

CHILDREN OF FIRE

A ROLEPLAYING GAME

available for free at <http://www.mimgames.com/cof>

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WELCOME

Thank you for coming to the Children of Fire web site. We have done our best to provide you, dear reader, with a comprehensive and easily navigable body of information. We hope you enjoy the time spent here.

Children of Fire is a role-playing game that allows players to take on the persona of an angel. These characters will interact with other celestials in Heaven and with the children of clay (humans) on Earth. The game crosses many genres and can accommodate many playing styles.

The material contained in these pages is free for you to do with what you like. The author merely asks that you give credit to the hard work he has put in on this project. If you like the game, please encourage others to come check it out.

Children of Fire is an ever-developing game. For this reason, we would love your feedback. Tell us what you like and don't like about the game. Let us know if you find any glaring mistakes, or any subtle mistakes for that matter. What needs to be added? What needs better clarification? Lastly, since there has been little chance to do intensive playtesting, let us know how your games are going. Only through this type of dialogue can we strive to make the game better.

Send all emails to kenpowam@aol.com

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE GAME

For organizational purposes the game has been divided into three sections: Introduction, World, and Rules. A brief description of each of these is given below.

1. INTRODUCTION

That's what you're reading right now. This section gives a general overview of the methodology and philosophy behind the game. Children of Fire can be played without a thorough understanding of the introductory material. It is merely here to provide some insight into the hows and whys of the game.

2. WORLD

The world section gives you all the basics of the game's setting. It will take the reader from the origin of the children of fire, through an examination of heavenly society, and finally to descriptions of some of the key celestial players. This section is fully capable of standing on its own. Players who would like to integrate the setting into their own or an existing system need not read the rules section.

3. RULES

This section covers character creation, game mechanics, and storytelling issues. The optional nature of the system can not be over stressed. The inevitable object it to develop rewarding role-playing, and the rules are given to facilitate those who need extra guidance. For those who prefer a more free flowing style of storyteller, ignore those rules that seem to slow things down.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The author started the creation of Children of Fire with one precept in mind—let the research dictate the course of the game not the other way around. Too many times we start a project having already determined its outcome. We are not open to the wondrous possibilities that present themselves. This is not the case with Children of Fire. The tone of this game was entirely derived from what the research suggested

Many works were used to complete the body of information presented here. Among the primary books used were the following: Malcolm Godwin's *Angels: An Endangered Species*, Gustav Davidson's *A Dictionary of Angels*, Florentino Garcia Martinez's *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, the books of Enoch, and some of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Ironically, the bible serves as a rather poor source for angels. Only the angels Michael and Gabriel are mentioned in it. If one is to include the apocryphal work of Tobit, then Raphael can also be added to this list. In cases where biblical scripture depicted the intervention of an angel, an alternate source was almost always consulted to get greater detail and to identify the specific celestial.

While the author tried to remain true to the sources, there were some instances in which changes had to be made for game play reasons. For instance, most sources claim that all the Nephilin and Anakim (giants) were wiped out at the time of the flood. Though the texts seem to indicate these abominations no longer exist, the inclusion of them in modern history helps to expand the dimensions of the game.

Additionally, many texts contradicted each other and, in fact, often contradicted themselves. This is especially true as it relates to the duties and exploits of specific angels. These ambiguities had to be cleared in the context of the game. The author did his best to resolve these issues in the fairest manner and with an eye for the interest of gameplay.

Lastly, there are many aspects of celestial society that could not be ascertained through research. These facets of setting and game play were simply made up. For instance, no source alluded to specific groups of forces being used by particular orders of angels. This element was added to increase diversity and regulate celestial abilities.

1.4 THE FALLACY OF THE MODERN ANGEL

Readers may notice a striking difference between the angels depicted in this game and what we normally think of. It must be understood that most of our ideas of these celestial creatures come from movies and television. The Hollywood angel is a near perfect being who roams the Earth doing good for people. They are not flawed creatures at war with themselves. In many cases they are depicted as saintly humans who have died and returned as these winged emanations.

Unfortunately, the research does not bare this portrayal out. Angels are a separate breed from man. They were created long before the inception of the children of clay. The departed souls do not return as angels. Additionally, angels have never till this modern century been seen as flawless pictures of virtue and grace. Rather, they have been viewed with awe, fear, and a bit of distrust.

This game takes nothing from the concept of the Hollywood angel. Rather it borrows from the ideas and concepts that persisted for thousands of years. This is a fact, dear reader, you should have clear in your mind as you sort through the rest of this material.

1.5 ONLY THE BEGINNING

What we present to you here is only the beginning. The author has compiled hundreds of pages of research and information. Do to time and length constraints, however, much of it has been omitted for this introductory work. We didn't want to overload the reader with too much information at once. The purpose here is to get you started, to get your own creative juices flowing.

In time additions will be made to this work. This supplemental material will more distinctly deal with certain aspects of the setting. More information will be given on sorcery used by the children of clay. More information will be given about the hierarchy of hell and descriptions of infernal powers. Let us know what information is most pressing for you to have.

Thank You.

2.0 WORLD

2.1 WHAT ARE ANGELS

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The way we see angels is colored by Hollywood's candy-coated imagery. They are portrayed as peacefully perfect beings of goodness and virtue. They are unflawed, unblemished. This is a lie, though. Angels are not so simply understood. The children of fire are complex creatures composed of countless contradictions and ambiguities.

It is difficult for our minds to grasp the true concept of the children of fire. Their form and function are mysterious and unique. Though they are not of the material world (so need not follow our physical laws), there is no other way to describe them but to endow them with physical traits and abilities. With all these explanations, dear reader, keep in mind that the descriptions are far more concrete than the abstract reality they represent. Their concepts of space and time are far more fluid than ours. But as we are not angels, we can only describe them in the words of men.

Among the children of fire there is great diversity. Every choir has its own flavor, every order its own uniqueness, every angel his own individually. With this said, however, there are some general points that can be made about all members of the celestial hierarchy. The following sections seek to explore these commonalities.

2.1.2 WHAT ANGELS LOOK LIKE

In their true form, we as humans could hardly perceive what the children of fire truly look like. Within the Seven Heavens, they are colossal creatures who are composed of varying degrees of celestial material. They are not of matter, but rather of energy.

To the children of clay they would appear as shifting visages of unstable energy held together with what must seem a fragile web of imagery. To their brethren, though, they are very discernable and distinct. For the sake of game feasibility, angels should be described in very human terms when dealing with other celestials.

Most angels are of the two winged variety. These wings jut from their backs like bird's, spreading out to either side. Their bodies are humanoid, though much larger than the average man. Their faces are neither inherently perfect nor inherently flawed. They are as diverse and unique as human faces. This description, of course, only applies to the lower six choirs. The Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones bear little resemblance to their lesser brethren. Their description will be left for another time.

Though the above description does reflect what the children of fire look like to each other in their natural form, one fact should be remembered. Celestials have quite a lot of latitude when it comes to what appearance they portray to others. In many respects, they can portray themselves however they see fit.

One last point should be noted. By nature, the children of fire are androgynous (sexless). In their true forms they are neither male nor female, possessing none of the distinctive physical features of either. They are not hermaphrodites (being both male and female) as some have suggested. This is completely opposite their true nature. While in the hidden form, however, they can assume either male or female guise.

2.1.3 FORM

While on earth, the children of fire have a number of options on how to present themselves. These are known as forms. There are three forms the celestial can choose from: subtle, di-

vine, and hidden. Transformation between forms can be done at will, but the process takes five to ten seconds to complete. In addition, only when the celestials is in an ethereal state can he ascend to the Heavens.

SUBTLE FORM

This is perhaps the least common shape angels take while on Earth. In this shape they are merely a presence passing through the material world. They are formless, substanceless, and very difficult to detect by other celestials. Humans, without the aid of magical amulets, have no chance whatsoever of detecting them.

In this shape, the child of fire can have virtually no effect on the world of matter and substance. They are no more than watchers, no more than mere thoughts. Most of their forces will not operate or will work in diminished capacity. In this state, they can travel to distant locations at the blink of an eye.

DIVINE FORM

While in this form, the children of fire assume a smaller likeness of their true celestial bodies. They can choose to be ethereal or material (substanceless or substantive). If they choose an ethereal state, the children of clay can generally not see them. Whether they are ethereal or material, they are always visible to other celestial creatures.

To appear before a human in this shape can be quite a traumatic experience. Most angels' true form is far from the sublime and lovely visage we might expect. Indeed, some of the creatures are down right hideous to behold. Most humans of low courage will feint or flee at the sight of a child of fire. Only the angels soothing words can calm them.

In the divine shape, children of fire can use all their forces to full potential. Some forces, however, require that the celestial be material in order to performed them.

HIDDEN FORM

This is the most common shape celestials take while passing among the children of clay. Here they assume a human guise to carry them on their duties. This shape is always in the material state. It has a few very distinct advantages. In this state, a child of fire's true nature is very difficult to detect by other celestial beings. This is especially true if the angel refrains from using any celestial forces that might give him away.

While most forces can be used to their full potential, there are a few that children of fire can not use while in the hidden shape. In addition, there is one more added hindrance. Because the child of fire must assume a material state to take this form, he can not instantly ascend to the gates of the First Heaven. The angel must first change to an ethereal state, a process that takes 5 to 10 seconds.

There is one last feature of the hidden shape that demands discussion here. All angels, while in this shape, have certain signatures they display no matter what type of body they assume. The signature may vary greatly between angels, but it is always there. Signatures may include, but are not limited to the following. The child of fire always transforms himself into humans with specific impediments. For instance, the angel is always missing an eye. Some children of fire will only transform into certain types of people (i.e. children, midgets, old women, etc.). Lastly, the child of fire can choose a signature relating to a certain item or manner of dress. Perhaps the angel always wears green or a specific medallion.

2.1.4 TELEPATHY AND ILLUMINATION

Children of fire have three ways of communicating: speech, telepathy, and illumination. Speech is only used on Earth, and is generally limited to communicating with the children of clay. Though they can speak while in Heaven, the process is far more cumbersome than telepathic transmission.

All angels possess the ability to telepathically communicate with any child of clay or celestial within sight. Through this process, thoughts are projected directly into the mind of the target. Only the sender and receiver of the telepathic message can hear it. If the recipient is a child of clay the conversation is one sided, since, under normal circumstances, humans can not reciprocate. It must be stressed that telepathy does not allow the angels to read the thoughts of others. It is merely another means of communication.

Illumination, on the other hand, is a far more effective method of communication. It can only be done from angel to angel, and the celestial doing the illuminating must be of a higher triad than the one he is trying to illuminate. Thus angels of the same triad or even the same choir can not utilize this power with each other.

Illumination is like passing complete understanding of a story or situation in the blink of an eye. No words are exchanged, no discussion needed. The recipient simply comprehends all that the transmitter is trying to get across. This ability is most often used by greater angels to send their subordinates on missions. Though most angels using this power must be in the presence of the target, it is said that those of the first triad can use it over vast distances.

2.1.5 MOVEMENT

Getting around is much more complex for the children of fire than the children of clay. Because these divine creatures must exist in different states and forms, there is a plethora of choice

when it comes to methods of transportation. While in the Seven Heavens, movement is most natural for them. Here they move much like the children of clay do on Earth. In this realm, they have the ability to walk or fly.

On Earth, the realm of matter, things become a bit more convoluted. Here their ability to traverse the globe is dependent on the form they assume.

Those choosing a non-material state (subtle or divine) can move at great speeds (usually 50x greater than normal humans). They may also pass through most matter without impediment. The one exception is that no angel while in an ethereal state can penetrate deep below the Earth's surface. It seems that the surface of the Earth (be it soil, rock, or water) acts as a repulsive force in these cases. Large masses of matter tend to push against the ethereal being. The farther they travel through it, the more the resistance. This is also true for angels in deep underground caverns trying to get to the surface.

The other option the children of fire have while in an ethereal state is teleportation. With this ability they can appear at any point on the Earth (the same subterranean rules as above apply). In most cases, though, it is an imprecise method. The child of fire usually appears in the general vicinity of his destination, but rarely directly at it. For example, a child of fire attempting to teleport to a specific church will often find himself standing a few blocks away from it. The distance the celestial appears from the desired location is totally up to the Storyteller and is governed by the needs of the story.

2.1.6 INTERACTION WITH TECHNOLOGY

Technology poses a very serious problem for the children of fire. Technology is a manifestation of man's ability to act as creator. It is totally and utterly removed from the divine (a fact that does not necessarily make it evil). Because they are not part of the web of God's creation, technological advances are difficult for angels to utilize and interact with. As time passed, and the future became the present, this problem has suddenly become more unnerving. In a campaign set in the far future, technology may lift man to a state nearly as powerful as the children of fire.

The more technologically advanced an item is, the harder it will be for a child of fire to comprehend its use. A gun, for instance, would be far easier to comprehend than a calculator would. It is not the complexity of thing, which makes it hard to use; it is merely the technological know-how that went into making it that is important. As a simple (and not always accurate) rule of thumb, assume that developments and inventions that came later in the human time-line are more difficult for celestials to deal with than early ones. The rules section of this game will give storytellers and players an idea of how to incorporate this aspect into the story.

2.2 IN THE BEGINNING

2.2.1 ORIGINS

The Almighty brought the children of fire into existence long before the creation of the material world and the children of clay. Their number, roughly 400 million, has been fixed since the beginning of time. Contrary to what we might like to believe, angels are a separate species set apart from man. Those good souls who die do not return to Earth as angels spreading peace and love.

There are two main factions of the children of fire—the sons of light and the sons of darkness. The sons of light, who constitute two-thirds of the holy host, still claim allegiance to God. The sons of darkness, comprising the remaining third, show allegiance to Samael, the accursed one.

The children of fire are immortal, but they are not eternal. Only God is eternal (having no beginning and no end). Still, being celestial creatures makes our concept of death mean nothing to them. They can, however, be destroyed, though this is a

rarity indeed. Only extraordinary forces can cause a child of fire to cease to exist entirely. Day to day confrontations between angels and demons are unlikely to produce such results.

An example of angelic destruction occurred at the time the material world was created. When the Almighty proposed the creation of man, the angels of peace and truth were leery of this idea. They made their complaints known to the Almighty, and for this dissention they were destroyed.

In their original inception, the children of fire were to ceaselessly praise God, a duty they joyously fulfilled. With the sin of man and the fall of Samael, though, their task changed. Many of them were sent out upon the world to help the children of clay achieve salvation and to do battle with the forces of darkness. It is in this capacity that they have passed among us and will continue to pass among us for centuries to come.

The sons of light are not perfection, though. They are inherently flawed beings. The lack of a soul has made them like ancient children. They tend to let their whims take control and

often stray from the most righteous path. At the core they are still good, but there is always the chance they may fall. Ironically it is the children of clay, who they were sent to protect, that represent the greatest corrupting influence. The passions and indulgences of the material world are often too much for these celestial creatures to resist.

2.2.2 THE FALL OF SAMMAEL

Sammael was once the greatest and most loved of all the children of fire. He was prince of the choir of Seraphim, leader of all the heavenly host. But Sammael became corrupted, losing the grace of God, and in so doing caused a third of his brethren to rebel against the Almighty.

There are varying accounts of how this once beloved angel became so vile and corrupt. The official version, set down in the book of Chronicles (one of the Nine Celestial Tomes), says it was pride that caused Sammael's fall. The mighty Seraph Metatron writes:

And the prince of the Seraphim thought much of himself. He became boastful and arrogant, thinking himself greater than even God. Such thoughts lead to resentment, resentment lead to dissention, and dissention lead inevitably to rebellion. So it was that the once brightest of angels rose up against his Creator, and a multitude of celestials battled beside him

The sons of darkness see the event in a totally different light. They portray Sammael is a dutiful and ever humble servant of the Almighty. They claim their leader was forsaken by God because he was too obedient. It is their assertion that the Almighty was inconsistent with His edicts. Of course, the sons of light reject this claim

At the time of his fall, Sammael had many allies. He brought havoc to the halls of Heaven, leading a third of the children of fire to stray from God. Among the fallen were all nine princes of the celestial choirs, for they had become prideful as well. It was easy for Sammael to rally them behind his cause. The greatest loss came in the choir of Powers, who, having always been the most susceptible to corruption, were quick to join forces with the dark one. In all, almost half this choir rose up against the Almighty.

But more children of fire remained faithful than did not. Although the sons of darkness boasted many powerful angels, the sons of light had their own mighty angel to lead them. That angel was the Seraph Michael. He led the sons of light into battle against the sons of darkness to determine who would have control of the Heavens.

In the end, the sons of light were victorious, and all the fallen were cast out of the higher Heavens. They were relegated to the Second Heaven where they live in eternal darkness, separated

from goodness and light. Many, however, have escaped to Earth bearing evil progeny and trying to infect the children of clay with their wickedness.

The sons of darkness, hereafter referred to as demons, are aware they can not directly contend with the power of God and the superior number of righteous angels. As a result, they have changed their tactics. Now they seek to hurt the Almighty by causing His precious creations, the children of clay to turn away from Him.

2.2.3 PROMISE TO THE CHILDREN OF CLAY

With the advent of sin and the choice of free will, the children of clay were left defenseless against the evil hordes. Demons leaking from Heaven found supple minds willing to soak up their tales of wickedness and greed. The early days saw great success for these evil beings. The demons taught them how to grow prosperous and strong, how to conquer the lands and conquer each other. Many mortals were turned away from the path of righteousness, the path of God. They began to make these demons their deities, seeing them as saviors and guides through the turmoil of life.

And God wept for the misguided.

His first solution was to send the mighty Grigori to Earth to teach and protect the children of clay. Unfortunately, these great creatures proved as susceptible to corruption as man. At this point the mighty Metatron stepped forward and promised his angels would look after the children of clay

And so the Almighty sent minions of the sons of light to look out for the children of clay. It is this task that has become central to the angels' existence. Some of them actively seek out and vanquish all demons that have dared to meddle in the affairs of humans. Still others give the children of clay the strength and guidance needed to turn away from the godless path. Some protect while others punish. Some preach while others police their own kind. In the end the goal is always the same, to save the children of clay.

The Almighty has not given his servants free reign over the Earth, though. He set restrictions and limitations to their conduct. Angels are not to trample on man's free will. The ultimate decision between a good life and one mislead must be made by the individual child of clay. Unless under the Almighty's directive, angels are not allowed to kill any child of clay. Even the wickedest of humans is protected, for there is always the chance they can be turned to good. The Almighty prefers conversion over coercion, subtlety over brazenness, and self-control over indulgence. Disobeying these dictates can bring punishment and a loss of divine Grace.

2.2.4 THE GRIGORI AND THE NEPHILIM

Before the creation of the children of fire, God brought forth the mighty Grigori. These grand, winged creatures stood taller and stronger than their younger brothers. The Almighty cherished them more than children of fire, endowing these celestial beings with great powers. For a long time they were the preeminent beings in the Heavens

The sin of man changed all that, though. The Lord entrusted the Grigori to help the children of clay. The Watchers were sent to Earth to teach humans the skills that would help them survive and endure. They performed their duties with great vigor and enthusiasm. They became enamored by humans, however, and in the end faltered to the corruption of the flesh.

In the guise of men, they lay with human women, and in the form of women, they lay with human men. From these unholy couplings, abominations were born. The Nephilim and Anakim were creatures of evil.

For generations these unions went unchecked. The world became full of evil offspring who fed on the fear and devoured the flesh of the children of clay. The Watchers, so consumed with their earthly lust did not see the harm they were causing. They were oblivious to the destruction their children were reeking. The children of clay were on the verge of extermination.

This so enraged God that he sent his angels to the Earth to eliminate all the Nephilim and Anakim they could find. A Great flood was unleashed to cleanse the world of these aberrations. The rain fell and the waters rose, cleansing the surface of the Earth. Even most of the children of clay (many of whom had grown wicked) were wiped away. Though all the Anakim died, it is said that some Nephilim might have escaped the flood. If this is the case, by now they would be among the most powerful of all creatures in the universe.

Death for their children was a blessing compared to what the Grigori suffered. The Almighty sent his angels out to capture these betraying celestials. Over half have been caught. In the Fifth Heaven they face eternal imprisonment and torment. In these cells they weep for forgiveness and for the desire of flesh.

Shemihazah, chief among them, was caught near the beginning of this purge. Hung upside down over the great flame, his skin was seared and flayed from the bone over and over again. Though no one seems quite sure how, he managed to escape

from this unending torment and flee back to Earth. No angel has seen or heard of him since.

There are still a few Grigori in modern days. As the population of the children of clay grows and as their technological world becomes more prevalent, the Watchers have had an easier time hiding. During this period they have sired many more children. The Anakim and Nephilim again roam the Earth, albeit in lesser numbers. The children of fire are obliged to destroy these creatures whenever they come across them.

2.2.5 THE SEVEN OF DIVINE GRACE

Seven angels stand out above the rest. They are Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Zadkiel, Raguel, and Remiel. What makes these seven different is not rank or power. Rather it is purely and simply a question of Grace. These creatures possess more Grace than any others in heaven. Because of this divine favor, they are the closest to the Almighty. Only they are allowed to sit by the throne of God. They are true conduits to his message and ultimately loyal servants.

These seven have often been referred to as the throne angels or the seven great archangels. These two designations will not be used in this game due to their misleading nature, but it does show how much confusion has clouded the minds of the children of clay. Archangels and Thrones are both choirs in the Celestial Hierarchy. The seven angels listed above are not limited to these choirs. In fact, we find examples of Seraphim, Cherubim, Virtues and Powers among their number. Oddly enough, not one of them comes from the choir of Archangels.

The question must then be asked, why are these seven so important? Part of their significance lies in their relationship to other children of fire. Because of their connection with the Almighty, they are highly revered and highly feared by their kind. To offend one of them is to get on the bad side of God. Their clout in celestial society can not be understated.

In addition, the Almighty occasionally sends them on special missions to Earth. He does this when He needs his words not to be clouded by interpretations. This is the reason that Gabriel (a Cherub and one of the seven) is more often seen on Earth than Brachiel (a more powerful Seraph, but not one of the seven).

Because of their significance, all seven of these angels have been further detailed in the Catalog of Celestial Beings.

2.3 THE CELESTIAL HIERARCHY

2.3.1 OVERVIEW

Even in heaven there must be order.

Almost all the 266,000,000 children of fire who have not fallen can be grouped into one of nine ranks called choirs. Fallen angels, while once part of the hierarchy, have adopted their own system of ranking. A discussion of the hierarchy of hell will be saved for another discussion. For now, let us concentrate on those angels who are in good standing with the Almighty.

The nine choirs in the hierarchy are further clustered into three triads. In the first triad we find the choirs of the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones. The second triad contains the Dominations, Virtues, and Powers. The final triad consists of the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. These choirs represent a clear delineation among the children of fire, granting those of higher rank a degree of power and authority greater than their underlings.

The first triad is closest to God. For this reason, its members have a clearer understanding of His nature and image. He speaks directly to them, hence they are more fixed in nature than their lesser brethren. They do not waver as much between the goodness of the Almighty and the corruption of man. This static nature is also due to the fact that members of these choirs rarely interact with the children of clay. Their primary purpose is to illuminate those of the second triad regarding the will of God.

Those of the second triad act as intermediaries between the first and third. They have less grace than their elder brethren, yet have exceedingly potent powers. Their time is evenly divided between the children of clay and the inner workings of the children of fire.

The third triad constitutes those angels closest in nature to man. The messages they receive from the Almighty have been filtered through the other triads and as such are subject to interpretation and change. They make their home in the First Heaven, which is closest in nature to the physical world of man. They deal constantly with the children of clay, rarely concerning themselves with the celestial politics. They are by far the weakest and most corruptible of the triads, and their balance is almost always in question.

The total number of children of fire in existence is set. This number stands at approximately 4 million. Since only a handful of celestials have ever been utterly destroyed and no new ones created by the Almighty, this is fairly constant. Even among the separate choirs, very little movement occurs. The number of angels who are able to advance from choir to choir is so miniscule, it barely effects the demographics at all. Below is a rough breakdown of how many children of fire exist at each rank.

Seraphim:	4
Cherubim:	15
Thrones:	70
Dominations:	400
Virtues:	3,400
Powers:	25,000
Principalities:	777,000
Archangels:	52,000
Angels:	215,000,000

2.3.2 SERAPHIM

The Seraphim are the highest order of celestial beings. There are but four of these majestic creatures: Metatron, Michael, Brachiel, and Nathaniel. Their powers are grand, their duties overwhelming.

They do not have the typical look of angels that we might think of. Instead of two wings (as most of the lower ranks have), they have six. In addition, four heads sit atop their single neck. Their bodies are immersed in a blinding white flame.

They seldom interfere with mankind, only venturing to the material world under the direst of circumstances. While on Earth their presence can easily be felt by all celestials in the vicinity. For these four, lesser angels and minor abominations can be dispatched at a whim.

Currently their leader is Metatron, but this was not always the case. Before his fall, Samael was the prince of the Seraphim. After his minions left the presence of God, Metatron assumed the position, making this mighty angel the highest ranking of the celestial hierarchy.

The four Seraphim have the broadest of duties. They govern the most important aspects of existence. Under them, a myriad of lesser angels, illuminated by these four, carry out their orders.

2.3.3 CHERUBIM

These creatures constitute the second rank of angels in the celestial hierarchy. They are fifteen in number and known amongst their kind as the holy beasts. Their bodies are those of animals while their heads are human. Unlike the Seraphim, they possess only one head, though each has four faces. In addition, they were blessed with two less wings.

Those of this choir are revered by the children of fire as both the greatest of Heaven's guards and the bearers of knowledge and wisdom. To this end, they are the ones who protect the gates to the Garden of Eden in the Third Heaven. In addition,

two of their kind flew beside the arc when the Almighty deluged the earth with rain.

Their trips to the material realm, while more common than the Seraphim, are meager as compared to the lesser ranks of angels. They are very aware of how their presence on Earth affects the children of clay. Most humans would cower or run if they caught sight of one these holy beasts. So they keep to the seven heavens, preferring to mingle among their own kind.

The leader of the Cherubim is the mighty angel Gabriel. As with all the choirs of the first triad, she rules with less than an iron fist. Her title is merely an honorarium, as the Cherubim go about their business as they please. Counted among their number are the angels Uriel, Sandalphon, Raziel, Ithuriel, and Machidiel.

2.3.4 THRONES

Thrones, seventy in number, are the lowest of the three choirs in the first triad. As such, they hold a very distinct position in angelic society.

For one, they have a unique appearance. Their ethereal bodies are composed of red and orange flames. Like the Cherubim, four wings protrude from the Thrones' bodies. Lightning flickers off them like darting tongues, licking viscously at the air. Though they have but one head and one face, their bodies are covered with countless eyes. Thus they are given the name "the many eyed ones".

The second aspect that sets them apart from the other children of fire is the role they play in the celestial hierarchy. They are a link between the divinity of the first triad and the corruptible essence of matter that begins to take hold in the lower ranks. For this reason, they stay primarily in the seven heavens, watching over the conduct of other angels. Most are bureaucrats, if you will, acting as intermediaries between God and the lesser choirs.

Though he is not one of them, the angel Raphael is their leader. Unlike Seraphim or Cherubim, this is more than just a title. Raphael, though kindly and cheerful, none the less has strict control of those who serve under him. They are far less individualistic than their elder brethren.

2.3.5 DOMINATIONS

These children of fire are the most powerful choir of the second triad and the first we will examine who look somewhat like the angels one normally thinks of. They have only two wings and are humanoid in appearance. To look upon one in its true form, however, is still a frightening experience. They are dreadful and mighty creatures.

They are the supervisors of the second and third triads. It is their job to oversee all lesser angels, to assign them duties and

tasks. For this reason, they are usually the highest choir lesser angels deal with on a regular basis. It is they who often illuminate the lower ranks.

Their time is balanced between the children of fire and the children of clay. What dealings they have on Earth, though, are usually of great importance and magnitude. Trifling with the lesser affairs of men is left to their underlings.

Every country in the world has a Domination set to watch over it. These angels greatly influence their country's demeanor and culture. Some of these angels, however, have fallen, being corrupted by the frailties of men. They set their lands on dark and misguided paths. Others, though, remain true to the goodness of the Almighty, striving to keep their charges on a noble course.

Dominations are not perfect beings by any stretch of the imagination. They are by no means as incorruptible as the choirs of the first triad. Quite the opposite actually. Given a great deal of power, they sometimes begin to grow dangerously inflated egos and believe themselves to be more important than they should. This taste of power is mingled with the knowledge that they, according to the current system, can never progress to a higher rank, no matter how lofty their ambitions might be.

The prince of the choir of Dominations is Zadkiel. He keeps a watchful eye over them, knowing that some of his brethren teeter on the verge of corruption.

2.3.6 VIRTUES

These angels, known as the "shining ones", are the second choir in the second triad. The power within them has become so great that it emanates from their being as a virtually blinding aura. This can be attributed to the fact that, unlike Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, and even Dominations, they have not been able to come to terms with their vast abilities. They are unable to mask their powers or curtail their presence.

These great angels are often the heroes of mankind, for they perform miracles like no others. They are sent to Earth to complete the most daunting of tasks and to demonstrate without subtlety the power of the Almighty. Many of mankind's greatest miracles have been performed by these children of fire, who can sometimes get a bit caught up in the extravagance of such deeds.

The Virtues also lead a myriad of lesser angels in large campaigns. They lead great battles against demons and other unholy emanations.

Like the Dominations above them, the Virtues are not bestowed with an unwavering character like the choirs of the first triad. They can be strong willed and obstinate. Many, having realized the great power within them, have succumbed to the sin of pride. They are often faulted for their over zealous and unnecessary use of power. Some would rather douse a candle with an ocean than a few drops of water.

Along with his duties as prince of the Thrones, Raphael also serves as leader to this lesser choir. Though their members are not as powerful as his other charges, the Virtues provide far more headaches for this great angel. They need constant watching and correction.

2.3.7 POWERS

The Powers are the lowest choir of the second triad, and they are among the most intriguing of all celestials. They seem to be ever embroiled in a struggle between the good and evil inside themselves. When Sammael fell and a third of Heaven's host went with him, it was the choir of Powers who had the greatest attrition.

Now risen to a rank loftier than the first triad, these angels have been given increasing powers by the Almighty and access to the hitherto forbidden sections of Heaven. These new gifts come with a price, and that price is the struggle to reconcile themselves with the concepts of good and evil.

The Powers reside in the borderland between the First and Third Heavens. Here they serve a two-fold purpose. Firstly, they are meant to stop the demons from completely overrunning the Earth. Though they stop many, some demons sneak through to wreak havoc among the children of clay. Second, the Powers act as guards to the higher halls of heaven. Members of the first triad are forbidden to go beyond their homes in the lower Heavens.

But these are not the only tasks of the Powers. They are often sent to earth to fulfill special missions. Unfortunately, it is in this capacity that the children of clay sometimes corrupt them.

Chief among them is Camael. As their prince, he is a perfect example of the dualistic nature of these creatures. He has faltered in his way on several occasions, but has always returned to the grace of God. He is known among his kind as a powerful and capable leader who, none the less, can be indecisive and contradictory in nature.

2.3.8 PRINCIPALITIES

Principalities are the highest choir in the third triad. While their powers are slightly greater and their duties a bit broader, they are generally considered to be fairly equal to Archangels. As will be explained in another section, their grace is considerably higher than the two lower choirs. They do not, however, command their lesser brethren.

As with the other two choirs in this triad, the Principalities reside in the First Heaven. This is the place that bridges the material world and the celestial one. These children of fire are generally not allowed to venture farther into the Heavens, though they occasionally find reason to wander into the Second Heaven.

The Principalities along with the two lesser choirs spend most of their time in the material world. They are the ones who deal with the day to day conflicts that mankind faces in its ultimate struggle between good and evil. Principalities find themselves constantly battling between purity and corruption. Only the most obedient, persistent, and faithful among them can ascend to the second triad, though this does not guarantee their later loyalty. Most, however, fall far short of attaining this ascension.

The prince of this choir is Nisroc. He rules his subjects with a light hand, preferring to go about his own business and not meddle in the affairs of other Principalities. For this he is a well liked, if not well revered, leader.

2.3.9 ARCHANGELS

The choir of Archangels has two very different personas. Among the children of clay, Archangels are often seen as the greatest of all angels. This directly contradicts their actual position among the children of fire. To men, this title is used to refer to any celestial above the rank of Angel. Most of the celestials they identify as Archangels are, in fact, of much higher ranks—Gabriel and Michael being only two of a handful of examples.

Within celestial society, Archangels have little clout or status. They are only slightly elevated from the hordes of Angels who swarm the Earth. Their number is a quarter that of their lesser brethren and their power only slightly more enhanced.

The Prince of this choir is Barbiel. He is, however, a rather unmemorable member of the celestial cast.

2.3.10 ANGELS

This, the lowest choir in the celestial hierarchy, is also the largest. At 215 million members, this choir contains more children of fire than all other choir combined. Their duties, though small in comparison to the greater celestials, keep them constantly busy in the material world. Their powers are minuscule when compared with the highest choirs, but considerable when compared to the abilities of mortal men.

These are faltering beings that have not and may never comprehend the nature of grace. They are individualistic and often egocentric. Only a small fraction of them will ever rise to a higher rank. Many more will lose all grace and walk the earth eternally separated from God.

Their leader is Pheleg, who is, in fact, not an Angel but an Archangel. It was felt that the burden of ruling so many needed to be placed on one who was more powerful than his subjects. For this reason Pheleg, who is often overbearing and sometimes downright ruthless, was a perfect choice for the position. Though he is generally liked by his equals and elders, his subjects do nothing less than despise him.

2.4 THE NINE CELESTIAL TOMES

2.4.1 OVERVIEW

As the children of clay have their holy books, so do the children of fire. In all, nine books constitute this angelic scripture. These books are collectively referred to as the nine celestial tomes. All angels have read them to some degree, and many zealots have spent centuries memorizing whole volumes.

Of the nine books, all but two were written by Metatron, wisest of all angels. He is the mouthpiece of the children of fire, and his words resonate through the hearts and minds of all his brethren.

Though numerous copies of these holy books abound, the original versions are under the watchful eye of Metatron himself in the Seventh Heaven. Save for the Sepher Raziel, none of these books has ever been seen by the children of clay.

2.4.2 CHRONICLES

This was the first of the great tomes to be set down by the mighty Seraph, Metatron. It details the history of the children of fire, focusing primarily on the war in heaven where Sammael and a third of the heavenly host fell. In vivid and lamenting tones, Metatron describes each battle of this war and how the sons of light drove the sons of darkness from the upper heavens. It also chronicles the individual angels whose contributions to these efforts were remarkable indeed, recounting their glorious acts of bravery.

I tell the truth, dearest brethren, it was Raphael alone who cried over the wounds of every Seraph and Angel alike. His tears alone healed the grievous injuries of the sons of light and allowed us to go on fighting.

Chronicles
III: XIX

2.4.3 NAMES

This tome actually consists of two separate books. One is the Names of Light, while the other is the Names of darkness. These books contain the names of all the children of fire who have ever existed—both those who are in good standing and those who have fallen. Along with their name, the celestial's rank (either in the Celestial Hierarchy or the Hierarchy of Hell) is included.

Originally, these books were written by Metatron, but over the passing eons, other angels have helped to keep them current. Though the books total 3,103 pages and contain the names

of over 400 million celestials, the task of updating is far from daunting. After all, there is very little movement among the hierarchies and the destruction of a celestial is a virtually unheard of event.

2.4.4 RETRIBUTIONS

One of only two books not written by Metatron, the book of Retributions was set down by the Cherub, Uriel. In its pages are contained the laws which govern the children of fire. In addition, Uriel has laid out what punishments befall those angels who transgress. These punishments differ according to the seriousness of the offense. Lastly, this book details the structure by which angels will be brought before Uriel and the validity of their charges determines.

All angels of Retribution have a copy of this book with them at all times. They consult it constantly to determine whether an angel's actions warrant them being whisked off to the Heavens for judgement before Uriel and his fearsome council. Celestials of other orders, however, despise this book more than they revere it.

2.4.5 RESOLUTIONS

This book, written by the Seraph, Metatron, deals with the prophecy passed down from the Almighty to the wisest of his angels. It details, in poetic and often vague language, the judgment days of both the children of fire and the children of clay. It talks of a final war in heaven and how Sammael and his minions will be defeated once more.

In many respects, Resolutions is similar to the book of Revelations found in the Bible. The primary difference comes in the emphasis on celestial events and the overall tone of the piece. Metatron has intentionally made it both inspiring and motivating in an effort to rally the troops, who must, in the end, fight and win this great war.

Behold, the dragon wakes. Spreading his wings, the evil serpent launches into the sky, a third of the stars following in toe.

Resolutions
I: XXXIV

2.4.6 PROMISES

As with most of the other works, this too is authored by Metatron. Here he writes about the obligations and responsi-

bilities of the children of fire to both their own brethren and to the children of clay. It outlines correct behavior and thought as desired by the Almighty. Those who follow the paths of grace and righteousness hold it up as a testament to their actions, while those who have fallen into disgrace ignore it completely.

For the Lord charged us to look over the children of clay, so that at death, their souls would be judged righteous and pure, so that the hands of the accursed one would not taint what God alone created. This task we should not take lightly. We should pursue this goal with utmost diligence.

Promises
VI: II

2.4.7 SEFER RAZIEL (THE BOOK OF THE ANGEL RAZIEL)

Two qualities make this book noteworthy. First, it is one of only two celestial tomes not written by the Seraph, Metatron. As the name suggests, the angel Raziel wrote it. Its second claim to fame is that it is the only one of the nine holy books to have passed into the hands of humans.

After completion of this work, Raziel gave a copy to Adam. But the children of fire, being envious of this gesture, stole the book and cast it into the sea. God told Rehab to retrieve it from the depths and return it to Adam—a gesture many of the children of fire have failed to comprehend. As the centuries passed, the book ended up in hands of some of the most influential children of clay including Enoch, Noah, and Solomon.

The book contains the inner workings of celestial power and structure. Of primary importance are the comprehensive descriptions of angelic forces. It further explains how humans can mimic and control these powers. This book is solely responsible for the development of sorcery among the children of clay—a development that is very significant in light of the fact that some sorcerers can become so powerful they can contend with even the mightiest among the children of fire. For this reason, it is understandable that the angels did not want such a work to pass into the hands of men.

2.4.8 I, II, AND III METATRON

These three texts were the last to be penned by Metatron, wisest of all angels. They are the least substantial and most whimsical of the works. They are merely the poetic ramblings of this angel on all manner of subjects. From the concept of grace to the creation of the world, Metatron addresses them all. Unfortunately, do to its lack of structure and order, it is sometimes difficult for the children of fire to find specific passages.

And so it is our nature to be as children in a world that is ever changing. The Almighty's creation is not a stagnant thing, but a whirlwind of development progressing far to fast for our ancient memories to bare. Only the children of clay, whose spirits contend with the material world for only short while, can restrict this scope enough to be comprehensible.

III Metatron
XX: XIX

2.5 THOSE WHO PLAGUE THE EARTH

2.5.1 OVERVIEW

Lest the reader believe the world of Children of Fire is populated only by good angels, fallen angels, and the multitude of mortals whose souls are in contention, we offer an assortment of other goodies for the would-be storyteller to choose from. They are introduced here to give variety and diversity to the tales one can weave.

There are powers at work in the universe that follow neither God nor Samael. These creatures know nothing of good or evil, but instead seek to fulfill their own selfish desires. Many are capable of thwarting the plans of the players, and some are even mighty enough to destroy them.

2.5.2 GRIGORI

Before God created the world, before He even conceived the nine choirs of angels, He brought forth the Grigori. These creatures are distant relatives of the children of fire. Perhaps it is even appropriate to call them the mightiest of all angels.

When the world came into existence, the Lord set the Grigori to watch over the children of clay. It is in this capacity that they came to be known as the Watchers. In II Metatron, (one of the nine celestial tomes) we are given an excellent account of what happened to these mighty creatures.

And the Lord said unto the Grigori, “You, most beloved of Mine, go forth and watch over the children of clay. Let them be safe in the knowledge that you will protect them.”

To this Shemihazah, first among the chiefs of ten, replied, "Oh Lord, we, the Watchers, will do as you command, for our hearts are filled with love for You and Your creation."

But the task was harder, by far, than the Grigori imagined. At first they taught man wondrous things: how to fashion weapons, how to work the land, and how to navigate by the stars. But they became so enamoured by the children of clay that they were corrupted. They lay with the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve. Their abominable offspring were the Anakim and the Nephilim. It was this transgression which God could not bare. He cast them out of the heavens and told His angels to hunt them and their progeny...

...And still they roam the earth. What plans they have are a mystery to us. They go on lusting after mortal flesh, and their progeny reek havoc upon man.

The Grigori were given knowledge to pass on to the children of clay. All science and technology stems from them. Even in contemporary society they go on influencing man's development. Most scientific breakthroughs and technical innovations are caused, in part, by their meddling. It is this very nature that makes them so dangerous. For they do not have the same restrictions placed on them as other angels do concerning technology. They can understand and use it as well (if not better) than the children of clay. This combined with their extraordinary celestial abilities makes them virtually unstoppable enemies.

Luckily for the children of fire they have a very limited scope. At their creation, there were two hundred Grigori in all. They were divided into twenty groups of ten, each group having a chief to rule over them. After their corruption, however, even this loose structure disintegrated. Now there is no cohesion among their kind. They serve neither good nor evil, but only their own selfish ends. They may or may not oppose the celestials. They neither love nor despise these distant cousins.

In their divine shape, the Grigori are nearly twice the size of normal angels. Their eyes are colorless, and they have no mouths. They can not speak, save through telepathy. This is true even when they assume human guise. Though they have mouths in this form, they possess no vocal chords. Instead, they move their mouths while telepathically communicating with the children of clay. The effect is not perfect, leaving the recipient with a slightly uneasy and eerie feeling. Most of the time, though, the Grigori refrain from speaking.

There are few Grigori still in existence. Many have been hunted down through the ages. Because of their immense power, though, some have managed to prosper and evade capture. Below is a partial listing of the Grigori. Storytellers should feel free to come up with their own. Remember, though, they should not be thrown in lightly. For if they so will it, they could dispatch most minor angels in the blink of an eye. Even a Cherub or Seraph would think twice before tangling with one of the Watchers.

Shemihazah

Agniel

Tamiel

Gadreel

Azazel

Matarel

Kokabel

Turiel

Yomiel

Azael

2.5.3 ANAKIM

These giants are wicked beasts, born from the coupling of Grigori with human women. In many cases, the women die during childbirth, shrieking in agony as their overgrown offspring tear their way into the world. Most Anakim are born weighing between 20-40 pounds. This does not mean to suggest that all babies born of this weight are Anakim. Some are merely extremes of human genetics.

The Anakim grow at an accelerated rate. They usually reach full maturity two or three years before the average human. When fully grown, most stand between 6'6" and 7'6" tall. Again, it should be stressed that not all humans of this size are Anakim.

Besides their immense size, there are a few other differences between Anakim and children of clay. Though they are mortal, most have a life span far longer than their counterparts. In III Metatron, the seraph reports of an Anakim who lived to be three hundred years old. In addition to their longevity, Anakim do not have souls. When they die, they are eternally destroyed. God has no place for them in Heaven. In fact, they are an aberration to Him. He has commanded His angels to destroy any Anakim they come across.

For their part, these giants are wicked creatures. Since there is no hope of afterlife, they indulge themselves in depravity. They thrive on pain and human suffering. Perhaps they are jealous of the souls of men and seek to exact a form of revenge.

In any case, they covet power and use it to intensify the world's misery. The Anakim tend to hold positions of great influence in the world. They are dictators, generals, corporate heads, robber barons, etc. They often have many henchmen under their control. If an angel is to tangle with an Anakim, he is usually contending with the giant's resources and influence as well. They are shrewd creatures, knowing they are no match for angels of the first and second triads.

They have no allegiance to God or Sammael. Like their fathers, the Grigori, they are selfish beings. They despise angels and demons equally, yet they stay clear of these celestials when possible. Only if no other choice is available will they contend with an immortal being.

There is no love between the Grigori and the Anakim. The Grigori will have no contact with their offspring, while the Anakim resent their fathers for giving them a life without possibility of redemption.

2.5.4 NEPHILIM

The Nephilim are born of Grigori after coupling with human men. The Grigori are forced to stay in the form of human women for two months (the gestation period for these creatures). These beasts are so linked to their mothers that any attempt to abort the fetus would result in the destruction of the Grigori. The birthing process is a long and painful one for the Watchers. Around the time of delivery, they seclude themselves in the deepest reaches of the wilderness. Their cries of agony shatter the night and make even the fiercest of God's creatures cower.

The monstrosities born are unrivaled in their hideousness. There is no set prototype for these beasts. Few resemble anything even remotely humanoid. These creatures are far more primal. Some have tentacles, others horns. They are dark creatures, possessed of an unchecked evil.

Almost immediately, the Grigori flee, not out of fear but disgust for what they have conceived. The Nephilim are left to the night, to slither into the deepest shadows, to grow old and grow strong. Many of these creatures hide forever in the wilderness, feeding on the wild things by night. Some, however, manage to make it to civilization where they take refuge in empty warehouses and dark basements, feeding on the flesh of the children of clay.

Though they are creation's wildcards, there are a few cohesive aspects to all Nephilim. The longer they live, (their natural life span seems unlimited unless checked) the more they grow. The elder ones, those who survived the flood, are rumored to be taller than mountains. These creatures are said to bide their time at the bottom of the oceans, occasionally surfacing to swallow ships or ravage ports. Another assurance is that the older they get, the more powerful they become. The young ones are easily dispatched by even the lowest ranking angels. Those who have survived a century are usually strong enough to fend off Principalities. Those who have lived five hundred years or more can pose a threat to the Dominations. And the Seraphim themselves will not battle one of the Nephilim who has lived a millennium or more.

Because of their hideous appearance and, in some cases, their enormous size, the Nephilim have adapted powers of concealment and deception. Many, but not all, have the ability to constrict and compress themselves, their huge mass filling a small area or spread throughout the inside of a wall. Some may even be capable of rendering themselves invisible to the naked eye. There are so many variations of their form and power that it's

difficult to make generalizations about their capabilities. The storyteller is encouraged to concoct any horror that suits his fancy and classify it as one of the Nephilim.

One fact is certain. There were many more of the Nephilim in years past. They gave rise to many of the mythological tales of monsters. but their war with the children of fire has taken its toll. Most were hunted down and destroyed by the middle of the 19th century. Only a few stragglers remain. Most are young and weak, but some of them (the old one) have power beyond imagining.

2.5.5 THE LOST

Not all children of fire serve God or Sammael. There are those who have deviated from the righteous path. These are referred to in the halls of Heaven as the Lost. In I Metatron, the great seraph laments about his missing brethren.

And I cry in the heavens for my lost brothers, the Almighty has banned them from these hollowed halls, save for the chambers of judgement. I will not see their sweet visage again, nor will I breathe in their honey odor.

How sad they must be in the knowledge that they are separated from their true home. What fear they must feel to be chased all the days of their existence. How much shame they must experience knowing God has shown them such disfavor. But alas, dear brethren, while we weep we should realize they brought it upon themselves. Their suffering is just and fair.

Somewhere along the way, these angels lost the grace of God. Through either one major act of depravity or a subtle succumbing to the corruption of man, these lost angel are now despised and pitied by their brethren.

Many have gone mad, seeing the world in a truly unrealistic and often self-consumed way. Many are megalomaniacs who see themselves as gods among the children of clay. Some are harmless, most are not. It is the job of the angels of purification to hunt them down and bring them to judgement before Uriel's council.

The lost come from all orders and choirs. Their powers range according to their celestial rank. All have at least one factor in common, though. Upon the loss of the last of their grace, they no longer have the ability to ascend to Heaven. They become trapped in the material world. When injured they must heal as normal humans do, and, unlike their brethren in good standing, when they have been physically exhausted, they do not automatically ascend to Heaven. They become comatose until their essence has a chance to heal the physical body. Some sleep like this for years, and some have been buried in this state, only to wake up years later in a coffin six feet under ground.

There is hope for some of the lost, though. Slight as it might be, there is a chance for redemption. This can come in one of two forms. First, if captured and brought before Uriel's council,

the angel may be lucky enough to receive a minor penance that will return him to good standing. Second, the angel can redeem himself on his own (usually with the support of other children of fire) by performing some profoundly redeeming act to restore some of his grace.

Gabriel became one of the lost for awhile. During this time she did her penance among the children of clay. When she was finished, her grace with the Almighty was restored. She never speaks of what infraction caused this or the precise nature of her penance, and no one dares ask.

2.5.6 THE FORGOTTEN

There are perils for those who spend too much time among the children of clay. Those who inhabit the bodies (the hidden form) of humans for too long may forget their celestial origins. It does, however, take some time for this to happen. Usually the process of forgetting takes two week or more of constantly being in the hidden form.

The forgotten are still celestials and still in good standing with God. They still maintain their immortal status, and if they suffer enough damage on Earth, they will automatically ascend to heaven where they will realize their true nature. Unfortunately, most of the forgotten do not go around trying to get themselves killed. There are, however, a few examples of forgotten angels committing suicide and finally recalling their true form and nature.

When a child of fire becomes one of the forgotten, he loses all his celestial forces. He is still stronger and more resilient than most children of clay, but all the powers he can call upon to perform “miraculous” feats can not be consciously inspired. Occasionally, (especially when in extreme danger) these forces can be invoked subconsciously.

The only way, outside of death, to bring a forgotten angel back into the fold is to convince him of his divine nature. This is no simple task. Even when confronted with the existence of other celestials and their powers, the forgotten angel may still not believe he is one of these beings.

In addition, the forgotten are very difficult to find. Since they always remain in human form and never use their celestial powers, they are virtually undetectable. They appear and act just like children of clay, with a few notable exceptions. Their human bodies will age very slowly (1 year for every 20 years in human form). In addition, they will have no memory of a family or childhood (since they never had them).

2.5.7 SORCERERS

The angel Raziel brought his infamous book, Sefer Raziel, to the earth millennia ago. Within in its pages was the key to

unlocking the power of all angels. Among those who possessed this book, King Solomon was the most noteworthy. From the information he gleamed, all sorcery was born. The descendants of Solomon have brought his art to an astonishing level by trapping and tapping the power of the children of fire. Through talismans and ritualistic magic, they have gained great knowledge and strength.

Two of the mightiest sorcerers were Jannes and Jambres. These two Egyptian wizards ascended to Heaven to test their skills (a feat in and of itself thought impossible by mortal men). So strong was their magic that neither Gabriel nor Michael was able to dispatch them. Only Metatron, the highest of all angels, was able to throw them from the halls of Heaven. But even this was no easy task.

Sorcerers possess a wide range of powers. Many have talismans that grant immunity to some forms of physical attack. In addition, some of the most powerful sorcerers have mastered rituals allowing them to call and bind both angels and demons. A thorough discussion of sorcery and sorcerers is beyond the scope of this introductory work. A later supplement will fully detail these aspects of the game. For now, storytellers are encouraged to use their creativity to utilize sorcerers wherever and however they see fit to enhance their story.

Keep in mind that not all sorcerers are intrinsically evil. Yes, many of them have wicked hearts, but there are those in the world who seek good for both children of fire and children of clay. For the most part, however, sorcerers tend to be an eccentric lot, seeking only to satiate their own warped desires.

2.5.8 THE GODLESS MACHINES

Technology is man's version of creation. With it, the children of clay can catch a glimpse of what it is to be God. But because of its removal from the natural order of creation, these machines are beyond the understanding of the children of fire. As it stands, angels have great difficulty dealing with technology, but these machines are utterly beyond their comprehension.

These Artificial Intelligence machines can pose a great threat to the children of fire. In some cases they assume their own personalities, rebelling against their creators. Very few celestial powers have effect on them since they are neither mortal nor angelic.

They range in power, some being no more than nuisances with little control. Others, however, are extraordinarily powerful, controlling countries and great stashes of weaponry.

Storytellers should consider throwing the godless machines in from time to time when running stories or campaigns set in the future. They can provide a nice change of pace for players who have seen almost everything else.

2.6 THE HALLS OF HEAVEN

2.6.1 OVERVIEW OF HEAVEN

Heaven, as the Seven Heavens is often referred to, plays a different role for the children of fire than it does for the children of clay. For humans, Heaven is seen as a sanctuary when the turmoil of life has finally ended. For them it is a place of rest, a reward for life well lived. For angels, however, it serves a more fundamental purpose. To them it is simply home. It is the place they feel most comfortable, most at ease. It is not a physical plane, but rather an ethereal one. It allows celestials to exist, move, and interact in a more natural state.

Heaven is of the angels, meaning its structures and boundaries are made of the same ethereal material as the angels themselves. Here they are in touch with their essence. Here they are in touch with their true nature. A child of fire who has been removed from Heaven for too long, will lose his sense of self, forgetting he was ever such a divine creature.

Movement between and within the Seven Heavens is much more comfortable for the children of fire than movement on Earth. Here they are able to travel in a more normal fashion, just as humans would travel upon Earth. They do not blink from location to location as they can in the material world, nor do they skirt the terrain at high velocity. Imagine Heaven to the children of fire, much as you would imagine Earth for us.

Hell as our modern minds have come to know it, is not a separate place from Heaven. Instead, the various aspects of hell manifest in the Seven Heavens themselves. While it might be hard to fathom initially, the fallen angels are themselves inhabitants of Heaven. Additionally, the wicked mortals, whose lives were wasted by corruption and greed, are punished in regions of Heaven.

Think of Heaven not as a paradise, though some areas are indeed near perfection. Rather, imagine it as a realm of diverse regions, each with its own character and feel. Some places are light while others are dark. Some are fertile, while others are desolate. Some are warm, while others are bitter cold.

2.6.2 THE FIRST HEAVEN (SHAMAYIM)

At the entrance to the First Heaven stands a mighty gate. To mere mortals it appears colossal, reaching five hundred feet into the air and with a width of one hundred and fifty feet. To children of fire who approach this portal in their normal form, it seems grand though not enormous. Atop the golden gate, a stone bust of Gabriel looks down. Her empty eyes track all those who approach. This seems only fitting since she is the prince of this realm.

There are rumors that a long forgotten path leads from the Earth to this gate—a path on which even the children of clay may tread. If such a path exists, none of the third triad angels know anything about it, and those of the higher triads keep silent on the subject. Still, the rumors seem well founded, since once in a great while a straggler from Earth ends up at the gate.

This, the First Heaven, borders on our own world. For this reason, it resembles the Earth more closely than any of the other heavens. The blue sky and lush landscape are dotted with the same features we see in the material realm. Though the sky is filled with bright, vibrant clouds floating on gentle winds, there is no sun in the azure firmament. Instead, this heaven seems to be bathed in a supernatural light that emanates from everywhere. The landscape literally glows with its radiance.

There is but one river in this realm. The orange and red ripples of its surface resemble fire as it flows from east to west, emptying into the endless sea. The waters of this river are refreshing to the children of fire. Those who play in its depths are rejuvenated and healed.

2.6.3 THE SECOND HEAVEN (RAQUIA)

Woe to the wandering angel who sets foot in this most wretched of places. A great valley exists here, surrounded by impenetrable walls of darkness. No light shines down from the empty sky above. Not even the smallest star dares make an appearance here.

In this heaven, the fallen reside. It is to this sightless realm that they were cast down and imprisoned. Their howls of torment, grief, and anger still pierce the darkness. They prey to their master, Sammael, to give them freedom and revenge.

In the center of the Second Heaven sits the palace of Sammael himself— the spires of this fortress stretching high into the endless night. It is within these walls that Sammael schemes to lash out at the Almighty by leading the children of clay astray. He looks out over his unseeable kingdom and tries to deny that it is indeed part of Heaven. Instead he calls it Hell, and it is his home.

Surrounding the palace of Sammael, are the lesser structures of his reigning chiefs. There are ten in all, the demon-lords of each preferring his own form of ghoulish decor.

A narrow path runs between the gates of the First Heaven and the gates of the Third. This is the only place within the Second Heaven where the stars shine. Here the sons of light can travel through this abominable place with out being harmed. The sides of this path are lined with watchful Powers, making sure no demons stray from their blackest home. Despite their diligence, however, more than a few sons of darkness are able to sneak through and make their way into the First Heaven and inevitably Earth. In addition, the Powers secure the gates to the Third Heaven to make certain no angels of the lowest triad enter, for they are forbidden in the higher heavens.

2.6.4 THE THIRD HEAVEN (SHEHAQIM)

If the Second Heaven is the realm of demons, then the Third heaven is the realm of man. It is here that the children of clay come once their material existence has ended. Though all the souls of Earth reside here, many children of fire also call this place their home.

The Third heaven is split into distinct sections. In the southern section (this use of direction reflects an abstract rather than literal connotation) is the great garden known as Eden. While in the north we find the much dreaded Tartarus.

The garden is a wondrous place with out earthly comparison. This utopia is meant as reward for those souls who have diligently striven to follow the goodness of the Almighty. Here they spend eternity relaxing in the shade of sweet smelling trees, enjoying all manner of fruit the garden has to offer. Two rivers

run through Eden. One flows with milk and honey, while the other flows with oil and wine. At the gates of Eden, two Cherubim with their whirling blades of fire stand guard, making sure only the righteous gain entrance.

Tartarus is a far cry from this serene scene. Its topography is devoid of beauty or life. Giant volcanoes jut into the sky, spewing forth great tongues of lava, and hurling clouds of odorous fumes into the air. A river of fire travels down from this mountain, passing through a barren wasteland of snow and ice.

It is here that the sinners are punished. The angels of torment mead out the appropriate penalty for the crimes. The air is thick with the cries of the tortured, repenting in vane for lives mislead. Few children of fire visit this region. Only the angels of torment seem to have the stomach for such suffering.

2.6.5 THE FOURTH HEAVEN (ZEBHUL)

This heaven sits among the stars. Here everything seems suspended in the nothingness of the cosmos. The sun and the moon are prominent in the black sky, and some of the closest stars seem so much larger and brighter than they appear from Earth. The very air is swirled with a divine florescent glow.

In the center of this heaven sits an awe inspiring city. The twelve gold towers within it are the highest points in the heaven. Twelve walls surround the majestic city, and only twelve gates lead inside. From this place, four rivers flow: one of honey, one of milk, one of oil, and one of wine. They flow down into the Third Heaven where they are combined into only two rivers.

The city is home to most of the angels of the upper two triads. Here they are at ease among the whirling celestial gasses. Here they can feel safe, far from the corrupting influence of the material world.

2.6.6 THE FIFTH HEAVEN (MACHON)

Like the Third Heaven, the Fifth Heaven appears to be of two separate natures. The southern region is tranquil and serene, while once again the north plays host to dreadful things.

This northern region is dominating by a large chasm where columns of fire arch into the black sky. Within this chasm, in the very heart of the flames and lava, is the prison in which all transgressing celestials are kept. Here the corrupted children of fire are punished for their misdeeds. Those Grigori who have been captured are imprisoned here as well.

At the edge of the chasm the ominous edifice of the Celestial Court rests. Here Uriel's council convenes to decide the penance and punishment of those angels who have faltered along the path of righteousness.

2.6.7 THE SIXTH HEAVEN (MAKHON)

Descriptions of the Sixth Heaven are sketchy at best. It is said, though, that it is a realm of snow and fog, of lightning and hail. Here the primal forces of creation collide in a dramatic display of beauty and rage. It is so far removed from the material world that it defies material description.

Within this turmoil, is the angelic university. Here scribes and scholars seek to explore the glories of the Almighty's creation. Some celestials spend their time cataloging and studying the stars. Others keep track of all the plants and animals in the material realm. There are also those scribes who set down the great history and lineage of the children of clay. Here the nine

celestial tomes (copies of the originals) are scrutinized for any hint of revelation.

2.6.8 THE SEVENTH HEAVEN (ARABOTH)

If little is known of the Sixth Heaven, then information about the Seventh Heaven is virtually non-existent. Here sits the throne of the Almighty. Only the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, and the seven of divine grace are permitted here, and they keep silent about this most holy of places.

Nothing is known about the landscape of this realm, though it is certainly a far cry from any earthly abode. Neither is anything known of the throne or visage of the Almighty himself.

2.7 CATALOG OF CELESTIAL BEINGS

2.7.1 OVERVIEW

The following pages contain descriptions of some of the primary celestial players. They are offered here to give the reader more knowledge of the angelic universe and hopefully spur on the creative process. The storyteller should feel free to introduce these characters into his/her story. Keep one thing in mind when doing so, though. These are among the most powerful celestials the game has to offer. Causing PC's to conflict with them will almost always result in failure.

Only descriptions are given here, not statistics. This is done for two reasons. Firstly, first triad choirs (of which many of these characters are members) possess forces and abilities not available to PC's. Inclusion of all this supplementary material was not possible for this introductory work. Secondly, the author wished this section to be available to both players and storytellers alike. Knowledge of these creatures is possessed by all angels and thus should be accessible to all. By not including statistical information on these creatures, the player is not privy to information the storyteller would like to keep secrets. Later supplements will detail this information for the use of storytellers.

For now, the storyteller is encouraged to come up with what ever seems appropriate when implementing these characters in their stories. Also, the storyteller should keep in mind that the creatures contained here by no means represent the extent of important characters. Many beings were not included in this catalog. Storytellers are encouraged to come up with their own key celestial players.

2.7.2 MICHAEL

Michael ("Who is as God") is one of the most powerful and revered of God's angels. This emerald-winged Seraph is the most beloved by the Almighty. His loyalty is unwavering, his dedication endless. He is known among his kind as God's champion. Sitting at the right side of God's throne, Michael is eternally good and completely beyond corruption.

In the first battle for heaven, Michael was the leader of the sons of light who cast out the sons of darkness. In single combat, he overcame Sammael and threw the accursed one from the higher Heavens. In Chronicles, the great Seraph, Metatron, recounts the battle:

'Twas with great trembling that the sons of light did back away from the adversary, but Michael was steadfast and unyielding. With drawn sword, he charged the Father of Lies, Sammael.

With a clash of weapons, their battle raged for but an instant. All the children of fire witnessed the accursed one go down under the unrelenting blows of Michael. Upon the head of the fallen one, Michael set his foot to signal victory. Then, grabbing the angel who was once the brightest in all the celestial choirs, he threw this wretched thing from Heaven. And the sons of darkness followed quickly in toe.

But this is not the only example of Michael's combative expertise. In 700 BC, when Sannacherib threatened Jerusalem, it was this great angel who came down to save the day. He obliterated the forces of the Assyrian king, 185,000 strong, in one night.

Michael is also known as the angel of judgment. Though it is merely metaphorical, he is said to carry the scales of justice to

weigh the hearts of men upon their death. To this end, all the psychopomps are under his command. Psychopomps are those angels whose duty it is to guide the souls of the dead to their proper destination in the afterlife.

Among the children of clay, as well as the children of fire, Michael is revered above all. He has, however, been noticeably absent in the workings of men during modern times. Those of the second and third triad suspect he is saving up strength for the final battle. Whatever the case, he has indeed become a recluse even in angelic society.

Prophecy tells us that in the last days of judgement, It will be Michael who must once again do battle with Sammael. And those who have seen Sammael in recent days have attested to the fact that he is much stronger than before.

2.7.3 GABRIEL

Gabriel (“God is my strength”) is the angel of resurrection, mercy, vengeance, and revelation. This Cherub is far different in nature and demeanor from Michael. Whereas, Michael is God’s champion, Gabriel is His chief ambassador to the children of clay. Gabriel’s grace is also the lowest of the seven angels of divine grace.

Because of Gabriel’s propensity to appear in the guise of women when dealing with the children of clay, the pronoun, she, is most often used to denote her (with the exception of Islamic culture where Gabriel always appears as a man). Gabriel appears as a woman when it suits her purpose as a messenger of God, especially when it concerns childbirth. She brought the news of both Mary’s holy child and the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias. In both cases, she took the hidden form of a woman.

But there is a darker side to her. She was the angel responsible for the destruction of Sodom and Gamora as ordered by the Almighty. This other side is evident in her quick temper and tendency to punish those who disbelieve her messages.

Among the heavenly host, her role is just as great. She is prince of the choir of Cherubim. Additionally, she is in command of the angels who guard the gates of Eden. Piled on top of these duties, she is prince of the First Heaven.

But Gabriel does not have as illustrious a standing in celestial society as one might think. For a time she fell into disgrace. The halls of Heaven were absent her presence for nearly two hundred years. Dobiel took on many of her duties during this absence. When Gabriel finished her penance, she was reinstated as one of God’s seven most beloved ones. Little is known of her specific infraction. Some say she failed to fulfill God’s precise instructions, but the event is not written of in any of the Celestial Tomes. None of the children of fire dare to ask about it, for Gabriel is known to be a vindictive angel. She still bares a grudge against Dobiel for taking her place, but will not act against him

in honor of God’s wishes. It is for these reasons that Gabriel is more feared than revered by her kind.

2.7.4 RAPHAEL

Raphael (“God has healed”) is at once the most likeable and mysterious of the seven angels of divine grace. Among his duties, he is the angel of love, prayer, light, and joy. In addition, he is ruler of the Sun and prince of the choir of Virtues.

Raphael’s primary role, however, is healer. This manifests in two ways. First, he is charged with healing the Earth so that it can sustain human life—a task that has become far more difficult since the coming of the industrial age. Secondly, he is the source of all healing for the children of fire. Along with his subordinates, he keeps the mighty river in the First Heaven flowing with revitalizing water.

Raphael is a mystifying creature even to those of his own kind. Although he is prince of the Virtues, he does not appear to be one of them. The choirs of Cherubim, Seraphim, Dominations, and Powers all claim him as one of their own. His six wings may suggest that he is of Seraphim origin, but no angel (save for Michael and Metatron who remain silent on the issue) knows for sure. There is speculation that he is outside the three triads, a separate choir in and of himself.

Among his greatest accomplishments in the material realm are his instructions to Tobias on the manufacturing of medicine (derived from the parts of a fish) and the healing of Jacob when he wrestled with an angel at Peniel. He is also the angel who brought forth Sefer Raziël (one of the nine celestial tomes) from the ocean. This book was presented to Noah to teach him the art of medicine. It is to his chagrin that the book is now used for more diabolic endeavors.

Raphael is well liked by both the children of fire and the children of clay. His playful and joyous attitude is refreshing for one of his celestial status. He is not nearly as aloof as most of the seven of divine grace are. Rather, he visits frequently with the lower choirs and is genuinely interested in the goings on of the Celestial Hierarchy at every level.

2.7.5 URIEL

If Michael is God’s champion than surely Uriel (“fire of God”) is His enforcer. This Cherub is the most feared of the seven of divine grace. In fact, were it not for his high grace, Uriel would have certainly made an excellent demon. His over zealous and wrathful nature is legend around the halls of Heaven.

Uriel is the angel of repentance as well as the angel who watches over thunder and terror. His most impressive and daunting task is as presider of Tartarus. He holds the keys to this fiery prison, and it is his underlings who administer punishment to the wicked.

It is not only the punishment of the children of clay that Uriel is in charge of. His duties extend to the judgment and punishment of the children of fire as well. Righteous angels who have strayed from their path must reckon with his dreadful council if they are caught. Both demons and Grigori are also brought before him for punishment.

He is the soul author of the book of Retribution (one of the nine Celestial Tomes). In this book he lays out the laws the children of fire must adhere to. Additionally, he spells out the punishments for these indiscretions. In the last paragraph of this work, he states very succinctly his views on transgressions.

Those coming before me, having broken the edict of the Lord, expecting mercy shall find none. You are wretched things, and I have no time for your pleading. Prepare yourself for the eternal punishment to come. For mercy, I know not your name.

Two important events highlight Uriel's dealings with the children of clay. He was the angel sent to Noah to warn the arc-builder of the coming flood. He was also the dark angel who came down from Heaven to wrestle with Jacob at Peniel.

It is said that Uriel has the sharpest eyes in heaven. Indeed this is the case. No deception or illusion passes his notice, and he is quick to punish those who seek to deceive him. His honor and devotion to God are both impressive and blindly cruel.

2.7.6 RAGUEL

Raguel ("friend of God") is an anomaly among the seven angels of divine grace. He belongs to the choir of Principalities, outranking only Angels and Archangels. Still, he found a way to make himself dear to the Almighty.

Centuries ago he was in charge of overseeing the righteous behavior of the children of fire and dealing out punishment. At least half this job was usurped by the mighty angel Uriel. It was Uriel's belief that Raguel was incapable of carrying out these tasks since many of the angels to be admonished were of greater power and rank. Raguel, who is a forgiving being, holds no grudge against Uriel for this action.

Raguel still helps to oversee the conduct of celestials. He helps those who struggle with their existence and who've faltered along the path of the Almighty. In this respect, his underlings and himself are more councilors than punishers.

Raguel seldom travels to Earth. His exploits among the children of clay are less numerous than the other angels of divine grace. In fact his only great deed among humans was to transport the prophet Enoch to the heavens for his visit.

In the Heavens, however, Raguel is well known and well respected. He is sought out often for his help and advice. Angels struggling with their flawed nature would rather deal with him (where they might actually receive some help) than to tangle with Uriel's angels of purification.

Despite his meager appearance and mannerisms, do not take him lightly. He still carries the favor of God and so can accomplish much more than would seem possible. To cross him is to cross the Almighty Himself.

2.7.7 REMIEL

Remiel ("mercy of God") is of the choir of Thrones. He is the angel of true vision. In this capacity he brings prophetic dreams from God to the children of clay. Additionally, he has been designated as the angel who will lead the souls before the Almighty on judgment day.

But Remiel's most important role is as leader of the ministering angels. In this capacity he illuminates members of the second triad regarding what missions need to be accomplished on Earth. In situation of great wait, Remiel himself descends to Earth to deliver the holy message.

Among the heavenly host, Remiel is well respected and well liked. Unlike Raphael, though, he is not a cheerful and jolly child of fire. Rather, he is known to be serious and stern, though his fairness is legend.

It is also through Remiel that the Almighty pronounces his revelations concerning the children of fire. These revelations have been repeated to Metatron who set them down in the book of Resolutions.

2.7.8 ZADKIEL

Zadkiel ("righteousness of God") is an angel of the choir of Dominations. As such, he is the prince of this choir and the second lowest in rank of the seven angels of divine grace. Zadkiel's prominence is all but ignored by the other children of fire. He is referred to (though not in his presence) as the forgotten one.

But Zadkiel is far from being worthless. His duties and obligations are numerous indeed. Among these duties, Zadkiel serves as the angel of benevolence, mercy, and memory. He does, however, seem to work more through other angels than the others of divine grace do. Rarely is he seen outside the Seven Heavens.

Only one notable exception to this has occurred. It was Zadkiel who stayed the hand of Abraham when the patriarch sought to sacrifice his son, Isaac, to the Almighty. Save for this incident, though, his presence on Earth is a rarity. His underlings, however, have a very strong presence among the children of clay.

Along with his other duties, Zadkiel, with the help of Zophiel, has been known to assist Michael when he goes into battle. Such epic confrontations have become rare in modern days, and so this duty has become less demanding for him.

2.7.9 METATRON

Metatron is the mightiest of all angels. He has many titles. Among others, he is referred to as both the king of angels and even the lesser YHWH. He is one of the four Seraphim and as such is the prince of his choir. Though children of clay (who know little of him) may quarrel, he is higher in rank than Michael or Gabriel

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of this angel is his height. In deed, he stands ahead and shoulders above all others. Even the Grigori, noted for their monstrous stature, stand a full head smaller.

Metatron has many duties in Heaven, as would be expected for one of his rank. One of his most important duties is as celestial scribe. Seven of the nine Celestial Tomes were authored by him. These works are kept close to his side in the Seventh Heaven

Primary among his other duties is as guardian of all Heaven. It would seem that the great champion Michael should assume such a position, and, in fact, Michael was the one who bested Samael when the dark one tried to wrestle control of Heaven. While Michael may be the brawniest (best in a physical confrontation) it is Metatron's wit that make him such an adept guardian. When the two Egyptian sorcerers barged their way into Heaven, it was Metatron alone who ousted them. Both Gabriel and Michael tried to best the two wizards and failed miserably. Though Metatron has never told what trick he used, the two interlopers were quickly dispatched.

Though he is supreme in Heaven, Metatron plays only a secondary roll with the children of clay. In fact, though he is the architect of the promises that enlisted his fellow angels in helping them, most mortals have neglected him. This is due in large part to the incredible rarity with which he traveled to Earth. In fact, the last known visit of Metatron was when he led the children of Israel through the wilderness.

2.7.10 SAMMAEL

Sammael ("poison angel") is ruler of the Second Heaven, which he calls Hell. His great palace rests in the center of this realm of darkness. From here he commands legions of demons to go onto into the world and contest the will of the Almighty.

Once the mightiest and brightest of all angels, Samael has fallen so far. Now his rage at the children of clay consumes his core. This hideous hatred drives him to separate mankind from their Creator. There is no other goal for him.

Most of this work is accomplished by the dukes of hell and their underlings, but on occasion Samael himself travels to the material realm. One such occurrence happened at the time of Moses' death. Samael himself went to contend for the body of the great patriarch. Upon taking possession of the body, how-

ever, he was confronted by Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. For the second time, Michael bested the accursed one in physical combat. Samael tells the story differently, though. In his version, he withdrew of his own volition, realizing such a confrontation did not serve his aims.

Though the true atrociousness of his form is beyond words, Samael often depicts himself as a handsome and charismatic figure. When presenting himself to the children of clay he disguises himself as the most upstanding and honorable of gentleman. The King of Hell has long since realized that the subtle approach far outweighs the direct one. He corrupts mankind with sweet words and plausible arguments.

Sammael has taken four wives for himself. Agrat-Bat-Mablabt and Eisbetb Zenunim are angels of prostitution. Lilith was once the wife of Adam until she was rejected by him. It is said that she is Samael's favorite bride. Finally, Naamab is Samael's most sensual wife. She is the greatest seductress Heaven or Earth has ever seen. She lusts after both demons and the sons of Adam. Samael encourages her in this lecherous behavior.

2.7.11 SHEMIHASAH

Oh great Shemihah, how you've disappointed our Father. Your betrayal was far worse than that of the accursed one. The Almighty trusted you with the souls of his Children, and instead of protecting them you and your kind buckled to the petty urges of the flesh

-The Book of Promises

Shemihah was the leader of the two hundred Grigori sent to Earth to teach and protect the children of clay. The chiefs of ten would take no action with out his say so. He was the watcher who taught men to grow and harvest crops. This innovation caused humans to prosper and thrive.

Like the rest of his breed, Shemihah became covetous of the flesh of the children of clay. He had two children with human woman, Hiwa and Hiya. These two giants were ravenous creatures. It was said that every day they consumed 1,000 horses, 1,000 camels, and 1,000 oxen. When there was not enough to satiate their appetite, they feasted on humans. Shemihah was appalled by his progeny and would have nothing to do with them. Despite his disgust, the Grigori leader went on ravaging the flesh of human men and woman.

When God passed judgment on these wretched creatures, ordering them all to be brought to Heaven for punishment, it was Michael and Uriel who were able to (with great difficulty) subdue this mighty creature. They brought him before the Almighty who judged that he would spend the rest of eternity tormented for his transgressions. He was hung upside-down over the great flame. Daily the angels of punishment flayed his skin with dull knives.

Sometime after the flood, (when Hiwa and Hiya were killed), Shemihazah was able to escape. No one is quite sure how he managed this feat. He fled to Earth and has not been heard from since. Assuredly he is scheming against those who punished him and is almost certainly still indulging in his evil transgressions.

2.7.12 ASTAROTH

Astaroth is one of the ten dukes of Hell. He is considered by those who've met him to be the most civil of the fallen angels. His palace in the Second Heaven does not show so many of the depraved trappings of most of other dukes. His quarters are emasculate and rather devoid of horrors. It is in the great hall of this place that he talks philosophy with his demon kin.

Astaroth is the architect of many of Sammael's most effective ploys to corrupt the children of clay. It is said that he was the one who came up with the story to portray his master, Sammael, as a dutiful servant punished unfairly by an inconsistent God.

He is not a great warrior or fierce in nature as are some of his brethren. He prefers to win his battles with words and gentle persuasion. He is the official scribe of Hell, though there seems to be little prestige in such a position. None the less, he dutifully writes down his thoughts and those of his master.

Astaroth has on many occasions traveled to Earth. While in the material realm the hidden shape he takes is almost always the same. He transforms himself into a man of small stature. With white suit, handlebar mustache, and wiry spectacles, he is the very picture of an unassuming soul. For the children of clay, however, his words are more devastating than the most gruesome of weapons.

3.0 RULES

3.1 CHARACTER CREATION

3.1.1 OVERVIEW

“And so we were created, each of us separate and unique, each with a boundless capacity for good and a limitless potential for depravity.”

- The Book of Promises

The character creation process is arguably the most important aspect of a role-playing game. Without meaningful and well-envisioned characters, the game is nothing but the shell of a story. But if our main characters (the players) are brimming with color and depth, we begin to connect to the setting. These characters breathe life into our story. Flat, cardboard cutout characters only serve to dull the emotional thrust of our tale,

So, dear reader, the author encourages you to spend time on the creation process. Give your character complexity and sophistication. Look beyond mere numbers to the core of the character. You will be well rewarded for your hard work.

3.1.2 CHARACTER CONCEPT

This step is the most crucial in creating both the character you want and one that will be enjoyable to play. Without it, the rest of this process will be nothing more than a boring exercise in number crunching.

Focus on one thing you would like from your character. This can be an archetypal concept (a rebel, a warrior angel, etc) or perhaps this one idea centers around an exceptional or deficient quality of the character (the angel is exceptionally strong, the angel is naive, etc). This process can also be started by concentrating on a particular personality trait in your character (kind, vengeful, direct, etc). Lastly, you can start character creation by imagining the character's appearance, either in earthly or angelic form. Are there any distinguishing physical features you can latch onto? Are there any distinctive mannerisms he possesses?

Once you've found a central theme to work from, the rest of the character creation process will have more meaning. Keep this central idea clearly in mind as you progress through the remaining steps.

3.1.3 ANGELIC ORDERS

An angelic order, in its simplest terms, is much like an occupation for a child of clay. The concept is actually much broader than a normal mundane career. It determines the nature of a character as well as what missions the celestial is apt to be sent on. An angel of vengeance would not be sent to tell a young woman she was about to give birth to a holy child. Likewise, it would be unlikely for a ministering angel to be sent on a mission to protect an important relic.

There are many orders among the children of fire. Unfortunately, most of them have a rather limited scope in terms of the game. For instance, there are many orders whose members rarely if ever travel outside the Seven Heavens. It would be pointless for players to make angels of these orders. For this reason, players must choose one of the six angelic orders listed below. These are the broadest of the orders and allow for the most diverse role-playing.

GUARDIAN ANGELS

Primary Forces: Vigilance, Protection, Perception

Secondary Forces: Benevolence, War

These are angels whose mission is to protect people, places, and items. Their job is to protect these things from harm and evil influence. While this may seem like a simple enough task, angels of this order are given many charges at once. Difficulty arises from the fact that the angel can only be in one place at a time. For this reason, almost all members of this order have the force link, which allows travel directly to a specific thing.

MINISTERING ANGELS

Primary Forces: Revelation, Benevolence, Miracles

Secondary Forces: Protection, Understanding,

It is the charge of these angels to bring both warnings and blessings to the children of clay. They travel the Earth, trying to bolster people's faith through subtle acts. Their missions are often vague and rife with ambiguity. Though they are often the weakest at the combative arts, they are usually the angels of highest Grace.

ANGELS OF THE SWORD

Primary Forces: Fire, War, Protection

Secondary Forces: Miracles, Weather

This order constitutes the Almighty's divine warriors. They are the guards of all things celestial. For instance, it is Cherubim of this order who guard the Garden of Eden in the Third Heaven. Additionally, they are the ones who are sent to Earth to actively battle against the fallen and other evil emanations. In some cases, they are sent down to the armies of men to help them be victorious against malevolent forces.

ANGELS OF VENGEANCE

Primary Forces: Vengeance, Fire, Weather

Secondary Forces: War, Perception

These are the angels sent down to unleash the wrath of God. Though they do occasionally do battle with celestial creatures, their primary goal is to punish the children of clay. They bring with them famine, disease, fire, and brimstone. This is a harsh job indeed, often going against what seems just and fair. Of all the orders, this one has the most difficulty maintaining and increasing Grace.

ANGELS OF PURIFICATION

Primary Forces: Purification, Understanding, Fire

Secondary Forces: Weather, Vigilance

Uriel's angels of purification are among the most feared of all orders in the halls of Heaven. Their mission deals not with the children of clay or with evil forces, but involves monitoring and punishing their own kind. With the book of Retribution in hand, they seek out any angels who transgress against the will of God. Often they roam the world in search of the Lost, so that they can bring them before Uriel's council. In some cases, they are sent to watch over a specific child of fire whose behavior is deemed questionable.

PSYCHOPOMPS

Primary Force: Mortality, Understanding, Benevolence

Secondary Forces: Perception, Miracles

The Seraph Michael is the leader of this group of angels whose job it is to release the souls of the recently departed children of clay and send them on their way to the afterlife. In addition,

it is the job of this order to seek out any souls who have failed to ascend to either Eden or Tartarus and instead wander aimlessly about the Earth. They are often sent to battlefields by the thousands to facilitate the passing on of the children of clay.

3.1.4 ASPECTS

All celestials can be described in terms of aspects. These aspects attempt to define the core of the child of fire. They give us generalities about what the character is capable or not capable of. They allow us to make comparisons between them and other characters in the story. In all there are five aspects that define a child of fire: Knowledge, Understanding, Power, Vigor, and Glory. Characters start with a five in each of these. The players then have 20 points to divide up as they see fit among their character's aspects. Keep in mind, however, that starting scores can not exceed 13.

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge governs recall and recognition. To remember a face, know the layout of a specific place, or recall the name of a fallen angel might require a knowledge roll. Knowledge is used for many perceptive and awareness forces.

UNDERSTANDING

Understanding governs the character's ability to comprehend the complex patterns that make up both the celestial and material worlds. It is used to fathom the uses of mysterious items and to interact with technology. It is used for countering deception, and gives a general indication of how long a child of fire can be away from his celestial home before forgetting his divine nature.

POWER

This aspect reflects the character's outward ability to exert himself on his environment. It can be thought of as all physical attributes (strength, dexterity, quickness, athleticism, etc) put together. And yet it is so much more than this. It is involved, to some degree, in any act seeking to exert the will of the child of fire on the universe and its laws.

VIGOR

Vigor is the opposite companion to power. As power represents the reservoir of outward energy, Vigor represents the reservoir of inner energy. It is the character's resistance to the environment rather than his ability to influence it. In addition, it dictates how much damage a celestial can endure before being returned to the Heavens. Forces that seek to damage the celestial spiritually or mentally are often resisted with ones Vigor. Think of it as the character's ability to remain unchanged.

GLORY

This aspect is akin to presence. It represents the impressiveness and righteousness a child of fire can convey. It can be used to intimidate mortals and celestials alike. Glory is the base for many celestial forces, including Vengeance, Miracles, and other powers of coercion.

3.1.5 VIRTUES

Whereas aspects define how a character is able to perform actions and ascertain knowledge, virtues are a measure of the character's moral make-up. It must be stressed that they are not personality traits. Rather, they are a gage of how strong certain moral paradigms are within the character.

Though they are of immense power and undeterminable age, celestials are much more like children than adults. They are easily distracted, corrupted, and enraptured. The virtues govern their ability to overcome temptation and assess the validity of their decisions.

There are four virtues: justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude. Though each is distinctly different from the others, they often come into conflict in the same situation. It is these conflicts that make up much of the backbone to this game. A character with a great deal of justice may wish to take a certain action for which his high level prudence would prevent him from doing so. These moments of contradiction should be cultivated by the storyteller and cherished by the players, for they exemplify the heart of role-playing.

A number of Forces are resisted with these virtues. As a result they must be quantified for proper game play. Whenever possible, though, issues dealing with virtues should be resolved through role-playing and not dice rolling.

Characters begin with a 5 in all four virtues. They are then given 16 points to add to the virtues as they see fit. As with aspects, characters in the choir of Angels (most beginning characters) can not have virtue scores exceeding 13.

A description of each of the four virtues follows. Keep in mind, like so many aspects of life, there are both benefits and drawbacks to having high scores in these virtues.

JUSTICE

This virtue dictates the character's ability to understand the difference between right and wrong. The innocent should not be harmed, the guilty should be punished for their deeds, and the strong should protect the weak. Justice, however, does not inherently involved delineating between good and evil. For sometimes evil can be righteous and good unfair.

Let us look at an example to illustrate this point.

The angel Kadal watches from a distance as a small girl crosses the street unaware that she is about to be struck dead by and

oncoming truck. Kadal knows that if the child lives, she will one day give birth to an evil leader who will slaughter millions, but the child herself has done no wrong. She is not evil or cruel, merely innocent and blameless. Kadal is uncertain of what to do. Should he save the innocent child or let her die so she can never give birth to her wretched progeny. To save her would be just, but victory for evil. To let her die would be unjust even though good would win the day.

Justice is a notoriously low score for the angels of vengeance as it often conflicts with their divine duty. It is the struggle between duty and justice that often results in a loss of Grace for these celestials.

PRUDENCE

Prudence is the ability to know that rashness is folly. Angels are known for their spur of the moment and often whimsical decision making. This virtue curtails such an instinctive nature. In this respect, it is often helpful when battling passion and resisting temptation. At the same time, too much prudence can be seen as indecision. Some situations demand a quick and untethered mind.

TEMPERANCE

Because the children of fire are much like adolescents, their whims and fancies sometimes go too far. They resort to extremes to accomplish their ends, often going too far for the likes of the Almighty. Temperance is the virtue that controls such behavior. It keeps their actions more restrained, their thought more rational. Too much temperance, however, also has a price. Sometimes it causes a child of fire to be unwilling to go to the length necessary to bring about a swift and clear solution.

FORTITUDE

Fortitude represents the sheer force of will a child of fire possesses. This is the angel's ability to withstand pain, both physically and emotionally, and not to be daunted by obstacles en route to their goal. While it plays a vital role in resisting many temptations and demonic ploys, too much fortitude can be the sign of stubbornness and an unyielding nature.

3.1.6 FORCES

The next step in character creation is the choosing of forces. Here the player is given 7 points to spend on attaining celestial powers.

At the beginning of each order is a list of primary and secondary forces. These are the spheres the player can choose from. Primary forces cost 1pt, while secondary forces cost 2pt. Within each group of forces, the celestial powers must be bought in order. Hence, a character must have a level one and level two

force in a given sphere in order to attain the third level force. In some cases there will be more than one force at a given level. If this is the case, the player is only required to purchase one of these forces in order to attain a force of the next higher level. Lastly, assuming players are making characters of the choir of Angels, only third triad forces can be gained.

3.1.7 TEMPTATIONS

Angels' emotions are frivolous things held in check by tenuous threads of moral obligation. These ancient adolescents often find themselves distracted from their divine duties.

Temptations are the representation of this personality quirk. All beginning characters start the game with three temptations. These are things the child of fire finds particularly hard to resist. These are not inherently depraved desires, but are often simply sources of distraction. For instance, an angel might have a temptation for children. They fascinate him so much that he is willing to forsake his mission for an opportunity to observe or interact with them.

Whenever a child of fire comes across one of these temptations, there is a chance he might succumb to it. This situation is usually resolved through role-playing, but the storyteller can ask for a roll. The roll is always based on whichever virtue is most appropriate for the situation. More about dealing with temptations will be discussed in the Rules section.

Players should take heed, though. Temptations should be chosen carefully. Choosing a set of temptations that is too broad may make accomplishing their divine tasks extraordinarily difficult. Likewise, picking insignificant temptations will rob the player of some wonderful chance to role-play. In the end, it is up to the storyteller to decide what temptations are acceptable for his/her game.

3.1.8 PROVIDENCE

Providence represents an aspect of the universe a child of fire is particularly adept at dealing with. It can be a thing, an idea, or even an emotion. All rolls involving this "area of expertise" are at +1, regardless of what aspect or virtues is being used.

For beginning characters, this providence must be very specific. The lesser angels are relegated to the rolls of minor providences. Examples might include: bald men, a particular hour of the day, or admiration of one's parents. At the beginning levels, these have a very small scope in the game. As the characters ascend through the Celestial Hierarchy, their providence will expand. With each new choir they attain, its scope will broaden slightly.

To illustrate this point, let's look at an example. At creation, a child of fire in the choir of Angels might choose for his providence the hour 2pm. From 2-3 he would gain the bonus listed

above. As he progressed through choirs this power might increase to a series of hour (say 2pm-4pm). Eventually this might increase to include an entire month or a specific day of the week (Tuesday for example).

Players may only choose a providence with a non-negative connotation. Things like deception, evil men, and torture are called dominions and fall in the realm of demons not angels.

It is rumored that angels of the first triad (Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones) are able to bestow additional providences to lesser children of fire.

3.1.9 SIGNATURE

All children of fire, both fallen and divine, have certain affectations. They carry these into the material world. When angels take human guise (the Hidden Form), this signature manifests itself. Each character has commonality that runs through all human forms he takes. For instance, an angel may only manifest in the form of children or perhaps the human form they take must always wear some piece of green clothing. It could be the angel only takes the forms of people with certain afflictions. It might even be that a certain symbol is always on the manifestation. There are endless possibilities, and all ideas should be discussed with the storyteller. Whatever the player chooses, it should be distinctive and add to the overall concept of the character.

3.1.10 GRACE

Grace is a very important fact in Children of Fire. It represents how much favor the character has with the Almighty. Put simply, it is how much the angel is liked by God. Thus Grace dictates the chance a character has of invoking direct intervention by the Almighty. Additionally it can be used to indirectly effect rolls. The effects of Grace and its uses will be further detailed in the Mechanics section.

A character's beginning grace is determined by his order. The chart below details the orders and the corresponding starting Grace.

Order	Starting Grace
Angels of Vengeance	5
Angels of the Sword	7
Pyschopomps	7
Angels of Purification	8
Ministering Angels	10
Guardian Angels	8

3.1.11 A FINAL WORD

At this point you've finish the statistical portion of character generation. What you have, though, is not a fully fleshed-out character. Without adding some useful details and motivations, all you really have is a sheet full of useless numbers. In order to breathe life into your new character and make him fun to play, the author recommends the following.

1. Write up a description of your character. Describe what the character looks like in divine form, and what mannerisms he possess. Talk about the character's motivations and his view on the major aspects of the game (demons, children of clay, Grigori, sorcery, Nephilim, technology, etc.)

2. Describe some of the most important instances during the angel's existence and how they shaped his views. Attempting to write a complete history for a creatures that has lived since the beginning of time is a bit silly, so don't even try. Merely pick out some of the more defining moments. Remember, this should help you more fully understand your character, not weigh you down with countless details.
3. Answer some questions the numbers on your character sheet might allude to. For instance, if one of your aspects is much higher than the rest, explain why. Why does the character have the temptations he does? Why does he have a specific signature. These questions will help you get a better grasp of what would otherwise be an uninteresting character.

3.2 GAME MECHANICS

3.2.1 SIMPLICITY VS. COMPLEXITY

There are very few rules to Children of Fire. The author strongly believes role-playing should be more about the story and less about the rules. It can ruin a scene to halt play in order to look up obscure rules or make countless die rolls. For this reason simplicity is stressed over complexity or even realism.

Much of the system for Children of Fire runs in the background and is meant to establish both atmosphere and continuity. These are guidelines that are applied before the gaming session begins or after it has ended. For instance, there are quite a number of rules regarding character generation. These are meant to give a framework to the game and to help players understand the natural emphasis and themes contained therein.

Still, there is a need to apply some rules during the course of the gaming session. Without them, decay, loss of control, and a sense of imbalance often occur, but these rules should be minimalistic. This section seeks to explain what rules apply for helping the storyteller structure and control the flow of the game.

Keep in mind, these are not hard and fast dictates. Rather, these are meant merely as guidelines, and should be ignored when the story demands it. Don't let rolling get in the way of (or substitute for) good stories. Some groups and storytellers will function better with a greater adherence to the rules, while others will thrive with a more free flowing style. Each role-playing group is unique and demands a different approach to the rules. In the end, it is the Storyteller's purgative as to how the rules should be applied.

3.2.2 THE FUNDAMENTAL RULE

Here it is, the governing rule to the entire game...

Situations whose outcome is in doubt or may be contended are resolved by rolling 2d10. This number is combined with a number from either the player's or supporting cast member's character sheet. In most cases a total of 20 or greater is considered a success.

If the Storyteller wishes to apply a greater difficulty to the action, then the target to be achieved (roll + stat) can be raised. The storyteller can set any target number he/she would like, but the chart below gives a rough guideline

Difficulty	Target
Normal	20
Hard	25
Very Hard	30
Nearly Impossible	35

An attempt has been made to keep these terms simple and not cloud the chart with uselessly poetic adjectives.

That's all there is to it. This one rule governs 90% of all game play.

As for contested actions (i.e. two characters having a tug-of-war) both players would roll and the one who achieved the highest combined target would win. It's that simple.

There is, however, one little catch storytellers can choose to either apply or ignore. A roll of 2 (snake eyes) is considered a failure, even if the total of both roll and stat matched or ex-

ceeded the target number. In contested rolls, this also results in a -5 to the final total for that player. Likewise, a roll of twenty (double zeros) is considered a success even if it did not achieve the target number. With contested rolls, a +5 is added to the player's total.

3.2.3 WHEN TO ROLL AND WHEN NOT TO

Too much die rolling can slow down a game or break the continuity of a scene, while too little can leave the players feeling they have no control over the events in the story. Finding a happy medium is the challenge of all Storytellers. Below are five guidelines to help Storytellers decide when and when not to roll.

1. If an action is simple or mundane, a roll should not be required. Children of Clay, for instance should never have to make a roll to see if they can start their car (though children of fire, for whom interacting with technology is a feat in itself, might have to)
2. When a given action is totally irrelevant to the course of the story, rolling should be avoided. Most of these situations revolve around character development and should be resolved through role-playing. Stopping the flow to resolve these trivial actions only slows things down.
3. Communication between players and other characters should never be decided by a roll, even if the player is attempting to coerce or pump the subject for information. This is a perfect opportunity for role-playing that should not be squandered on mere random chance. Hopefully this practice will cut down on annoyances such as having a player say, "My character asks him about the dead body."
4. Actions whose outcome is so integral to the plot that they can not be left to chance, should absolutely never be rolled. If a certain result is necessary to continue the plot line, then having players roll is setting them up for disappointment. Nothing is worse for a player than rolling double 10's (what should be an automatic success) and finding out they still missed the person they were shooting at.

Storytellers should avoid making players roll for actions they have already accomplished during a scene or even a session. There are, of course, many exceptions to this guideline, but under normal circumstances, a child of fire who already made a technology roll to operate a computer, should not be forced to continually make this roll during the course of the scene. Such rolling is redundant and once again slows down game play.

3.2.4 USING FORCES

The one aspect for which rules and guidelines are most important concerns the use of celestial forces. These forces add a great deal to the character and feel of the game, but they can also be a source of great consternation and debate. This section tries to clearly spell out their uses and limitations.

Every force has a governing stat from which all die rolls are based. This stat is different for each force. Check the corresponding description for the governing stat. In most cases, as with the rest of the game, a target of 20 is the norm. Higher results are assumed to indicate better or more powerful manifestation of a force, but this is purely a subjective matter left up to the Storyteller to decide.

Some forces are contested (directly opposed by another character). In these situations both participants must make a roll. Only if the total achieved by the character using the force is greater than his opponents, does the force take effect. If the combined roll and stat did not add up to 20 (even if it beat the opponent's) the force is also not successful.

The use of forces can be felt by other celestial as well as very attuned children of clay. The child of fire using the power sends out a shock wave of sorts (almost like a sonic boom). The more powerful the force, the greater the ripples it causes. In game mechanic terms, the more a character exceeds his target by, the louder the celestial noise will be. A player rolling a 21 to perform a blessing would only create a whisper (detectable only to those very near him), while a roll of 35 would create a colossal shock wave that could be felt anywhere within a large city. Larger shock waves are easier to pinpoint than smaller ones. Usually if a character exceeds his target by 5 or less, it is nearly impossible for those nearby to pinpoint its origin. Targets exceeded by more than 10, however, are relatively easy to pinpoint. This is a very fluid and subjective matter left up to the storyteller's discretion.

While nearby celestials may be able to sense that a force is being used, they can not identify the specific force being applied. Even determining whether the force is of divine or infernal origin is impossible. All that is known is that a celestial power of some kind is in play.

The use of a force can only be perceived at its inception. Forces that have long lasting effects can not be sensed if the celestial arrives on the scene after the invocation of the force. For instance, celestials using the force Link need not fear detection after the link has been established.

There is no limit to the number of times a character can use a specific force during the gaming session. The Almighty, however, frowns on those who over use their celestial talents and under utilize their intellect.

3.2.5 DEALING WITH TEMPTATION

All angels have weaknesses. Like children they are easily swayed from their current course. In *Children of Fire*, this weakness is represented by temptations.

Temptations are those things that distract and side track angels from their divine missions. Each player must choose at least three temptations for their character during the creation process.

Storytellers should make every effort to confront the PC's with their temptations around every turn of the plot. The more they must address and overcome these failings in their personalities, the more the players will understand and appreciate the nature of the game. This moral struggle between the divinity of the Almighty and the corruption of the material world is at the very heart of the game.

When possible, encounters with a character's temptation should be resolved through role-playing. Sometimes, however, the storyteller may deem that a die roll is in order to truly represent the overwhelming influence temptations have on the players. A player may want his character to do one thing, but the need to fulfill his temptation may take control.

Players need not roll if they choose to succumb to their temptation. Only if the players attempt to resist the source of their temptation may they be asked to roll. These rolls are based on one of the four divine virtues. The virtue used is totally dependent on the situation. In most cases, the target to be rolled is 20, but the Storyteller may alter this to reflect the difficulty of certain temptations.

Let's take an example.

The guardian angel Iriquel has been sent to look after an important businessman. Iriquel has as his temptation gambling. As it happens, Iriquel follows his protectee into a Las Vegas casino. Immediately he is bombarded with the allure of almost irresistible games of chance. The player wishes Iriquel to keep following the businessman since he knows the man's soul is in danger of being corrupted by dark forces. The Storyteller deems that a roll is necessary to resist this temptation. In addition, this is no ordinary temptation. The player is confronted with a room filled with the hundreds of slot machines, banks of video poker machines, and dozens of tables of roulette, blackjack, and craps. This makes the target 25 (difficult).

Depending on the specifics of the scene, any of the four virtues might be appropriate for the roll. In this particular case, the storyteller deems that temperance is the most fitting virtue. Iriquel has a temperance of 8, and the player rolls an 11. The total is 20, less than the required 25. Iriquel is forced to leave the side of his protectee, and succumb to the allure of the blackjack table.

In many cases, determining which virtue is most applicable to a certain situation can be difficult. There will even be times when more than one virtue seems appropriate. There are no hard and fast rules to help make this decision. Ultimately, it's up to the Storyteller to decide.

3.2.6 ANGELS AND TECHNOLOGY

As has been discussed at numerous points in this work, angels have difficulty interacting and using technology. The mechanism for applying this difficulty is quite simple. Whenever a child of fire is confronted with a piece of technology, he must make an understanding roll. For simple forms of technology, the difficulty is normal (20). The more advanced the technological device, though, the greater the difficulty. Very advanced technological innovations, such as computers can garner a difficulty of near impossible (35).

Once a character has made a roll for a particular piece of technology, the result stands for the remainder of the scene. Just because an angel succeeded in using an item once, however, does not mean he will always be able to use it. This operational knowledge is fleeting for these celestial beings. Even a short time away from the item will put the angel back to square one.

3.2.7 COMBAT

Combat in *Children of Fire* is treated much the same way as any other aspect of the game. Many systems break combat down into dozens of steps governed by rigid criteria. Such a system is impractical for this game and, in the author's opinion, only serves to disrupt scenes and hinder role-playing.

The outcome of a combat scene is guided by only one die roll. Players do not roll every time they swing at a demon or grapple with a Grigori. Rather, a roll represents the general flow of the combat scene, entailing many actions.

A few prefatory notes are needed before a discussion of the die roll is addressed. Players and Storytellers alike should be conscious of the fact that celestials can only physically contend with creatures if they are in the same state as their opponent. In other words, an angel who is material can not engage in combat with one who is ethereal. They can, of course, use forces against each other, but blows can not be exchanged. In addition, transformation from one form (or state) to another takes five to ten seconds to complete. Lastly, angels who are in ethereal form always have the option of teleporting away if they are losing. Teleportation under such stress is difficult and erratic. Celestials attempting to flee combat using this method have no idea where they might end up. They might end up a few hundred yards away or half way around the world. The location is entirely within the purview of the Storyteller.

When two combatants face off, the Storyteller may ask for a combat roll. Both participants roll using their Power aspect. The results of these rolls are then compared. The character that rolled higher will be assumed to have the edge in the combat scene. The greater the difference between the two rolls, the more decisive the victory. A difference equal to the losing player's Vigor will mean a decisive thrashing by the winner, and the player will have been injured enough to be forced to return to the Heavens for recuperation. A difference of twice the loser's vigor (an extraordinarily rare occurrence) will result in the destruction of the losing angel.

As with other rolls, the Storyteller may decide that under the circumstances one side has an inherent advantage over the other. This can be represented by an additional bonus to one combatant's roll.

The roll, however, is only the beginning of a combat scene. Once a general idea of what will happen is determined it is up to the storyteller and players to fill in the details of the scene through role-playing. The outcome may be changed by extraordinarily innovative or foolhardy actions.

The initial combat roll is optional. There are certain circumstances when a roll is a waste of time. There should be no roll used when supporting cast members are battling other supporting cast members. These conflicts should be resolved according to what works best for the story. Also, players should not be forced to roll if the outcome of the combat is irrelevant.

3.2.8 USING FORCES IN COMBAT

The combat roll described above only reflects the physical confrontation between two beings. It does not take into account the use of forces in a conflict. Use of such forces can easily sway the outcome of battle and allow the players to emerge from the scene victoriously.

In the midst of battle, however, forces can be very difficult to perform. Attempting to disengage and somehow exert ones will on the universe can be a daunting challenge. For this reason, many force rolls in a combat scene will have a difficulty of hard (25). This is reflected in contested rolls by the character using the force incurring a -5 to his/her total when comparing it to the opponent's.

Keep in mind, not all situations of force use will incur this penalty. There are many role-playing circumstances where this penalty would not make sense. For instance, though the characters may make a combat roll, characters that use a force before the engagement of that combat is described probably would not suffer the increased difficulty.

In the end, the effect of forces on a combat scene is different for every situation. For this reason, the storyteller is responsible for deciding their effect and whether it turns the tables of a battle.

3.2.9 USING GRACE

Grace has two uses in the Children of Fire system. Firstly is a pool from which players can draw to increase the results of their rolls. For every point of grace spent the player receives a +1 to their die roll. There are, however, a few restrictions.

For One, the maximum number of grace points a player can spend on a single roll is dependent on their choir. The following chart details these limitations.

Choir	Max Expenditure
Angels	2
Archangels	3
Principalities	4
Powers	6
Virtues	8
Dominations	0
Thrones	15
Cherubim	20
Seraphim	25

Secondly, grace expenditures must be decided upon before the dice are rolled. A player can not wait to see if he has succeeded or failed his roll before deciding to use grace points.

Points used in this manner are not permanently lost. Rather, they are used up for the duration of the story. At the beginning of a new story, the player again has access to all his grace points.

In addition to using grace points to modify rolls, players can use their character's grace to attempt to call for divine intervention. The celestial preys to the Heavens for the Almighty to intervene on his behalf. This roll is actually made as a percentage roll. The player must roll equal to or under they're grace score. This is the original grace score, not the current one used up by roll modifying expenditures.

This option is only exercised under the most extreme situations. Whether it succeeds or fails, the attempt results in an automatic loss of 5 grace points. This is a permanent change to the grace score and can only be reclaimed through grace increasing acts. The Almighty does not like to do the work of his angels, and considers such interventions to be a failure on the part of his holy subjects.

3.2.10 GAINING AND LOSING GRACE

During the course of a character's existence, their grace score can fluctuate. There is a certain set of behaviors the Almighty prefers from the children of fire, and he favors those who follow this code and disfavors those who act against His wishes.

Each order has its own set of standards that apply specifically to how they gain and lose grace. There are, however, some general actions that will garner and increase or decrease of grace. Below are two lists detailing some of these actions. The storyteller should feel free to add or subtract from these lists as they see fit. Later supplements to this initial system will detail some of the criteria for each of the orders.

LOSING GRACE

- Killing a child of clay (when not ordered to do so), 10
- Divine Intervention, 5
- Infringing on man's free will, 5
- Excessive use of divine force, 1
- Succumbing to temptation leading to failure of a mission, 3
- Consciously disobeying the will of God, 1
- Causing a child of clay to turn away from the Almighty, 2

GAINING GRACE

- Converting a child of clay back to the path of the Almighty, 5
- Destroying an Anakim or Nephilim, 3
- Overcoming severe temptation to complete one's mission, 2
- Strengthening the faith of a child of clay, 1
- Defeating overwhelming evil forces, 2

3.2.11 RISING THROUGH THE RANKS

Most character development is accomplished through role-playing. To attempt to apply rules to this process does a great disservice to the players and the story the storyteller is trying to weave. Many games attempt to use experience points or the like to simulate character advancement. Such a process would fail miserably in Children of Fire.

Instead, increases in aspects, attainment of new forces, and overcoming of temptations are totally subjective elements of the story not governed by number crunching point expenditures. Rather, they are totally left up to the Storyteller and the role-playing of the players. At any point during the game (though this usually happens at the end of the mission or plot point) the storyteller can reward players by boosting elements on their character sheet. These boosts have to do with both actions in game play and what players tell the storyteller their characters are doing in between session. A player, who is actively seeking out celestials possessing a certain force, might at some crucial point in the story acquire the desired new force. Characters who attempt to utilize essences they are weak in during the course of a story might find they have gained more understanding of how to better utilize these abilities.

There is another side to this process, however. The storyteller can also elect to reduce scores. This should be done sparingly and only when extreme situations warrant it. For instance, a character who constantly fails temperance rolls or fails to role-play according to his character's high temperance score, may find himself behaving in a more rash and poorly thought out manner. The storyteller might reflect this change by lowering his temperance score.

In addition to increases of character sheet elements, there is another type of character development that must be addressed. This issue revolves around the character's ability to progress through the Celestial Hierarchy. This progression, however, does need some systemization.

As was explained during the character creation process, all player characters (unless the Storyteller decides otherwise) begin the game at the rank of Angel. Though making ones way up the ladder of the Celestial Hierarchy is a rare occurrence, it certainly is possible. For the vast majority of supporting cast characters this advancement will never occur, but for the PCs it's something they may strive to attain. There are, however, some requirements the character must fulfill.

Firstly, there is a grace requirement for advancement. Each choir has a minimum grace required in order to advance into it. Loss of grace after the new choir has been reached does not result in an immediate demotion. Many children of fire have fluctuating grace scores, but the minimum grace must be present at the time of promotion. The chart below details these requirements as well as listing the maximum score for aspects and virtues an angel can have at that rank.

Choir	Grace	Max Stat
Angel -	13	
Archangel	15	14
Principalities	30	15
Powers	40	16
Virtues	50	17
Domination	60	18

There is a second requirement to promotion. The character must perform some divinely inspired act of goodness (saving the souls of a thousand people on the verge of damnation) that does not directly relate to his mission, or the player may perform a particularly astounding piece of role-playing. In either case, this decision is left up to the Storyteller. Promotion, however, should not be given to players whose soul motivation for these good acts or breathtaking role-playing is to attain a new choir. Such contrived events should not be rewarded.

3.3 FORCES

3.3.1 OVERVIEW

The following sections describe the Forces children of fire can possess. They are broken up by category and further divided by third triad and second triad powers. Characters who belong to a choir not in the second triad may not choose from those forces. Since PCs are not able to advance into the first triad, those forces are not described in this work. They will be detailed in a later supplement.

Each entry follows a standard format beginning with the force's name. This is followed by the level of the force. Characters must possess a force at all lower levels before they can attain the higher level force. If, however, two forces exist at a given level the character need only attain one before learning the subsequent force. This requirement applies to each category of forces separately. In other words, having a level one force in Benevolence will not allow the character to attain a level two force in War.

After the level indicator is the governing aspect. This indicates what aspect is used in conjunction with die rolls to invoke the force.

Next, the duration of the force is listed. There are four possibilities for duration: immediate, scene, session, and story. Immediate effects are not necessarily instantaneous. Once they are invoked they can feed off themselves, but are not sustained by the angel. The remaining duration indicators are fairly self-explanatory.

Finally, the description of forces is prefaced by an indication of what forms the angel can be in to invoke the force. There are few forces that allow celestials to use them while in the subtle form. Additionally, some forces must be invoked while in a material state. Since the hidden form is always material, nothing is added, but the divine form will have the word material in parentheses after it.

The description of each force gives a general idea of the mechanism and effect of the force. It is kept purposefully vague to allow Storytellers some leeway in their interpretations.

Some Storytellers feel more comfortable with more specific and detailed examples. For this reason, the author has included Optional Rules after many of the force descriptions. Those who find merit in a more structured set of rules may find them helpful, while those storytellers who prefer a more free flowing and subjective approach can simply ignore them.

3.3.2 BENEVOLENCE

THIRD TRIAD

Calming the Savage Beast

Level: 1

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

With but a thought, the child of fire can sooth one of God's wild creatures. The enraged lion becomes docile; the ravenous bear becomes content. More ferocious animals might garner a more difficult target, as might the condition of the beast (cornered, unfed).

Optional Rules

As a general rule, domesticated animals, though they can become frenzied and attack, do not warrant a roll. Such targets should meet with automatic success. Animals that are intrinsically viscous (badgers, sharks, etc.) usually require a roll at hard difficulty (25). Animals who have been trained for aggression or who are near starvation will usually increase the difficulty level by an additional step (+5).

The Calming Word

Level: 2

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

Through gentle words, the celestial is able to calm the anguish, fear, and anger of a child of clay. If the force is invoked while in a material state, the words are clearly audible to the target and those around him/her. If, on the other hand, the child of fire is in an ethereal state, the words can only be heard by other ethereal beings. In this situation, the target is only aware that turbulence within them is growing less. If the Storyteller deems this to be a contested roll, the target's fortitude is usually used to resist it.

The Calming Song

Level: 3

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

Through angelic song, the celestial can allay the anguish, fear, and anger of a group of children of clay. In all other respects, this force is identical to the calming word. If the Storyteller elects to make this a contested roll, the highest fortitude among the group is used to resist the power. Only those who are in earshot can be effected, and the angel can not exempt certain humans in the group from the calming force.

The Calming Touch

Level: 3

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine (material), Hidden

Description

This force allows a celestial to render a child of clay or other material being unconscious. The angel must be able to physically make contact with the target. The roll can be resisted using the target's fortitude.

Optional Rules

While the duration of this force is usually the remainder of the scene, the author offers these guidelines if Storytellers looking for more exacting time descriptions. The greater the targets Health, the quicker they will recover. Subtract this vigor score from twenty to get the number of minutes they will remain unconscious. After this time passes, the process of waking is not an immediate one. It may take them many minutes to fully recover. During this time they can observe what is going on around them and only minimally interact with the world.

SECOND TRIAD

The Calming Spirit

Level: 4

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This force endows the child of fire with the ability to perform calming word on celestials as well as mortals. The one stipulation for this, however, is that the celestial creature must be of equal or lesser rank to the one attempting to utilize this force.

Sanity

Level: 5

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine (material), Hidden

Description

Through touch alone the child of fire can cure those children of clay suffering from insanity. It can restore the minds of those shattered by horrific experiences or suffering from unexplained delusions.

Serenity

Level: 6

Aspect: Glory

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Duration: Scene

Description

The child of clay is put into an almost euphoric state. They believe everything is good with the world and that nothing threatens them. They will sit idly by while other attack them. They will face death with out the merest hesitation. Additionally, they will see no reason to lie to anyone. This force can be contested with the target's fortitude.

3.3.3 FIRE

THIRD TRIAD

Holy Light

Level: 1

Aspect: Vigor

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This force taps into the most basic attribute of fire, the ability to provide light. The angel can have the light stem from any source within sight. The spot designated begins to glow bright, shedding rays on all the surround area. If the source of light is moved, the radius of illumination moves with it. Since there is no apparent material reason for this glowing, witnessing the use of this force can be very unnerving for children of clay.

Optional Rules

The radius of light provided by this force is determined by the amount by which the user made his roll. A total of twenty would produce a small light with no more than a 5' radius. For every point by which the roll exceeds 20, 10' is added to the radius of the light. Thus, a roll of 25 would result in a light source with a 55' radius. This only reflects the maximum potential of the light. The child of fire need not make it this bright.

Control Fire

Level: 1

Aspect: Power

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

With this force, a celestial can control the size of an existing blaze. The fire can be increased, decreased, or totally snuffed out. While the effect of using this force is immediate, its sustained condition is dependent upon its fuel supply. Hence, a fire in the desert that is expanded may quickly return to its original or even diminished state due to the lack of anything to burn.

Optional Rules

As a general rule, fires can only be enhanced to double their normal size. Most fires require the standard 20 as a target, but extremely large fires are more difficult to control. The Storyteller may wish to assign a difficulty of hard (25) for these blazes.

Holy Flame

Level: 2

Aspect: Vigor

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

Using this power, the angel can create a very small fire (the size of a candle flame) out of thin air. The flame can be made to appear anywhere within the celestial's sight. Unless there is fuel to feed on, however, the fire will go out almost instantly. Though the fire can cause discomfort and a modicum of pain to material creatures, it does no real lasting damage.

Holy Fire

Level: 3

Aspect: Vigor

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is merely an enhanced version of holy flame. Now the angel can create a campfire size blaze. As with the previous force, the fire must have fuel to burn in order to remain existent. Unlike holy flame, though, this force has the potential to inflict substantial damage to material creatures. Only if the creature remains in the heart of the blaze for an extended period of time, does it have a chance of being killed.

SECOND TRIAD

Combustible

Level: 4

Aspect: Power

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine (material), Hidden

Description

The child of fire can make any material (including water) combustible. When touched by flame, it will ignite as if it was gasoline. The celestial must actually touch the item or substance to convey this force.

Optional Rules

Some mystical relics such as holy items may be more difficult to use this force on. Many will have a difficulty of hard (25), and some may even have a difficulty of very hard (30).

Holy Inferno

Level: 5

Aspect: Vigor

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is yet further advancement of holy flame and holy fire. Here, though, the blaze created is of extraordinary destructive heat and size. It can engulf an entire building and render it to no more than cinders in only a few minutes. Any material creature caught within its grasp would be lucky to survive, and even if they did, the damage inflicted would be staggering.

Divine Blaze

Level: 6

Aspect: Vigor

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

With this force, the angel can bring the effects of Holy Inferno upon a celestial. The fire created still affects the material world, but it has the added effect of scorching ethereal beings as well. Those angels who are in the subtle shape, however, will not feel the effects. While it is unlikely that this blaze will utterly destroy a celestial, it certainly can cause enough damage for that being to have to leave the material world for days of recovery.

3.3.4 MIRACLES

THIRD TRIAD

Charmed Existence

Level: 1

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Session

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description:

With the power of his will, the angel bestows divine luck upon a child of clay. Good things will happen to the recipient, and coincidence will make misfortune rare. This good fortune, however, can only be bestowed on mortals not celestials.

Optional Rules

In game mechanic terms, rolls of 2 are no longer automatic failures and do not incur the subsequent penalties. Keep in mind such a roll can still be a failure, just not such a grievous one.

Minor Blessing

Level: 2

Aspect: Glory

Duration: immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

Using this force, the child of fire can bestow a touch of grace on a child of clay. This grace allows the mortal to perform tasks they would have otherwise failed at.

Optional Rules

Making the roll exactly (20) imparts one point of grace. For every point by which the roll succeeds an additional point is added to this grace pool. The recipient can spend these points to augment die rolls, but only one point can be used per roll. Once points are used, they are gone forever. Angels can not compound the effects by using the force multiple times on the same target.

Charisma

Level: 2

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Scene

Form: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

The voice of an angel is bestowed on a child of clay. He or she can enrapture and command crowds with but the simplest spoken words. Followers are lost in their leader's auras, and simple minds can be convinced of the most unbelievable things. Some of the world's greatest leaders were recipients of this force, granted the ability to move the masses. Celestials should be wary, however, of who they grant this gift to. Once bestowed, it can not be revoked, and the child of fire has no control of what the recipient might say.

Optional Rules

With a roll of 30+ (very hard) the effects on the child of clay are permanent.

Conception

Level: 3

Aspect: Glory

Duration: immediate

Forms: Divine (material), Hidden

Description

By laying a gentle hand upon a daughter of Eve, the child of fire can ensure that a child will soon be born. Though it is not an immaculate conception (both man and woman are needed to make it possible), it can allow an infertile couple to conceive. The baby born of this union will be of blessed origin. The determination of how this plays into the story is left entirely up to the storyteller. One thing is for sure, though; the child is destined to make a wondrous difference in the world.

Minor Miracle

Level: 3

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Subtle, Hidden

Description

By using this force, a child of fire can bend the laws of nature to produce effects that some might deem divinely inspired. This may be anything from stigmata, to portraits that weep oil.

SECOND TRIAD

Shrine

Level: 4

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

With this ability the child of fire can turn an ordinary place into a holy sanctuary. It must be a place that holds some important significance to the surrounding populace or is of particular uniqueness or beauty. An outhouse, for example, can not be made into a shrine. This new holy place will provide strength and resilience to those angels who are nearby, and can inspire faith in the children of clay.

Optional Rules

The strength of the shrine is dependent on the roll the angel makes when using this force. If the roll exceeds only a difficulty of normal (20) the result is a level 1 shrine. A roll of hard (25) results in a level 2 shrine, and a roll exceeding a difficulty of very hard (30) would make it a level 3 shrine. The level indicates the bonus any child of fire with positive grace receives for all actions while inside or within a 15' perimeter of the shrine. Additionally, children of clay with very high faith may also receive this bonus.

Major Miracle

Level 5

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

This force is very similar to minor miracle save for its scope. Major Miracle can effect wide areas, and can break as well as bend the laws of nature. Evidence collected at the scene will reveal the physical impossibility of the event.

3.3.5 MORTALITY

THIRD TRIAD

Sense Death

Level: 1

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

With this force the psychopomp can detect those in the vicinity who have died and whose souls still need to be released. In addition, it can be used to locate the living dead (those whose bodies are dead and decaying, but continue to be animated). The precision of this force is entirely up to the Storyteller, and is dictated by the needs of the story.

Optional Rules

The distance for which an angel can detect a dead or undead mortal is dependent on their grace score. Each point of grace adds one mile to the angels sensing radius. Thus a child of fire with a Grace of 15 can use this force up to a 15-mile radius around his current position.

Free Soul

Level: 2

Aspect: Glory

Duration: immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

With this force, the child of fire attempts to release the soul of a dead body. Without its use, the soul is trapped in the body and gradually becomes warped as the corpse decayed. In most cases, a released soul naturally floats off to its proper place in Heaven (Paradise or Tartarus).

Optional Rules

The souls of the living dead can also be freed with this force. This, however, is more difficult than freeing a normal soul, the difficulty being hard (25). Once the soul is freed, the decayed body becomes inanimate and harmless.

Judgement

Level: 3

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

Some souls have lead lives neither good nor evil. When their bodies pass away, these souls have the tendency to remain on Earth. In cases such as this, the soul must be judged and forced to its rightful place in the afterlife. If this judgement is not done, the spirit will roam the Earth as a ghost.

Optional Rules

It takes some time (usually days) for a disembodied soul to become a ghost. If the angel tries to use this power during this transformation stage, only a standard roll is needed. Once, the spirit becomes a ghost, however, the roll is contested with the ghost's vigor score.

SECOND TRIAD

Agony

Level: 4

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine (ethereal)

Description

The child of fire can use this force to reach in and tug at the soul of a living being. This causes excruciating pain to the child of clay, though it does not cause any real damage. This experience will leave a child of clay shattered for quite some time. Use of this force, however, sometimes incurs a loss of grace. The Almighty does not like His prized creation being tortured so it is save for extreme cases.

Optional Rules

The recipient must make a successful fortitude roll to perform any action for the remainder of the scene.

Stealing of Souls

Level: 5

Aspect: Power

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is a rather dangerous force for a child of fire to utilize, since it almost always incurs a loss of grace. With it, the angel removes the soul of a currently living person, causing instant death. This roll is resisted with the target's health score.

Soul Shatter

Level: 6

Aspect: Power

Duration: Instantaneous

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is one of the most devastating forces available to a psychopomps. By using this force, the angel is able to utterly destroy a soul, removing it from existence forever. It incurs a massive loss of grace and is thus rarely used. As with Stealing of Souls, this force is resisted by the human's health score.

Optional Rules

The storyteller can require a justice roll for any child of fire attempting to use this forcer who has a positive grace score.

3.3.6 PERCEPTION

THIRD TRIAD

Shift Sense

Level: 1

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This force allows an angel to slightly manipulate one of a material being's senses. If the storyteller requires a roll, it is usually resisted with the target's perception. If successful, the celestial can slightly alter what the target perceives. A red dress can look like a yellow one; a sour lemon can taste sweet. Only one use of this force can be applied to a single target. Additionally, the force can be used against other celestials but only when they are in the hidden form. If this is the case, they resist the effects with their understanding score

Sheltered Eye

Level: 2

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This force causes a material being to consistently overlook a chosen object. Their eyes wander over the thing without actually perceiving it. This makes the object virtually invisible to the target. The roll is opposed by the target's perception. Unlike Shift Sense, this force can not be used against celestials even if they are in the hidden form.

Optional Rules

Larger objects may be more difficult to conceal from the observer. Items the size of a table or bigger carry with them a penalty of -5, while items the size of a small dwelling or larger have a penalty of -10.

Sheltered Masses

Level: 3

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

In many respects this is simply an enhancement of the Sheltered Eye force. The only difference is that it effects a significant area around the object. Anyone passing inside this area will succumb to the force. Hence a building might be virtually invisible to the inhabitants within a block of it, but those viewing it from miles away can clearly see it. If the item is moved, the area of obscurity surrounding it moves with it.

Optional Rules

The radius of coverage for this force is equal to 20 x the angels grace score in feet. In addition, if the celestial's roll exceeds a difficulty of near impossible (35) the effects last for the remainder of the Story.

Lost Sense

Level: 3

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Session

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This force renders the mortal target without the use of one sense. This force can not be compounded to take away many of the target's senses. The roll is contested using the target's perception score. Though the effects can last the remainder of the session, the celestial can choose to alleviate the impairment at any time.

SECOND TRIAD

Divine Darkness

Level: 4

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Session

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This force allows the user to invoke the power of Lost Sense on a group. The force effects all mortal beings within a 20' radius of the primary target. Only the target with the highest perception rolls against the force's user. Success or failure of this contested roll determines the outcome of the entire group. Angels can not choose to exempt certain beings from the force's effect.

Vanishing

Level: 5

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

Objects that were once clearly present suddenly become imperceptible. They can not be seen touched, or in any way detected in the material world. They are however, not destroyed. In fact, these objects still leave an ethereal shadow of their presence. Thus they are always discernible to celestial creatures. Children of fire often use this force to hide doorways or conceal holy relics. A mortal can see the object if given permission by the angel who invoked the force.

Optional Rules

As with Sheltered Eye the larger the object, the greater the difficulty: table size object are hard (25) and small dwellings are very hard (30).

3.3.7 PROTECTION

THIRD TRIAD

Sense Danger

Level: 1

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Session

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

The child of fire bestows upon a mortal being the ability to innately sense danger. Though it does not give them knowledge of the exact nature of the danger, it can prevent a child of clay from getting on a plane that is destined to crash and such. In the end it is up to the recipient of this gift to interpret its meaning. Do to its non-coercive nature, it is a force that never incurs a loss of grace.

Toughness

Level: 2

Aspect: Vigor

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine (material), Hidden

Description

The child of fire imparts a bit of his immortality to a mortal being. The force is invoked by physically touching the recipient. The target becomes more resistant to physical damage. Though he may lose just as easily as he would have before, the mortal will find he hasn't suffered quite the beating he would normally have. In game mechanics terms, this equated a temporary +3 to the target's health.

Grant Sight

Level: 3

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This force allows a mortal being to see into the ethereal world just as angels do. The recipient can see all celestial beings (save for those in the subtle form) as well as the natural flows of ethereal essence. In addition, the recipient can sense the use of celestial forces just as a child of fire can. This can be a very dangerous power to use, since the mind of the recipient can often not cope with what he/she is seeing.

Fortress of God

Level: 3

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

The righteousness of the Almighty is channeled through the angel to give a child of clay moral strength. They become more virtuous under daunting circumstances: their sense of justice more acute, their self-control more exercised, their resolve bolstered, and their wisdom sharpened.

Optional Rules

To demonstrate this increased moral resolve. All the recipient's virtues are raised by 2 for the remainder of the scene.

SECOND TRIAD

Purest Spirit

Level: 4

Aspect: Power

Duration: Session

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

Through the use of this force, an angel can make a mortal being immune to possession by demons. If the recipient is already under demonic control, the roll is contested with the demon's fortitude. If the demon loses this roll, he is immediately expelled.

Absorb

Level: 5

Aspect: Vigor

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

With this force all physical damage done to the target is instead absorbed by the angel. While onlookers still see the target being struck or shot, it is the angel who feels the effects. If the angel sustains enough damage he will be returned to the Heavens for recovery. Once this happens, the target will be unprotected. This force can only be used on material beings

Optional Rules

In terms of mechanics, the recipient of this force would roll their power against the opponent's power, but the angel's vigor would be used for purposes of comparison. See the section on Combat for more details.

Reflect

Level: 6

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is one of the most awesome powers in a celestial's arsenal. With it, the angel can cause any force used against a particular child of clay to be reflected back on the user. The power can be of celestial, infernal, or magical in origin. It should be kept in mind that some forces will not have the same effect as they might have had on the target. Forces meant only for material beings, for example, will have no effect if reflected back upon a celestial.

3.3.8 PURIFICATION

THIRD TRIAD

Hand of Truth

Level: 1

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

By laying a hand on an ethereal or mortal creature, the child of fire can tell if the target is answering questions truthfully. If the Storyteller chooses, this roll can be resisted by the target's prudence or deception. Keep in mind that the force can only work if the two characters are in the same state (ethereal or material). This force is only active as long as the angel maintains contact with the target.

Optional Rules

Generally only one roll should be made per target per scene. If the player lets go of the target and then reestablishes contact during the same scene, a new roll is not required.

Sense Corruption

Level: 1

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is a force only usable on other children of fire (specifically the sons of light). With it, the angel can tell the exact level of the target's grace. The roll can be resisted with the target's temperance (ability to mask their true nature). As with Hand of Truth, a physical contact must be established. If the target is not a son of light or if the roll failed, the angel will get no result whatsoever.

Shackle

Level: 2

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine

Description

This renders teleportation impossible for the targeted child of fire. They may still physically move around as normal. This is an extraordinarily useful force for the angels of purification since it limits the target angel's ability to flee judgement. At the storyteller's discretion, the roll can be resisted by the target's fortitude.

Forced Ascension

Level: 3

Aspect: Glory

Duration: immediate

Forms: Divine

Description

Once a celestial has been successfully shackled, the angel of purification can use this force on them. By making contact with them, the angel attempts to teleport both of them to the council room of the Celestial Court. Here they will be judged for their crimes. This is the only situation where lower ranking angels are allowed into the higher heavens. This roll can be resisted with the target's fortitude. Additionally, the user must be of an equal or greater celestial choir.

SECOND TRIAD

Tempt

Level: 4

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

Now the celestial has the ability to find the deepest weaknesses in his adversaries, namely their temptations. Knowledge of these temptations gives the angel of purification a great edge over those he seeks to persecute. Another major advantage to this force is that it is not a contested roll.

The angel need only attain a 20 to be successful.

Weaken

Level: 5

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

With this force an angel can drain the abilities of another celestial (good or evil). The target's energy is sapped. Their ability to perform all tasks is lessened, and even the strength of their moral fiber is diminished. The roll is resisted by the target's fortitude.

Optional Rules

Though the effects of this power can be interpreted to mean whatever the storyteller likes, here are some guidelines. This weakening can be represented in mechanical terms. For each point by which the angel exceeds the opponents roll, the opponent's stats are correspondingly decreased. Thus an opponent who rolled a 20 against the users 26 would find all his aspect and virtues decreased by 6. Grace is the one part of a celestial that can not be decreased.

Nullify

Level: 6

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is one of the most feared celestial forces in the halls of Heaven. With it an angel can be separated from his connection to God. The favor the Almighty has bestowed on the child of fire can not be accessed for the remainder of the scene. In other words, celestials who have had this force used against them can not use grace points to modify their rolls and can not call on divine intervention for help. The roll is contested with the target's glory, and it can not be used on celestials of higher choirs.

3.3.9 REVELATION

THIRD TRIAD

Voices

Level: 1

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

With this force, the angel can cause a child of clay to hear the disembodied voices of long dead loved ones. The voices can deliver any message the angel desires, provided it is no more than a few sentences in length. Though this can be a very useful power, players should take heed. Children of clay who have little faith might attribute these voices to insanity rather than celestial intervention.

Dreamsend

Level: 2

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

Here the angel orchestrates the dreams of a child of clay. Dreams are not concrete things, though. They work through symbolism and innuendo. Often times these sophisticated metaphors are ignored or misinterpreted by the dreamer. However, they are less apt to disturb and unbalance people as some of the other forces of Revelation have the tendency to do.

Option Rules

If the storyteller wishes, the amount of control can be dependent on how much the player made the roll by. Rolls that manage only to garner a normal difficulty (20) have marginal control of the dreams. Subsequent difficulty levels will grant the angel increasingly more control of the target's dream world.

Minor Vision

Level: 3

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

Through the use of this force, the angel can cause a child of clay or other mortal creature to have visions. These visions are not prophetic in nature but constructs of the angel's imagination. Using Minor Vision only allows the angel to create ghostlike images that last for less than a minute.

Optional Rules

If the storyteller sees fit, characters who realize this power is being used on them can resist it with a prudence roll.

SECOND TRIAD

Major Vision

Level: 4

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This is a more powerful version of Minor Vision. The visions can now be far more intricate. The angel can compose entire scenes filled with realistic looking images that last for many minutes at a time. It is unlikely that the target can dismiss such an occurrence (as they might be able to do with Dreamsend), though this experience can leave them unstable and confused.

Mass Vision

Level: 5

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This force is identical to Major Vision with the exception that it effects all mortal beings in a small area. Though they may all see the same vision, each one might interpret its meaning differently.

Optional Rules

The area of effect for this force is a radius equal to 20 times the angels grace score in feet.

Minor Prophecy

Level: 5

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This force differs from visions because it is not a construct of the angel but rather of the Almighty. Through this force, children of clay can be given a divine glimpse of the future or some universal truth. The person goes into a trance like state for as long as few minutes. There is absolutely no doubt within the target's mind that this was a mystical experience of some kind (though they can misjudge its nature). This roll is not resisted since it comes from the Almighty Himself. The angel is merely the portal through which divinity delivers its message.

Major Prophecy

Level: 6

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

The only difference between this and the above force is the scope. Major Prophecy can have a much more dramatic effect. The trance the target goes into can last for days; the recipient may see whole landscapes or complete futures. The message is always of earthshaking proportions. Though the Almighty gives the message, the child of fire chooses the recipient. Choosing an unworthy person for such divine inspiration can often result in the loss of grace.

3.3.10 UNDERSTANDING

THIRD TRIAD

Empathy

Level: 1

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The child of fire is able to read the emotional state of a mortal target. This will not tell the angel what the target is thinking but only what he/she is feeling. For instance, the angel can determine a man is angry, but he will not learn what the cause of this anger is or what the individual intends to do as a result of it.

Psychometry

Level: 2

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine (material), Hidden

Description

By handling a physical (non-living) object, the angel can gain knowledge of what past events have surrounded it. An ancient dagger might give the angel a vision of it being plunged into the chest of a Roman general. Only traumatic or important events tend to make impressions on objects.

Optional Rules

The length of time a celestial can see into the passed is determined by the success of the roll. Rolls that only meet a normal difficulty (20) can only see 50 years into the passed. Results that exceed a hard difficulty (25) can see up to 100 years back. Rolls exceeding a very hard difficulty (30) can see 500 years in the pass, and rolls exceeding a nearly impossible difficulty (35) can see for as far back as the item has existed.

Sense of Taint

Level: 3

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

By employing this force, a child of fire can tell if a place is tainted with evil. Such places might include unholy sanctuaries, demonic summoning areas, and places where great evil and suffering has occurred.

Optional Rules

A tainted place is in essence the opposite of a Shrine. It feeds infernal creatures making them more powerful. Depending on the strength of the taint, it can add +1, +2, or +3 to all rolls made by demonic creatures.

SECOND TRIAD

Communicate

Level: 4

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The child of fire can communicate with the lesser creatures of the universe. This extends even to communication with plants. The lower the intelligence level of the target, though, the less sophisticated this communication will be and the less detailed the information is likely to be. The communication is of a telepathic nature, and thus can not be heard by other creatures.

Read Thoughts

Level 5:

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

No mortal mind is safe from this celestial probing. The angel has the ability to read all surface thought the target has during the course of the scene. This can be an invaluable tool in determining if the target is lying. If tried on another celestial creature (obviously in hidden form) the result would be a failure, though the child of fire using the force would not realize he was probing another celestial. This force can be resisted by a target's prudence score.

Read Memory

Level: 6

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

The celestial is now able to probe the target's mind more deeply. Instead of mere surface thoughts, the child of fire can probe a mortal mind for any memory they're looking for. Sorting through another's mind is a difficult and time-consuming task. It requires a great deal of concentration and a minimum of distractions. Knowledge of when the event took place and details about it can aid in the process.

3.3.11 VENGEANCE

THIRD TRIAD

Sickness

Level: 1

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Varies

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

With this force, a child of fire is able to infect a small group (neighborhood, office building, small village) with a debilitating though not life threatening disease. This might be something akin to the common cold or flu. The sickness can only effect children of clay and other mortal beings. The duration depends on the nature of the sickness and the demands of the story. Keep in mind, the more technologically advanced the setting you play in is, the more likely those effected will have access to medical resources that can alleviate or even eradicate the disease.

Optional Rules

To simulate the drain such a sickness takes on mortal creatures, physical rolls are made with a -2 penalty, and mental rolls are made with a -1 penalty.

Disease

Level: 2

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Varies

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is a more potent strain of the force described above. The scope of the disease is greater, allowing the angel to infect a much larger group of people. Additionally, the effects of the disease are much more sever. Now there is a chance some (though not many) of those who contract it will die. It usually takes longer for this type of disease to run its course, often staying in a community months after it was introduced. As with sickness, societies with a greater access to technology will have an easier time isolating and curing the disease. The incubation period and duration of the disease is up to the player and storyteller to decide.

Optional Rules

At the height of the disease the victim will incur a -5 penalty to all physical rolls and a -2 penalty to all mental rolls. Additionally, about 1% - 2% of those who contract the disease will die.

Swarm

Level: 3

Aspect: Glory

Duration: varies

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The child of fire calls out to a group of lesser creatures (insects, frogs, spiders, etc). They will appear at the location of the angel in the millions. It takes at least ten minutes for this force to reach its zenith. The creatures will ravage the land and harass any nearby inhabitants.

Optional Rules

The swarm will stay in the area for a number of hours equal to the character's grace score. After this time, they will slowly begin to disperse. The child of fire who invoked this power can dismiss the swarm at any time.

Famine

Level: 3

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The child of fire now has the ability to destroy crops and mysteriously cause livestock to die, their flesh becoming poisoned. The actual effect on the population (i.e. number of deaths caused) is a subjective decision made by the storyteller and will be determined by population density and access to transportation and communication technology.

Optional Rules

The area effect by this force is determined by the difficulty level a character was able to achieve on the glory roll. A difficulty of normal (20) will result in famine covering a land area equal to a county. A difficulty of hard (25) would cover an area of a few hundred square miles. A very hard difficulty (30) would result in a regional famine, while a result of nearly impossible (35) would result in a nationwide famine.

SECOND TRIAD

Draught

Level: 4

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

Through the use of this force, the celestial can cause a devastating draught to hit an area. It tends to have a greater effect on the human population than famine does since water is more crucial to their existence than food. It takes about a week for the effects of the draught to be felt. Considering the lack of water needed to irrigate crops and quench the thirst of livestock, a side effect of draught is often famine. As with the above force, the impact on a population is dependent on their access to technology and communication

Optional Rules

The optional rules for Famine concerning area of effect are the same for draught.

Plague

Level: 5

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

While this is an even more enhanced form of disease, it differs from the lesser force in a number of important ways. Victims are more likely to die than they are to survive. Secondly, its duration is totally dependent on its ability to find new hosts and migrate to different areas. A well-fed plague (one with plenty of victims, a vector to carry it, and proper conditions) is almost limitless in scope. Lastly, societies with greater technology actually help the plague. Faster and simpler methods transportation allows it to spread to many regions quickly. The exact nature (symptoms, gestation period, etc.) of the plague is left up to the player and storyteller. Keep in mind, though, once a plague is unleashed it can not be recalled.

Optional Rules

At the height of the sickness, the victim will not be able to perform any physical tasks, and mental tasks will incur a -5 penalty. Additionally, between 50% and 90% of people who contract the plague will die. This percentage may go down in time as humans find ways to cope with the disease.

Wrath of God

Level: 6

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This force is invoked (as was the case in Sodom and Gamora) to totally obliterate an area. There is no hiding the use of this force. It is clearly an unnatural and unexplainable act of vengeance. Anyone and anything in the given area is destroyed. The shape this reckoning takes is up to the player, storyteller, and the demands of the story.

Optional Rules

The area of effect is determined by the difficulty the character was able to attain on the glory roll. A normal difficulty (20) will wipe out only a few blocks, while a difficulty of near impossible (35) could wipe out a city of millions.

3.3.12 VIGILANCE

THIRD TRIAD

Vigil

Level: 1

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

With this power the child of fire is able to know when someone or something is being physically harmed. They will not be aware of what the nature of the damage is or what is causing it. The subject must be in the angel's presence at the inception of the force. After that time, the angel can be anywhere (including Heaven) and sense the physical damage. The force can be dropped at any time.

Optional Rules

A character can only keep vigil over a number of subjects equal to his Vigor score.

Link

Level: 2

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine (material), Hidden

Descriptions

Through this force, the child of fire establishes a link with something in the material world (person, place, or object). Once the link is established, the angel can teleport to the source of the link at will. In order to establish the link, though, the angel must first make physical contact with the subject.

Optional Rules

As with Vigil, the number of links a celestial can sustain is equal to his Vigor score.

Watchful Eye

Level: 3

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

The child of fire can now see through the eyes of a mortal being and hear through their ears. The force can only be used with subjects who are linked to the angel. While using this power, the angel is an inactive observer. He can not control the subject's actions. During this time, the subject is unaware of the angel's presence. There is one more stipulation to this force's use. The child of fire must be present somewhere within the material world for it to work.

SECOND TRIAD

Watchful Spirit

Level: 4

Aspect: Knowledge

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

This force is virtually identical to watchful eye. The only difference is that it is not limited to the material realm. It can be used from Heaven.

The Vigilant Servant

Level: 5

Aspect: Power

Duration: Story

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This force enlists the help of an animal to look after and protect a subject. The creature will literally give its life to protect the subject from danger. The angel has the option of dropping the force at any time. Only one vigilant servant can be maintained at a time.

Optional Rules

The type of creature the angel would like to protect the subject will determine the difficulty of the roll. A small or medium sized bird would garner a normal difficulty (20), while a large bird or small mammal (i.e. a cat) would require a difficulty roll of hard (25). A difficulty of very hard (30) could result in a large dog or its like becoming the guardian. Lastly, a difficulty of near impossible (35) would allow the angel call any creature he wanted.

Tracking Eye

Level: 6

Aspect: Understanding

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden, Subtle

Description

If the an angel arrives on the scene less than five minutes after another celestial has left, he can use this force to discern where the celestial has teleported to. The force works so long as the target has teleported somewhere in the material realm. It can not be used to track creatures that have returned Heaven.

Optional rules

If the storyteller wished, the roll can be resisted (though not consciously) with the target's temperance (deception for demons).

3.3.13 WAR

THIRD TRIAD

Battle Luck

Level: 1

Aspect: Glory

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

For the duration of the scene, the celestial upon whom this force is used will find himself incredibly lucky in combat. A roll of 2 (double ones) will no longer be an automatic or grievous failure. It should be stated, though, that such a roll could still result in a failure, just not one that's quite so bad. Additionally, a roll of 19 and 20 are considered automatic successes and incur the corresponding bonuses.

Battle Prowess

Level: 2

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The blows the child of fire rains on his opponent come faster and more furious than thought possible. Few celestials of equal or lower rank will be able to cope with the onslaught. While under the influence of this force the chance of doing more serious damage to an adversary is greatly increased.

Optional Rules

For storytellers wishing to represent this force in mechanical terms, apply the following rule. If the angel rolls a 10 on one or the dice used for the combat roll, that die is rolled again. The resulting number is added on top of the original roll.

Armor of God

Level: 3

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The angel is enveloped in a suit of gleaming holy armor. This is for the celestials what the force Toughness is for the children of clay. Though it does not effect who wins or loses a conflict, it does have a bearing on how bad of a beating an angel will take if he loses. A +5 is granted to the celestial's vigor score for purposes of combat comparison only. This makes the angel even harder to vanquish or destroy.

SECOND TRIAD

Divine Army

Level: 4

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The angel is able to increase the effectiveness of an entire army in battle. The recipient army will be harder to kill and more effective when attacking. The effects only last for one battle and then the troops are returned to normal. The force can only be used on armies of mortals, not celestials.

Optional Rules

All members of the target army gain a +1 Health and +1 Athleticism for the duration of the battle.

3.3.14 WEATHER

THIRD TRIAD

Gust

Level: 1

Aspect: Power

Duration: Immediate

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The angel can cause a gust of wind to blow through an area. This wind can be strong enough to lift small objects and even topple a person precariously balanced. Both the direction and strength of the wind can be rigidly controlled. It must be noted, however, that this blast of air is not sustained. It dissipates quickly after its inception.

Temperature Control

Level: 2

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

Through this force, the child of fire can alter the temperature in his immediate region. The temperature can be raised or lowered up to 20 degrees Fahrenheit from its normal state.

Optional Rules

It is much easier for a celestial to effect the temperature inside than it is to effect the outside temperature. As a result, changing the temperature in an outdoor environment carries with it a difficulty of hard (25).

Precipitation

Level: 2

Aspect: Power

Duration: Session

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The angel can cause passing clouds to unleash their content. Normally this is the form of rain, but if the temperature is cool enough snow may follow. It is not a down-pour that ensues, but rather a steady though mild precipitation. There must already be clouds in the sky for this to work. It can not be performed on a clear day or night.

Freeze

Level: 3

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The child of fire has the ability to make any liquid freeze solid. It can be done any substance (including alcohol and gasoline) up to the size of a small lake.

SECOND TRIAD

Fog

Level: 4

Aspect: Power

Duration: Session

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The area in 5-mile radius of the celestial is blanketed in a thick bank of fog. The fog takes five to ten minutes to fully form. Visibility within this region is cut back to only a few meters.

Optional Rules

If the character is able to achieve a difficulty of very hard (30), he can elect for the fog to stay in the area for the remainder of the story.

Extremes

Level: 4

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

This is a more severe version of temperature control. Now the angel can alter the temperature of an area by plus or minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Storm

Level: 5

Aspect: Power

Duration: Session

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The angel has the ability to call up a great storm (be it thunderstorm or blizzard). The storm takes at least thirty minutes to form and up to two hours to reach its full potential. The severity of the storm is up to the player and storyteller to decide. Very violent storms have the ability to knock out communication, power, and the ability to travel. There is always a chance in some of these storms that fatalities will occur.

Disaster

Level: 6

Aspect: Power

Duration: Scene

Forms: Divine, Hidden

Description

The destructive force of a natural disaster is at the fingertips of the angel. The child of fire can call upon a hurricane, tornado, earthquake, tidal wave, or other such calamity to befall an area. Such a force must be used with care, however, as deaths are very likely.

3.4 DEMONS AND THE CHILDREN OF CLAY

3.4.1 OVERVIEW

Both demons and children of clay play crucial rolls in the game. Unfortunately, some of the rules governing them differ from those of angels. It is for this reason that these two groups demand special attention. The following sections attempt to clear the confusion that may have set in and clarify how these beings differ from angels.

For children of clay, the world is often seen as a mundane place. They are locked into their material realm, not privy to ethereal wonders going on around them. They are weak creatures when compared to the celestial beings who battle over their souls. This does not, however, mean they are mindless creation always getting in the player's way. It should be remembered that the children of clay are almost always the focus of the games. It is their salvation that is at the center of the angel's existence. The storyteller should make an effort to introduce rich and complex children of clay into their stories. Their moral dilemmas will become the characters', and their ultimate fait will decide whether the characters are victorious or meet with failure. Unfortunately, being creatures of matter and mortality there are some additional features to them.

Demons, on the other hand, are those children of fire who have fallen away from the light the Almighty. While they are just like angels from most statistical standpoints, there are additional considerations to be made with them. Their lack of connection with God has made them resentful of the children of clay. Their ultimate goal is turn as many of these mortals away from the Almighty as possible. While they do indulge in their own depravities, they are always trying to corrupt the righteous. Because of their lesser numbers and lack of having the Almighty on their side, demons are far more subtle then we would give them credit. They often work behind the scenes and are not always quick to confront angels directly. The storyteller should take this into consideration when introducing them into the story. They are usually not uncouth monstrosities (though some can be) who mindlessly attack all that is good. Their strength is far more insidious.

3.4.2 CHILDREN OF CLAY - ASPECTS

While there are rough equivalents between the aspects of the children of clay and those of the children of fir, there are enough differences to warrant renaming and describing them. Many of the strengths and some of the limitations angels have do not correlate to humans.

These aspects are not just applicable to the children of clay, though. The same aspects are used for any material/mortal creature. Nephilim and Anakim, for instance, would have a health rather than a vigor score.

ATHLETICISM

This is the equivalent to the celestial aspect of power. Whereas power represents the celestial's potential to influence the universe by force of his will alone, athleticism merely represents an influence on the physical world. It encompasses all traits such as strength, dexterity, agility, and overall speed.

HEALTH

Like vigor, this aspect represents the character's ability to resist the influences of the universe. It is less an ethereal strength though, then it is a physiological toughness. The higher this aspect the more punishment the body can take and the more resistant to diseases it is.

PERCEPTION

Perception finds a vague counterpart in the celestial aspect of understanding. The major difference, however, is that perception only allows the human to comprehend the physical world and not the ethereal and esoteric elements of the universe that angels are privy to. Additionally, understanding is used for celestials to deal with technology. This is not a consideration for mortals, who do not have these natural blocks against technological use.

INTELLIGENCE

This represents the child of clay's capacity to retain and utilize information. It dictates both memory skills and knowledge of the world. It is equivalent to the celestial aspect of knowledge

PRESENCE

This is the material equivalent of glory. It does not represent the divine aura its corresponding aspect does, but is derived purely from charisma and communications skills. It makes a character believable and an effective leader.

In general, the children of clay are much weaker than celestials. The average aspect score for a child of clay is seven or eight. Additionally, these aspects can not exceed twelve.

3.4.3 CHILDREN OF CLAY - INTERESTS AND SPECIALTIES

The children of clay do not have access to the celestial forces that angels do. They do, however, have interests and specialties to make up for this deficiency. These give them areas of expertise where they can excel beyond their natural limits.

Interests represent casual pass-times. They do not necessarily represent single skills, but rather a group of skills involved in particular endeavors. For instance, a character with automobiles as an interest may actually have proficiency in driving, mechanics, and knowledge of vintage cars. Any time the storyteller asks for a roll that involves one of the character's interests, a +1 modifier is reward for that roll. Most children of clay have from three to five interests

Specialties indicate a great level of expertise in an area. They usually (though not always) correspond to a character's chosen profession. Any roll that falls within the realm of this specialty gets a +3 bonus. Most children of clay have only one or two specialties, and it is a rarity to find one with more than three.

3.4.4 CHILDREN OF CLAY - OTHER SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Like the sons of light, the children of clay have the same four basic virtues. Unlike aspects, these score are on par and sometimes exceed those angelic creatures. The only major difference is that they are not used to resist temptations. Even humans with evil dispositions have these virtues.

Though the children of clay are not endowed with a grace, they do have faith. Their faith score (a number from zero to twenty) represents their belief in the Almighty and the celestial world. Higher faith scores will allow the character to better cope with celestial occurrence. Additionally, higher faith makes humans more resistant to demonic possession. A high faith score does not automatically denote righteousness or goodness. In fact those who ascribe to the demonic arts (siding with Samael over the Almighty) often possess very high faith scores.

Children of clay are mortal creatures. With time, their bodies begin to slow down, and eventually they die. They can also be killed by creatures, disease, and hardship. If an opponent ever wins a combat roll against a mortal being by that creature's health score or better, death occurs.

Lest you think that the children of clay are powerless beings when confronted with celestials, think again. Sorcerers, using the traditions of Solomon, can attain immense powers. Through the use of rituals and amulets, they can harness the forces of angels for their own using. These amulets can protect them from divine, infernal and material threats. Through intensive rights they can bind angels and demons, forcing them to do their mischievous bidding. Prepared sorcerers can contend with the mightiest children of fire.

Unfortunately, a detailed discussion of sorcery is beyond the scope of this work. Later supplements will fully detail these occult practices.

3.4.5 DEMONS - VIRTUES

What is virtuous for the sons of light is contemptible to the sons of darkness. For this reason not all the virtues given to angels are meaningless to demons. Prudence and Fortitude cross the boundaries of good and evil, but the following two infernal virtues are meant as substitutes for Justice and Temperance.

DECEPTION

This represents the demon's ability to pull the wool over others' eyes and to conceal those things best left hidden. It is much more than simply the ability to lie. It also represents the passive ability to mislead. There is a downside to this, however. Demons with very high deception score may not be able to tell the truth even if it serves their best interest

CRUELTY

With a callous heart, the demon is able to inflict torment on the most innocent of creatures without a second thought. As with all virtues there is a downside to a high score. Those with an exceedingly high cruelty may not be able to resist the lure of causing suffering, even if it interferes in their mission.

3.4.6 DEMONS - OTHER SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

There is no equivalent to grace for demons. There is no way for them to add points to their die rolls, and calling for divine intervention on their behalf is impossible. This is one advantage the righteous will always have against the fallen.

As for aspects, they are the same as for their divine brothers. They too are can succumb to different temptations, though the consequences are far less severe. Demons who succumb to their own personal desires may get sidetracked from their goals, but they are not looked down on by their brethren for these transgressions

The forces at a demon's disposal are totally different then the divine once listed in the Forces section. These infernal abilities have a much more viscous and cruel tone to them. They are not limited by the restrictions placed on divine forces by the Almighty. A full discussion of these infernal forces, however, must be saved for a supplemental work.

3.4.7 POSSESSION

Unlike angels, demons have the ability to possess the children of clay. By leaping into a body, they can take control of the person's actions. The victim's spirit is still inside, but they have lost control. The greater the persons faith, though, the more difficult this possession is. The demon must make a successful power roll against the victim's faith score.

Possession is not an instantaneous thing. Once the demon inhabits a body it takes some time for the process to be completed. During this period, the demon is making connections with the subject's system and gathering the strength needed to assert himself. This strengthening process can take up to a week to complete, during which time there are no signs that the person is possessed.

The emergence of the demon is a gradual thing. At first, the demon will only be able to take control for short periods of time. As the demon grows stronger, though, he will be able to subvert the consciousness of the child of clay for longer episodes. Eventually, the original soul will only be able to break through for short moments.

The demon must constantly stay with the subject during the possession process. If for any reason, the demon is forced to leave the body, the possession must once again start from scratch. It is often times much more difficult for a demon to attempt to possess a person once again.

Humans need not resist this process, though most do. Any child of clay can willingly give up his body for possess. In these cases, the possession process follows a much more accelerated rate.

Demons possessing the children of clay are very difficult for angels to spot. This is especially true during the strengthening period. Once the demon begins to manifest itself, though, its behavior is usually a clear give away to its presence.

3.4.8 DEVILS

Demons are not under the same restrictions as angels when it comes to bearing offspring. In fact, demons will often beget progeny from union with other demons or unholy creatures. The results of these couplings are devils. The material world is teaming with these hideous creatures.

In most cases, (Asmodeus being a notable exception) devils are lesser versions of demons. While they posses many of the minor infernal forces, their aspects are generally much lower. Additionally, they do not share the same immortal nature of their fathers. Though their natural life span seems endless, they can be killed. Like the Anakim, who also have no souls, once they are killed there is no afterlife. They simply cease to exist.

Devils tend to cause more mischief then real harm. Because of their mortal nature, they will almost always flee from direct confrontations with the children of fire.

3.5 STORYTELLING

3.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Storytelling can be a challenge in any game or setting. The ability to tell a good story, keep the players involved, establish atmosphere, and keep a respectable level of consistency is a hard challenge for even the most experienced roll-players. For the beginning storyteller the task can be downright daunting, and even the most veteran storytellers can get bogged down with complacency and old tricks. In the author's opinion, the process of running an extraordinary game needs to be carefully explored.

Children of Fire offers its own special difficulties for storytellers. Unique obstacles exist in this game that may not exist in others. The nature of angels themselves, having lived since the beginning of time, provides special challenges. Additionally, the fact the game minimizes combat can sometimes be discombobulating for people more used to traditional role-playing systems.

The following subsections seek to address these issues.

3.5.2 ATMOSPHERE AND THEME

Two very crucial aspects of a game are atmosphere and theme. Atmosphere involves the general mood of all ambient story elements. Additionally, atmosphere is also dictated by the pace of the story. Different atmospheres include: light-hearted, action oriented, dark, and whimsical. Theme, on the other hand, deals with the ideas behind the plot. A theme can be specific to a particular story, or run through a series of stories. Keep in mind, a theme need not be a set moral statement. In fact, in many cases it works best to formulate the theme in way of a question (Is man truly worth saving? Can we ever really make up for the misdeeds we've done in the past?) The storyteller need not have an answer to this thematic question. The mere fact that it operates behind the scene can engage the players. Themes are best felt and not seen.

The atmosphere and theme of a particular story varies. It is up to the storyteller to determine what works best for the tale he is telling. What the author can explain, however, is what atmosphere he feels runs through the entire game and what themes have struck him as important.

As far as atmosphere goes, the author has envisioned this angelic world not as dark, but as sad. There is a forlorn, almost sorrowful quality to these divine creatures. Once they were the most loved of God's creations, but since the coming of the children of clay they have been forced to play second fiddle. How

sad it must be for them to have to battle demons (once their beloved brothers) over the souls of these usurping mortals. Empty churches, hollow chanting, suffering children, and unanswered prayers, these are the images that come to the author's mind when thinking of this game.

There are many themes that run through the heart of Children of Fire. Two seem stand out from the rest. First, the theme of moral dilemma is preeminent. Good can sometimes be wrong while evil is right. Every choice has consequence. Put the characters in moral binds, situations without easy solutions. Present them with choices that all have a downside. Total success in a mission should be a rarity. Often sacrifice of some kind is necessary to come up with a suitable solution. Second, the concept of eternal children is essential to the game. Try to instill in the players a sense that, though they are older than time, they are carried by whims and adolescent urges. They are by no means venerable sages or perfect guardians. They do not have all the answers.

3.5.3 SETTING

One of the greatest advantages of Children of Fire is its ability to cross genres. The basic themes can operate in a multitude of settings. From stories set in the Middle Ages to those that take place on a spaceship two hundred years in the future, the possibilities are endless. Find a genre that interest both you and the players

Let us look at some possibilities.

The author has run three Children of Fire games at conventions. The first was *Showdown*, a western of sorts. The story centered around a once prosperous mining town trying to summon a demon to regain its lost glory. The second story took place during the roaring twenties. The setting was filled with gangsters and speakeasies. It centered around the redemption of a mob leader and had a guest appearance by a rather nasty Nephilim. The last story took place in the near future on a nuclear submarine. The plot involved a Grigori's attempt to create his version of paradise. As you can see from these examples, there is great diversity possible.

Simply choosing a setting is not enough. Elements of the setting need to be integrated into the story. The author does not recommend hour-long diatribes on the architectural style of a particular building or the stitching method used to create the vest a character is wearing. Such overindulgence in description only serves to slow the game down. Equally bad, however, is not giving setting nuances for the players to latch on to. Without these descriptive touches, the game can lose its color, and the players will have a hard time really getting into the world.

3.5.4 FITTING THE PLAYERS IN

In *Children of Fire*, it can be difficult to fit all the player characters in smoothly with the tale the storyteller is attempting to weave. Angels of different orders (having very divergent goals) may have difficulty finding common ground within the plot line. The author offers these suggestions to help alleviate this problem.

1. Come up with only half the plot prior character creation. Establish the main themes and many of the major story points. Once all the players have made their angels, go back and fill in what's missing. Use story hooks to include specific characters in the plot.
2. It helps for the characters to have connections to each other. Encourage the players to have commonalities between their angels. Perhaps they have some shared experience. Have the players elaborate on these connections.
3. Give the players a clear idea of what you're going after during character generation. Nothing is worse for a player than to get attached to character they've invested a lot of time in, only to find out he doesn't mesh well with the main thrust of the story.
4. The group mentality common to many standard role-playing games does not always apply to *Children of Fire*. Don't be afraid to keep the characters separated, sometimes working toward divergent personal goals. Give the players plenty of scenes to work with during a given session, and don't be afraid to let the other players enjoy someone else's role-playing scene. Eventually, however, the characters should be brought together in some manner, but don't force it.

Try to make the characters' individual missions more open-ended. These celestial mission are what usually get the main character's involved in your plot. If they feel there is no leeway in them, they will resist your attempts to get them involved in other elements of the story.

3.5.5 RUNNING A CAMPAIGN

A campaign is simply a set of stories linked together in some way. These stories can follow a singly plot line or be connected by thematic elements. In most cases, (though not all) they share some or all of the same main characters. In *Children of Fire* there are two types of campaigns.

The first type of campaign is what most role-players are used to. Here contiguous stories follow what can be referred to as chapters. Each chapter has a main thrust and continues to progress the plot or theme. These games usually incorporate the same atmosphere from chapter to chapter and share a common genre. Though they can incorporate large jumps in time, most chapters start soon after the last one ended.

The second type of campaign is unique to *Children of Fire*. Here the chapters need not occur within the same genre and leaps of decades or centuries are common during the advancement of the overall plot. This is due to the incredible longevity of angels as compared to the children of clay. Additionally, this more free-flowing timeline allows entire chapters to actually occur prior to the chapter they follow. Though the atmosphere and setting of each of these chapters may differ, there must be some thematic and story elements that hold things together.

In *Children of Fire* campaigns have the tendency to take on very epic tones. The end goal of the story is usually something of extraordinary weight. Some involve the fulfillment of prophecy, the birth of holy children, the destruction of crucial elements of the universe, or the warped visions of the fallen celestials.