

Wolf & Raven Style Martial Arts

Wolf and Raven styles are two interrelated martial arts recently developed by Abyssal Exalted to aid them in the conquest of Creation. Wolf, the way of the predator, is primarily a brutal, aggressive style that concentrates on stealing life from foes and crippling them. Raven, the way of the scavenger, is a more controlled style that catches opponents off-balance and is specially designed for spellcasters, which are numerous among the Deathknights.

Attacks with knives, daggers, and katars are treated as unarmed attacks for the purposes of the following charms.

[Identifying the] Scent of Danger

Cost: 3 motes

Duration: Scene

Type: Reflexive

Minimum Martial Arts: 3

Minimum Essence: 1

Prerequisite Charms: Five-Fold Sensory Exercise / Sensory Acuity Prana

Scent of Danger attunes the character to the Essence flows of the beings around him, enabling him to sense their emotions and motivations. He can smell fear and hatred, and know who intends to do him harm. Even enemies who have concealed themselves, such as hidden assassins, can be picked out by the threat they emanate. Nonsentient objects, such as traps, can also be detected by the emotional residue left behind by their builders. This charm will not detect truly coincidental accidents that are about to befall the character, but attacks made to look like coincidences will be noted.

If this charm is already in use when a situation would trigger Ominous Portent Method (or Surprise Anticipation Method, for a Solar), then character receives a number of turns of warning equal to his Perception, instead of just one. Although not strictly a true prerequisite, the training methods developed by the inventor of this charm depend upon the familiarity with increased perception provided by Five-Fold Sensory Exercise. A character wishing to learn this charm may substitute a similar charm, such as Sensory Acuity Prana.

[Remaining the] Unobserved Observer

Cost: 3 motes

Duration: Scene

Type: Simple

Minimum Martial Arts: 3

Minimum Essence: 1

Prerequisite Charms: Five-Fold Sensory Exercise / Sensory Acuity Prana

By knowing how the flows of Essence carry hints of actions in the world to the senses of an observe, one can learn to avoid raising such disturbances. The user of this charm adds his Martial Arts score to all Stealth rolls made for the remainder of the scene.

Similarly to [Identifying the] Scent of Danger, the techniques developed for learning this charm are based upon understanding provided by Five-Fold Sensory Exercise, though substitutes are possible.

Wolf Form

Cost: 5 motes

Duration: Scene

Type: Simple

Minimum Martial Arts: 4

Minimum Essence: 2

Prerequisite Charms: Identifying the Scent of Danger, Flesh-Mending Discipline / Body-Mending Meditation

The wolf is a fierce hunter, and by emulating him, the character can channel his virtues into those of the hunt. Wolves must be strong and hardy to chase down prey and slay it, keen of nose, ear, and eye, to seek out the prey where it hides, and fierce of heart to lead the pack. For the remainder of the scene, the character adds his Conviction to his Strength, his Valor to his Stamina, his Temperance to his Perception, and his Compassion to his Charisma. These bonuses count towards the maximum number of dice the character may add to his various abilities. In addition, his Martial Arts attacks do lethal damage even if he is unarmed. Wolves require mobility, but can work around restrictions. Armor may be worn with this charm, but the armor's mobility penalty is applied to all Martial Arts rolls the character makes, including attacks and parries.

This charm may be used outside of combat as well. It is quite well suited for leading armies and presiding over court. The techniques for learning to channel virtues into the flesh require a thorough knowledge thereof, such as that gained from Flesh-Mending Discipline and similar charms.

Raven Form

Cost: 5 motes

Duration: Scene

Type: Simple

Minimum Martial Arts: 4

Minimum Essence: 2

Prerequisite Charms: Remaining the Unobserved Observer, Raiton's Nimble Perch / Graceful Crane Stance

The raven can hunt when needed, but he is cunning enough not to need to do such work himself. Quick and crafty, he can trick others out of what is theirs without exerting himself. By adopting the wily bird's ways, the character may add his Conviction to his Dexterity, his Valor to his Wits, his Temperance to his Intelligence, and his Compassion to his Manipulation for the rest of the scene. Ravens are also messengers to the land of the dead, thus the character's blows can harm fleshless spirits while using this charm. Lastly, he may emulate the ability to fly in strike with a beak by using his Martial Score in place of his Thrown score when making thrown attacks with knives and daggers. Unfortunately, the raven needs to be light and capable of motion, so no armor may be worn while using this charm.

Like its companion the wolf, this charm also has value off the battlefield. Negotiation and larceny can benefit from its power. Controlling one's virtues in such a manner first requires controlling one's body. The training techniques rely upon the balance granted by Raiton's Nimble Perch or other such charms.

Quickening the Shaped Essence

Cost: 5 motes

Duration: Scene

Type: Simple

OR

Cost: 2 motes

Duration: Instant

Type: Supplemental

Minimum Martial Arts: 4

Minimum Essence: 3

Prerequisite Charms: Raven Form

Careful study and precise manipulation of Essence allow powerful magics to be performed astoundingly quickly. When under the effects of this charm, the Exalt reduces by one the number of turns needed to cast any spell. (For instance, a Terrestrial Circle Sorcery would complete on the turn it is cast.) This charm may be used in two different ways. For a cost of five motes, it may be activated as a simple action, and its effect will last the scene. Alternately, it can be used supplementally for

only two motes with an instantaneous effect that may explicitly be placed in a combo with any Sorcery or Necromancy charm. (This second form is only useful in a combo with such a charm. By itself, it has no effect.)

Catching the Thrown Focus

Cost: 4 motes

Duration: Instant

Type: Reflexive

Minimum Martial Arts: 5

Minimum Essence: 3

Prerequisite Charms: Quickening the Shaped Essence

An opponent who attacks is extending himself, and with proper baiting can overextend himself into a waiting trap. The Exalt adds his Martial Arts score to a single dodge attempt. For each success of his opponent's that he cancels, he steals one mote of essence from that opponent.

Inflicting the Horrendous Wound

Cost: 7 motes, 1 willpower

Duration: Instant

Type: Supplemental

Minimum Martial Arts: 5

Minimum Essence: 2

Prerequisite Charms: Wolf Form

A sudden outpouring of savage brutality can leave an opponent stunned and disoriented, tending to nothing but the pain his new scars are bringing him. The Exalt springs forward, adding his Martial Arts score to his initiative for the round. For each HL of damage he successfully inflicts on an opponent this turn, that opponent will be at -1 on all his die pools for the rest of the scene. This cannot reduce the opponent's die pool below his permanent Essence.

Tearing Out the Flesh

Cost: 10 motes, 1 willpower

Duration: Instant

Type: Supplemental

Minimum Martial Arts: 5

Minimum Essence: 3

Prerequisite Charms: Inflicting the Horrendous Wound

The jaws of the wolf bite and snap, tearing hunks of flesh from his prey, and filling his empty belly with the blood of his enemies. The Exalt makes a single Martial Arts attack, adding his permanent Essence in dice to his Dexterity+Martial

Arts. For each health level the attack successfully inflicts, he regains one health level himself. (This charm cannot heal aggravated damage.)

Rending the Heart and Soul

Cost: 8 motes, 2 willpower

Duration: Instant

Type: Supplemental

Minimum Martial Arts: 5

Minimum Essence: 3

Prerequisite Charms: Wolf Form, Raven Form

Cunning and strength combine to cruelly pierce the heart of an opponent, letting his very soul spill forth upon the ground to be lapped up by beast and bird alike. The Exalt makes a single Martial Arts attack. After soak, do not roll any remaining damage dice—they are all automatically successes. After the opponent takes the damage, the character steals Willpower equal to absolute value of target's new wound penalty (0, 1, 2, or 4). If the target is incapacitated or killed, the attacker steals all the target's remaining Willpower. If an effect is modifying the actual wound penalty a character is experiencing, use the base unmodified wound penalty to determine how much Willpower is stolen.

Wit of the Raven

Cost: 1 motes + 1 willpower / Charm

Duration: Instant

Type: Reflexive

Minimum Martial Arts: 5

Minimum Essence: 3

Prerequisite Charms: Quickening the Shaped Essence, Rending the Heart and Soul

Preparedness is hard to beat, but improvisation is better than no plan at all. The cunning warrior can quickly assemble the ideal plan for any situation. On the turn in which this charm is invoked, the Exalt can use a number of other charms up to his permanent Essence without the use of a combo. It costs one Willpower for each charm other than Wit of the Raven.

Stamina of the Wolf

Cost: 5 motes

Duration: Scene

Type: Simple

Minimum Martial Arts: 5

Minimum Essence: 3

Prerequisite Charms: Inflicting the Horrendous Wound, Rending the Heart and Soul

The wolf does not surrender. He does not give up. He does not die. He steals himself and charges his foes, focussing his anger into their destruction. When the Exalt uses this charm, he gains a number of additional -4 health levels equal to his permanent Essence, and all his wound penalties become bonuses instead (so that the new health levels are actually +4). At the end of the scene, these extra health levels disappear, but this does not heal any damage sustained, and may even kill the character if he is still bearing more damage than his normally available health levels.

If a character who knows this charm takes sufficient damage in combat to reduce him to incapacitated or lower, this charm will trigger reflexively at an additional cost of 1 Willpower in addition to the normal activation cost.

Three-Fold Partition of the Soul

Cost: 10 motes, 1 willpower, 1 health level

Duration: Permanent Essence in Turns

Type: Extra Action

Minimum Martial Arts: 5

Minimum Essence: 4

Prerequisite Charms: Catching the Thrown Focus, Tearing out the Flesh, Rending the Heart and Soul

The body is home to both the higher and lower souls, as well as the shard of Celestial Essence that empowers the Exaltation. With great practice, masters of the art can loose their souls separately to fight alongside their body. When this charm is activated, the Hun and the Po fly forth, taking the form of ghostly versions of the character's body, which is controlled entirely by the Celestial Essence. (As such, this charm cannot be used by Terrestrials, for they have no Celestial Essence, only the Exaltation of the blood.)

The Hun's traits match those of the unarmed, unarmored character while under the influence of Raven Form. Likewise, the Po's traits are those of the bare character under Wolf Form. The body retains whatever armament it had prior to invoking the charm. Being freed of the mortal aspects of the soul provides unparalleled clarity, providing automatic successes equal to the character's permanent Essence on all Martial Arts rolls. These effects last a number of turns equal to the Exalt's permanent Essence before the multiple fragments of the soul need to recombine. While the Exalt is so partitioned, each of the three parts acts with its own fully independent action. All three share common essence and willpower stores, and take damage on the same track.