in the same way.

Mercurians

The friends of Stone bring out the strongest is humanity. When a mercurian labors alongside mortals, under the leadership of a human, any project that they work on is blessed. Efforts to repair an old church, raise money for a community member's surgery, or rescue a mountain climber stranded by weather or landslide will be bolstered. This blessing does nothing to protect the endeavor from pitfalls or hardship, but it guarantees that those involved will work their hardest and will not lose faith.

Mechanically, any roll that a mortal fails in pursuing the goals of the project instead counts as having rolled one success, but generally this effect is handled narratively rather than mechanically.

While under the auspices of this attunement, no mortal or celestial who is working on the project can roll a divine intervention on rolls related to its completion.

David requires that the task is completed by the **people**.

Dissonance

David's angels do not instigate violence, but nor do they shirk from it.

It is dissonant for one of his angels to strike first in any physical conflict, although once the angel or one of his allies is attacked, he is authorized to use violence to any extent necessary.

In combat, his angels are forbidden to use ranged weapons, and any attack or return fire made with one is dissonant for them.

Dominic

Angel of Judgment

Dominic loathes taking human form. He is a seraph. In his eyes, he is THE Seraph. An inquisitor and a seeker of truth. Dominic manifests equally often in masculine and feminine aspects, but always with piercing, distrusting eyes.

In her true angelic form, Dominic is a bronze six-eyed serpent dressed in a long, hooded cloak, out from which stretch her immaculate white wings.

Dominic has overseen Heaven's internal affairs. He roots out corruption, incompetence, and transgression within the Heavenly Host, and he has honed his senses so consumately that that dissonance and discord ring painfully in his ears. This has earned him a reputation as a tyrant—a reputation to which Dominic pays no mind.

Upon discovering dissonance or any behavior that she considers treasonous, she will immediately report an angel to their superior and, if she considers it necessary, to the Seraphim Council. She believes she is within her right to strike down any angel with multiple discords in the streets of the Eternal City, although she has thus far held her hand at Ives' request. She trusts Ives fully, and he often defends her from the criticism of her peers.

"We have not seen," Ives is quick to gently remind the host, "what Heaven might become without her."

Choir Attunements

Seraphim

A seraph of Dominic can cause lies to stick in the throat of the dishonest. By locking eyes with a person, or touching them, or asking them a question in a clear, authoritative tone, and spending one Essence, the target will have a hard time lying for the remainder of the scene. Each time they lie, they will choke, sweat, stutter nervously, or otherwise act in a way that completely undermines their credibility. Resisting this inflicts one Mind hit per lie, until they may take no more mind hits, at which point they become incapable of lying convincingly for the remainder of the scene.

Cherubim

Dominic's guardians hunt down wrongdoers relentlessly. They generate no dissonance from the harm of beings they are attuned to, when they attune to a miscreant for the purposes of bringing them to justice.

Mercurians and kyriotates who take this attunement also do not generate dissonance from the choir conditions when harming a wrongdoer as part of a just and proportional punishment. This attunement is of no use to any other choir.

Elohim

When invoking their special use of their resonance to determine the cause of a person's guilt, doing so costs no essence for Dominic's elohim.

All other choirs who take this attunement can instead see guilt plainly on a person's face, as though sensed by the elohite resonance. (This is not a true resonance and has no function other than sensing guilty emotions)

Ofanim

Dominic's wheels specialize in chasing down wrongdoers. They double *rolled* successes (but not edges) in all opposed rolls made in pursuit of a wrongdoer.

Malakim

When a malakite of Dominic touches the vessel, host, or celestial form of an angel or demon, they can feel any disharmony therein. The angel knows if the target has any dissonance or discord, and what amount or type, respectively.

Other choirs who take this attunement can use the ability with a touch, but not hear their resonance.

Eli

Archangel of Creation

Dressed in baggy, stained jacket and sporting short, practical hair, Eli roams the Earth with a smile on his face and wonder in his eyes.

Almost a century ago, Eli gathered his angels and spoke his final words to them as their superior. "Do what thou wilt," he decreed, "but be cool."

Eli's angels retain their attunements, but most now report to other archangels in Heaven. Still nominally Angels of Creation, a servitor of Eli might be a Cherub of Eli in service to Marc, for instance. These temporary superiors do not inherently grant their attunements (although angels can earn them) and do not necessarily bind the angels of Creation to their dissonance conditions, though they will still expect certain behaviors from them. Some dedicated angels do stay in Eli's citadel and tend its galleries and studios, awaiting the return of the Archangel of Creation.

Even without Eli advocating for his Word in Heaven, creation has not slowed down at all. Eli walks the Earth, seeming content to enjoy creation, rather than promoting it. He reinvents himself regularly, suppressing his memories and becoming a young woman in medical school, a jeweler at a high-end studio in Vietnam, an undiscovered artist's boyfriend in rural Iowa.

Though none know Eli's ultimate goals, Ives hints that it is Eli's nature to create, and whether he is trying to or not, he must be building something as he wakes up each year as someone new and falls in love with Earth all over again.

Choir Attunements

Cherubim

Eli's cherubim may automatically attune to anything they create themselves, at the moment of the project's completion. These attunements do not count against the angel's limits on attuned subjects.

Other angels who take this attunement can determine the direction and distance to one object they have created themselves, but gain no other benefits of cherubic resonance. Switching to a new object can only be done while that object is being created, and severs the connection to the previous object.

Elohim

So long as they have at least 1 note of essence, thrones who serve Creation know at a glance what a person's passion is (see page XX). Celestials and spirits usually return a passion related to their role, Word, or domain, if applicable.

Ofanim

When the pressure is on, ofanim serving Eli work faster than any mortal craftsman. For one essence, they can divide the time needed to create or repair any object by their corporeal forces (or by 2, if their corporeal forces are 1). This stacks with the Ethereal Song of Motion.

Mercurians

Muses to humanity, these mercurians inspire mortals to create marvels of both art and engineering. When a Mercurian of Creation provides assistance to anyone other than an angel, they grant one edge if the angel does not have the skill in use, or two edges if they do.

This cannot be combined with any other assistance, and cannot be used to inspire actions that are destructive.

Gabriel

Archangel of Fire

Gabriel, the Lord's personal messenger, is a terrifying and intense woman. Her Word is the only one in the Symphony shared by an archangel and a demon prince, and she feels the unholy desecration of Belial's presence at the core of her being.

Many archangels would have buckled under the immeasurable spiritual agony, but Gabriel is ancient and indomitable. She is one of the oldest archangels, and rivals Michael in might.

Gabriel is the fire that purifies, the burning in the heart of the zealot, and the beacon that guides souls toward righteousness. On her calmer days she is the hearth that warms against the winter chill and the candle by which one studies the scripture.

Some on The Seraphim Council worry that she has burned too bright and too long. She is unpredictable and has scarred countless of the Host, but those who are drawn to follow her do so with searing devotion.

Speaking cryptically and with restraint between her bouts of gritting agony and manic glossolalia within her volcanic citadel, Gabriel is a woman robed in flickering fire and spitting magma, and surrounded by whirling rings of light. On Earth, she is the protester with the shaved head. She is the poet who incites the prison riot. She is the teenage girl who fatally stabs a sexual predator in the throat with a pen.

Choir Attunements

Seraphim

Gabriel's holiest can touch anything that was destroyed by fire or raw energy, such as an explosion or electrical shock, and see it as it was the moment before its destruction. Her seraphim are detectives and investigators, turning back the effects of her Word to examine destroyed evidence, clearly see the faces of burn victims, or even page through books completely reduced to ash.

Ofanim

In their celestial forms, Ofanim of Fire beam with a dizzying heat and light that ripples the air around them. Both their celestial forms and their vessels are immune to any injury or negative effect from heat, fire, electricity, friction, or radiation, completely subsuming the energy into themselves, and burning all the brighter for it.

Ives

Archangel of Destiny

Gently, patient, and unassuming, Ives' always appears, on both celestial and corporeal forms, as an elderly man with a weathered face and kind eyes. While Michael considers himself the first angel, and does have some reasonable claim to the title, Yves was the first **soul** that the Lord crafted, older than the angels and belonging to no choir.

Demons

The fallen counterparts of angels, the demonic horde is divided, primarily, into seven classifications. Six of these—balseraphs, djinn, calabim, habbalah, shedim, and impudites—have angelic counterparts in Heaven. Some of these demons are hellborn, created by Lucifer or demon princes, or uplifted from imps and gremlins. Others are fallen: former angels whose dissonance severed their connection with God's grace.

The seventh band are the lilim. Every single lilite is hellhorn, and Lilith is the only being in the Symphony capable of creating lilim.

In addition to the true demons of Hell, there are minor infernal spirits of myriad types. The vast majority of these are divided into the broad categories of imps and gremlins.

Imps are petty and spiteful, twisted little humanoids, ranging from gaunt to flabby to sinewy and vascular, coming in every color imaginable, with small wings and horns, and fleshy tails. They whisper in the ears of mortals and orchestrate opportunities for them to betray themselves and others: a nail in the tire of an alcoholic right in front of his favorite bar, an apology text that never sends, a dream about a toxic friend just as you were ready to break ties. Imps who gain their seventh force usually become shedim, habbalah, or impudites.

Gremlins manifest in their celestial form in a variety of bestial shapes. Some have snouts and tiny tusks, other have canine jaws and sharp claws. Some walk upright, others hunch over on their arms like tiny gorillas, and some even slither on serpentine bodies or scamper on thin insectoid legs. Gremlins bring things to ruin, draining batteries, fraying brake lines, and scrawling obscene messages on church bathroom stalls. Gremlins who gain true demonic status tend to become calabim, balseraphs, and djinn.

Regardless of their shape and classification, imps and gremlins, and those rare outliers in Hell's chaotic throng, do not have Hearts. Most that live on Earth snuck away from Hell unnoticed, shirking their responsibilities in Hell or trying to pull off a stunt worthy of true demonhood. Those that are on Earth by assignment are usually expected to die before they return (though they can return to Hell by following another demon there, like any celestial). Like relievers, gremlins and imps can become familiars, but when one of these vile little creatures is bound into an animal form, it is usually as punishment or by force, rather than by choice.

Balseraphs

The Liars

The unholy choir slither through Hell with their massive serpentine forms, with multiple gleaming eyes and imposing, oppressive wings that seem to envelop their surroundings. Balseraphs are usually some combination of white, black, red, and yellow. Some are metallic and gleaming or ashy gray.

Balseraphs are demons of truth, just like their angelic counterparts, but their truth is the personal truth that shapes one's world and allows one to ignore what they don't wish to acknowledge. On earth they enjoy roles as teachers, media personalities, con artists, cult leaders, and politicians. If a balseraph is not in a position of authority, they have the ear of one who is.

Some balseraphs wholly acknowledge that their personal truth is out of harmony with reality. On the far end of the spectrum, others truly believe that they are the only ones who can see reality for what it is. Most fall somewhere in between, straddling the chasm between their personal Symphony and the observable world with confidence—able to acknowledge that they see the world as they wish to see it, without ever acknowledging any particular self-deception.

Most liars enjoy sharp clothing and attractive vessels, both to feed their personal vanity and to lend credence and authority to their words.

Resonance

The balseraphs' truth is unbound to the world around them. Their personal Symphony contains its own truths—truths they are enthusiastic to share with others.

No magic, including the seraphim resonance, can detect the lies of a balseraph.

In addition he can touch another to send ripples of his personal Symphony into another, harmonizing them and sharing their personal truth. For as long as the subject is actively paying attention to them thereafter, their perspective and their logic are tainted by the liar. Their statements will make sense so long as a given assertion would be even theoretically possible, however improbable.

Creatures who suspect manipulation may roll their celestial forces to shrug off this resonance. Two successes will overcome the resonance and additional successes will inflict dissonance, below. Having resisted a balseraph's resonance, the target is immune to that demon's resonance for 24 hours.

Dissonance

Balseraphs' certainty of their own truth is the source of their strength. When one is confronted with unassailable evidence that they have lied, or when their lies come to contradict one another, they take a note of dissonance.

In addition, when a balseraph's resonance is resisted with more than one success, they take one dissonance per additional success.

Djinn

The Stalkers

Djinn appear to mortal eyes as fantastically adorned beasts: tormenting figures adorned with horns, iron and ivory masks and bangles, wings of membranous flesh or mismatched feathers. Many combine or rearrange the features of multiple earthly creatures, appearing as a lion with an owl's face, or a jackal with insectoid compound eyes and a floating crown of tarnished silver.

Djinn pervert the cherubic resonance of protection. Rather than protecting others, they hunt and obsess over their charges. Rather than caring about others, they wish to be cared about. To a djinn however, all attention is good attention. Adored, feared, or reviled, a djinn may be happy with anything but being abandoned. Some djinn, in fact, offer promises of protection as a way to keep their victims close by.

On Earth, djinn are employed to hunt down resources valuable to their superior's goals, track and tamper with angelic agents and soldiers of Heaven, or to trap innocents in cycles of abuse.

The vessels selected by djinn fall at the extremes in terms of how imposing or threatening they seem. Some opt for muscular, sturdy vessels that inflict fear into their prey. Others prefer unassuming forms to allow them to get close to their targets without arousing suspicion.

Resonance

Djinn resonance allows the demons to attune to people or objects, and then locate them within the Symphony. They may similarly attune to up to their celestial forces in targets, and know with a moment's thought the direction and distance to anything they are attuned to.

When the prey is most vulnerable, a djinn will know that, as well as the general nature of the vulnerability. In combat this means that once per fight they may gain an edge by exposing a vulnerability their target is experiencing.

By spending one essence, a djinn may see and hear the surroundings of the being or object to which he is attuned. While doing this, his perception of his immediate surroundings is muted and muffled, and he cannot succeed on notice rolls.

Much like cherubim, ceasing the pursuit of a victim is antithetical to the nature of the djinn. Doing so takes an hour of focus and costs one essence, or may be done immediately and for free, generating one dissonance.

Dissonance

The cherubic nature of the djinn is fractured and corrupted, the angelic care for their wards instead mirrored selfishly onto themselves, into a need to be loved, respected, or feared.

The first time in a scene that one of their targets becomes disappointed or disinterested in the djinn, she generates a note of dissonance.

A victim going 24 hours without considering the djinn at all has the same effect.

Finally, it is possible for a djinn to generate dissonance by rapidly severing an attunement, as described above under resonance.

Calabim

The Destroyers

Calabim are the limitless motion of the ofanim, turned directionless and disruptive. These demons embody entropy and reckless abandon.

A calabite appears in celestial form as a roiling mass of unpredictable, searing energy; a sentient, ongoing explosion. Rooted deep in their chaotic souls, a calabite's most distinguishing trait is that every single calabite carries at least one permanent discord that manifests plainly and obviously in their celestial form. In the case of physical discords such as stigmata or vestigia, these manifest literally as bleeding holes in space or in searing hands floating beside their form, or as broken horns emanating from the opaque, white-hot center of their form. Mental or emotional discords manifest symbolically instead. Addiction may appear as leather bands that bound the demon, megalomania may appear as an ornate, luminous crown.

Most calabim genuinely enjoy the destructive effect they have on the world around them, but the majority are wise enough to know that wanton havoc will disrupt the goals of their peers and their superiors. When a calabite has the opportunity to truly let loose, however, it is wise to run away.

Given how disruptive to the Symphony they can be, many calabim would benefit from roles that would dampen their disturbances, but most calabim are too unfocused to maintain roles. Those who can, maintain roles as demolition experts, terrorists, physicists, and muggers.

Resonance

The calabite resonance is for entropy and ruin. In corporeal form, he can select any object within arm's reach and unleash his untamed celestial energy upon it. This is usually enough to instantly shatter, immolate, rot, or dissolve fragile items. Sturdier targets may take time, up to a few seconds, and heavy and reinforced objects, like a ship's hull, a vault door, or a marble pillar can take up to a minute to weaken to the breaking point. During that time, it will creak and vibrate and may give off heat or fragments.

Held or worn object generally don't stay still long enough to break unless they are fragile or are being held stationary for the entire time needed to break the object.

Importantly, the calabite resonance is not capable of subtlety. Corroding the wires in a phone to render it useless is likely to crack the phone in the process, and generate a fair bit of excess heat. Blowing up a gun in someone's hand will probably also fire the chambered bullet.

Living targets are someone more protected against the calabite resonance. Any creature of forces instead takes twice the demon's celestial forces in body hits (or soul hits if in celestial form).

A difficulty 2 resistance roll from a living target resists the entropic energy and the calabite is left with three choices. She may take the damage herself, she may "swallow" the chatic energy and take one dissonance, or she may loose into into the world, where it will strike a target of the GM's choice—usually something inconvenient.

Dissonance

Calabim suffer dissonance when someone resists their resonance and they are neither willing to vent the destruction randomly or to take the damage themselves.

Because the nature of calabim is chaos and entropy, it is also dissonant for a calabite not to carry discord. A calabite without discord takes one dissonance every sunset. Luckily, this is a self-correcting problem.

Habbalah

The Horrors

To describe a habbalah in celestial form, one would perfectly describe their celestial counterparts, the elohim—large, perceptive eyes; delicate, hairless bodies ranging from pale blue to deep almost-black purple—but to glance for even a moment at a habbalah is to know you are in the presence of a demon.

Habbalah often retain the outward appearance of calm detachment for which the elohim are known, but have no limitations on being driven by emotion, whether or not they would acknowledge this, even to themselves. Many will defend their choices as rational and unemotional, even as they are motivated by their basest, most selfish desires.

Calling upon their personal Symphonies, habbalah reach out into the hearts of mortals and twist the emotions of others, inciting guilt, fear, joy, sorrow, hope, or shame, or even damping emotions down to leave their victim calm and detached.

Habbalah walk among humanity as life coaches, priests, sponsors at AA meetings, and chiropractors—people who have access to the desperate and the stressed, people who are turned to for advice or for a friendly ear. Some delight in punishing those they see as inferior to themselves, or those who are wicked in their eyes. Others hope (or claim to hope) to help people find their way, or to alleviate pain. Whatever their intentions, they do not truly understand humanity, and so even those who are motivated to do good, by demonic standards, often do unforeseen harm.

Resonance

The habbalah resonance is for emotion.

With a touch or with eye contact, a habbalah can subtly or overtly twist the emotions of any sentient creature. There need only be the slightest hint of the desired emotion in the target already, which can often be brought about by a well-placed comment or look, and the demon can unleash dizzying extremes of emotion.

The habbalah has no control over how a person *acts* on their emotions, but the emotion continues for about 6 hours, or until the victim meaningfully acts against their own self interest in the throes of the emotional outburst. For this purpose, acting against one's self interest would be any action that undermines or delays meaningful goals, or hurts the affected person or someone they care about.

Once during the outburst, either at the moment of influence or at some pivotal point later, the target can attempt to reevaluate and center himself. This requires a resistance roll of celestial forces from the victim of the resonance. The difficulty of this roll is 2, and, if successful, it renders the resisting target immune to influence from that specific demon's resonance for 24 hours.

If made in the moment that the resonance is invoked, then harmonic feedback overcomes the demon, and she must either take a note of dissonance as her Symphony is overpowered, or must take on the emotion herself, acting out with extreme emotion until the normal 6 or so hours pass, or the demon acts against her own self interest due to the emotional outburst.

Dissonance

Habbalah gain dissonance only from harmonic feedback on their resonance attempts, as above. When a creature resists the habbalah resonance and the demon refuses to take on the emotion themselves, they gain one note of dissonance.

Lilim

The SOMETHING, idk

Every one of the lilim is hellborn. They have no naturally occurring angelic counterpart. These demons are created by Lilith, the Princess of Freedom and the original wife of Adam.

[[The lilim will be written after playtesting.]]

Shedim

The Corrupters

While there are other demons who are more *unholy*, more opposed to the Symphony as God intended, and higher in Lucifer's favor, the shedim are the most *vile* of the demons.

The corrupters are pulsing, whorling masses of limbs and facial features. They are veiny and tumorous, self-destructive and gory. Mouths emerge from their fleshy depths and swallow hands. Legs plant their feet firmly against faces to push them under the demon's surface. Taloned claws rip out bloodshot eyes and toss them away with a squelching splatter of pus.

In the corporeal world, shedim are incapable of manifesting vessels, and must instead rely on mortal hosts, whom they possess in their pursuit of that which they crave the most: the sticky thrill of pushing someone into new depths of depravity.

Hell's princess employ shedim as spies and thieves, accessing the homes, workplaces, and even thoughts of those they possess. They share a body with the waking mind of their hosts, whispering to them, coaxing them put that cigarette out on their arm one day, and on their child the next, to kick their neighbor's dog, to do just one more hit from the pipe, to squeeze just a little harder on her throat, to just do it already, this will be the thing that makes you feel better.

Resonance

Like kyriotates, shedim have no vessels of their own, and use their resonances to inhabit the bodies of living beings. The similarities don't extend far beyond that however.

Shedim may possess a single host at a time, human or animal, and the mind of their host remains awake and conscious throughout the possession, sharing volition and control of the body.

The shedite may access the memories of the host and act using his body, and the host remains aware and will largely see any such actions or recalled memories as his own choices and experiences. The host may perceive the actions of the demon as dark intrusive thoughts, a literal voice in their head, or simply a lack of self control.

After possession, however, hope is not lost for the host. If the host wishes to expel the demonic influence, he may do so with a difficulty 2 resistance roll using his celestial forces. This roll can be made at the moment of possession, and then at any time that the host is driven to new lows of depravity, endangerment, or self-destruction. This difficulty may drop to 1 or even 0 if the shedite tries to make her host do something *truly* despicable, in

relation to previous actions taken while possessed. For this reason, many shedim practice patience. Pushing the line little by little prevents this reduced difficulty.

Success on the resistance roll rebukes the demon, and additional successes can be used to inflict dissonance on the demon. Once expelled in this way, the demon manifests celestially and cannot possess that host again unless the host can be convinced to allow it, which starts the process anew.

The demon has access to the host's thoughts and memories, though the host is aware of anything that the shedite "remembers," and can block access to the memory. In this case, the shedite is aware that it is being blocked.

Dissonance

It is dissonant for a shedite to go a day without harming their host. At any point in a 24 hour period, they must subject their host to a corruption at least marginally more dangerous and harmful as the most unpleasant thing they experienced the day before.

This can involve wither maneuvering them into more and more dangerous situations or leading them to commit greater and greater atrocities. These acts often start small, with things like aggressive driving or causing trouble for waitstaff, but can escalate rapidly, especially if something out of the demon's control leads their host into harm's way or to violent acts, upping the stakes faster than the corrupter intended.

Eventually, the shedite either loses need for their host or brings ruin to the mortal's life and those around them.

Shedim can also gain dissonance by being forced from a host with extra successes can also inflict dissonance: 1 per success above the difficulty.

Impudites

The Takers

Other demons may be amused by humanity, or find humans useful, or despise humans and wish for their downfall. Other demons may enjoy spending time among mortals in order to slake their desires and ambitions, or escape the torture of Hell.

Impudites, however, truly love humanity. Sweet, beautiful, delicious humanity.

The beguilers thrive among the living, who find them friendly, warm, compassionate, funny, and generous. They worm their ways into the hearts of mankind, integrating easily into social groups. New acquaintances feel immediately like old friends. Strangers in bar bathrooms become like sisters. Late nights spent on porches and trips to Ibiza and the most electric, fulfilling sex you've ever had...until they don't need you anymore. Until someone else has come along who needs their love.

In their celestial forms, impudites resemble humans, usually a favorite vessel, with two or more horns, and a barbed tail. On Earth, they enjoy roles as celebrities, socialites, community organizers, and poets.

Impudites are the least unholy band of demon, the closest to humanity. The harms they do to mortals are no greater than the harms mortals do to one another.

Resonance

Impudites resonate with human interconnection. By touching a mortal or celestial, an impudite can insinuate himself into her understanding of her social world, creating a context and vague memories. Those affected by this resonance can attempt to resist with a celestial forces roll of difficulty 2.

In general, targets of this resonance will treat the impudite in accordance with the nature of their manufactured relationship. The impudite cannot control specifics of the relationship, and the victim will subconsciously fill in details.

This can be used either to make the equivalent of a strong first impression purely at the desire of the impudite, or to subtly implant the demon into distant memories. An old fraternity brother, a distant cousin, a former drinking buddy.

The mark of this ability will be accommodating and compliant with those for whom a positive relationship is formed, or may be confrontational in the case of negative relationships.

The relationship with the impudite is not a natural one, and will occupy an unusual amount of the time and energy of the victim for 24 hours, or as long as the demon continues to use their resonance again every day. The relationships that an impudite forges are by their nature obsessive.

Dissonance

Human connection is at the core of impudite existence. It is dissonant for an impudite to kill a human, directly or indirectly. This includes allowing a human to be killed by impersonal forces that the impudite could have prevented, or contributing to an attack on a human that ultimately results in its death.

Demon Princes

While Hell is filled with demons leveraging their power over one another, all demons, aside from the rare Free Lilim, swear subservience to one of the demon princes.

Andrealphus

Prince of Lust

The Prince of Lust is transparently smarmy, with lecherous sneers and fidgeting hands. Groomed and preened, but never attractive.

The only thing more sickening than his obvious salacious stares and his blatantly rehearsed pickup lines is that they *work*. Victims of his twisted attention loathe themselves for waning to give themselves to him in.

Of course, this is an intentional tactic. Andrealphus has the ability to be genuinely beguiling, and may do so when in disguise or when it suits his specific goals at the moment, but he prefers to heighten his selfish sense of conquest by leaving his victims feeling cheap and desperate.

Andrealphus' servants, however, tend to prefer a more classical approach, and lean towards sensual vessels that either hint at unattainable pleasures or exude sexual prowess. It is difficult to be as simultaneously repulsive and desired as the impudite Prince of Lust. Besides, Andrealphus is truly fond of the straightforward pleasures of sexuality, and a demon who indulges their master is a demon who lives another day.

Servitor Attunements

Knight of Satisfaction

Andrealphus's knights deal with the aftermath of sex, rather than the seduction or the act itself. When a Knight of Satisfaction uses her resonance or any ability that allows a resistance roll, the victim gets no resistance roll if she has had an orgasm in the last 15 minutes.

Calabim causing damage with their resonances enhanced by this ability choose whether to do body or soul damage, even to those with a vessel, but cannot deal the last soul hit to a mortal or a creature using a vessel or host.

Vassal of Shudders

These demons rewire a person's mind momentarily. For as long as the demon continues to spend one essence per hour and remain in the presence of their victim, they can force any sentient creature to experience all physical sensation as pleasurable. The more intense the sensation, the more intense the pleasure.

Additionally, those under the effects of this ability ignore any normal gender-or-appearance-based boundaries on their sexuality.

Dissonance

It is dissonant for a demon in service to Andrealphus to put the needs of a mortal before her own needs in any way.

Asmodeus

Prince of The Game

In his celestial form as a djinn, Asmodeus is a towering lion, 15 feet tall at the shoulders, with clawed black wings and a pair of snakes in lieu of a tail. He prowls smoothly through the streets of Hell, stalking from informant to meeting to tribunal, and scanning the throngs of demons and the dead with meticulous precision and a whiskered sneer.

Asmodeus oversees Hell's labyrinthine legal structure. There are laws and precedents and strictures, because games only work so long as rules are obeyed. Asmodeus takes advantage of the complicated and sometimes contradictory body of infernal regulations, exploiting loopholes, reinterpreting clauses, or clinging to technicalities as it suits his needs, and the needs of Hell, but his devotion to the rules of The Game is genuine. He will only enforce regulations that genuinely exist, and will not let a violation of the law go unaddressed, and will neither turn a blind eye nor manufacture charges.

Servitors of The Game catch renegade demons, punish infernals who risk strengthening belief in God by flaunting their powers in front of humans, and ensure that the hordes of Hell remain loyal to their superiors and to their causes.

Asmodeus despises discord, seeing it as a manifestation of disobedience to one's nature. The only reason he has not snuffed out Belial's flame is his fear of what will happen when he is killed.

Servitor Attunements

Knight

Knights of The Game spend the majority of their time on Earth, where renegades are likely to hide and where demons don't have the watchful eyes of their superiors. An informant may instantly recognize any demon and their band, regardless of what form they are in. Additionally, they may select a free role at character creation and take one skill related to that role.

Bishop

Asmodeus' bishops are tasked with locating and punishing the discordant. They can sense discord on a demon, even when the celestial in question wears a vessel. If he does at least one hit of soul damage to an enemy with discord, he takes an additional hit for every discord he has.

All of these abilities also work on angels with discord.

Dissonance

Servitors of The Game generate dissonance when they disobey orders from any demon who has any legitimate authority over them, or by helping a demon to escape judgment or break infernal law.

Baal

Princess of Attrition

In her sharp suits adorned with medals and her hair pulled into an impossible rigid bun, Baal is Hell's chief strategist in the War against Heaven. She is no valiant frontline fighter like Michael, and, unlike him, she does not share her responsibilities in opposing Hell's enemies with any other superior. While she is absolutely capable of holding her own in combat, she prefers the strategic calculations of the general's desk.

Hell's high commander holds regular council with Eligor, the Demon of Atrocities, her personal lieutenant and most trusted soldier. Baal petitioned Lucifer for her lieutenant's word in the late nineteenth century, and he has served her with unquestioning loyalty since that moment.

Baal is unflinching and unsmiling. She is perpetually busy, and expects the same of her servitors. She is also, more than any of her peers, truly loyal to Lucifer. She takes no joy nor satisfaction in her duties. She fights and she commands because it is her nature to fight and it is her responsibility to command.

Servitor Attunements

In addition to specific attunements, demons serving Baal never generate dissonance from killing or wounding another, if doing so directly and specifically serves Hell's general goals.

Captain of the Blood-Soaked Banner

After acting in combat, a Captain of the Blood-Soaked Banner may act again immediately by spending 1 essence. This overrides all other rules for determining turn order.

Additionally, he can sense any flesh, living or dead, with 10 yards.

Captain of the Inverted Cross

It is impossible to kill a foe who has escaped. By directly dealing physical damage, a Captain of the Inverted Cross prevents his victim from assuming celestial form (if she is not already in it), moving between realms, or using songs, attunements, or resonances to escape combat. This restriction lasts one minute, and does not work if the demon does not have at least one essence in reserve.

Captain of the Rose Massacre

By spending 1 essence, a Captain of the Rose Massacre can manifest any mundane weapon weighing less than 20 pounds, and ammunition, if applicable. This weapon then exists permanently, and the user of the weapon can spend 1 essence per attack to deal an additional damage for the remainder of the scene in which it is created.

Dissonance

Demons of Attrition cannot willingly retreat from any combat with a direct order from a higher-ranking servitor of Attrition, or from Baal herself. To do so generates one dissonance.

Beleth

Princess of Nightmares

Beleth does not leave her tower. Overlooking her side of the Marches, she sneers down at the panicked human dreamers tormented by their own minds and sometimes the cruel imaginations of her servitors. She buries herself in her work, and she seems to genuinely enjoy it, not allowing herself to think of anything else.

The princess of Nightmares helps humans realize the worst possible outcomes for the future, and haunts them with the scars of their past, trapping them in a paranoid present where they are unable to reminisce or to plan.

Many of her servitors work in the Marches, dealing directly with the dreaming, while others work on Earth, sowing fears that will follow mortals skulking into their dreams. Beleth knows that fear is a powerful motivator, and she has Lucifer's favor for all she does to pull humanity away from its destiny.

While very few ever see her face, Beleth's stifling presence can be felt by any who fall under the shadow of her tower. She sets her eyes not only on the terrified humans under her thrall, but greedily across the Marches, seeking always to gain ground and claim the tower that sits opposite hers, killing the archangel within, whom she never loved.

Servitor Attunements

Nightmare Warden

By touching a sleeping person or entering their dreamscape, a nightmare warden may ensure fearful dreams and a trip to Beleth's side of the Marches.

Additionally, for as long as they stay in contact, or remain in the dreamers' dreamscape, and they have at least one essence in their reserve, the dreamer cannot wake up. Djinn, ever the possessive bastards, have an even harder time letting go of the dreaming, and can apply this ability to anyone they are attuned to.

Dread Acolytes

When in celestial form, the acolytes of Beleth inspire terror, even compared to their demonic peers. Mortals who see these demons universally panic and can take no meaningful action, with the exception of soldiers and sorcerers, who can prevent this state by taking 2 mind hits, and saints who are immune to his effect.

Dread Acolytes can invoke this ability while wearing vessels or hosts, for the cost of 1 essence. In these circumstances, the effects last until they choose to dismiss them.

Dissonance

It is dissonant for a demon serving Beleth to spend essence on edges on corporeal forces roles.

Belial

Prince of Fire

Crackling, untamed, scarred—Belial oozes through Sheol inexorably. In his true form as a calabite he erupts in constant bursts of flame, fissured and broken both physically and spiritually. Belial shares his Word with the ineffable Gabriel, the mouthpiece of God, and her searing holiness agonizes him.

The only thing that numbs the torment of her Fire scorching his personal symphony is to burn himself worse than she burns him, and to burn everything around him in an effort to vent the violent inferno within.

Belial is an atomic bomb in demon form—unspeakable destruction given will. When he manages to pressurize his spirit into a corporeal frame, Belial is gruesomely disfigured by discord. 4 inch long fangs curl outward from his cracked, glowing mouth. His hand and feet drip with sooty blood. Brittle, chitinous scales cover his body. The air around him ripples and warps from his heat and objects sear and ignite in his presence. If the Demon Prince of Fire has more than one vessel, nobody would know. He is almost more discord than demon, and the distinctive grotesqueries make his forms indistinguishable from one another.

For all his unchecked destruction, Belial is no more animal. He deploys his servitors intelligently, using them for their precision, where his own nature would annihilate indiscriminately.

Haagenti

Princess of Gluttony

Haagenti is the only demonic superior who refuses to ever wear a human form. She began her existence as a familiar, a puny underling in Hell's hierarchy, and she has no shame for her coarse fur, her greasy talons, her six outward-bent legs, or her slobbering maw. She was kicked around for centuries, and harbors blatant contempt for most other princes. If they respect her, as she sees it, she has become too like them.

As she built up her first few forces and fledged into a calabite, Haagenti was discovered by Kobal, who watched her with bemusement as she cannibalized forces from other demons and tore directionlessly through those who would put her down, eventually earning the Word of Gluttony, at Kobal's suggestion, and eventually devouring Meserach, the erstwhile Prince of Sloth.

Even now, overseeing the principality of Shal-Mari with Andrealphus, Haagenti does not have the respect of most of the other superiors in Hell. Many suspect that even Kobal snickers at her behind her back, or perhaps is setting her up for his biggest prank yet.

Haagenti is a buffoon and a brute, senseless and insatiable, and her servitors enjoy free reign to indulge their hungers wantonly while furthering her Word.

Servitor Attunements

Devourer

Gluttony cares only to consume, and worries itself not with the repercussions. Using this attunement, the devourer may make a roll of celestial forces, or corporeal forces if she inhabits a vessel or host, and, on a success, consume [20 x successes] pounds of matter within a minute. The difficulty is how many times she has used this ability in a day, minimum 1.

On a failure, she cannot force down the matter, and may not attempt again for 2 hours.

The demon will not become sick from this consumption, will not be poisoned, and will not take damage from otherwise harmful materials. To chew through things that would be flatly impossible for a human to bite through (stone, metal, thick glass), she must be able to swallow the components whole or use Numinous Corpus: Teeth.

Enabler

Any use of resonance by an enabler to convince or force its target to engage in excess, indulge a vice, or consume something he otherwise might not, has its difficulty of resistance increased by 1, and can cross boundaries of logic. For instance, a balseraph lying that a fresh, severed human hand is a juicy steak has just as much chance to work as any other lie. A shedite can encourage acts of consumption without the lowered difficulty for huge leaps in depravity.

This attunement is almost never taken by djinn or calabim, whose resonances do not usually directly encourage behavior.

Dissonance

Demons serving Haagenti are as much victims of their gluttony as they are promoters of it. All servitors pick some material vice. A drug, a kind of food, etc. To deny a chance to indulge that vice once a day, regardless of the consequences, is dissonant for her servitors.

Kobal

Prince of Mirth

In the stifled giggle when a stranger walks into a telephone pole, in the nervous laughter at a racist joke, in the unabashed guffaws at the expense of a common enemy, Kobal slakes his callous thirst.

He is an Impudite, and sees his Word as benevolent. The world is a ceaselessly cruel and painful place, and what can we do but find the joy in that cruelty?

His demons, some with good intention and some sadistically, help humanity see the humor in the darkest moments, whether it be the gallows humor of the suffering or the giddy schadenfreude enjoyed at the expense of another.

For centuries, Kobal's demeanor was grinning and lively. Lately, the Prince of Mirth laughs more slowly, and some worry that he has grown bored of his routine, perhaps even with his Word. He's seen and made a mockery of

every tragedy. He's heard every joke. He's pushed the envelope further and further. For Kobal, there are no boundaries left to cross for that rush of a new shock.

Whether he turns away from his station or stumbles across some unprecedented tragedy in which to find humor may end up shaping the course of the War.

Servitor Attunements

Laughter warms the heart and heals the soul. Once per day, when a servitor of the Prince of Mirth makes a joke at the expense of another that the GM and players find genuinely funny, that demon regains one essence. The joke could be verbal, or a humorous situation manufactured by the demon. At least one other character must witness the joke. In addition, choose an attunement below.

Baron of Chuckles

So long as she has one essence in reserve, a Baron of Chuckles can make any mortal who witnesses a misfortune or atrocity laugh it off, if he can make a joke about it. This can be resisted with a resistance roll of ethereal forces. The difficulty of this roll is 1 for anything as severe as human death, and is 2 otherwise.

Prankster

The difficulty of any action that would be funny AND would harm another is reduced by 1 for a prankster, so long as he has at least one essence in reserve. In addition, the laws of physics will slightly bend for the prankster to accomplish the joke.

Dissonance

It is dissonant for a demon of Kobal to go a day without doing at least one thing to worsen the misfortune of another. This worsening doesn't actually HAVE to be funny in any way, though many servitors of Mirth will attempt to make it funny.

Kronos

Prince of Fate

For all his extraordinary insight, the archangel Ives only sees half of the story when it comes to the futures of mankind. While Destiny represents the best that a soul can accomplish, Fate represents the ultimate depravity to which a person can plummet, and Kronos' demons record these dark futures in their lead-bound tomes.

About half of Kronos' demons toil endlessly in the Black Archive, divining and recording futures, and filing and updating ledgers of damnation in halls lit only by the magma that flows down channels in the walls and along grooves in the floor. The remainder of his horde travel the corporeal realm, corrupting the paths of humans and of nations, and thwarting the plans of Ives' angels.

Kronos is a balseraph, with tarry black scales and white wings. When glanced briefly from the corner of the eye, his usually-serpentine face looks almost human. Despite his unholy band, Kronos speaks the truth, in the rare instances that he speaks at all. His servitors however will intermix truth and lie in any combination that leads humans down the most loathsome path.

Servitor Attunements

Broken Mirror

No demon prince understands the Symphony as a *whole* like Kronos does, and he crafted this attunement to take advantage of his unique insights and his station as a balseraph, lying to the Symphony itself about his children. Upon receiving this attunement, the demon selects an angelic choir. He immediately gains access to that choir's resonance, but also is now bound by their dissonance condition.

Keeper of the Book of Days

Demons with this attunement are ongoingly aware of the important factors that guide the course of history in this moment. They have the equivalent of constant awareness of global and local news and perfect recall of all such events over the last 100 years, with a moment's concentration.

Additionally, they may receive flashes of insight from the GM, patterns spotted within fate and circumstance.

Fateseer

With a touch or a moment's scrutiny, a fateseer can determine if a person has a particularly notable fate, and by spending 1 essence he can determine what it is.

If the demon has NO dissonance, he can also also see if the person has a particularly powerful destiny, though he cannot determine its nature.

Lilith

Princess of Freedom

The only non-celestial to hold a position as a superior, in Heaven or in Hell, the first woman is beautiful, brilliant, and untamed. After Lilith disobeyed Adam and God and left Eden, she found herself alone in the wilderness. There she did whatever she needed to survive. Hunting, stealing, bargaining with angels and demons, beasts and men. Eventually she was found by Lucifer himself.

The first fallen offered her unspeakable power in exchange for her subservience, a trophy to flaunt against the God who had made and lost her. Lilith laughed in his face and spit at his feet. Lucifer was ready to destroy her absentmindedly for her impudence, but she made him a counteroffer. Nobody know what this mortal woman offered to the Lightbringer, but Lucifer was pleased and granted her a Word, the only Word she would accept.

Freedom.

Lilith has no servitors and grants neither attunements nor distinctions. She is the sole being who is capable of creating Lilim (save, perhaps, God Himself, but He, at the very least, hasn't done so yet). Each of the Lilim is a work of art, and she loves them all deeply in her way, freely giving each their of heart, to do with as she pleases. That is not to say that she is protective of them. She considers that sort of matronly responsibility a form of bondage, and will have no part of it.

Lilith is a woman, striking, nude, with deep brown skin, wild hair, and piercing dark eyes that betray her cunning and drive. Even for all her obvious power, she is unmistakably human.

Malphas

Noble of Factions

It can effortlessly predict the least popular opinion in any room and shift just one more person in that direction. It can turn small disagreements into family-shattering divides. It's the Black Lives Matter protester at a Klan rally and the anti-vaxxer in front of the pediatric clinic.

Malphas doesn't care at all what causes it champions, so long as disagreement and discontentment are sown. It will craft compelling arguments (whether or not it believes them), when it thinks it can win minds over and set the audience against one another. It will present a nonsensical caricature of talking points when it doesn't believe it can change minds, just to make listeners even more indignantly assured of their *own* righteousness.

When not visiting college philosophy courses, political rallies, and the trending tags on social media, Malphas resides in Hades, agreeing sycophantically with every prince and princess, strengthening their convictions and their certainties, and broadening the gap between them. In private it loathes all of its infernal peers, with the exception of Beleth, whose penchant for fomenting paranoia delights the noble, and whose own splintered history with the Archangel of Dreams Malphas feeds with secretly delirious enthusiasm.

Servitor Attunements

Acolyte of Rivalries

The feuds between enemies is mutually destructive. When an acolyte of Malphas targets someone with a song, they may also target another person within 50 yards for additional essence equal to the cost of the song. One roll is made and the song resolves as though it has been separately used on both targets. The only stipulation is that the original target and the new target must hate one another, either personally or as a matter of their affiliations.

If the song is sung over multiple turns, the additional essence cost need only be spent on the last turn of performance.

Infernal Sectarian

An infernal sectarian can determine the group affiliations, if any, of anyone they can touch.

This cannot inherently reveal demons or angels, but will reveal loyalties to demon princes, or to Heaven broadly.

Jeroboam's Heir

With at least one hour of conversation, and the expenditure of one essence, these demons may invert the loyalty of any mortal, until someone or something convinces them to convert back.

The mortal may resist with a celestial forces roll, difficulty 2, and upon resisting, the mortal is immune to this ability for 24 hours.

This ability has no effect on any creature that can consciously spend essence or can perceive the Symphony.

Dissonance

If a demon serving Malphas helps two people to communicate, reconcile differences, or see common ground, he generates ones dissonance.

If acting as a mediator or messenger in any way, it is dissonant to deliver the message without twisting or altering the message in a way that makes it sound less kind or more divisive.

Nybbas

Prince of Media

In his short tenure as a prince, Nybbas has climbed to dizzying heights of power. He was granted his Word in the early twentieth century, where he worked to keep families ignoring one another in favor of listening to radio dramas and reading lurid headlines. Soon thereafter, the first moving pictures were popularized in cinemas, and Nybbas' reach only grew from there.

Through the advent of the home television, the internet, social media, and streaming video, Nybbas leached his way into every aspect of life on Earth.

His game is to blur the lines between reality and fiction. Sensationalized newscasts and true crime shows make the horrors of reality feel like entertainment. Self-righteous pundits use their charm and wordplay to vindicate their audiences, passing their demagoguery off as news. Instagram filters make your friends look like movie stars, and streaming chats make movie stars feel like your friends.

And people willingly return again and again, aching to disengage with what's real and absorb a lie that feels more true than the truth.

In Hell or on Earth, Nybbas is always impeccable. Whatever any of his enemies (or colleagues) do or wear or say seems outdated and embarrassing in comparison, and his own demons brutally bash one another for clout in the halls of Shal-Mari and on their YouTube channels.

Servitor Attunements

Subliminal Artist

When creating any sort of media—a song, a broadcast speech, a blog post—a subliminal artist can encode a message within it. She can choose one of the following effects.

They can either select a group of people who will understand the intended message or they can make a Create roll and use it as a persuade roll for anyone who listens, who will not consciously understand what they are being persuaded to do or feel.

Baron of the Numb Mind

So long as a person has spent at least an hour engaging in some sort of relatively mindless consumption of media, be it app games, scrolling TikTok, or watching video compilations of reddit posts, a Baron of the Numb Mind can use their resonance, or any attunement or song, and the distracted target cannot roll to resist. They CAN however, still spend essence on edges to resist, they simply cannot roll dice for successes.

Genuinely thoughtful and intellectually challenging media does not provoke this effect UNLESS it was produced by a demon, but plenty of media that bills itself as thoughtful is not. The GM has final say.

Cardinal of the Fourth Estate

Nybbas' cardinals specialize in information, and in disinformation. When debating or presenting information before a large audience, live or recorded, the audience will see the cardinal as trustworthy. In general, there are never penalties for statements they make, and audiences in general will side with them over their opponents.

Their statements will be parroted to a broader audience as well, gaining a wider reach and greater credibility.

Dissonance

New media must always exist to consume. A servitor of Nybbas must spend at least one hour a day contributing to the body of media that exists in the world. Producing an album, recording a podcast, streaming on Twitch, or writing an opinion column for a school newspaper.

If dissonance is gained from this condition, mark down how many days you have missed. You can alleviate the dissonance by working extra hours on future days to catch up.

Saminga

Princess of Death

Stygia is one of the few quiet places in Hell. Away from the screaming of Sheol and the clanging casinos of Shal-Mari and the gunshots and explosions of Gahenna, Saminga stew in her catacombs, a miasma of rotting limbs and skeletal grins attended by her cadre of mummified slaves.

The Princess of Death is disastrously vain and idle. She personally sees no need to advance her inevitable Word, and instead plants dear of it, scratching at the back of mortal minds, and visiting the living as they lie down to sleep. While Malphas and Baal promote strife and death, Saminga is content to wait for it. Each human death feeds her Word, and after being shuffled from principality to principality, nearly all souls in Hell ultimately end up in Stygia, where the princess delicately savors the final emptiness of their spirits ultimately dissolving.

Saminga does not engage much with the politics of Hell, but she and Kronos share a cordial rivalry, and the two debate quietly at the entrance to her catacombs whether it is a crueler fate to die or to live in misery.

Servitor Attunements

Stygian Embalmer

By preparing a corpse with unholy funerary rites and infusing it with 2 essence, an embalmer may raise that corpse as an undead servant.

These servants lack intelligent thought, respond to nobody but their creator, and work tirelessly without concern for their own preservation. They last approximately a month doing light labor

Bone Puppeteer

Saminga's puppeteers can use the dead as vessels. Doing this requires access to a corpse with at least some notable amount of flesh. By expending 3 essence, the demon makes this corpse disappear, and adds it to their collection of vessels.

A corpse vessels destruction does not cause trauma to the demon wearing it, but it does slowly decompose at a normal rate while being worn. If it is destroyed or rots beyond usefulness, it can be replaced by finding a new corpse and spending 3 more essence.

A demon may have only one corpse vessel at a time, until they have 4+ corporeal forces, and then they gain a second.

Shedim with this attunement instead gain the ability to use corpses as hosts which never resist and which need not be corrupted.

Breathdrinker

Breathdrinkers can kill a willing target merely by being in very close proximity to them. They must be close enough to touch easily, but need not actually be touching. Anyone who wants death (either of their own volition or through manipulation, mundane or infernal) can be killed in this way, and by all accounts the death will seem to be of natural causes.

When a breathdrinker kills a mortal in this way, OR kills with their bare hands OR kills a calm or sedated target by passive means (unplugging life support, injecting poison into the IV of a hospitalized patient, flooding a house with carbon monoxide), the death causes no dissonance and does not disturb the Symphony.

Dissonance

It is dissonant for a demon serving Saminga to nurture life in any way. Providing medical care, using restorative songs, or providing nourishing food, to a mortal, host, or vessel, generated dissonance.

Valefor

Princess of Theft

Lucifer doesn't claim to recall granting Valefor her Word, and Kronos' records seem to indicate that she was Hellborn, so her Word wasn't granted by the Seraphim Council in Heaven. When asked where she acquired her Word or her s

tation, Valefor shrugs, "where do I get anything?"

It would certainly be an impressive trick indeed, to steal a whole pattern out of the Symphony, and counterfeit a forged Word of your own.

Valefor is a muscular woman with massive curling horns. While she has lasting respect for few, she is drawn fondly to those stoic souls who overcome hardship and survive by any means necessary—a strangely sympathetic trait for a demon, and one she developed after acquiring her Word.

Valefor's Theft encompasses both the sly burglary and the brutish smash-and-grab, and her demons can be counted upon to acquire nearly anything, either for the right price or the love of the game. Granted they're just as likely to rob you blind upon delivery, if you aren't mindful.

Vapula

Prince of Progress

Vapula cannot glean fundamental truths and elegant patterns out of the Symphony. He experiences no flashes of divine insight. Vapula, like man, must rely on experimentation to see results, and he seems them daily.

The Demon Prince of Progress is soft-spoken and smiling, even as he vivisects like subjects or tests his contraptions on demonic bystanders or damned souls, breaking his gentle facade only during his bursts of manic insight, scribbling ideas and findings on backs of schematics, on napkins in Earth's diners, or on his own pale arms.

His demons drum up demand for half-finished and ill-conceived technologies that cost human lives, lead to ecological destruction, and precipitate social ruin. While there is no shortage of dangers to be found in his more shoddy inventions (and the human innovations that he backs), Vapula is truly at his most dangerous when he succeeds, and the angels shudder to think what projects hold his attention deep within his laboratories.

Ultimately, Vapula understands that progress has a cost, but he does not care what that cost is, so long as discoveries are made, embraced, built upon. The future is coming for all of us, Vapula wants to get there first.

Servitor Attunements

All servitors of Vapula who have any attunement below get a technological device. This should be briefly described on the demon's character sheet, for instance "a car with defensive and offensive enhancements" or "a personal shield that projects force to deflect incoming attacks." These devices are always unstable and unreliable, and many rely on reality-warping infernal technology to work properly. The more the device is used and the more fantastical and broad-reaching abilities the device calls upon, the more strange side effects it will have. In addition, many of these devices disturb the Symphony when used.

Vapula will not employ calabim. Their destructive auras wreak havoc on his delicate instruments.

Harbinger of Utopic Tomorrows

When one of these demons describes flaws in some relatively new (to the listener) process, device, or technology, she may spin them as features. So long as she can conceive of SOME way in which the downsides have some sort of utility, mortal listeners will be unable to see them as negative for 24 hours. Celestial and ethereal characters can make a difficulty 2 resistance roll to avoid this effect.

Improbable Technician

A technician may repair any machine with the most unusual tools and materials. This does take the normal time for repairs, but can be sped along with the Song of Motion.

This ability costs no essence, unless the demon has dissonance, and then it costs 1 essence per device repaired.

Damned Engineer

Librarian of Infernal Blueprints

Architect

Songs

The Symphony can be manipulated or sensed by angels and demons naturally with their resonances: the ways they naturally hum and vibrate within the Symphony. Songs, however, are learned, rather than innate. Specific effects that can be evoked by playing them into the Symphony.

The songs listed here can be learned by any angel or demon. All songs must be taught by an angel demon or ethereal spirit. Even soldiers and saints who know songs categorically lack the understanding of the Symphony to teach them to others.

In addition to the songs below, some angels, demons, and spirits know special songs that they only teach to their most trusted allies, or for exorbitant costs, if they are willing to teach them at all.

Each song lists a cost that must be paid for each action spent performing it, and also lists a duration that the spell lasts if performed successfully. The effects of a song can be brought to an end prematurely by its performer at any time by spending one action singing the final verse of the song, which costs no essence and requires no roll.

Song of Attraction

The song of attraction brings things together, physically or emotionally.

Corporeal

1 essence

1 hour per success

The corporeal song of attraction binds two items, or strengthens the bond between two items already linked. When this song is performed, the performer either chooses two targets within arm's reach (be they objects or people), or one object that is inherently linked to another object or person. For the duration, the two will gently pull toward one another. The tug is gentle enough that it usually cannot move either affected item, though spherical items may gently roll or items floating in water glide toward their partner.

In the case of performing a song on something already linked to a partner, the link needs to be obvious and meaningful. Using a lock of a person's hair to track them is fine, as is using half of a broken object to find the other. A discarded coffee cup would not be enough to track someone, but a favorite mug used over years would.

Because this gentle tug works in both directions, it is not always a good way to track a person clandestinely.

Ethereal

3 essence

1 hour

The ethereal song of attraction creates an infatuation toward a person or an object in the mind of a living being in arm's reach of the performer. The target becomes obsessed with the object or person for the duration of the song's effect. The player of the song's target chooses the nature of the infatuation, but the target will want to be around the object of their obsession for the duration.

The target can shake off this obsession, but doing so inflicts mind hits equal to the successes on the song.

Celestial

2 essence

instantaneous

This song conjured an item that the performer owns from its location in Heaven, Hell, Earth, or the Marches. The number of successes depends on the size of the object. All relics require only one success.

1 successes for a handheld item

2 successes for an item the size of a briefcase

4 successes for an item as large as a car
10 successes for an item the size of a house
Once conjured, the item stays in its new location.

Song of Dreams

These songs directly influence or interact with the Marches.

Corporeal

1 essence
1 hour per success

While inhabiting a vessel or a host, or at any point for naturally physical creatures, a character can perform this song and enter a trance state, travelling mentally to the Marches for the song's duration. Their corporeal body remains physical and in place, and they are aware of any intense noise, or of being truck or shaken.

Users of this song do not create a dreamscape of their own, even if they would normally do so while dreaming, and instead manifest in the dream of someone nearby to them, or at a random point in the Marches. Characters serving Beleth or Blanding may always choose to manifest at the base of their superior's tower.

It is not possible to cross into Heaven or Hell from the marches while manifesting in this way.

Ethereal

1 essence
1 dream

An untrained pianist might be a virtuoso in her dreams, and a trained surgeon might struggle to perform a basic procedure in her nightmares. The ethereal song of dreams bends the Marches to aid in some actions or hinder others. The performer picks one skill for a given target within the same dreamscape and can select a skill to either impede or aid within the context of the dream.

For the remainder of the dream or until the performer ends the song, all rolls with that skill either add or subtract a number equal to the successes on the roll. This may mean that rolls are required to do things that are normally difficulty 0.

Song of Form

These songs change how a person appears, or if they appear at all.

Corporeal

1 essence
indefinite

At the culmination of this song, the performer alters their physical appearance to anything within the bounds of the species of their vessel. The changes last until the final verse is sung to reverse the changes.

A simple success is enough to change a person's facial features, skin tone, eye color, hair style, or other purely cosmetic changes. Broader changes like changing height, sex, weight, or age require an additional success each.

Copying the looks of a specific person costs 1 success AFTER all other requisite changes, and the performer must be able to see their target or remember them clearly with a Know roll, difficulty 2.

Ethereal

2 essence
1 hour per success

The performer infuses their body with shadow, mist, and dream, gaining near invisibility. This grants one automatic success on rolls made to hide, and allows attempts to hide even in circumstances where that would normally be impossible due to a lack of hiding places.

Even if the performer is found, nothing about their body can be determined. In celestial form, this disguises the choir or band of the performer, and even if they are an angel or demon. However, it falls when opposed by effects that determine those traits by means other than simple observation.

This song does not change how the performer's body operates, or its mass or shape, only its appearance.

Celestial

5 essence

instantaneous

This song can only be performed by celestials and by ethereal spirits. Soldiers and saints cannot learn it at all.

The celestial song of form is used to craft vessels from essence. It is a complex and time-consuming song to sing, requiring 24 hours for each action to perform it, with each roll being made at the end of this period. Once the performer has accumulated their corporeal forces in successes, they have crafted a vessel suitable to house their spirit.

With a single success, this song can also be used to transfer ownership of a vessel to a willing recipient capable of using vessels. This requires touch for the entirety of the song's performance.

Player characters who craft or receive a vessel in this way are not eligible for normal advancement at the end of the chapter (see p XX).

Song of Light

Be it the radiance that emanates from Heaven, the searing light of vengeance, or the flickering illumination of Hell, this song manifests luminance.

Corporeal

1 essence

1 hour

Upon completing this song, the performer glows with a light that illuminates up to 10 feet away per success. This light can pass through solid barriers, and can be brightened, dimmed, and expanded or shrunk within its maximum size for the song's duration.

Ethereal

1 essence

20 minutes

This song creates an illusory mirage. It cannot be larger than 1 foot on its longest side per success. The illusion may have visual and auditory components, and may provide the sensation of slight warmth or coolness (the equivalent to an autumnal breeze or a balmy summer), but has no matter.

Celestial

2 essence

instantaneous

A focused beam of searing light is directed as of the conclusion of this song, counting as a ranged attack action that garners successes equal to those accumulated in the song's performance.

This beam does 3 damage, to body or soul, as is appropriate for the creature struck by it.

Song of Memory

This song calls back the historic, recalling motifs and refrains of the past.

Corporeal

1 essence

instantaneous

This song is used in a location or on an object (anything that is not alive and does not have a mind). The song reveals its history, one day per success, giving a vague overview of notable events. If the performer chooses, she may hone in on one moment and may see a few moments of time, hearing seeing and feeling from the object's perspective. This then ends the visions.

Ethereal

1 essence

instantaneous

This song grants perfect recall of the past, 15 minutes per success, either for the performer or a being in arms reach. This can be used to notice details missed the first time, or to recover memories lost to amnesia, mundane forgetfulness, or substance use. It cannot recover memories lost to magical memory alteration, but it will reveal that it has occurred. Altered or removed memories leave telltale gaps and incongruities.

Know rolls made to remember events replayed with this song always succeed.

Celestial

3 essence

instantaneous

This song alters the memories of the performer or of a target she is touching. If the target is resisting, he can attempt to break contact before the song is completed, ruining the performance.

With a single success, the performer can remove or alter approximately 10 minutes of memory from within the last 24 hours. Each additional success expands the range by 24 hours or the length of altered memory by 10 minutes.

The memory can either be singled out by time or by content. "remove everything in the last 20 minutes" is a valid use of the song, as is "replace all memories of me with memories of a middle-aged pediatrician," so long as the range and duration cover the necessary periods. With enough successes, the song could replace an afternoon of violent torture with a lovely stroll through a park, feeding ducks.

Angels and demons are aware of this song, and so are likely to suspect its use in cases where they have cause to doubt their memories. Most do NOT take kindly to being manipulated in this way, and angering a celestial can come with a hefty price, in addition to the already-considerable cost of this song.

Song of Might

This song creates strength in those who it blesses.

Corporeal

2 essence

1 minute per success

The deep, resonant thrum of this song bolsters the physical strength of the singer or a recipient within arm's reach. For the duration, he deals 2 additional damage with unarmed attacks and muscle-powered weapons. In addition, this song greatly increases the lifting strength of the target, approximately quadrupling the amount of weight she can move.

Ethereal

2 essence

1 hour

The ethereal version of this song grants clarity of mind and constructs a buttress of logic that fortifies the recipient against manipulation or deception. While under its effects, the recipient gains 2 extra mind points, per success. These are lost before the character's natural mind points, and they cannot be healed. In addition, while under its effects, the recipient of this song may choose one supernatural effect that would alter his perception or thinking and fully ignore it. He becomes immune to that power (song, resonance, etc) from that source for the remainder of the song's duration.

Celestial

1 essence

1 hour

The celestial version of this song amplifies the Symphonic amplitude of the performer or someone within their arm's reach. For the next hour, any essence spent to gain edges on skill rolls instead grants 2 successes. Once this has granted additional successes equal to twice the successes on this song, the song's effects end.

Song of Motion

From the bustling activity of an anthill to the singular drive of a glacier, the Symphony is full of motion. These songs harness the concept of movement, hasten the performers endeavors, and even allow for movement without crossing the intervening distance.

Corporeal

1 essence

10 minutes

The performer selects one object or being within sight, or himself. He can then move that target in any direction, free from the constraints of gravity. To maneuver it skillfully, he must be able to see what he is moving and its surroundings.

The object must be freestanding and can weight no more than 50 points per success.

Ethereal

2 essence

1 task

The ethereal song of motion speeds the completion of a task performed by the beneficiary, who may be the song's performer or a creature within arm's reach. The task will take 10% less time per success rolled, to a minimum of 5% of the required time with 10 successes. For this purpose, a task is a single application of a skill or forces roll made outside combat and not inherently requiring essence, resonance, or attunements. Cumulative rolls can be effected if they meet the criteria above.

Materials to erect a shelter fly around the recipient of the song as he works. Library books are read seemingly in an instant while he researches, and his hands are a blur of motion as he performs surgery. Some leave the area a disheveled mess in the wake of this song, others leave it almost disturbingly tidy, as everything falls into its perfect place within the performer's design.

Celestial

5 essence

instantaneous

The performer of this song pulls himself from the Symphony and reintegrates himself elsewhere. He may select a new location where he has been before, can see currently, or can very clearly visualize. The end location must be within 100 miles per success, and must be in the same realm of existence (Heaven, Hell, Earth, or the Marches. This song does not work within the Deep Marches.)

The performer may bring along passengers within arms reach by spending an additional 2 successes per creature. Unwilling creatures may make a corporeal forces resistance roll, difficulty 2.

Song of Peace

This song soothes and placates those who hear it. It is said that Novalis herself wrote this song.

Corporeal

2 essence

instantaneous

This song brings someone to rest. They must be within arm's reach. If the recipient does not wish to sleep, she may instead take 2 mind hits per success rolled to avoid the effect.

If the target is very energized, as an individual involved in combat or a car chase, they offset successes with only one mind point each.

Ethereal

3 essence

1 minute

Anyone within the same room-sized area as this song ceases fighting, ending both physical and verbal confrontations. They may still disagree on things, but may only express those disagreements in a calm and respectful manner.

A new fight may erupt after this song is used, but if that occurs within the song's duration, then the instigating character takes one mind hit per success on the song. If anyone does this, or if a new beligerent enters the scene with aggressive intent, the song's effects end prematurely, and all the effected can act normally.

Celestial

2 essence

1 hour per success

This song eases the effects of discord. The performer selects a target within arm's reach, and the song suppresses a single discord for the duration. This song CAN force a calabite to become dissonant, but the calabim can overcome the effects of this song by spending a single essence to assert their chaotic nature and end the spell as it begins.

Song of Restoration

These songs heal or recover what is damaged. All three function identically when healing damage. To heal damage with these songs, spend 1 essence per action performing the song. The beneficiary heals 1 body, mind, or soul hit (as appropriate for the corporeal, ethereal, and celestial versions, respectively) per success on the song.

Each song has an additional use described below.

Corporeal

1 essence

instantaneous

This song can repair a nonliving object or structure. Performing this song will repair (or partially repair) damaged matter in an area 1 yard in length on its longest side. Fully destroyed objects become badly damaged,

badly damaged objects become worn and cracked, and worn and cracked objects become whole. Each success can be used to add 1 yard to the area's longest dimension, or to move the repair by two steps along the spectrum of damage, from fully destroyed to whole.

Repairing something in this way requires at least 90% of its original parts or pieces.

Ethereal

1 essence

1 minute per success

The ethereal version of this song soothes stress, anguish, shock, or mental illness. By making eye contact or being within arm's reach of the beneficiary of the song, you can bring the subject mental clarity. If the episode would have passed or the source of the distress has been removed when the song's duration lapses, then the subject remains calm afterward, otherwise, the distress resumes. This song has no effect on those under the sway of habbalah resonance.

Celestial

6 essence

instantaneous

This song heals flaws in the spirit, removing dissonance. To benefit from the song, the beneficiary must be in their true celestial form and be willing to receive the song, and the performer and any chorus must have no dissonance, themselves.

To dissonance can be removed one at a time, and removing each note of dissonance requires that the song accumulates as many successes as notes of dissonance the beneficiary holds. For instance, to remove a 2 dissonance from a demon with 4 dissonance, the song must be performed twice, once garnering 4 successes and then afterwards once garnering 3.

Song of Shields

This song invokes protection, safeguarding the performer and those he wishes to defend.

Corporeal

1 essence

1 minute per success

This song can be performed normally, OR can be performed as a defend action (in the latter case, it must end in that action, though it can be performed one or more times normally and then end in a defend reaction). If performed or completed as a defend reaction, then the defense counts as having received twice the successes of the song.

For the duration of the song, reduce all body hits taken from all attacks by 1. Multiple performances of this song add to the duration but do not increase the damage reduction.

Ethereal

1 essence

1 hour

The repugnant chords of this song create an aversion to an area or object that makes it difficult to enter or interact with. If covering an area, it may have a radius of twice the number of rolled successes, in yards.

Any character who wishes to enter the area or interact with the object must take three mind hits in order to do so. Mortals who have no particular reason to fight the effects of this song will subconsciously avoid it, turning down a different street to take the scenic route home, or remembering last moment that there was a different restaurant they'd rather go to.

Celestials, even those who do not pay the cost in mind hits, will realize that something is blocking them.

Song of Sight

The songs of sight extend the sensory capabilities of the performer. While it is predominantly used for visual acuity, any sense can be extended with these songs.

Corporeal

2 essence

10 minutes

This song increases the singer's perceptive capacity. For each success it grants one of:

- ❖ night vision: unhindered sight even in absolute darkness
- ❖ telescopic vision: triple the usual visual range
- ❖ microscopic vision: 50x magnification on anything within a yard or so
- ❖ heat vision
- ❖ ultraviolet vision
- ❖ supersonic and subsonic hearing
- ❖ filtered hearing: hone in on sounds as soft as a whisper from up to 15 yards away, regardless of other sounds
- ❖ tracking by scent
- ❖ refined palate: can taste a drop of a substance diluted in a gallon of water, and pick apart each flavor component in a mixture
- ❖ detect micro-vibrations allowing for navigation without sight and the ability to feel movement through the floor or air

Ethereal

1 essence

1 hour per success

This song allows the performer to experience the world through the senses of another. The being you chose to carry your senses must be within arm's reach when the song is performed, but can travel any distance thereafter over the song's duration, so long as they remain in the same realm.

Over the duration, the performer can switch between their own senses and their remote ones at will.

The subject of this spell is not necessarily aware that they are acting as a sensory conduit.

Celestial

1 essence

10 minutes

This song allows the performer to see and hear through walls or other barriers for the duration. It is possible to see through barriers up to 1 foot away per success, and see anything past that barrier as normal line of sight would allow.

With enough successes, an angel could simultaneously see the entire contents of a house.

Song of Thunder

3 essence

30 seconds/2 minutes (see below)

This song does not have a celestial or ethereal version, it is a purely corporeal song.

The song of thunder creates a deafening boom that is accompanied by a swell of powerful chords in the Symphony. For 30 seconds, each creature nearby becomes unable to benefit from the edges granted by their skills or passions, as the shock to their system disorients and unbalances them.

In addition, for 2 minutes, disturbances in the Symphony become harder to hear. This song disturbs the Symphony at two levels higher than usual for the duration, and makes it impossible to identify other disturbances of smaller or equal level without a divine or infernal intervention.

Song of Tongues

While angels and demons can already speak dozens of languages, there are other ways in which they may need to facilitate communication. In those circumstances, they rely on these songs.

Corporeal

1 essence

1 hour

This song can be performed to bless a number of people equal to the successes rolled in its activation. Subjects of the song can speak, understand, read and write any earthly language for one hour.

For three successes per person, the song may instead rob its targets of the ability to use any language for one hour.

Ethereal

2 essence

2 minutes

This song builds a link between the performer and a sentient being within arm's reach.

Upon completing this song, the performer can speak through the mouth of the target of the spell. The subject remains conscious and can move about normally of their own volition. Being targeted in this way does not *inherently* feel unnatural—most people don't think too closely about what they say anyway. As long as the words she speaks are things she might conceivably have said, she might not realize anything is wrong, and minor surprises might be easy to write off as a slip of the tongue.

More unexpected moments may be understood as some sort of neurological problem unless the subject has reason to expect the paranormal.

Sleeping targets are never awoken by their own voices.

Resisting targets can take mind hits equal to the successes rolled on the song to prevent disastrous moments and shrug off the influence.

The performer of this song can allow the target to speak normally any any point over the song's duration.

Celestial

1 essence

instantaneous

A character who performs this song holds a note of essence in her hands and sings a message into it celestially. The message may be up to 5 words in length per success rolled to perform the song. She then names a creature she has met before or can visualize and name.

Once released, that message will find him.

If the intended recipient is dead or does not exist, the sender knows the message was not sent, otherwise she knows it was delivered.

Song of Tribulation

3 essence

30 minutes

All three versions of this song function identically, hindering a target's ability to access their forces, of the type of the song's version.

This song disrupts a person's connection to their forces, temporarily interfering with their rolls. Successfully performing this song, which can be performed on anyone within a few yards, requires successes equal to the target's number of affected forces. Affected beings roll one fewer success on all rolls of the related forces, to a minimum of 0 successes.

Multiple performances of this song are not cumulative, but will reset the duration.

Numinous Corpus

2 essence

1 hour

This song does not have ethereal or celestial versions. Instead, each version of this song represents a different bodily change that the performer can manifest in their vessels, hosts, or celestial forms. Each version of this song is learned separately, but they are performed together. The performer selects the features he wishes to evoke, and the performance of the song must gain a number of successes equal to the number of changes made.

Some of the changes of the numinous corpus grant combat benefits. These appendages and organs do celestial damage (or protect from it, in the case of hide) while the performer is in celestial form.

Acid

This numinous corpus allows the performer to spit a caustic substance with the Aim skill that does 3 damage on a hit and bypasses 1 point of armor.

Arms

Two additional arms allow the performer to hold or manipulate items while retaining use of his normal arms. This does not increase the ability of multitask or perform more actions in combat, but it grants an edge to climbing and wrestling.

Claws

Unarmed attacks with these claws do 3 damage.

Elasticity

Softened and flexible bones allow for squeezing through small areas and double successes on rolls to escape bonds or wrestle actions.

Eyes

Additional eyes open up on the performer's body. In addition to providing new points of view, these make it impossible to surprise the performer.

Fins

This version of the song is crucial for those who wish to maneuver underwater. It offsets all penalties and opposition for underwater movement and, for creatures that require breath, allows them to breathe through gills.

Hide

This thick skin blocks 1 damage from all attacks, and stacks with armor.

Horns

Headbutt for 2 damage, and if the horned being charges as part of the attack, a target who takes any damage must make an endure roll or be knocked back or down.

Tail

A prehensile tail does 2 damage, can manipulate objects, and provides an edge to rolls to maintain balance.

Teeth

Creatures with these teeth can bite for 2 damage, and one extra success can be used when dealing damage to a living being to recover 1 essence.

Wings

These wings allow flight

Glossary of Terms

Action

Angel

Cantor – The person performing or leading a song (see below)

Celestial – An angel or demon. Sometimes used to include relievers, imps, and gremlins.

Demon

Force – The concrete building blocks of a life. All sentient creatures have corporeal, ethereal, and celestial forces, and some celestials and ethereals have others as well

Heart

Heaven

Hell

Host – The living body that a kyriotate or shedite possesses on Earth

Saint

Soldier

Song

Tether

Word